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INTERDISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVES ON RESTORATIVE JUSTICE: DEVELOPING INSIGHTS FOR EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT: This article takes restorative justice as an example of an initiative that crosses disciplinary boundaries, and that has been usefully applied within educational contexts. Grounded in criminology, restorative justice also has roots in psychology, education, sociology, peace studies, philosophy and law. The article draws on an ESRC funded seminar series which investigated interdisciplinary perspectives on restorative justice and their applicability to education. The series found that the ways in which restorative justice is conceptualised and applied varies according to disciplinary norms and assumptions. It is this creative tension that the current article explores.

Keywords: interdisciplinary, peace education, justice

1. INTRODUCTION

This paper attempts to exemplify some of the issues raised in this special issue on interdisciplinarity. It suggests some ways in which interdisciplinarity can be both a challenge and a powerful thinking tool for those engaged in the enterprise of education. It takes restorative justice (RJ) as an example of an initiative that crosses disciplinary boundaries, and that has been usefully applied within educational contexts, and draws on a seminar series on this subject. Grounded in criminology, restorative justice also has roots in psychology, education, sociology, peace studies, philosophy and law. Interestingly, the ways in which it is used and applied vary according to disciplinary norms and assumptions, and it is this creative tension that the current article explores. Restorative justice provides a particularly good example of an initiative that crosses disciplinary boundaries as it also crosses sectors. It can be seen in the youth justice sector, children's services and social policy, and this increases the need for theoretical interplay. The combination of disciplines and sectors makes for a heady mix, and, as will be shown here, plenty of scope for confusion, lateral thinking and profitable development.

Background: Interdisciplinarity

Thompson Klein (2010) outlines three terms that constitute a core vocabulary for thinking about disciplinary interaction: multidisciplinary; interdisciplinary and transdisciplinarity. Whilst multidisciplinary approaches are about juxtaposing, sequencing and coordinating, interdisciplinary approaches

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are more integrative: involving interaction; linking; focusing and blending. Multidisciplinary approaches are seen as encyclopaedic in nature, whereas interdisciplinary approaches involve synthesis and fresh insights that go beyond disciplinary boundaries – the whole is greater than the sum of the parts.

In the same volume, Frodeman (2010) points to the role of interdisciplinarity in challenging the ways in which knowledge is produced in the academy, and in raising questions about the nature and viability of expertise. Interdisciplinarity contains the promise of better understanding of relations between different fields of knowledge, and of how knowledge produced in the academy moves into society. It can point to dangers as well as the opportunities inherent in continued knowledge production:

Despite the riches that it has brought us, disciplinary knowledge has tacitly functioned as an abdication. By focusing on standards of excellence internal to a discipline, academics have been able to avoid larger responsibilities of how knowledge contributes to the creation of a good and just society. (Frodeman, 2012, pp. xxxii–xxxiii)

Interdisciplinarity allows for research to embrace the fact that, ‘there is no final or unimpeachable answer which does not give rise to another question’ and that, ‘what counts as expertise in a given domain is as much a reflection of political and sociological factors, such as societal relevance, funding streams or intellectual fashion as it is of inherent epistemological standards’ (Frodeman, 2012, p. xxxiv). He argues that it enables a kind of thinking that is aligned to Heidegger’s ‘denken’ which strikes a balance between breadth, depth, timeliness and societal relevance.

The current consideration of interdisciplinary perspectives on Restorative Justice draws on all three of Thompson Klein’s concepts: it lists multidisciplinary perspectives on the phenomenon of restorative justice; it discusses the ways in which concepts re-emerge and inter-relate across disciplinary boundaries; and it begins to suggest ways in which transdisciplinary approaches can be drawn upon to transgress, transcend and transform, with particular relevance for those non-academic actors who are charged with implementing strategies for more just and equal social relations through education and schooling.

Background: Restorative Justice

RJ is a process that is used in the criminal and youth justice sectors, and more informally in schools and looked-after settings where harm has been caused. It involves an impartial third party facilitating a process whereby an offender (or wrong-doer) is held accountable and makes some form of reparation to his or her victim. The victim is placed at the centre of the process, and is given the opportunity to express the ways in which s/he has been affected and to ask questions about the offence (typically – Why me? Am I safe?). Some cases eventually involve a face-to-face meeting, although it is also common for parties to choose shuttle mediation. It has been positively evaluated, and shown to be very effective in diverting young people from crime (Morris, 2002; Sherman and Strang, 2007).

