

Teaching and Learning Reparative Education in Settler Colonial and Post-TRC Canada

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This paper focuses on the implementation of a critical and decolonizing approach to social justice education and pedagogy. I envision an anticolonial approach to thinking critically and differently about culture, citizenship, colonial settlement, and settler colonial reconciliation. I suggest that schools in settler colonial Canada work to realize original nation-to-nation political relationships and reform-based educational and programmatic initiatives concerned with exposing and apprehending the violence of settler colonialism and law. I outline an approach to education concerned with colonial reparations, restitution, and what it might mean to realize and articulate a program of settler decolonizing in Canadian schools.

Introduction

This paper envisions its audience as teachers and learners who wish to implement an anticolonial and decolonizing approach to social justice education and pedagogy. I do not suggest that non-Indigenous peoples—including educators—might work to acquire “cultural competence” or come to better understand Indigenous peoples’ customs, cultures, or languages. Rather, I wish to name and consider the role of non-Indigenous peoples—including educators—in transforming pedagogical and reform-based programmatic initiatives centred on Indigenous-settler relationships rejuvenation and nation-to-nation relationships building. I ask in particular: How might schools be invigorated so that all people teaching and learning within them are better able to consider, know about, name, and challenge investments in colonial dominance and complicity?

I suggest that the answer to that question starts with land, specifically lands dispossession that has taken place under settler colonialism. Schools must provide a way of thinking differently about matters of land, the history of colonial settlement, and the ways we relate to each other as peoples and as nations. Schools must also work to illuminate, interrupt, and then eliminate the harm experienced by Indigenous nations under ongoing settler colonialism. These conversations are as complex as they are urgent, and, as Grande (2004) suggests, they are made especially complicated by multicultural approaches to education concerned with learning about the *Other*, absorbing “cultural difference,” and then “‘including’ marginalized groups in the universality of the nation-state” (p. 33).

Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) has asked that we think about reconciliation. For me, that means asking: How might we restore right relations? I have come to reflect on this matter from a perspective that centres Indigenous-settler relationships building and rejuvenation. In what follows, I propose that relationships building in the Canadian context take place in a way that centres a few crucial items. A priority among them is land, specifically lands dispossession, the role of law, lands reclamation, colonial reparations, and Indigenous-settler relationships building as a starting point in education. My paper begins by pointing toward the limits of multiculturalism and, relatedly, problematic formulations concerning culturalism when it comes to centering land and Indigenous peoples.

I centre Indigenous sovereignty and settler decolonizing in my analysis and discussion because I believe it is critical to transforming pedagogical and reform-based programmatic initiatives centred on restoring right relations and the revitalization of Indigenous nationhood. Lastly, I provide an overview and reflexive commentary on two graduate post-secondary courses I developed and teach that explore directly the role of education in creating a new and productive dialogue between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

The Question of Land and Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism has not done a particularly good job at inviting questions about lands dispossession, Indigenous sovereignty, and self-determination. Multiculturalism would have Canadians believe that Indigenous peoples ought to be represented and/or dealt with as a component of ethnic diversity—as racialized groups—but never as sovereign Indigenous nations (Porter, 1999). As a model of education, it is “centered on unifying all peoples in the nation-state” (Grande, 2004, p. 47). Within this model of education, there is very little room to call attention to matters of land dispossession or a truly decolonizing education, or to centre a conversation about Indigenous nationhood and futurity. Multiculturalism does nothing to invite a critical conversation about what Grande (2004) sees as “competing moral visions” (p. 31) of democracy and sovereignty; nor does it invite settlers to think about where it is that they stand in relation to the land and what it might mean to relinquish control or leave.

Conversations about decolonization and decolonizing education are rarely concerned with relinquishing settler sovereignty and lands appropriation. Instead, they have become too tightly scripted in ways that are often concerned only with how teachers might best integrate Indigenous culture in Canadian schools (St. Denis & Schick, 2003). This not only raises

obvious questions about cultural appropriation (Battell Lowman & Barker, 2015, p. 40); it also enacts a reprehensible relation of power in locating the origin of colonial grievances in cultural incommensurability when they are really involving lands theft. As Razack (2015) writes:

The pernicious idea that it has all been simply a cultural misunderstanding persists in education. We have yet to develop anti-colonial pedagogies that would invite students to examine their complicity in ongoing colonialism, one in which Indigenous peoples are disproportionately incarcerated and overrepresented in deaths in custody. While universities are happy to promote courses on Indigenous knowledge ... there is less willingness to consider issues of Indigenous sovereignty and colonial violence (pp. 207-208).

