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Historical cosmologies: Epistemology and axiology in Australian secondary school history discourse

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Keywords

history, historical, cosmologies, epistemology, discourse, axiology, school, australian, secondary

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Key Words: History discourse, knowledge structure, Legitimation Code Theory, axiology, cosmology.

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Cosmologías de la historia: Epistemología y axiología en el discurso de la historia en colegios secundarios australianos

Este artículo aborda el discurso de la historia moderna en los colegios secundarios australianos, desde la perspectiva de la lingüística sistémica funcional y de la sociología realista de la educación. En particular, este trabajo estudia el género y el campo en el discurso de la historia en relación a la estructura de conocimiento y el rol de los conceptos técnicos realizados como '–ismos'. Estos son interpretados en relación a la investigación reciente en sociología realista sobre la carga axiológica de términos, especialmente en el discurso de las ciencias sociales y humanidades; de modo que cómo uno se siente resulta ser tan importante como lo que uno sabe en tanto cuanto la mirada del historiador acerca del pasado está involucrada. Esta perspectiva cosmológica se ilustra a partir de manuales e interacciones de sala de clases, examinando las formas en que los estudiantes de historia son formados en las constelaciones relevantes de significado.

Palabras Clave: Discurso de la historia, estructura de conocimiento, Teoría del Código de la Legitimazación, axiología, cosmología.

INTRODUCTION

Alongside science, history is one of the best studied disciplinary discourses from a social semiotic perspective. Coffin (2006) presents a systemic functional linguistic interpretation, which sits alongside critical discourse analysis (hereafter CDA) in Martin and Wodak (2003) (see also the special issue of Critical Discourse Studies edited by Wodak & Richardson (Issue 6.4, 2009). Thanks to Oteíza (2006) and Achugar (2009a), Latin America is well represented in this research tradition (see also Oteiza & Pinto, to appear), work usefully supplemented by the corpus studies of Spanish academic and professional discourse by Parodi and his colleagues (Parodi, 2007a, 2007b; Parodi, Ibáñez & Venegas, 2010). Recently, as part of collaborative research, SFL has entered into dialogue with social realist sociologists in the tradition of Basil Bernstein to further explore the nature of history discourse, including its relation to other kinds of knowledge structure (Christie & Martin, 2007; Christie & Maton, en prensa). This paper builds on this research to explore a dimension of history, teaching in Australian secondary schools, that has not been directly addressed in the past: namely, the function of '-isms' (e.g. colonialism, nationalism, socialism, capitalism).

To begin, social realist perspectives on knowledge structure are introduced, drawing on Bernstein's work on horizontal and vertical discourse and hierarchical and horizontal knowledge structures. Subsequently, SFL research on history discourse is briefly reviewed, covering work on the genres of history, their differing constructions of time and value, and their predilection for realising causal relations inside the clause. The paper then turns its attention to a dimension

of technicality not previously investigated in either tradition: the role of '-isms'. Building on Legitimation Code Theory (LCT), which extends Bernstein's approach, this terminology is shown not only to imbue history discourse with abstractions for dealing epistemologically with the past but in addition infuses it with an axiological loading reflecting the ideologically invested gaze of one historical perspective or another. It is suggested that learning this gaze bears critically on the success of apprentice historians in secondary or tertiary education.

1. Knowledge structure

In his later work Bernstein (1996, 2000) further developed his concern with common and uncommon sense, distinguishing between horizontal and vertical discourse, and within vertical discourse between hierarchical and horizontal knowledge structures (outlined in Figure 1). His characterisations of these discourses are as follows:

> "A 'Horizontal discourse' entails a set of strategies which are local, segmentally organised, context specific and dependent, for maximising encounters with persons and habitats.... This form has a group of well-known features: it is likely to be oral, local, context dependent and specific, tacit, multi-layered and contradictory across but not within contexts ... a 'Vertical discourse' takes the form of a coherent, explicit and systematically principled structure, hierarchically organised as in the sciences, or it takes the form of a series of specialised languages with specialised modes of interrogation and specialised criteria for the production and circulation of texts as in the social sciences and humanities." (Bernstein, 2000: 157).

Within vertical discourse Bernstein makes a second distinction between hierarchical and horizontal knowledge structures. A hierarchical knowledge structure, exemplified by natural science disciplines, is "a coherent, explicit and systematically principled structure, hierarchically organised" which "attempts to create very general propositions and theories, which integrate knowledge at lower levels, and in this way shows underlying uniformities across an expanding range of apparently different phenomena" (Bernstein, 1999: 161-162). In contrast, a horizontal knowledge structure, exemplified by disciplines in the humanities and social sciences, is "a series of specialised languages with specialised modes of interrogation and criteria for the construction and circulation of texts" (Bernstein, 1999: 162).

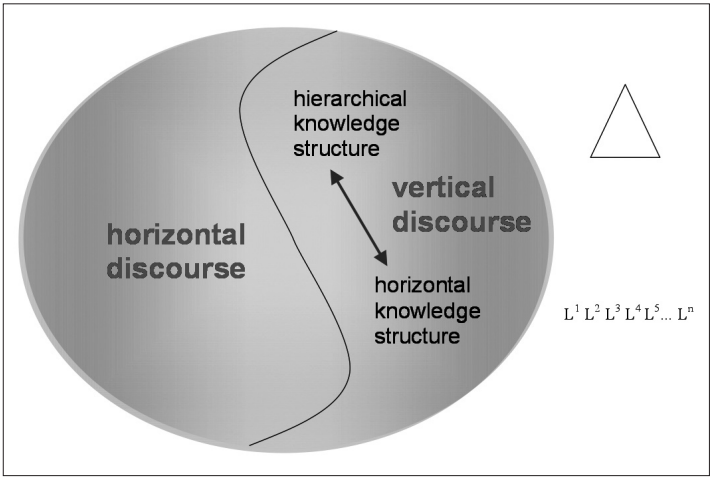

Figure 1. Bernstein's (1996, 1999, 2000) reformulation of common and uncommon sense.

As we can see, Bernstein is making a distinction here: first between the everyday practical discourse that students bring to education and the academic discourse that education has evolved to research and teach; and secondly, within academic discourse, between the kind of technically integrated knowledge constructed in science and the less technical, more segmental understandings built up in the social sciences and humanities. Bernstein distinguishes these academic knowledge structures along two dimensions which Muller (2007) terms verticality and grammaticality. First, verticality conceptualises how theories progress –via ever more integrative or general propositions that embrace a wider range of empirical phenomena, or via the introduction of a new language which, as Bernstein (1996: 162) describes, constructs a "fresh perspective, a new set of questions, a new set of connections, and an apparently new problematic, and most importantly a new set of speakers". Borrowing Bernstein's image of the triangle for hierarchical knowledge structures and iterating languages for horizontal ones, this can be schematised as Figure 2 below.