In more informal settings, restorative approaches (RA) can involve the use of restorative questions with the person who has caused harm and the person who has been harmed (What happened? What were you thinking at the time? What have you been thinking since? Who has been affected? What can you do / do you need to put things right?). It has been seen as an effective behaviour management strategy in schools, and may well result in a reduction in exclusions (Hendry, 2009; Hopkins, 2004; Lewis, 2009, Skinns *et al.*, 2009). Research carried out by Skinns *et al.* (2009) has shown that it can have a positive impact on pupils who are confronted for the first time with the consequences of their actions, and that it can provide new insights for teachers into the complexities of bullying and conflict between peers. It can also enhance feelings of empowerment, emotional literacy, and respect amongst teachers and pupils. It has been shown to improve the quality of relationships, and to restore friendships, or enable young people to simply learn to live with each other or keep out of each others' way (McCluskey *et al.*, 2008; Skinns *et al.*, 2009).

From a more theoretical perspective, restorative justice is an essentially contested concept. It is unlikely that there will ever be one agreed definition. Like democracy, it is seen as a good thing, but is internally complex and changes over time and in different contexts (Johnstone and Van Ness, 2007). Some RJ theorists have seen the different approaches and practices of RJ as forming a continuum (Zehr, 2002), and others have grouped them into different categories. Johnstone and Van Ness (2007) suggest three different but overlapping categories: the encounter conception; the reparative conception and the transformative conception. The encounter conception prioritises communication and the coming together of the person who has harmed and the person who has been harmed. It has its roots in the disciplines of psychology and psychotherapy. The reparative conception is rooted in criminology and law and prioritises the reconciliatory outcomes of RJ, the restoration of the victim's wellbeing and the rehabilitation of the offender. The transformative conception is more sociological in orientation, and has leanings towards international relations, peace studies and theology. It is even more ambitious and focuses on the ways in which RJ can transform conflict, relationships, spiritual life and communities. Expanding into areas beyond crime, law and education, it holds that both the initial and the ultimate goal of the restorative movement should be to transform the way in which we understand ourselves and relate to others in our everyday lives:

To live a life-style of restorative justice, we must abolish the self (as it is conventionally understood in contemporary society) and instead understand ourselves as inextricably connected to and identifiable with other beings and the 'external world'. (Johnstone and Van Ness, 2007, p. 15).

Transformative concepts of RJ evoke passion and commitment amongst adherents that are difficult to explain by cost / benefit calculations. Zehr (2002) links restorative principles with various cultures and religions, including the Hebrew concept of Shalom, the Māori *whakapapa*, and the African *ubuntu*, which was central to the truth and reconciliation process in South Africa. All of the above

contain the notion that we are interconnected with each other, a creator and the environment, and that this sense of connection needs to be restored when it is ruptured.

Even at a definitional level, however, questions immediately present themselves. To what extent are young offenders, or pupils in schools (or their workers and teachers) ‘empowered’ in any aspect of the judicial process or in processes of schooling? What is meant by the empowerment of the young, the poor and the dispossessed when it comes to the dispensation of ‘their’ crimes / misdemeanours? What is meant by ‘facilitation’? To what extent can adults in youth offending settings and schools – responsible for the safety, wellbeing and educational achievement of large numbers of young people – facilitate in a neutral, non-judgemental and non-directive way? What is meant by community? Whose community? Is it possible for strategies in educational settings that are proactive and preventative to be classed as restorative? And perhaps most significantly, what is being restored?