Canadian schools should do more than acquire facts and information about Indigenous culture and then distribute them in what amounts to a cultural competence approach. The invitation to cultural competence and/or sensitivity training has already been shown in services provision literature to place dominant individuals into inevitable positions of power and superiority (Allan, 2006; Jeffery & Nelson, 2009; Pon, 2009). Within these frameworks, Indigenous peoples are positioned as those to be helped and tolerated or, at the very least, as those without sovereignty or historic colonial grievances concerning land and colonial injustice.

Under the current culturalist regime in education, non-Indigenous peoples normally are not asked to remedy systemic inequities or processes of identity making that are rooted in Indigenous inferiority and settler superiority. They are not required to know their own culture, institutions, or law, or to recognize and nuance their own complicity and responsibility. Rather, the objective is only to learn as much as possible about Indigenous peoples, which re-enacts a historical process of land entitlement and settler futurity, and is complicit in the removal of Indigenous peoples—violently if necessary—from settler spaces of belonging (Razack, 2000; 2015).

If reconciliation is to be truly meaningful, Canadians need to learn about, identify, and then relinquish structural advantages acquired through settler colonialism and privilege (Macoun, 2016). It will require moving beyond a sole focus on Indigenous peoples to what I once called a *changing of the subject in education*: the idea that non-Indigenous people must come to know, understand, and challenge their own investment and implication in colonial dominance and self-identification (Cannon, 2012).

Land, Relationships, and Settler Decolonizing

Conversations concerning settler decolonizing, colonial reparations, and relationships building have only started to play themselves out in a concerted way in Canadian scholarly literatures (Bobiwash, 2003; Canadian

Sociological Association, 2016; Davis, 2010; Hiller, 2013; Koenig, 2005; Long, 1997; Mathur, Dewar, & DeGagné, 2011; Regan, 2010; Davis, Denis, & Sinclair, 2016). This is notable given that Indigenous peoples have always talked about these issues (Monture, 2015; Hill, 2017). The TRC called repeatedly on all Canadians to think about and improve relationships with Indigenous peoples. In fact, this need for settler decolonizing was made abundantly and consistently clear throughout the commission's public events and hearings, wherein Honourable Justice Murray Sinclair stated numerous times, "Indian Residential Schools is not an Aboriginal problem. It is a problem that all people in Canada need to think about and address" (Government of Canada, 2010, pp. 7-8). I want to think seriously about what it might mean now to take Senator Sinclair's assertion literally and to heart. I think we need to ask three central questions in response to this call, notably: (1) How is scholarly literature concerning critical pedagogy and educational reform bringing us closer to or facilitating conversations about whose problem the history of settler colonialism actually is?; (2) What are we doing in Canadian classrooms and how much of that work addresses histories of racism and settler colonialism?; and (3) How are schools seeking to ensure that Canadians know about, interrogate, and restore respectful relations with Indigenous peoples as nations?

It is incumbent upon schools to take these questions seriously. If the history of colonization is a problem facing all Canadians, then it is each and every Canadian who needs to acknowledge and understand how this is so. We need to think of frameworks that start not only with Indigenous peoples, or even with Indigenous culture and worldviews, but also with the identity-making processes—many of them racialized—that are specific to settler colonialism and non-Indigenous peoples.

I am not suggesting the focus of educational discourse should shift solely to settler populations; rather, I suggest that non-Indigenous peoples shoulder equally, if not principally, the responsibility of teaching themselves and others about the history of settler colonialism.