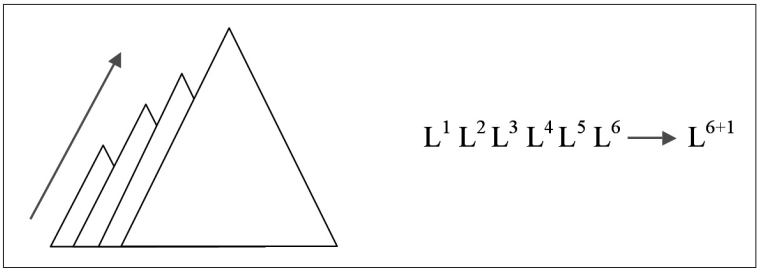

Figure 2. Progress in hierarchical vs horizontal knowledge structures.

Secondly, grammaticality describes how theoretical statements deal with the phenomena they are modelling. The stronger the grammaticality of a language, the more stably it is able to generate empirical correlates and the more unambiguous because more restricted the field of referents. Hierarchical knowledge structures in other words **test** theories against data; horizontal knowledge structures use theory to **interpret** texts:

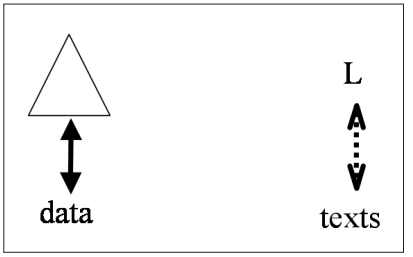

Figure 3. Relations to empirical referents in hierarchical vs horizontal knowledge structures (testing vs interpreting).

As a number of social realist and SFL scholars have pointed out (e.g. Maton & Moore, 2010), this model tends to suggest the social sciences, which represent horizontal knowledge structures, do not involve any cumulative knowledge-building. Thus, rather than simply a series of proliferating and flat languages, they might be better represented –drawing on Wignell's useful characterisation (1994, 2007a)– as a series of warring triangles, where languages may show some cumulative knowledge-building within each segment.

It appears that verticality and grammaticality in the social sciences are typically not strong

enough to enable theoretical integration in relation to the complex social phenomena being described. Rather the social sciences typically 'progress' by adding new triangles with new sets of speakers (e.g. various functional theories such as SFL, Role and Reference Grammar, Lexical Functional Grammar, Functional Discourse Grammar in linguistics, or various gazes on the past we might denominate as Traditional, Marxist, Feminist, Queer, Post-colonial in history). Viewing vertical discourse as more of a cline than an opposition or complementarity, one can characterise knowledge structures as outlined in Figure 4 below, filling in some exemplary singulars ranged along the scale.

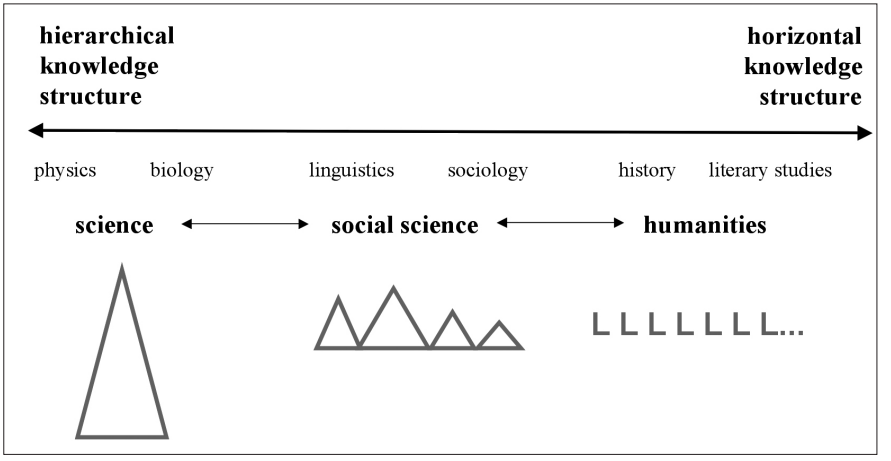

Figure 4. Vertical discourse as complementarities along a cline.

Although Bernstein's model characterises fields of intellectual production, social realist and SFL scholars (Christie & Macken-Horarik, 2007; Maton, 2009) have shown how these ideas can be applied to curriculum and to learning. One cannot 'read off' structures of curriculum and learning from those of their related intellectual fields –Bernstein's concept of 'recontextualisation' highlights how their logics may differ. However, each may analysed in similar terms. For example, Maton (2009) introduces the concepts of hierarchical and horizontal curriculum structures and cumulative and segmented learning to describe different structures of educational knowledge and student understanding, defined by whether they develop cumulatively or segmentally over time and the degree to which they unambiguously define their empirical referents. As with knowledge structures, these can be placed on clines.

As Figure 4 illustrates, history would be understood as towards the horizontal structure end of such clines. From this we would predict that it has relatively weak verticality, meaning that knowledge is organised segmentally (e.g. era by era or theme by theme), without much interlocked technicality in an integrating conceptual superstructure of the kind we find in linguistics or biology. We would also predict that instead of testing hypotheses against data historians would be more concerned with the interpretation of the archive record. Whether these features are echoed in curriculum and learning is a matter for empirical research.

2. History discourse: An SFL perspective

Bernstein's concern with knowledge structure resonates with SFL work on the recontextualisation of professional and academic discourse in secondary school curricula. Muller (2007) in fact notes the similarity between Martin's (1992) provisional taxonomy of fields (reproduced as Figure 5 below) and Bernstein's work. There Martin was attempting to scaffold SFL research on school and workplace genres (Christie & Martin, 1997; Unsworth, 2000), foregrounding context dependency, especially in relation to apprenticeship, and within decontextualised discourse, foregrounding the pragmatic purpose of the discourse (proposals for action or propositions about the world) and the degree of technicality used to construe uncommon sense. Of particular concern was the complementarity of science and humanities in terms of their different reading and writing demands for students, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

For related SFL work on history see Wignell, Martin and Eggins (1989), Coffin (1997, 2000), Martin (2002, 2003), Veel and Coffin (1996); for science and geography Eggins, Martin and Wignell (1993), Veel (1997), Unsworth (1998), Halliday (2004), Halliday and Martin (1993), Martin and Veel (1998). Science and history discourse are compared in Martin (1993a, 1993b), Martin and Rose (2008); Christie and Derewianka (2008) examine the development of these discourses through school. Latin American scholars inspired by this tradition include Schleppegrell's colleagues Achugar and Oteiza (Schleppegrell, Achugar & Oteíza, 2004; Achugar & Schleppgrell, 2005; Achugar, Schleppegrell & Oteíza, 2007; Achugar, 2009a, 2009b; Oteíza, 2003, 2009a, 2009b). Both groups have influenced academic literacy oriented research by Moyano and her team (e.g. Moyano, 2007; Guidice & Moyano, in preparation) in Buenos Aires.