2. THE SEMINAR SERIES

This paper draws primarily on an ESRC funded seminar series that ran between February 2010 and July 2011. The series was entitled *Inter-disciplinary Perspectives on Restorative Approaches to Reducing Conflict in Schools: Exploring Theory and Practice from Cross-national and International Settings*. It was hosted by the authors whose universities span England and Scotland, and involved a range of English, Scottish and international speakers, including for example Prof David Johnson from the University of Minnesota, USA, Rt. Hon Lord Falconer, Former Lord Chief Justice and government minister, and Dr Kathy Bickmore, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) Canada. Speakers were chosen to represent international, interdisciplinary and cross-sector perspectives, and to represent a balance of gender and people at different career stages, including graduate students. A core group of around thirty people attended all five seminars, with additional local attendees at seminars in London, Cambridge, Nottingham and Edinburgh. Academics and research students in the core group spanned the disciplines of education, psychology, social policy, peace studies, law, philosophy, sociology and criminology. Members of the core group included a judge, a QC, teachers, headteachers, policy-makers, charity workers and representatives from governmental and non-governmental institutions including, for example, the Restorative Justice Council, the Youth Justice Board and UNICEF. The first seminar was run in collaboration with the national restorative justice umbrella body The Restorative Justice Council and was hosted in the House of Lords in London. Seminars typically involved three or four paper presentations, with papers circulated in advance and the majority of time given over to discussion. Notes were taken from these discussions, and these were circulated after the event. The main aim of the series was to examine commonality and divergence in key theoretical models underpinning restorative justice. Although this was an

inter-disciplinary seminar series, it was hoped that outcomes would focus on the challenges and benefits of applying these perspectives within the field of education, so that new understandings would emerge for the study and application of restorative justice in schools. It was hoped that those involved in restorative justice research, policy development and implementation in schools would benefit from international cross-disciplinary and cross-cultural comparison through participation in the seminars and its disseminated outcomes.

Outcomes of the Seminar Series

The following discussion of ideas from the seminar series is structured according to a thematic analysis of the papers presented. The thematic analysis began with perspectives from different disciplines. The disciplines that emerged were, unsurprisingly, those that were represented by the people who presented the papers, although several of the presenters were interdisciplinary in focus. For ease of communication, the following discussion talks about perspectives 'from psychology' for example, but clearly these are only the perspectives that emerged during the seminars, not from the field of psychology as a whole. The article in hand is concerned with dialogue between key academics with an interest in restorative justice from across disciplines, rather than in an exhaustive or comprehensive account from one or more discipline. Concluding comments will address issues of interdisciplinarity.

3. PSYCHOLOGY / PSYCHOTHERAPY

Within the disciplines of psychology and psychotherapy, restorative justice is seen as an unmitigated good, with clear benefits for both those who have been harmed and those who have harmed others, and indeed for communities. It is seen as a powerful tool for the rehabilitation of offenders, and for building self-esteem and feelings of empowerment in young people. Although it is contrasted with psychotherapy, which has scope for broader more long-term healing, it is seen as therapeutic when used after an incident that has caused harm. Roger Johnson's paper proposed that it is grounded in social interdependence theory, which has its origins in Gestalt Psychology and Lewin's Field Theory (Johnson, 2010). Thus RJ foregrounds social-psychological perspectives, which hold that human behaviour and personality are embedded within social relations, and that it is equally important to restore the health of groups and communities as it is to restore the health of individuals.

In the first seminar Brenda Morrison drew on the work of Phil Zimbardo (2008), a social psychologist and creator of the infamous Stanford Prison Experiment of 1971 (Morrison, 2010). The experiment was stopped after only six days because individuals randomly assigned to the role of prison guards began to systematically abuse their power, and individuals randomly assigned to the role of prisoners began to suffer mental breakdowns. The experiment was

considered highly unethical because it resulted in everyday citizens (deemed mentally healthy through a battery of psychological tests) applying what they thought were increasingly powerful electric shocks to actors whom they thought were prisoners. The experiment revealed what Zimbardo has called the Lucifer Effect, whereby particular institutional conditions bring out the worst in people. As Brenda Morrison revealed in the seminar, Zimbardo (2008) has continued to challenge psychologists and others to look beyond dispositional (internal) attributes in understanding human behaviour (what he sees as the fundamental attribution error) and consider the situational (external) factors that are predictive of behaviour. These insights were drawn upon recently in the Abu Ghraib trial in the United States where Zimbardo was called as an expert to testify about the extent to which the torture of prisoners could be attributed to a few ‘bad apples’, as was asserted by General Myers. Morrison cites his response:

There was something troubling about this authoritative declaration to absolve the System and blame the few at the bottom of the barrel. His claim was reminiscent of what police chiefs tell the media whenever police abuse of criminal suspects is revealed – blame the few rotten-apples-bad-cops – to deflect the focus away from the norms and usual practices in the back rooms of police stations or the police department itself. This rush to attribute a ‘bad-boy’ dispositional judgment to a few offenders is all too common among the guardians of the System. In the same way, school principals and teachers use the device to blame particularly ‘disruptive’ students instead of taking the time to evaluate the alienating effects of boring curricula and poor classroom practices of specific teachers that might provoke such disruptions. (Zimbardo, cited in Morrison, 2010, p. 4)

Thus, Morrison drew on social-psychological perspectives to reinforce one of the main drivers of RJ – that destructive, violent and criminal behaviour needs to be understood within its social context (including systems of schooling) and that an over-reliance on punishment and individual responsibility can mask dysfunctional or abusive institutionalised norms and practices. Linking social psychology with criminology and education, she called for a refocusing from dispositional attributions of poor behaviour in schools (bad apples) towards situational attributions (bad barrels) and systemic institutional power structures (bad barrel makers). In this, perspectives from psychology have much to offer to the development of RA policy and practice in schools.

In the third seminar, Helen Cowie suggested that the core principles of counselling and humanistic psychology provide insights into how restorative practices work (Cowie, 2010). Restorative approaches, grounded in Carl Rogers’ core conditions of empathy, genuineness and unconditional positive regard provide a context for human beings to understand their interconnectedness and their need to build reciprocity, cooperation and trust. Restorative justice draws on Rogers’ assumption that human beings will self-regulate and self-actualise given the right conditions, and that a warm and non-judgmental facilitator can enable those most affected by a crime or a harmful act to find their own solutions to their own problems. According to this transformative way of thinking about restorative justice,

the autonomous self needs to be balanced by the human need for interdependence and reciprocity. This needs to take place within nurturing human relationships and a just social infrastructure. The wellbeing of individuals is inextricably connected with community cohesion, social policy for human flourishing, participation and deliberative democracy. It is interesting to reflect on the sociological and educational implications of this for communities and schools, and on the fact that two complementary but different theoretical perspectives on RJ emerged from within the discipline of psychology.

4. CRIMINOLOGY

In contrast, perspectives from criminology tend to be more equivocal. Whilst there are those who feel that RJ is an unmitigated good, others see its benefits as limited. Still others see it as potentially or actually harmful. This was in evidence in the dichotomous views that were expressed in two papers in the first seminar in the House of Lords. These papers were presented by Judge David Carruthers, who was a Parole Board Judge in New Zealand, and by Charlie Falconer who was the former Lord Chief Justice in Tony Blair's government. One of the core debates in criminology concerns the extent to which offenders should be punished or rehabilitated, and this core debate infuses the dialogue surrounding RJ. Charlie Falconer was clear about the limited contexts in which RJ should function (Falconer, 2010). His overriding concern was with the need for justice to be seen to be done, and with the maintenance of the public's confidence in the criminal justice system. He cited the infamous Jamie Bulger case, in which two young boys killed a toddler, to provide an example of a situation in which RJ would not work:

In the Jamie Bulger case, the killers could not have developed an understanding of the consequences of what they did, and had no sense of responsibility. The criminal justice system, to be effective, has got to convince people that it extracts sufficient punishment to mean that they do not have to take the law into their own hands. And that's not just about the parents of Jamie Bulger who, for quite legitimate and understandable reasons would have been, and indeed were, outraged by the sentence that was passed, but about society as a whole and a need to feel that an appropriate punishment has been meted out. (Falconer, 2010, p. 2)

Thus, in Falconer's view, RJ would have been of little use in developing understanding and empathy in the boys, and it would have been unthinkable to expect Jamie's parents to be involved in a restorative process. Discussion in the first seminar focused on the needs of victims and the public, and on the socio-cultural aspects of crime and punishment. An example was given of a similar crime that had taken place in Norway at the same time as the Bulger case. Five-year-old Silje Redergard was beaten and left to freeze to death by her ten-year-old attackers in October 1994 (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/8577458.stm>). In Norway, unlike in Britain, disbelief and outrage were focused on the society that had managed to produce such dysfunctional and violent young boys, rather than on the boys themselves. The young attackers were left with their families, they were helped by