Roger Simon (2013) offered an important instruction in answering this question about non-Indigenous engagement and change. Simon (2013) suggested that "Canadians cannot simply feel good about feeling bad," stating:

The act of acknowledging victimhood [cannot be] reduced to an affective transaction in which one both recognizes and feels for the pain of others, [where] there is no need to ask difficult questions that might implicate one's psychic, social and economic investments in the conditions and institutions responsible for the genesis and prolongation of that pain. (p. 133)

In seeking to reconcile colonial pasts—specifically histories of racism, settler colonialism, and residential schools—Canadians should seek to learn about, identify, and then relinquish structural advantages acquired through settler colonialism and privilege.

Restoring right relations in the way I am describing was fundamentally a part of a report produced for Canadians some 21 years ago by the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. The RCAP (1996) report identified four principal stages of native/newcomer relationships throughout history: the Separate Worlds, Contact and Cooperation, Displacement and Assimilation, and Negotiation and Renewal stages. In their report, the commissioners suggested the fourth stage had yet to be realized, especially the role to be played by educational settings in creating and/or improving Indigenous-settler relationships (Goulet & Goulet, 2014, p. 36). One might well ask: Will we wait 21 years—as we have with RCAP—to realize the changes recommended by the TRC report?

Signs of a failed relationship are as evident today as they were in 1996, especially in the violence of settler colonialism. Consider the nature in which men still learn to view Indigenous women's bodies as disposable and that crimes can be committed against them with impunity (Deer, 2015; Razack, 2000). There is also physical and often state-sanctioned violence, including threats, stones-throwing, and gunshots experienced by our communities in retaliation for land grievances, acts of reclamation, and unbroken assertions of sovereignty (Alfred, 2005; Mackey, 2016; McCarthy, 2016; Monture, 2015). Even Indigenous deaths in custody stem from conceptual if not ideological formulations that must continue to be re-enacted if settler colonialism is to lay ongoing claim to stolen land (Razack, 2015). What are schools doing to teach of these matters of life and death? How are Canadian schools obliged to identify, combat, and correct for a culture of entitlement and ignorance that contributes to—if not creates—the conditions of ongoing colonial violence?

The truth is that a decolonizing education in settler colonial and post-TRC Canada is necessarily a matter of life and death. It endeavours to place genocide, theft of lands, Indigenous nationhood, colonial reparations, gendered racial violence, and border imperialism (Walia, 2013) at the forefront of curricula. It invites settlers to become conscious about and apprehend their own complicity in settler colonialism. Teaching and learning has not typically contemplated these matters of settler accountability, responsibility, and land. In fact, if research surveying non-Indigenous participants at the final TRC event held in Ottawa is any indication, even non-Indigenous people considered to be engaged in the matter rarely contemplate land reparations when it comes to thinking about “reconciliation”

in Canada; when they do, many are wary of reconciliation being possible in light of the sheer magnitude of change required of “government” and “economic” structures (Denis & Bailey, 2016, p. 155).

Land itself is key to thinking about “a revolutionary critical pedagogy that can inform Indigenous struggles for self-determination” (Grande, 2004, p. 25). Pedagogically, we do a number of things when we start with land in educational settings; perhaps, foremost, we affirm the position and birthright of the peoples referred to by my ancestors as *Ukwehuwe* or “real human beings” (Cannon & Sunseri, 2011, p. xv). We invite a conversation about the original treaty and nation-to-nation agreements that often characterize first contact with *Ha dih nyoh* (the word in my language for White settlers), including the *Tehontatenentsonteronhtahkwa*, the Silver Covenant Chain, and the *Tekeni Teiohatatie Kahswentha*, the Two Row Wampum (see Cannon & Sunseri, 2011; Hill, 2017; McCarthy, 2016; Monture, 2015, p. 213). We also invite a conversation with racialized peoples about what these early agreements might mean in principle for them, in creating alliances with Indigenous peoples (Sehdev, 2011; Phung, 2011). Further, we invite racialized and non-Indigenous peoples to situate themselves in relation to the land (Cannon, 2012; Dion, 2009, p. 179; Haig-Brown, 2009) and to engage in discussions about relational sovereignty (Monture-Angus, 1999, p. 36; Smith, 2012, p. 83). Finally, we recognize that *Empire* may create settlers but that not all settlers are shaped universally by *Empire* (Veracini, 2010).