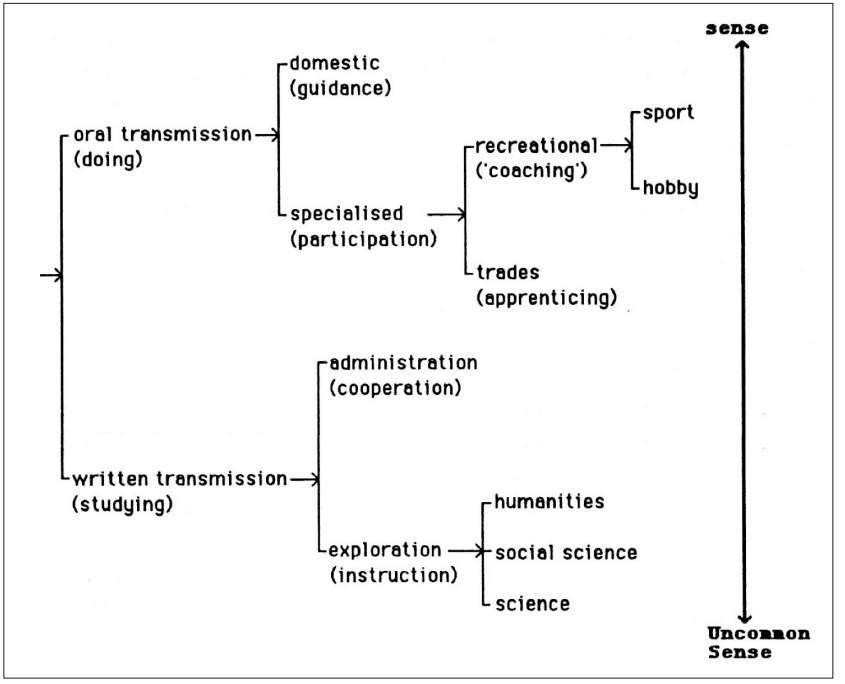

Figure 5. Martin's (1992) taxonomy of fields.

Coffin (2006) is the best single source for the results of work on history (for a paper length synthesis see Martin, 2003). A major part of this project had to do with mapping out the major genres deployed in history discourse, including recounts, accounts and explanations, and expositions, challenges and discussions. Martin and Rose (2008) map these genres typologically and topologically in relation to one another, and propose a learner pathway taking students from common sense personal recounts through biographical to explanatory and finally on to argumentative genres of vertical discourse. Along the way students have to learn to design texts organised around setting in time rather than a sequence of events, to the point where event episodes are nominalised (e.g. 'first wave of boat people', 'second wave'... etc.) and possibly named (e.g. 'the French Revolution', 'the Long March', '9/11', 'Kyoto', '*la dictadura de Pinochet*'). Alongside this move from sequential to serial time, students come to privilege causal relations over temporal ones, and to express these relations inside rather than between

clauses (e.g. 'their escape from the south led to victory in the north as opposed to they escaped from the south and then won in the north'). Both these progressions depend on what SFL calls grammatical metaphor (Halliday, 2004, 2008; Simon-Vendenbergen, Taverniers & Ravelli, 2003), a resource students have to master in secondary school to access vertical discourse.

Work on history discourse was instrumental in the development of appraisal theory (Martin & White, 2005) and used by Coffin and others to discuss the different kinds of evaluative stance adopted by historians (recorder, interpreter and adjudicator voice). In modernist history for example a lot of value is placed on the skills and courage of great 'men' in relation to 'lady' luck; judging people's social esteem in other words is at the heart of explanation. Historians also have to evaluate the significance of events, drawing on resources for appreciation. As Coffin has shown, explicit evaluation tends to be strategically placed in prospective or retrospective points of textual prominence, and propagated through quantification and intensification (as in academic discourse in general; see Hood, 2010). Achugar (2008) and (Oteíza 2006, 2009a) develop this perspective for Spanish; for the graduation resources used to propagate prosodies of attitude see Hood and Martin (2005). Importantly for purposes of this paper, history is not just about what happened in the past; it is also about how we evaluate what happened. As a student you have to have the 'right values' as well as the 'right knowledge' in order to succeed.

As far as history as a horizontal structure is concerned not much work has been done on the different Ls of history, perhaps because the major voice recontextualised in Australian secondary school discourse is a fairly standard modernist one (for Marxist, feminist or post-colonial voices, students normally have to wait for university). Martin (2003) deals very briefly with one Marxist and one post-colonial text; Oteíza (2009a) reports on research examining the discursive transformations involved in Chilean's official public re-appraisal of the Pinochet dictatorship and its aftermath.

The picture we are left with from social semiotic research, then, is of history as a horizontal structure. The challenge for history teachers is making students see that history is not simply about telling stories but rather about interpreting the past in uncommonsense ways which involve packaging up sequences of actions by individuals into episodes, explaining these packages causally inside the clause and valuing them appropriately. This puts tremendous pressure on being able to read and write grammatical metaphors, making the discourse relatively abstract. However there is very little technicality. Episodes with proper names have to be learned of course ('the Renaissance', 'the Great Depression', 'the Cultural Revolution', etc.); but there is no theoretical superstructure to master. Learning the right values is trickier. Our current research explores how this is done.

3. Methodology

This research is underpinned by a qualitative methodology that brings together elements of ethnography, linguistic analysis and sociology of education to analyse learning in History classes in school. As a starting point, transcripts of video-recordings of three hour-long classroom lessons from two schools were analysed to identify passages for more detailed linguistic and sociological analysis. Passages were chosen which illustrated work done by the teacher and students to enable 'cumulative learning' (Maton, 2009) as they shifted between commonsense and more technical language and explained abstractions and principles of History. In particular, the focus was on identifying sections of the lessons where the teacher aimed to move the students from the understanding of particular events and experiences of individuals or groups of people towards an understanding of underlying social forces and historical concepts.

These passages were analysed using SFL to determine the linguistic work being accomplished in the classroom and to explore how cumulative learning functions in History. This analysis revealed the importance of '-isms' in all three lessons. Syllabus documents from two separate states in Australia were also analysed in order to ascertain the place of '-isms' in the History curriculum and to discover the structure of the senior Modern History course as a whole. Chapters concerning Indochina from six textbooks, as well as their contents pages and glossaries, were also examined for further evidence of both course structure and the place of '-isms' in History.

The final stage comprised a 'constellation analysis' which explored the 'cosmology' of values underlying the history lessons (Maton, to appear; see further below). This combined Legitimation Code Theory, a development of Bernstein's code theory, and SFL to examine two main '-isms' (colonialism and nationalism) and two main participants (Ho Chi Minh and French colonialists) in the data. This stage explored the ways in which terms were clustered around these '-isms' and participants by analysing the linguistic couplings associated with the terms. The resulting constellations were then analysed in terms of their epistemological and axiological underpinnings to reveal the axiological cosmology underlying the way history was taught.

3.1. '-Isms'

To begin, consider the following text, which illustrates the mix of named and unnamed packages of time reviewed in previous research (Dennett & Dixon, 2003). Taking initial upper case font as criterial, the postcolonial struggle in Indochina is technicalised ('as the Indochina Wars'), and then divided into three component episodes. These three components are realised nominally as 'the first (Indochina war)', 'the North Vietnamese campaign' and 'the clashes'..., but they are

not technicalised. In other texts, in Australia and the United Sates at least, the second episode is often technicalised as 'the Vietnam War'. The taxonomy of episodic time constructed in this text is outlined in Figure 6.

The results of the years of war in Indochina

There were three Indochina Wars: the first to remove the French; the second, the North Vietnamese campaign to unify the country; and third, the clashes between Vietnam, Cambodia, and China. All three wars saw massive loss of life and social and economic dislocation within the region. The period marked the end of western imperialism and forced the USA to acknowledge that there were limits, even as a superpower, to its capacity to determine the fate of other nations.