psychiatrists and social workers, and the newspapers dropped the story. In Norway the aim was to re-educate and reintegrate, whereas in Britain debate in the media focused on whether the boys would 'get off lightly' because of their age. It is interesting to note that one of the British boys is currently back in prison in his twenties because of sex offender crimes. Remarkably, the parents of Silje, in Norway, continue to support the decision that was taken to keep the young attackers with their families rather than remove them to a young offenders' institution. Thus, when considering the needs and perceptions of the public in the field of criminology, it is important to take account of the socio-cultural context in which public opinion is formed. The kinds of citizens that societies wish to produce should be a matter of on-going debate, with crime and punishment at the heart of such debates. Education, perhaps, has a role to play in supporting young people to consider these issues as part of their citizenship education.

In his paper, Judge David Carruthers spoke of political pressure in New Zealand in the 1980s for reinstating traditional Māori methods of conflict resolution (Carruthers, 2010). The result was that in 1989, nearly 150 years after Europeans abolished the Māori restorative system and introduced adversarial British criminal justice, the New Zealand Parliament legislated for a system that operates from restorative Māori philosophy. Judge Carruthers explained that in New Zealand RJ is used in virtually all cases that involve offenders below the age of 18, although it may be in the form of a Family Group Conference (FGC), which may or may not directly involve the victim. FGCs, not the courts therefore, determine the manner in which the offending should be addressed. Full decision-making power is devolved to the community in which the offending took place. Carruthers suggests that, 'The advantages of restorative justice processes have to do with bringing home wrongdoing in a personal way to the offender himself so that consequences and accountability are foremost. They meet the needs of victims and prevent reprisals and revenge. They restore some peace to communities after terrible things have happened' (2010, p. 28).

In contrast, Charlie Falconer was clear that RJ can only be effective in certain cases that are not too serious. Although the UK does not have a history of indigenous community peace-making, it is a useful strategy if the offender has accepted responsibility for the crime, and if it is advantageous (for example because of someone's age) to keep them out of the criminal justice system. He gave an example of a 'chaotic drug user' in Liverpool who was diverted from future offending through a meeting with a widowed lady in her seventies whom he had burgled. He agreed to spend time helping her in her garden, and benefitted from getting to know her. She was able to get answers to questions about why she was targeted, and was no longer traumatised and fearful when she saw how 'pathetic' he was. Falconer was able to endorse the use of RJ (and did whilst a government minister) provided that practical challenges are taken into account. These include ensuring that offenders cannot use the process disingenuously to get out of punishment, that punishments remain consistent and fair, and that victims cannot be re-victimised. These issues are highly pertinent to the management of behaviour

and educational exclusions in schools, with debates in the field of criminology reflecting those within educational discourse. They also flag up once again the role of socio-cultural contexts of violent and anti-social behaviour in determining what happens next when harm has been caused.

5. PHILOSOPHY

Philosophers work with language and concepts to derive theories that help to provide meaningful ways of looking at existence. In the case of this RJ seminar series, input from philosophy concerned the extent to which the term 'transformative restorative justice' is logically paradoxical. Linguistically, there is tautology in this term which points to wider inconsistencies and philosophical and practical challenges for researchers and practitioners. In his paper, James MacAllister (2010) drew on the Oxford English Dictionary (1991 version) definition of the word transform, which is to 'make a thorough and dramatic change in the form of outward appearance or character'. It similarly defines a transformation as a change in form or metamorphosis. A person is 'transformed' if they are changed into something that they were not previously. In contrast, the OED defines restorative as either a 'tending to restore to health' or a bringing 'back or attempt to bring back to the original state by rebuilding, repairing'. Thus, as MacAllister points out:

Restoration and transformation seem to refer to very different processes: the essence of a restoration involves something being returned to how it was before, whereas at its core, a transformation entails something becoming different and new. Furthermore, while a 'transformation' suggests a sudden, swift and perhaps radical alteration, restoration implies a more gradual process. Given these differences it is probable that 'restoration' and 'transformation' are words that cannot be used to describe the same activity or goal without a distortion of the very meaning of these words. Thus, the very idea of a transformative restoration arguably hinges on a logical (or at least a linguistic) paradox. (MacAllister, 2010, p. 6)

There is a second paradox, according to MacAllister, in the arguments of many proponents of RA in schools (e.g., Morrison, 2007) who believe that it is most powerful when implemented as a pro-active whole school approach. According to this perspective, RA should prevent destructive conflict and violence through the development of pro-social behaviour and emotional literacy. This should involve the whole school population, not just those actively involved in disputes and incidents. As MacAllister points out, however, 'once educational practices become focussed on the "proactive" rather than the "reactive" they arguably cannot be, at base, "restorative" either. A restoration does after all seem to necessarily require effort to make good some pre-existent harm, damage or deterioration in state' (p. 7).