There is an opportunity to disrupt the history of settlement when we start with land in both classrooms and in pedagogy. Histories of slavery and migration are indeed part of these conversations in important ways, all of which are complicated by versions of democratic citizenship being offered up in schools based on settler futurity and Indigenous erasure. Clearly, not all migrants are settlers. In fact, they are usually “appellants facing a political order that is already constituted” (Veracini, 2010, p. 3). Some migrants, as Walia (2013) writes, are:

Indigenous to their own lands, but often displaced due to Orientalist crusading and corporate plundering ... thrown into capitalism’s pool of labor and, in a cruel twist, violently inserted into the political economy of genocide: *stolen labor on stolen land*. (p. 126, emphasis in original)

How centrally does understanding of these matters of land and settlement fare in education? How are non-Indigenous peoples being invited into conversations about a relationality to land—especially its corporatization and appropriation—at home, globally, and transnationally?

Schools are challenged to invigorate conversations about settler colonialism and citizenship education. They are obliged to illuminate the truth

about slavery, border imperialism, lands dispossession, and also “people to people” relationships (Andersen, 2014). Put simply, more needs to be done with respect to a decolonizing education focused on land. For too long, these conversations have been shaped by “an exclusivist concept of nation based on control and ownership of land and territory that is demarcated by borders” (Smith as cited in Walia, 2013, p. xiii).

Thinking in bounded, propertied, and hierarchical ways about land invites coercive and statist-oriented versions of citizenship. It does nothing to educate non-Indigenous peoples about the ways in which Canadian and US citizenship were—and are still—forced on Indigenous peoples (Porter, 1999). Nor does it show how a statist version of citizenship “compels us to negotiate and comprehend our identities on narrow grounds, discouraging and possibly foreclosing the possibility of alliances that might allow a systemic challenge to white dominance [and] patriarchy” (Thobani, 2007, p. 175).

We need to think about land, each other, and our agency as citizens in relational terms. Current models of education often preclude these sorts of understandings. Sovereignty is (mis-)interpreted as involving property alone (Grande, 2004, p. 54). This preclusion does nothing to facilitate a conversation about settler-Indigenous relationships building, border imperialism, and relationships building and/or rejuvenation across multiple subject positions. It offers instead a propertied, exclusivist, and indeed colonial model of citizenship under which there is little reason or room to imagine or engage with a more respectful, reciprocal, and “peaceful coexistence” with Indigenous nations (Grande, 2004, p. 61).

Land, Relationships, and Indigenous Sovereignty

In some academic and political theorizing, sovereignty has been interpreted as a call for ethnic cleansing (see Waldron, 2003). The tendency to (mis-)interpret sovereignty in separatist terms requires rethinking (Grande, 2004, p. 57; see also Nichols, 2013; Sanderson, 2011, p. 182). Thinking in exclusively propertied ways about sovereignty does nothing to invite a conversation about settler emplacement and futurity. Nor does it acknowledge already established scholarly Indigenous theorizations about sovereignty in relational and responsible terms (Monture-Angus, 1999, p.36).

It is necessary to critically analyze sovereignty and the way we have come to think about the world around us in propertied terms, and to think more expansively about the idea in relational ways. The word *relational* is important here because sovereignty *is* relational: it depends on our mutual entanglements, our affective transactions, and our interdependence as *Ukwéhuwe* and settlers. As Taiaiake Alfred (2009) writes, “irredentism has

never been in the vision of our peoples” (p. 182). Borrows (2010) states similarly, “secession is largely a colonizer’s activity. It is rare for Indigenous peoples in Canada to talk about severing their relations with others” (p. 167). How, then, will schools address this call for Indigenous-settler relationships rejuvenation, recuperation, and the rebuilding of nation-to-nation political relationships?

We are accustomed to thinking and learning about Indigenous sovereignty as though it were a threat to democracy, a destabilizing force (Grande, 2004, p. 54). Not only does this view result from and reinforce a way of thinking in corporate and imperialist terms about land and citizenship, it also maintains a version of education that does not address fully the crossroads of democracy and Indigenous sovereignty; this view does not see these concepts, to use Grande’s (2004) theorization, as “competing moral visions” (p. 31). We need a way of thinking about sovereignty as “the ability to assert oneself renewed—in the presence of others” (Lyons as cited in Grande, 2004, p. 57). Only then might we realize a more equitable practice of education. Only then might we envision a generative way of thinking about where it is that we stand in relation to each other and land.