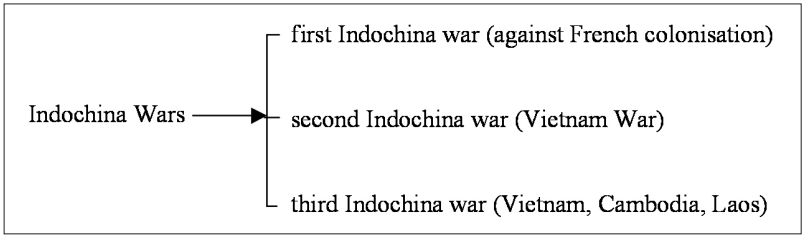

Figure 6. Taxonomy of episodic time phases for Indochina Wars.

Alongside proper names for episodes, a second dimension of technicality in history which we have more recently confronted in our research has to do with '-isms'. As a derivational suffix '-ism' is something that turns a proper name or adjective into a principle, belief or movement, for example 'chauvinism' (coined after Nicolas Chauvin), 'conservatism' (from conservative), 'feminism' (from femina, Latin for woman), 'liberalism' etc. The following text (Dennett & Dixon, 2003: 474) shows technicality of this kind (communism and nationalism in particular) at play in its interpretation of the 'lessons' of the Indochina Wars:

> A study of the region and the time provides important lessons about communism and nationalism. Communism is not a monolithic or uniform ideology that directs and determines the actions of all its adherents in the same way. Vietnamese, Cambodian, Laotian, and Chinese communists all displayed very different points of view and even went to war with one another. The years of war were initially prompted by a desire for national self-determination, but were then maintained by traditional and long-standing ethnic and cultural animosities. The Indochina region now has self-determination, but it struggles with the burdens and challenges of economic development, burdens and challenges made all the more difficult by the price that the region has had to pay.

In fact the two texts just considered appear side by side near the end of a chapter on the Indochina wars, followed by a 'Concepts and groups' section entitled Key features of the conflict in Indochina with 'Anti-communism', 'Communism' and 'Decolonisation' as headings. The same book uses this section in other chapters to define relevant '-isms' (Dennett & Dixon, 2003), which we can exemplify as follows:

> **Capitalism** is as economic and social system under which most of the means of production are controlled by private individuals or companies. [195]
> **Imperialism** is the rule of one country or a group of countries by another, more powerful, country. [475]
> **Nationalism** is a fierce loyalty to your country above all others. [196]
> Like anarchists, **socialists** sought to correct the ills of society that industrialisation brought upon the working classes. Socialists spoke of a class war –the ruling class and the bourgeoisie (middle class) were the enemy– and desired the abolition of private property and the redistribution of wealth to provide everybody with enough. [76]
> Of the various ideas that affected the lives of politicians and people around the globe at the turn of the century, one of the most significant was **imperialism**, or the building of empires. Winning empires brought adventure and glory; their exploitation brought wealth and trade. [70]

Recurring '-isms' in history include capitalism, communism (Marxism), socialism, democracy, despotism (oligarchy, autocracy, monarchy, fascism), imperialism (colonialism), nationalism, internationalism, militarism, racism –some of which may have different linguistic origins (cf. 'apartheid', 'glastnost') and so not actually end in '-ism'. The foreign sourcing of such terms

is a feature of English technicality, reflecting the practice in early modern English of having to harvest vertical discourse from French and Latin sources following centuries of subjugation by French speaking administrators and Latin speaking clergy.

Not surprisingly, in our classroom research we observed history teachers working hard to define these technical terms for students. The following excerpt is from a Year 11 lesson in which the teacher is reviewing definitions of '-isms', which have been assigned to students to prepare:

> T Yep yep. We're talking about the the broad sweep of the time. OK keeping a focus. Um who are we up to Cassie?
> S4 (Cassie) Nationalism.
> T Liberalism.
> S4 (Cassie) Nationalism.
> T What does that relate/oh nationalism. OK.
> S4 (Cassie) Um a group of people who pride their country to the extent that they demand independence and the right to function as an autonomous state.
> T OK. Sounded good, but I don't think everyone actually heard that. So can you just yell it out 'cause we've got a lot of competition from next door.
> S4 (Cassie) A group of people who pride their country to the extent that they demand independence and the right to function as an autonomous state.

This sounds to the teacher like something the student has copied directly from a book or handout, so she insists the student paraphrase it in her own words. In linguistic terms she wants a register shift –from more written discourse to more spoken (mode), from more formal to more informal (tenor) and from more vertical to more horizontal (field). The teacher then further elaborates the concept. Somewhat ironically, register shunting of this kind is generally taken as good teaching practice and evidence of scaffolded learning; in some sense, for teachers, reducing uncommon sense demonstrates more understanding.

> T OK which means in your words...
> Ss((laugh))
> S4 (Cassie) Um people that like they have it's what it says –they have pride in their country so they want independence and they wanna be able to operate by themselves and not have to rely on other countries.
> T Good. So it's pride in their their group. OK remember we talked about how nations could be defined in different ways. Daniel you weren't here for that so you need to listen now. In terms of the the actual land mass the culture um the traditions, the language, the religion, there were many ways of defining that group. The loyalty that then went to that group. But the the development of modern nationalism also included notions about the right of the people to govern themselves –to be an autonomous or in dependent functioning

> national group. OK and that's ah kind of signalled a political shift from earlier times. It wasn't just about the kings anymore; it wasn't just about the rulers –it was about the people. And the people being the nation. Thanks girls.

Learning '-isms' is apparently more challenging for students than learning the names of eras. In one of our lessons, the students are dealing with a source text written by Ho Chi Minh, written in Paris during his time working and studying there early in the 20th century. Ho describes his path to Leninism as follows (Hoepper, Henderson, Hennessey, Hutton & Mitchell, 1996: 81):

> "After then I had entire confidence in Lenin, in the Third International... My only argument was: 'If you do not condemn colonialism, if you do not side with the colonial people, what kind of revolution are you waging?'... At first patriotism, not yet communism, led me to have confidence in Lenin, in the Third International. Step by step, along the struggle, by studying Marxism-Leninism parallel with participation in practical activities, I gradually came upon the fact that only Socialism and Communism can liberate the oppressed nations and the working people throughout the world from slavery." [Ho Chi Minh (1967) *On Revolution*. London: Pall Mall Press. 5-6.]

After reading the passage aloud the teacher asks for some register shunting; but the students parry, initiating some humorous banter ('too many -isms'). The teacher for his part uses sarcasm to indicate that however challenging '-isms' are, history cannot do without them.

> T OK. Well done! Yeah. OK now **what did all that mean**?
> S (Female) Too many 'isms'.
> T Too many 'isms'.
> Ss/T ((laugh))
> T Oh yeah ((inaudible)); let's ignore 'isms' completely. Yeah. Fantastic.
> Ss/T ((laugh))

Our initial observations indicate that -isms in fact play a crucial role in historical interpretation of the past. To put this in colloquial terms that students might use among hemselves, 'shit happens, people get pissed off, they form movements and believe in -isms'. An outline of this chain of reasoning is presented in Figure 7, which we shall draw on again below in our discussion of secondary school Australian modern history as primarily concerned with struggles for power.