Whilst it could be argued that such play with language is on the margins of usefulness for practitioners, including teachers, we would argue that this perspective from philosophy is very useful for shaping educational practice. It highlights inconsistencies and confusion that characterise some aspects of RJ in the public

arena, notably the extent to which it loses its definitional clarity, and therefore its power, by becoming everything and nothing. If it encompasses everything to do with positive relationships under its umbrella, then it is hard to agree how to implement it effectively. If its scope is more limited, and it is seen as a device for encounter and reparation where harm has been caused, implementation and evaluation become more possible. This does leave, however, the tricky question of how to bring about changes in institutional behaviour that is rooted in punitive and retributive ways of thinking. In educational settings, what needs to happen to change (transform?) the skills, attitudes, values and habits of adults and young people so that RA can be effective?

6. PEACE STUDIES AND CONFLICT THEORY

Unsurprisingly, perspectives from peace studies and conflict theory have had a strong influence on RJ. As Kathy Bickmore (2011) pointed out in her paper, Galtung, the Norwegian founder of the discipline, is seminal in the field. He suggests that the best way to define peace is to define violence, its antithesis (Galtung, 1969). Violence, he argues, has one or all of three key elements: direct violence (attack, massacre); structural violence (unjust social structures such as death by malnutrition); and cultural violence (cultural assumptions that mask direct or structural violence such as indifference or support of domestic violence). He distinguishes between ‘negative peace’, which is the cessation or avoidance of direct violence, but which does not resolve structural and cultural conflict, and ‘positive peace’, which involves the presence of democratic relationships and structures for handling conflict constructively and justly. The process of bringing about peace involves addressing all three elements of violence cited above. Whilst direct violence is often addressed through peace-keeping, which keeps conflicting parties apart and leads to negative peace, structural and cultural violence are best dealt with through peace-making and peace-building, both of which can lead to positive peace. Peace-making is reactive – it involves helping conflicting parties to respond to harm that has occurred; whilst peace-building is proactive – working to create cultures of peace that make the likelihood of direct and structural violence less inevitable. Many proponents of RJ argue that they are working within Galtung’s framework of positive peace. They use processes of encounter and reparation to bring about the transformation of relationships, institutions and communities, with the former involving peace-making and the latter involving peace-building. This distinction could be useful in clarifying some of the philosophical issues highlighted above.

Perspectives from peace studies tend to resonate with perspectives from cultural studies and anthropology. Daniel Van Ness shared some of these in his paper (2010). He spoke of indigenous models of restorative justice throughout the world, all with different names and focusing on different aspects. Indigenous or community-based models of justice such as those identified by Sawatsky (2009) in Iona Scotland, Manitoba Canada, and Plum Village (a Buddhist Monastery)

in France, tend to foreground processes of healing, so that Van Ness contrasts criminal justice with 'healing justice' and 'peaceful communities'. These perhaps mirror ideas of positive peace and absence of structural and cultural violence, as discussed above. Van Ness argues that of the three concepts of RJ – encounter, reparation and transformation – the primary concept is reparative in Western cultures, but transformative in indigenous cultures. He feels that RJ cannot be narrowed to a set of techniques and procedures without losing the essence of its powerful indigenous roots, and therefore its efficacy. RJ needs to be transformative within a wider social and political culture that values equity, diversity and interdependence. Once again, socio-cultural contexts and attitudes towards peace, justice and violence are central.

7. PERSPECTIVES FROM SOCIOLOGY

Restorative justice has strong links with social justice. David Johnson (2010) in his paper spoke of different forms of justice, including: ensuring that benefits are distributed justly (distributive justice); applying the same procedures for all (procedural justice); including everyone as part of the same community (social justice); and righting any wrongs that are suffered (restorative justice). It could be that some of the confusion and disagreement surrounding RJ is a result of people making different assumptions about the ways in which justice should be conceived. Whilst some (perhaps those grounded in criminology) tend to think of justice in more procedural terms, others (perhaps those grounded in sociology) tend to think of justice in terms of equitable distribution of resources and social justice.