Schools have not worked effectively enough to combat ignorance related to the theft of Indigenous land, or to inform or educate people about ongoing encroachment as sanctioned by settler colonial violence and law. Before reconciliation is possible in a post-TRC and highly apologetic Canada, it is necessary for settlers to accept that ignorance is not the sole cause of conflict. McCarthy (2016) argues that education will be unable to play any role in assuaging a conflict stemming from Indigenous land grievances and reclamation so long as “non-Native people ... want what native people have” (p. 179). McCarthy cites the work of Smith on this matter, who writes:

Non-Indians oppress Indians because Indians occupy land and hold resources that the dominant society wants. The majority of energy resources in this country are on Indian land. The [state] cannot stop oppressing Indian people without fundamentally challenging its hegemonic position or multinational capitalist operations. If we frame Native genocide from a *materialist perspective* [emphasis added], then we have to rethink our analysis of non-Native ignorance about Native cultures. (as cited in McCarthy, 2016, p. 345)

McCarthy (2016) concludes, “There will be no decolonization in Canada simply because non-Native people learn more about Indigenous history and culture. Better knowledge must be accompanied by the return of land to alter settler colonialism’s structural foundation” (p. 280).

Notwithstanding McCarthy’s and Smith’s important criticism, I would suggest that taking a materialist, anticolonial, and decolonizing approach to Indigenous education in settler colonial and post-TRC Canada is an

important step toward transforming relationships. Such an approach would reject a possessive individualism which has always functioned as ideological justification—and an explanation—for occupying stolen land (Thielen-Wilson, 2012, p. 54). It offers tools for interrogating how Canadian law seeks at every turn to disavow a nation-to-nation political relationship with Indigenous peoples and to recuperate a unilateral claim to Indigenous land. It would also provide a context for understanding actions taken by some Indigenous nations, including my own, to reclaim and/or occupy land (McCarthy, 2016; Monture, 2015).

A decolonizing education could make a difference across barricades, especially if we consider the violence and disavowal experienced by some communities in retaliation for land grievances, reclamation, and affirmations of Indigenous sovereignty (Mackey 2016; McCarthy, 2016; Monture, 2015). Canadians do not usually think in critical ways about lands or about the direct action that is used at times to occupy and protect them. Furthermore, they do not even have to think about land itself or what it might mean to stand in a reciprocal relationship with land as the Mother beneath our feet. Indeed, Sheelah McLean reflects on a much more common oppositional way of thinking that is evident when extralegal and direct action is taken by Indigenous peoples to occupy land, one in which “the Canadian public are socialized to believe that barricades are violent” (as cited in Lilley & Schantz, 2013, p. 121). McLean states:

The mainstream media, along with our schools, churches, and government work very hard to create and maintain that perception, which inhibits people from seeing the violence inherent to colonial society and from understanding barricading as an act of protection. (as cited in Lilley & Schantz, 2013, p. 121)

Classroom-based, pedagogical, and programmatic initiatives must necessarily transform this way of thinking. Schools should also be challenged to think instead about how to foster a collective responsibility to reject settler capital and lands exploitation and the ecological devastation brought on by both. They should be challenged to think about what it might mean to bring both settler and non-Indigenous populations into a relationship with land and with the Indigenous nations endeavouring to safeguard and recover them. Finally, schools should be challenged to find a cause for rebuilding Indigenous-settler relationships and to invite all Canadians to see themselves as standing in historic and current contemporary relation with Indigenous peoples.

Teaching Law, Land, and Settler Colonial Dispossession

Each and every Canadian ought to receive mandatory education about law, land, and the history of settler colonialism. Settlers cannot possibly

hope to restore a peaceful coexistence across the Indigenous-settler divide until such time that Canadian law—not to mention education—recognizes and affirms a nation-to-nation political relationship (Turner, 2013). Furthermore, efforts toward reconciliation are almost sure to fail us so long as Canadians are not taught in schools about Indigenous nationhood, shared sovereignty, interdependence, and the criteria established by courts and Canada to dispossess us of land. How these matters are being taught in schools remains unclear, however imperative the regular inclusion of this content is.