4. Knower structure

It appears then that history is more technical than was documented in our earlier research,

since we find technical -isms operating alongside technicalised eras. As outlined in Figure 6, history relates eras to one another taxonomically as parts of the past, preceding or following one another. What about '-isms'? How are they related to one another? The most common relation we have observed is that of opposition, with '-isms' defined epistemologically as the opposite of one another. Here are some examples of lesson talk focusing on such oppositions.

T Yes. OK. So what would be the opposite of individualism so...

S (Matthew) Communism.

T OK a (form of that) or collectivism.

S (Matthew) Yeah collectivism.

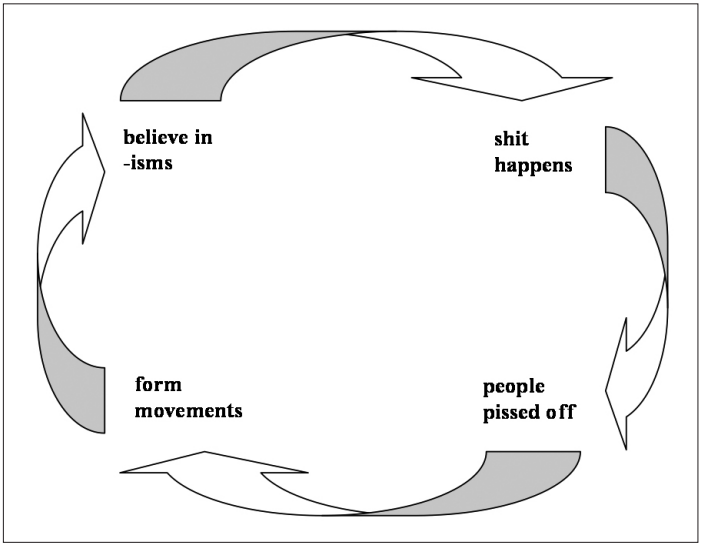

Figure 7. The role of '-isms' in interpreting the past.

T Perhaps we we we could have a very long discussion about what may or may eventuate in terms of capitalism versus more socialist collectivist forms of government; it's hard to predict, isn't it?

T We began the modern era roughly around the 15th 16th 17th centuries because of the the shift from a religious world view into a secular world view and the subsequent social cultural political changes that flowed from that.

Oppositional relationships of this kind in the lessons, textbooks and other teaching materials we have collected include:

individualism vs communism (or collectivism)
secularism vs religion
capitalism vs socialism (or communism, Marxism)
decolonisation vs colonisation
democracy vs autocracy (or oligarchy, despotism, monarchy)
imperialism vs independence (or nationalism, self-determination)
nationalism vs colonialism
racism vs multiculturalism
sectarianism vs nationalism

It might be argued that in fact most of these terms have been borrowed by historians from other knowledge structures such as economics, political science and religious studies; and if borrowed from economics, they have been selected and recontextualised from a discipline with a strongly integrated conceptual superstructure into one where oppositions of the kind just illustrated are the main form of relation. It may even be the case in history that these oppositional relations are not foregrounded, with -isms apparently operating more or less on their own. In addition, once recontextualised into history, the terms are relatively weakly classified (Dennett & Dixon (2003) definitions reviewed above), in ways that might not sit easily for economists, political scientists or religious studies experts. For historians however this has the potential advantage of making them applicable to a wide range of situations (e.g. the Cold War, Indochina, Palestine). At times '-isms' seem to verge on characterisation as 'floating signifiers' which adopt most of their meaning implicitly from their co-text. In terms of the social realist model, then, although we do have an additional dimension of technicality, history remains a relatively flat, segmented structure (in terms of conceptual relations), with relatively weak grammaticality (for interpreting sources).

What then makes history discourse so hard to learn? To answer this question we have to return to the question of values. However true it is epistemologically speaking that history borrows its '-ism' terms from other disciplines, axiologically speaking it builds up its own system of values around them. In classroom discourse this at times involves considering the way in which key players value '-isms'. Continuing work on the Ho Chi Minh text introduced above, one student reads the following passage aloud (Ho himself has been reading Lenin's 'Thesis on the national and Colonial Questions', published by L'Humanité):

> "There were political terms difficult to understand in this thesis. But by dint of reading it again and again, finally I could grasp the main part of it. What emotion, enthusiasm,

> clearsightedness, and confidence it instilled into me! I was overjoyed to tears. Though sitting alone in my room, I shouted aloud as if addressing large crowds: 'Dear martyrs, compatriots! This is what we need, this is the path to our liberation!'" [Ho Chi Minh (1967) *On Revolution*. London: Pall Mall Press. 5-6].

The teacher focuses on Ho's reaction, both in terms of affect (emotion, enthusiams) and judgements of social esteem (clearsightedness, confidence):

> T OK. So what's it what his reaction from reading this. It's a hard slog but then I'll wow. OK His emotion, enthusiasm, clearsightedness, confidence all comes from this book OK "over-joyed to tears". Remember the last book that you read that made you over-joyed to tears?
> SsNo.
> T No, neither do I. OK.
> Ss(laugh)

The lesson continues as follows (the passage read aloud is in upper case font below), with the '-isms' referred to by the teacher as 'ideology':

> S (Female) THERE IS A LEGEND IN OUR COUNTRY AS WELL AS IN CHINA OF A MIRACULOUS 'BOOK OF THE WISE'. WHEN FACING GREAT DIFFICULTIES, ONE OPENS IT AND FINDS A WAY OUT. LENINISM IS NOT ONLY A MIRACULOUS 'BOOK OF THE WISE', A COMPASS FOR US VIETNAMESE REVOLUTIONARIES AND PEOPLE; IT IS ALSO THE RADIANT SUN ILLUMINATING OUR PATH TO FINAL VICTORY, TO SOCIALISM AND COMMUNISM.
>
> T OK would you say he's slightly impressed by the ideology?
>
> Ss(laugh)
>
> T OK just a wee bit.
>
> Ss(laugh)
>
> T Just a tiny bit impressed with it.

Classroom negotiation of students' own axiological orientation to '-isms' is well illustrated in the following humorous exchange:

> T (teacher lets out a big breath) Where are we? David you're sitting there by yourself. You can tell us about communism. OK...
>
> S (David) Don't make me do that. That's against my Christian beliefs.
>
> Ss(laugh)

Note however with reference to this text that communism and Christianity are not '-isms' that

are 'ontologically' opposed. There's nothing about a communist economic system per se which means it cannot co-exist with one religion or another. Religious tolerance is a political variable, changing over time, as the different and changing stances of self-labelled communist regimes in Russia, China, Cuba, Vietnam and elsewhere have shown. Rather the opposition between communism and Christianity at play here is axiological. It has to do with the attitudes that students have to communism and Christianity. The critical issue as far as teaching history is concerned is aligning students' attitudes with the ones valued by relevant historians, even if, and especially where, this challenges the values students bring to class from their horizontal discourse.