It is certainly the case that disproportionate numbers of marginalised and minority groups experience the criminal justice system (Braithwaite, 2002). This is a problem that concerns sociologists. RJ can either be seen as a way of addressing these inequalities, or as a way of sidelining structural and cultural violence, whilst holding the poor and the dispossessed to account for 'their' direct violence. This was a major theme running throughout the seminar series. Helen Cowie (2010) spoke about the structural and cultural violence inherent in the 'school to prison pipeline' and about how zero tolerance policies in schools and communities in the USA and elsewhere have led to increased referrals to the criminal justice system. Wendy Drewery (2010) from the University of Waikato in New Zealand pointed to cultural violence that results in disproportionate numbers of Māori and Pacific Island students facing school suspensions, exclusions and early leaving. She suggests that, 'The effects of colonisation on identity is on-going, and continues to create feelings of alienation and disengagement' (Drewery, 2010, p. 10). Derick Wilson (2010), speaking of structural and cultural violence in Northern Ireland, is concerned that the resolution of conflict is difficult where there is asymmetry of power, and where the effects of the conflict are felt more by one side than the other. Thus from a sociological perspective, RJ is problematic if it focuses on encounter and reparation whilst ignoring the need for transformation of unjust

social relations. As Hilary Cremin (2010) pointed out, a feminist critique of RJ (e.g. Curtis-Fawley and Daly, 2004) is a robust one, and resonates with concerns about the use of RJ in bullying situations in schools (Rigby, 2010). If the informality of RJ results in violence associated with women and children being returned to the private sphere, then many of the gains in social justice for these groups will be lost. At the other end of the social scale, she also drew on Braithwaite (2002), who warns that RJ will have little impact on reducing crime as long as it remains the case that the majority of victims of crime are victims of unreported white-collar crime. The field of sociology and the field of education share a concern with social justice, and with links between education and the growing lack of social mobility in the UK.

8. EDUCATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

The discussion above notes several perspectives on RJ that are highly relevant to education from other disciplines. In what follows perspectives from the seminars that are more directly relevant to the field of education are discussed. As Edward Sellman (2011) pointed out, schools are unique within society and produce their own set of challenges for restorative approaches (RA). Many of these are to do with values and ethos, and with cultures of schooling nationally and internationally. There is, he argues, a need for a realistic assessment of the degree of cultural transformation required to fully support approaches that offer some form of pupil empowerment. As an example, Wendy Drewery (2010) noted that in New Zealand current educational discourse surrounding the pre-eminence of raising achievement has resulted in a preoccupation with the teaching of subjects at the expense of pupil empowerment. In her experience, a primary motivation for teachers, policymakers and senior school managers to take up RA is that they address behaviour difficulties, and can be seen as part of an enhanced discipline policy. There is often less interest in the more whole-school transformative aspects, pupil empowerment and meaningful teacher professional development. Kathy Bickmore (2011) was also concerned that implementing comprehensive peace-building in Canada and elsewhere seems to be especially challenging where poor and ethnically-diverse students are clustered in under-resourced schools, and constrained by standardised curriculum and testing. In a similar vein, Carol Hayden (2010) shared the research that she carried out in looked after settings in England, which found that, despite some successes, formal scripted RA had limited impact amongst young people who sometimes appeared to be 'paying lip service' in order to avoid sanctions, and amongst adults who had not been fully consulted and involved in developing restorative philosophy and practice. Gillean McCluskey (2011) from the University of Edinburgh pointed to problematic assumptions within the RA community that involvement of the victim in educational settings is always a 'good thing' (Christie, 1977). She questions the extent to which returning conflict to the people most directly involved is always well grounded. For example, thought needs to be given to the use of RA with children with

SEN or autism, and those who are influenced directly or indirectly by alcohol or drug use.