The *Doctrine of Discovery* is an exemplary ideological formulation administered today by settler courts to lay ongoing claim to stolen land. Lindberg (2010) suggests that the *Doctrine of Discovery* is used as “a rationale to take Indigenous lands on the basis of constructed ... deficiencies and inhumanity” (p. 94). It is “a dogmatic body of shared theories predicated on a notion of ‘first’ and ‘discovery,’” which enables ideological assertions about the “rightful and righteous settlement of Indigenous peoples’ lands” (Lindberg, 2010, p. 94; see also Fitzpatrick, 2002). The *Doctrine of Discovery* is firmly ensconced in settler colonial law. The settler nation perpetuates these racialized ideas of discovery, especially through its constitutional law. The settler nation never questions its own right to legitimately possess land or to interfere with Indigenous sovereignty in Canada, let alone to define and then legislate over those it calls *Indians* and *Aboriginals*.

Canadian law is based on the supremacy of settler sovereignty. It is based on racialized notions of conquest, discovery, and a unilateral entitlement to land. As Razack (2015) rightfully observes, “even when the settler state is at its most expansive in acknowledging Aboriginal rights [emphasis added], the premise remains that history begins with the sovereignty of the settler state” (p. 12). Even at their most expansive, courts in general remain steadfast in refusing to acknowledge Indigenous peoples as nations or, for that matter, anything beyond “Aboriginal title” which is understood in Canadian law to mean “a legal right to ... ancestral lands where their title has been neither surrendered nor validly extinguished” (McNeil, 1997, p. 135). Aboriginal rights always have to be “reconciled with Crown sovereignty” despite them being inherent rights bestowed by the Creator (Borrows, 2002, p. 8; Mackey, 2016, p. 10; see also Tully, 2000, p. 45). This tautological and deeply recolonizing move protects settler sovereignty, as does foreclosing examinations of the category *Aboriginal* in general (Alfred, 2005, pp. 126-130).

Canada has not addressed but has instead reinforced its colonial existence through the language of law and rights discourse. As Monture-Angus (2006) wrote, constitutional law is by no means an arbiter

of colonial reparations or even social justice (see also Cannon, 2014). Maracle (2003) writes of the *Constitution* in particular:

Section 35 has created the biggest and saddest sham in our history of having to endure plenty of shams perpetuated by colonial authority. Prior to the entrenchment of Aboriginal Rights in the constitution, we were fighting for the recognition of a nation-to-nation relationship, not fighting to cement the colonizer's magic foot print. (p. 314)

These matters of *recolonization*—that is, the process whereby Indigenous peoples are subsumed by a legal apparatus serving settler interests and sovereignty—need to be understood, taught thoroughly, and addressed by Canadian schools. Schools need to teach how the sovereign right of Indigenous nations to exercise jurisdiction over our lands and territories has been reduced to a pattern of rights and rights infringement.

Interrogating and ultimately dismantling these injustices have never been a focus of Canadian schools, let alone settler governments. Even section 35 of Canada's *Constitution Act*—which recognizes and affirms “the existing and aboriginal treaty rights of the aboriginal peoples of Canada” (Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, 1982)—does not adequately protect our interests as nations and peoples. As Maracle (2003) reminds us:

If section 35 was meant to reflect a true nation-to-nation relationship instead of a continuance of colonial history, it would ... have reverted to origins—pre-colonial conditions—to declare: “Canada hereby abrogates the right of Canadians to intervene in the determination and limitation of Indigenous national authority, and agrees to establish Nation-to-Nation relationships and joint jurisdiction with Indigenous Nations [emphasis added].” (pp. 310-311)