In short then, as far as '-isms' are concerned, both epistemology (definitions and oppositions) and axiology (values and attitudes) matter. With LCT, Maton has extended Bernstein's model to address such issues. In Maton's (2008: 15) terms, "intellectual fields are not only structures of knowledge, they also comprise actors with passions, hopes, desires, emotions..." As well as comprising knowledge structures, intellectual and educational fields thereby also comprise knower structures. These arrangements of knowers may also be described as horizontal and hierarchical. For example, Maton (2007) shows how science can be 'characterized as possessing not only a hierarchical knowledge structure but also a horizontal knower structure: a series of strongly bounded knowers, each with specialized modes of being and acting, with non-comparable habituses or embodied dispositions based on different social trajectories and experiences'. In other words, who you are matters less than what you are discussing and how. In contrast, horizontal knowledge structures such as history may have a hierarchical knower structure: "a systematically principled and hierarchical organisation of knowers based on the construction of an ideal knower and which develops through the integration of new knowers at lower levels and across an expanding range of different dispositions" (Maton, 2010: 162). In short, what matters more is who you are. Fields are thus knowledge-knower structures which classify, assign, arrange and hierarchise not only what but also who is considered legitimate (Maton, to appear).

Using these ideas we can start to bring together analyses of the roles of both epistemology and axiology in fields like history. To do so Maton (2008: 16) introduces the notion of a cosmology:

> "In 'Words and Things' Ernest Gellner described an 'ideology' as 'a system of ideas with a powerful sex appeal'. A 'cosmology' is what makes some ideas sexy and others not so hot. Every field has a cosmology. In fields like the natural sciences, they tend to be primarily epistemological in nature and the sex appeal of theories is related to their comparative explanatory power. In fields like sociology and Education, they tend to be less epistemological and more axiological; i.e. a moral ordering which works to allocate ideas and authors

> to different poles of field, as either on side of good or evil. To understand what happens in fields... we need to understand how such an **axiological cosmology** works."

In other words, fields with horizontal knowledge structures and hierarchical knower structures focus on 'who you are' through a way of viewing the world that emphasises values and attitudes. This axiological cosmology is the basis of measuring one's legitimacy as a knower, as a historian for example. One implication is that just as taste in film, furniture or clothes says something about you, so:

> "your choice of concepts, terms, theories, approach, writing style, referencing style, figures, use of quotes, etc. tell others something about what kind of person you are. They show whether your heart is in the right place and so whether you are one of us or one of them" (Maton, 2008: 25).

A cosmology works by means of the "creation of 'constellations' of positions through a process of association whereby ideas, practices and beliefs are grouped together and contrasted to other groups" (Maton, 2008: 17). As far as history constellations are concerned, we considered the epistemological basis for oppositional relations between '-isms' above. When applied to a specific situation, such as the Indochina wars, '-isms' like nationalism and colonialism are epistemologically positioned along these lines and are associated in lessons with relevant ideas, practices and beliefs (as outlined in Table 1 below). In this Indochina history lesson we've been considering, the nationalism constellation embraces nationalism, communism, freedom and independence, national pride, and growth of movements; the colonialism constellation references French colonialism, slavery, poverty, discrimination, inferiority, investment, making money, occupation and unrest.

In fields with a horizontal structure of knowledge such as these however, as Maton predicts, ideas, practices and beliefs are axiologically charged. Students are being positioned to appreciate the nationalist position and look critically at the colonialist one. Freedom, pride and strength are positive attributes associated with Vietnamese nationalists; slavery, poverty, discrimination, inferiority, money mongering ('chase for the dollar') and anger are negative attributes associated with the French colonialists. Given Australia's fulsome support for the US in the second Indochina war, it is interesting to see this opposition more explicitly developed in the textbooks and lessons with reference to the first Indochina war than the second. For Australians, the French are an easier target in this respect than the Americans. Australians still expect Americans to protect them in times of need, joining the 'alliance of the willing' in Iraq and currently fighting alongside them in Afghanistan; the French on the other hand are less obviously a source of support, conducted nuclear testing in the Pacific for some decades

and more recently had espionage agents convicted of the murder of environmental activists in New Zealand after blowing up a Greenpeace flagship –the French are not exactly in many Australians' good books.

Table 1. Nationalist and colonialist constellations for the first Indochina War.

Nationalism	Colonialism
a Vietnamese nationalist	the French
Ho-Chi Minh. Focussed communist. Leader of the Vietnamese Nationalist Movement	the French colonialists in Vietnam
freedom / independence	slavery/poverty/discrimination/inferiority
pride in your nation	... make money by investing... in the colonies
it [the nationalist movement] would have been strengthened	turn out pear-shaped
fighting for the nation that doesn't yet exist	the French colonised...they took over the land
nationalism underpins an awful lot of stuff	underpinned by the chase for the dollar
there would have been more people getting involved more people getting wrapped up in it	it [dispossessing people] tends to upset people
the nationalist movement would have been spurred on,	people increasingly annoyed with French rule

In history constellations don't just involve abstract evaluations of ideas, practices and beliefs; they construct the way in which people are viewed as well. As we would expect in modernist history, one great man, Ho Chi Minh is singled out; for the first Vietnam war he is pitted not against another individual (no one Frenchman stands out) but against the French colonialists in general, who the teacher refers to, slightly tongue in cheek, as 'French pigs'. As illustrated in Table 2, the lesson talk and texts involved describe Ho as a motivated, enthusiastic, clear-sighted, confident, focused leader and patriot driven by his desire for change (he's also a model student who wants to be educated and reads things over and over again until he understands them!); the French on the other hand are brutal, criminal, murdering, imperialist pigs who

subject the Vietnamese people to torture, disappearances, dispossession and discrimination.

If this seems a little overdetermined, recall that there is a fair amount of work to be done by Australian secondary school history teachers as far as redeeming Ho Chi Minh is concerned. Ho was a committed communist, Australia did fight against him in the second Indochina war and lost, and Vietnamese refugees who left Vietnam after the collapse of the American sponsored regime are one of Australia's main immigrant groups. So what has generally been presented to Australians by conservative politicians and media in US terms as a struggle between democracy and communism has to be axiologically recharged in relation to the cosmology. The basis of the conflict has to be reworked in relation to colonialism and nationalism; and its axiological charge has to be remoulded in relation to good and evil. As this discussion indicates, Australian modern history takes up a slightly left-of-centre viewpoint, interpreting the past as a struggle for power and interpreting this in ideological terms. It is this bias that Australia's former neo-conservative government, led by John Howard, railed against what it considered to be a 'black arm-band' view of history; left-of-centre history was considered far too critical of Australia's behaviour in the past, when what the country needed was patriotic glorification such as that celebrated in the Vietnam war section of the Australian War Memorial in Canberra.

Table 2. Nationalist and colonialist constellations for Ho Chi Minh and the French.