For RA to be effective then, there is a need to reassess power relations between teachers, other adults in schools, and students, and to revisit curriculum, teaching and learning. Roger Johnson (2010) calls for schools to draw more heavily on cooperative learning and to develop the attitudes, skills and knowledge of constructive conflict resolution. Teachers can engage with pedagogies that teach these, for example by setting up academic controversies during lesson times, and teaching students how to work through them. Despite clear challenges, some schools are beginning to transform relationships using these methods. Nancy Riestenberg from Minnesota Education Board in the USA shared how they have used restorative measures in schools to reduce suspensions, youth offending and behaviour referrals (Riestenberg, 2011). It seems that punitive and restorative forms of behaviour management can co-exist in schools provided there is clarity about which system is to be used when. The merit of restorative practices may become most evident if proponents of it restrict themselves to modest and specific claims about its educational potential.

9. DISCUSSION

Key ideas that emerge from this interdisciplinary discussion of RJ and RA in schools, then, can be grouped according to Johnstone and Van Ness's seminal definition (2007): encounter; reparation; transformation. There is confluence and divergence amongst and within different disciplines represented in the seminars, with each discipline foregrounding one or other of the main concepts. Psychology tends to foreground concepts of encounter – with RJ seen as therapeutic when used after an incident that has caused harm. Social psychology, like criminology and sociology, draws on sociological concepts of reparation in addition to psychological concepts of encounter. It highlights the importance of situational and contextual factors. Criminology is mainly concerned with reparation, the socio-cultural context of crime, and the need to avoid unequal reparation and the further marginalisation of disadvantaged groups. The way in which public opinion is formed is significant for criminologists. In some cultures, such as New Zealand and Norway, public opinion expects decision-making following a crime to be devolved to the local community, whereas in others, such as the UK, the public expects the state to take the main role. According to perspectives from peace studies, the primary concept of RJ is reparative in Western cultures, but transformative in indigenous cultures, and there is a danger in narrowing RJ to a set of techniques and procedures. Educationalists share some of these concerns, with cultures of schooling, nationally and internationally, often set in opposition to the values and ethos of RA in schools. In order for RA to be effective, cultural transformation may be necessary, but interest in RA from schools tends to come, at least initially, from a desire to enhance discipline and a concern with concepts of encounter and reparation. There is often less interest in the more whole-school transformative aspects.

Processes of transformation, however, are not straightforward. From a philosophical perspective, restoration and transformation seem to refer to different processes. Once educational practices become focused on the 'proactive' rather than the 'reactive' they cannot be, at base, 'restorative'. Restoration is about making good some pre-existent harm, damage or deterioration in state. In addition, there are philosophical and practical questions about what is being restored. If RJ proponents align themselves too closely with restoring cohesive communities, they lay themselves open to claims that such communities never existed. It is hard to re-establish something that was never there. Perhaps the solution to these dilemmas and apparent paradoxes lies with a fusion of ideas from peace studies and sociology. Restorative justice could be seen as inherently about restoring communities to a place where conflict is non-destructive, or restoring conflict to a non-destructive level. Perhaps in schools and communities, proponents of restorative justice need to combine processes for dealing with harmful behaviour with more proactive changes in culture, so that it becomes both remedial and preventative. Restorative approaches should include all three conceptions of restorative justice: repair of harm, encounter of the affected parties and transformation of relationships and culture. Despite clear challenges, evidence presented in the seminars from practitioners and teachers seems to suggest that some schools are beginning to transform relationships using these methods. This is achieved when affected parties meet voluntarily to find a resolution cooperatively when harm has been caused. When that happens, transformation of people, perspectives and structures can follow.

10. CONCLUSION

It is hoped that this discussion of restorative justice from across disciplinary divides, sectors, and different countries of the world has been useful to inform educationalists as they decide how to take restorative approaches forward. However this relatively recent initiative unfolds, it is clear that when a concept is taken from one context or discipline and applied to another it is important to translate core ideas in ways that maximise opportunities for synergy and growth and avoid the appropriation of language and processes that do not fit. In this case it was important to avoid pathologising and criminalising young people, particularly the disadvantaged. Disciplinary values and assumptions need to be re-examined and challenged if the richness of inter-disciplinary dialogue is to bear fruit. It is certainly the opinion of the authors that within-discipline and across-discipline discussion in these seminars was enormously beneficial, as was the integration of research and practice, and that these seminars have led to insights that take both research and practice agendas for RJ forward in creative ways.

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