Schools must start to teach that the law in Canada is a system intended to divest our nations of sovereignty and land (Turpel, 1989, 1991). This system demands that our grievances always be reconciled, foremost with Crown sovereignty and then in the interests of settler futurity. Moreover, settler courts put into place criteria intended to freeze our *Aboriginal rights* into a context pre-dating *Ha dih nyoh*. As Borrows (2001) explained, under the law in Canada our rights are currently believed to flow from distinctive “cultural practices, traditions, and customs” (p. 37), which we are in turn required by settler courts to explain and then prove using oral histories. Oral histories are not the problem; the problem is that our stories are scrutinized as “evidence” by judges—often White men and women—to determine how well they provide an unbroken and/or unchanging window on a past that pre-dates contact (Borrows, 2001). In courtrooms, as in classrooms and settler culture, Indigenous peoples are expected to live in a world of long ago. If, as Indigenous peoples, we have in any way consumed modernity, our grievances are rendered suspect (Cannon & Sunseri, 2018, pp. 19-21).

The “integral to the distinctive culture” bias in Canadian constitutional law is as repugnant as it is insidious. In what has amounted to

“victim blaming,” Canadian courts still require Indigenous peoples to “associate their rights with the very cultural practices that government policies have attempted to destroy” (Turner, 2013, pp. 106-107; see also St. Denis, 2011, p. 182).

An anticolonial and decolonizing education seeks to explore these matters of Crown sovereignty and supremacy in settler colonial contexts. Specifically, it provides an understanding of the law in Canada and interrogates whose authority it is to decide on what is “integral to the distinctive culture” (Turner, 2013, p. 106). It provides a context for understanding the options made available to Indigenous peoples by settler courts in rendering our peoples timeless, unchanging entities. As long as Indigenous peoples are rendered invisible in courtrooms (and classrooms) or prevented from being alive in the present as “nationally governed societies” (Maracle, 2003, p. 312), the act of land dispossession continues. While Settler populations are never expected to bear the same cultural burden of proof, least of all in law, we do not exist as sovereign nations under such circumstances. Before any reconciliation can take place in Canada, schools must challenge themselves and others to correct for a system of settler law and culture that contributes to, if not creates, the conditions for ongoing lands dispossession and violence.

An understanding of settler law was missing from my own formal K-12 education as an Indigenous person growing up in Canada. So, too, was a theory of settler colonialism and decolonization. Indeed, I came to university in 1988 for many reasons but, in the first instance, to find and develop a vocabulary for describing my own experience of racialization and the law, including the process whereby we became Indians or Métis or were denied federal recognition altogether under Canada’s *Indian Act* (Andersen, 2014; Cannon, 2018; Lawrence, 2012). Based on my experience—in particular, what I did not learn in school about racialization, patriarchy, settler colonialism, and Canadian law—I suggest that education must centre matters involving law and racialization (i.e., Indian-ness), including how blood quantum ways of thinking are intended to denigrate Indigenous peoples’ genealogical connection to territory and place in ways that further lands dispossession (Cannon, in press; see also Kauanui, 2008, p. 11, 34-35).

Schools ought also to provide a more thorough critique of settler colonial history and law, especially the ecological violence that is still invariably a part of empire building. As Canadians come to recognize that our current system is imperiled, they might learn to interrogate “the failure [of Canada] to uphold historical agreements governing peaceful interactions between sovereign political bodies and their citizens” (Hargreaves &

Jefferess, 2015, p. 208). In relation to the world around us, it is more necessary than ever to call on settlers to participate in matters concerning environmental sustainability and in ways that rejuvenate our interdependence as sovereign nations. Formal education should work to challenge more effectively a system that exploits us all.

Envisioning Anticolonial and Reparative Education in the Canadian University Schools must be challenged collectively to think in more critical ways about the range of possibilities for having non-Indigenous peoples engage with and apprehend settler colonial history and law. This was my primary motivation for co-authoring the textbook *Racism, Colonialism, and Indigeneity in Canada* (Cannon & Sunseri, 2011). In terms of my own teaching, I am invested in transformative anticolonial pedagogies, and in fostering collaborations in both research and practice. Classrooms are especially relevant in bringing about reparative education in settler colonial and post-TRC Canada.