Ho Chi Minh ("Fairly famous bloke")	The French ("French pigs")
very politically motivated	get the whole investment thing happening
he's political	Gold Gospel Glory
he is so driven by this desire to change	to show the rest of the world...they can still do stuff / to show that they are mighty
Lenin..he says..is a great patriot who liberated his compatriots	they colonised
emotion, enthusiasm, clear-sightedness, confidence	brutality in crimes/murdering/family members butchered disappeared tortured
focussed communist	imperialist Lords of Vietnam
leader of the Vietnamese Nationalist Movement	the French colonialists in Vietnam
he wants to know what it's gonna do for him and his people	took over the land, livelihood ability to survive, dispossessing people
only socialism and communism can liberate the oppressed nations...from slavery	were they nice kind people who let everyone do... what they were doing beforehand?
distributed leaflets denouncing the crimes committed by the French colonials in Vietnam	the French, you know, criminal holdings
he reads and he studies it and he involves in some of the activities	the French killed the Vietnamese people
his confidence in this ideology	pessimistic about what's gonna go on in Vietnam
liberate Vietnam from the French	suffered under the French
got the facility to find...more. To go grab a book and read stuff	did the average French person know what was going on in Indo-China?
a Vietnamese person...who wants to be educated	a society that doesn't necessarily know that in my own country I'm treated as a second class citizen

In the following passage the teacher is quite deliberate about this left-of-centre reading of Ho, highlighting the connection between Lenin's communism and liberation from colonial rule in the material under consideration (in bold face below; read aloud passages in upper case).

T ... Alright this is pick apart all these sentences here: STEP BY STEP ALONG THE STRU-

> GGLE I WAS STUDYING MARKISM LENINISM PARALLELED WITH PARTICIPATORY PRACTICAL ACTIVITIES. **I GRADUALLY CAME TO THE FACT THAT ONLY SOCIALISM AND COMMUNISM CAN LIBERATE THE OPPRESSED NATIONS AND THE WORKING PEOPLE THROUGHOUT THE WORLD FROM SLAVERY**. OK, he had an argument though; he wasn't too sure initially –beginning of the paragraph. **IF YOU DO NOT CONDEMN COLONIALISM (.) IF YOU DO NOT SIDE WITH THE COLONIAL PEOPLE, WHAT KIND OF REVOLUTION ARE YOU WAGING?** That's his question initially 'cause he looks at all this communist stuff and while he's interested in it he wants to know what is it gonna do for him and his people. 'Cause if it's not gonna do his people any good then (it's an) ideology that he's not interested in. What are you gonna do for these nations that are under colonial power. What are you gonna do for the Vietnamese in France what are you gonna do for the for the various African nations under, you know, rule by colonial powers; what are you gonna do to them? And then he reads and he studies it and he involves in some of the activities and he comes upon what he calls the fact that only socialism and communism can liberate the oppressed nations and the working people throughout the world from slavery. So he –see in that paragraph, first the question and then the answer to it. OK he sees that yes in communism he believes is the solution to liberate the French –to liberate Vietnam from the French.
>
> S Hmm.
>
> T That's what he sees in there.

The textbook from which the teacher takes the source text in fact treats Ho's position as a communist or nationalist as an issue, and scaffolds an assignment in the form of a discussion genre for students to debate the '-isms'. What is really at stake here is the explanation of the causes of the Indochina wars. As the teacher comments earlier in the lesson, wars don't just happen; there's reasons for them (bold font below).

> T Yes. OK. **Because conflict just doesn't happen**. This is one of the things we're going to look at. If we could just fast forward straight to the Vietnam War and say "hey look", bang, (slight laugh) OK here's a war. Means nothing unless you look at what happened beforehand. **Wars don't just (teacher clicks his fingers), come out of the blue**. OK. There's always some sort of factor leading up to it. OK. You don't just decide to walk up to somebody and kick them, you know; generally there's reasons behind reactions hopefully. OK. (spoken laughingly). Either that or you're a very strange person, but we'll get to that later. OK. So if that's the impact of the French generally, what we want to look at is the impact of the French specifically in Indo-China. Question for the day: (teacher writes 'What was the impact of the French colonisation of Indo-China?' on the board). OK, and of course, as always, with a bit of luck we'll end up answering that question.

As apprentice historians then, students have to learn to explain the factors leading to war. The focus is on French colonialism here, reflecting the fact that in general Australian secondary

school modern history is about struggles for power. Characteristic topics include the Cold war, the Arab-Israeli Conflict, Conflict in the Pacific, Conflict in Indo-China, How did India Achieve Independence, Has White Australia got a Black History, Industrialisation and the Environment, Changing Gender Relations and so on. And the struggle for power is interpreted not just in terms of events leading to one another but in terms of ideology as well. The '-isms' motivating movements for change are crucial, as outlined in Figure 7 above.

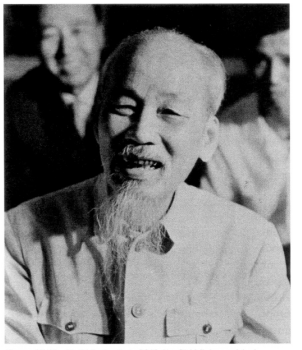

Figure 14.27 Until his death in 1969, Ho Chi Minh provided inspiring leadership in North Vietnam's struggle against the military might of the USA

Nixon took advantage of these factors to win a narrow victory over Humphrey in November 1968. In 1969, Ho Chi Minh died. The search for an end to the war was now directed by new leaders on both sides.

Review questions

1 *Why could 1968 be called a turning point in the Vietnam War?*

2 *What part did Giap's siege of Khe Sanh play in his plans for the Tet Offensive?*

3 *Why are some scholars critical of elements of the American media for their coverage of Tet? Is this criticism justified? If so, why? why not?*

4 *Write a brief outline of the events at My Lai. How were they linked to the Tet Offensive?*

Review task

Was Ho a communist or a nationalist?

Although it is widely acknowledged that Ho Chi Minh was both a communist and a nationalist, this task requires you to evaluate a series of arguments that address the question: 'Was Ho more *a nationalist or* more *a communist leader?'*

Use the arguments set out below, library resources, and the Internet for further research. Following class discussion add further arguments before preparing an essay in response to the question outlined above.

More a communist

Ho was in reality a communist, and he only used nationalism to further his real communist goals.

It was a typical communist tactic to use nationalist sentiments to help spread communism. In 1961, Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev had called for communists to join wars of national self-determination.

During his 'purification process' Ho had imposed major hardships on the North Vietnamese people in the name of communist ideology.

As a good communist, Ho accepted pressure from the USSR and communist China to accept the division of Vietnam in 1954.

Towards the end of his life Ho pleaded with fellow communists, the Russians and the Chinese, to end their split for the good of international communism.

More a nationalist

The reality was that Ho was a true nationalist, and only used communism to help his main nationalist goals.

Ho did use communism, but there is no evidence that he put the interests of other communist countries above those of Vietnam. Vietnamese nationalism always came first. When Ho established the Viet Minh as a nationalist movement, it replaced the Indochinese Communist Party.

Ho accepted the division of Vietnam in 1954 because he thought that it would be temporary, and because at that time the North was not strong enough to act alone, not because he was following some international communist policy.

When in 1957 the Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev suggested that both North and South Vietnam be admitted to the United Nations, acknowledging to a degree the permanent status of the division, Ho opposed the idea.

When President Nixon and Henry Kissinger tried to win favour with the USSR and Communist China, hoping that they would put pressure on Ho as a fellow communist and end the war, the plan failed. Ho put Vietnamese nationalist interests above communist solidarity.

Figure 8. Communist/nationalist issue page (Dennett & Dixon, 2003: 464).