Ten years ago, I created the course *Race, Indigeneity, and the Colonial Politics of Recognition* to explore these issues. This course provides an overview of the racism, settler colonialism, and legal assimilation that have worked to create colonial injustices for Indigenous peoples in Canada. I am primarily concerned with the *Indian Act*, histories of racialization and resurgence, and a politics of recognition rooted in the ideological violence of Indianness itself. I ask non-Indigenous students to think not only about these histories of race and settler colonialism as they relate to federal (non-)recognition but also to see themselves as capable of imagining and transforming a version of citizenship outside of current models of Indianness and multiculturalism. I encourage people to think differently about Canadian citizenship and to place the voices of settler and Indigenous populations into critical and new, productive kinds of dialogue.

Race, Indigeneity, and the Colonial Politics of Recognition sets a scholarly context and framework for contemplating complex matters of citizenship, colonialism, and multiculturalism. In the interest of moving forward with colonial reparations in Canada, it is imperative that non-Indigenous peoples give thought to Canadian citizenship in scholarly and educational contexts, including the complex matters of difference, diversity, and colonial entanglements that comprise them. As Thobani (2007) writes of this matter, "Canadian citizenship remains predicated upon the erasure of Aboriginal sovereignty, and *unless this institution can be transformed in relation to the realization of Aboriginal sovereignty, it will remain an instrument of colonial dispossession* [emphasis added]" (p. 250).

An official policy of multiculturalism in Canada complicates matters of citizenship, structuring the relations that exist and are possible between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. My course offers one way of navigating these precise sorts of issues in sites of formal learning. It is designed to have students of social justice education extend and contribute to a more reparative education in settler colonial and post-TRC Canada.

In an effort to assist students to better understand (and remember) the history of Indigenous-settler relations in Canada, I designed and developed another course in 2011: *Centering Settler-Indigenous Solidarity in Theory and Research*. The goal of this course is to contemplate more explicitly and deliberately the kinds of intellectual and intercultural relationships that exist between Indigenous, *Ha dih nyoh*, and racialized populations in Canada. It illuminates the possibilities, challenges, and limitations that surround the building of Indigenous-settler alliances in both theory and research.

In *Centering Indigenous-Settler Solidarity in Theory and Research*, I encourage graduate students to contribute to an ever-increasing body of peer-reviewed scholarly literature concerned with Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships. My motivation stems in part from realizing that I work and teach in one of the most diverse graduate programs in the country and that, before reconciliation can take place, Canada will require precisely these sorts of education-related initiatives in schools along with a diverse population of graduates who are learned in both imagining and defining them.

The history of Indigenous-settler relations extends well beyond the informal and official exchanges Indigenous peoples have had historically, and still have today, with the state and with White settlers. Indeed, Canada involves an ever-increasing population of individuals—some of them racialized peoples—who have come to Canada fleeing their own colonial contexts. Many of these persons wish to know more about, explore, and understand more fully the history of settler colonialism and Indigenous peoples in Canada. These are the precise sorts of historical considerations that I intend to have students of social justice education explore in *Centering Indigenous-Settler Solidarity in Theory and Research*.

The story of Indigenous and racialized peoples' relationships is being told in a growing body of scholarly literature. I believe all students in Canada should read this literature and make a contribution of their own to its development. We should be challenged collectively in settler colonial and post-TRC Canada to engage with matters of difference, racialization, citizenship, and relationships rejuvenation, including nuances across multiple subject positions. The relevance of this engagement extends well beyond Canada, the classroom, and the academy.

Conclusion

Part of the work I envision going forward in Canada, indeed informed by this paper, involves working with teachers and graduate students, in particular, to contemplate pedagogical and/or programmatic initiatives aimed at settler decolonizing and relationships building in schools and the classroom. Teacher education must become a central part of envisioning a process of relationships rejuvenation and nation-to-nation building. I believe that reconciliation can only take place when settlers start to move beyond a simple acknowledgement of privilege to place words into real, anticolonial, transformative, and pedagogical action. I hope this is something that all Canadians will come to think more about, including the ways in which settlers might begin to and further engage with the 94 *Calls to Action* offered by the TRC (2015), and the ideas and conversations that ought to be happening in Canadian schools about law, land, and settler decolonizing. More importantly, I hope the emphasis being placed on relationships building and learning will truly transform Canadian education.

Nyawen Skannah.

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