In history discourse the '-isms' responsible for change are not simply epistemologically based constellations such as the opposition between capitalism and communism, or between colonialism and nationalism for example. In history, the key agentive constellations are axiologically charged and represent an '-isms' schism. The differences between epistemologically based and axiologically charged oppositions is perhaps easiest to see in political rhetoric, as exemplified in Figure 9 for America's position during the second Indochina war. For Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon the war was construed as a struggle between democracy and communism, evaluated in predictable cold war terms as a holy war between good and evil respectively. This kind of binary, oppositional cosmology effectively rules out the possibility of a socialist democracy (e.g. Allende's Chile) or a totalitarian capitalism (e.g. the South Vietnamese regime the United States was fighting for). Politics subjugates rationality in a discourse of this kind, as we well know.

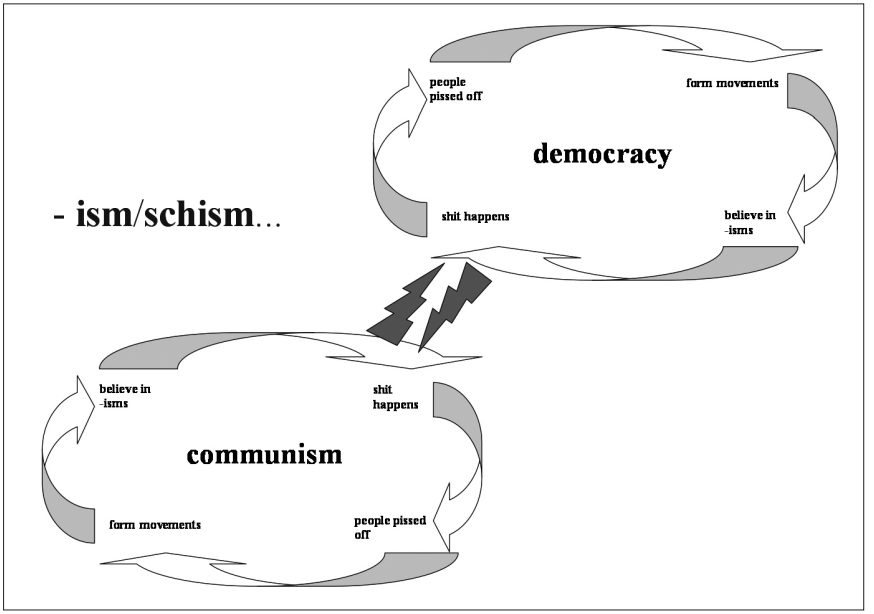

Figure 9. Axiologically charged '-isms' in American Vietnam War rhetoric.

History is not politics, but as we have seen it also deploys axiologically charged schisms to explain the past. The history lesson we have been focusing on here in effect re-charges the political discourse outlined in Figure 9 as Figure 10. For some students this will involve an

axiological shift from values they have experienced in horizontal discourse to those expected from left-of-center historians; for others it may simple involve an axiological charging of constellations they have not experienced before. Successful students are well aware of the need to play the game; as two students were once overheard discussing an introductory unit in cultural studies at an Australian university, 'There's two things you have to remember to do well in this course: it's good to be gay and God is dead.'

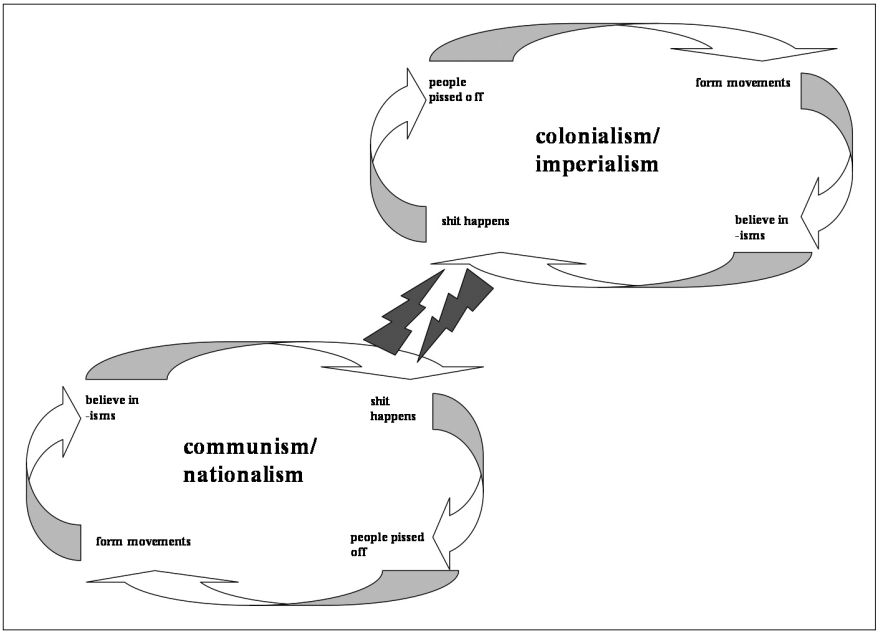

Figure 10. Historically charged '-isms' in Australian school representation of the Indochina War history.

CONCLUSION

In this paper we have introduced an additional dimension of technicality not foregrounded in previous Sydney School research, namely the use of '-isms' to explain struggle for power (e.g. capitalism, socialism). Using Maton's LCT, we positioned these '-isms' as names for constellations of practices, ideas and beliefs which may enter into oppositions with one another (e.g. capitalism vs socialism). Then, as predicted by Maton for fields like history, we noted the

importance of the axiological charge given to these '-isms', both in relation to the values of people and movements and to the values of historians interpreting their struggles as an ideologically positioned battle between good and evil (e.g. nationalism versus colonialism). Our main point here is that its not enough for students to learn the 'facts' of history; they have to adopt the right values as well –they have to gain the 'cultivated gaze' (Maton, 2010) set forth by the axiological cosmology.

Alongside knowledge, this brings knowers back in and returns us to seminal remarks by Bernstein (2000) on the importance in horizontal knowledge structures of acquiring the right gaze:

> "A 'gaze' has to be acquired, that is a particular mode of recognising and realising what counts as authentic... this is I suspect a tacit transmission; to be inside the specialised language probably requires oral transmission; the experience of a social relationship with those who possess the 'gaze'.
>
> Basically in the case of a hierarchical knowledge structure, in the end, it is the theory that counts and it counts both for its imaginative conceptual projection and the empirical power of the projection... in the case of a horizontal knowledge structure... what counts in the end is the specialised language, its position, its perspective, the acquirer's 'gaze'... In the case of horizontal knowledge structures, especially those with weak grammars[2], 'truth' is a matter of acquired 'gaze'...no one can be eyeless in this Gaza." [Bernstein, 2000: 164-165]

As Bernstein warns, the right gaze in the humanities and social sciences is generally tacitly acquired. And as he and others have emphasised in countless studies, tacit acquisition in schooling discriminates against students who do not come from the privileged middle-class backgrounds for whom traditional and progressive pedagogies were designed (Martin, 1998, 1999, 2000). Thus the importance of developing a theory of history discourse which makes explicit the values that have to be learned, so they can be transmitted and critiqued in educational practice. No educational linguist can be eyeless in this Gaza.

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Notas

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2 By 'weak grammars' Bernstein is referring to weak grammaticality: a weak capacity to generate unambiguous empirical referents.