

Indigenizing the Academy

Resistance and Rethinking Colonial Practices in Academia through Indigenous Storytelling and Allyship

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Le féminisme autochtone, les récits narrés, l'autochtonisation et la décolonisation serviront à examiner l'existence de discrimination fondée sur le sexe, la race et l'origine autochtone qui excluent les chercheurs autochtones du milieu académique. Ces éléments sont enracinés dans des vues coloniales hégémoniques blanches dominantes qui construisent socialement les différences pour opprimer, marginaliser et éradiquer ceux et celles construits comme « autres ». Les récits narrés contiennent les expériences et les descriptions des traumatismes subis par les communautés autochtones, qui ont fait des populations autochtones une minorité et sont pratiquement inexistantes dans le monde universitaire. Les récits narrés amplifient les voix autochtones, ce qui force la réflexion et la résistance aux pratiques et aux structures discriminatoires, particulièrement dans les milieux académiques. Ce document sera une leçon éducative pour les personnes non autochtones sur l'impact des structures coloniales discriminatoires qui existent contre les peuples autochtones dans le milieu universitaire. Cette leçon permettra aux personnes non autochtones de reconnaître leurs privilèges, de construire une base de connaissances et de créer une prise de conscience qui ouvrira la voie aux universitaires, aux cadres, aux méthodologies et aux modes de pensée autochtones pour qu'ils fassent partie du monde universitaire.

Preface

“Although I still believe in justice and peace, I no longer have the faith necessary to maintain a close relationship with Canadian laws, lawmakers or judicial resolution of disputes as we know them all today. This book is very much an examination of the reasons for which I was unable to maintain my individual faith in Canadian

law. Law was and is my ultimate lesson in colonial oppression. I am not seeking escape but rather a way to put my understanding of colonialism and law to better use” (Monture-Angus 10).

The production and evolution of this discussion on the indigenization of academy has been a journey in learning about the impact of colonialism on Indigenous people and learning about my responsibility towards them. At the core of this journey is learning the path towards decolonization practices that will influence change for Indigenous people, especially in academic settings. Therefore, I begin this paper with a significant quote found amongst the ethnographic literature written by Indigenous matriarchs that outline the impact of colonialism on Indigenous people, especially women in Canada. Patricia Monture-Angus inspires me with her personal journey, her words, and work towards decolonization because she is more than just a lawyer, educator, and author. Patricia Monture-Angus was an Indigenous matriarch and Mohawk woman who became a legal scholar and lawyer, and has become an important figure in the fight against colonialism by Indigenous people in Canada. *Journeying Forward: Dreaming First Nations' Independence*, Monture-Angus' autoethnography, serves as a resistance towards colonial governments. This auto-ethnography has allowed me to formulate a comprehensive understanding that storytelling, in the form of ethnographies and/or autoethnographies, can be a powerful way for Indigenous people, especially women, to formulate a resistance towards the impact of colonialism. Storytelling becomes the method to examine the social, political, and cultural significance of colonization and patriarchy on the matrilineal way of life.

In addition, by reading further ethnographic stories of Indigenous matriarchs such as Audra Simpson, Maureen Lux, Laurie Meijer Drees, Beverly Jacobs, and Kim Anderson, I was able to contextualize the historical and ongoing impacts of colonization through the lenses of Indigenous matriarchs and their communities. My review of these ethnographies alongside readings of Indigenous feminism paved the way for a more complete understanding of the colonial desire to eliminate Indigenous communities, which started with patriarchy, women, and the role of being a mother and being mothered. Within Indigenous communities, these attributes have significance beyond biology; rather, it is about being raised within a community, culture, connection to the land and especially one another. Without these bonds between Indigenous women and children, the community connection is unable to be formed properly. Therefore, the strength and vitality of a community is not formulated, which is the implicit intent of colonialism.

The concepts of race and gender are inextricably linked when discussing the white patriarchal state of Canada that prohibits equality for Indigenous people. I reference Patricia in my work because of her discussion to patriarchal rule in the Canadian legal system. Monture-Angus' book identified the problems with the Canadian legal system that has been structured to disadvantage Indigenous people across Canada. Based on this, she acknowledges that she has given up on the Canadian legal system because it has worked against Indigenous people due to patriarchal norms. Patriarchy normalizes the notion that women, especially Indigenous women, are to be excluded from a place in society, especially from powerful places where they were involved in decision making. Therefore, colonialism deemed the matriarchs of Indigenous communities unacceptable and created a pervasive structure that excludes all Indigenous from employment, education, and healthcare. All of this is vital to the examination of the lack of inclusionary and equitable spaces for Indigenous people, especially women, in the academy.

Through storytelling, Patricia expanded upon the impact of marginalization and oppression that Indigenous communities continuously feel in Canada, which became an education for me and prompted me to acknowledge my responsibility towards Indigenous people, in the form of being a settler educator. By making the connections between ethnographic storytelling and Indigenous feminism, I hope that this paper will become part of the decolonial literature and influence non-Indigenous people. I also hope that this paper will amplify Indigenous voices in the academy, and will influence the creation of inclusionary and equitable practices.

In what follows, I will:

a) outline the significance of ethnographic storytelling by Indigenous matriarchs as forms of resistance and decolonization and b) outline the ideas of whiteness that are present in academic institutional structures to dispel the existence of these racist and discriminatory practices

Introduction: Colonial Context in Canada

Colonialism creates dehumanizing situations and alienates those that are colonized not only from themselves, but from their culture, language, and lands. Settler colonialism is defined as "settlement over Indigenous people and lands" (Hart 2). Colonialism is rooted in domination, self-righteousness, and greed. When you connect colonialism to Indigenous people, especially women, we need to focus on the ideas of exclusion, marginalization, and assimilation. Historically, settlers came to Canada only to create trade routes from mother countries such as Britain, France, and Spain. However, once it became apparent to colonizers, such as the British, that there was more to be gained than having just trade routes, there became a shift towards the development of colonies and the hostile takeover of Indigenous lands. The hostile takeover of lands were rooted in the ideas of racial inequalities, which created oppressive situations and structures. The shift towards the development of colonies also created a relationship between Indigenous communities, especially the matriarchs of these communities, and white colonizers that were beneficial to the colonizer. For example, upon the takeover of Indigenous lands, colonizers enacted laws about trading, farming, and land management that became a way to marginalize and/or restrict Indigenous people as a whole, especially women (Cannon and Sunseri 89). These laws were a way to accomplish the goal of marginalization and the eradication of the Indigenous way of life, and eventually Indigenous people because the white colonial British life was deemed to be preferential. British settler colonialism shaped the political, legal, social, educational, and institutional structures that reinforce the existence of the white colonial mentality.

For Indigenous communities in Canada, colonialism created controlling and eradication mechanisms in the form of residential schools, Indian hospitals, and reserves, which have had long-term effects on Indigenous communities. Indigenous women and entire communities were forced onto reserves after being removed from the "history and geography of Canada" (Cannon and Sunseri 9). Indigenous people in Canada are currently at a social, legal, academic, and economic disadvantage as they have had to give up their lands and identities and are forced to live on reserves.

The institutional face of the reserve otherwise known as “reservationization” presents the optics that Indigenous communities have everything by living on reserves, which could not be further from the truth, as they do not have access to healthy food; they lack access to running water and electricity (Simpson 99; Anderson 127). Indigenous women are given limited access to education and financial resources due to a lack of government intervention.

Winona Stevenson in her article entitled “Colonialism and First Nations Women in Canada” provides a discussion of the “rationalization of the subjugation and imposition of patriarchy via federal legislation” (Stevenson 44). British colonizers created and attributed binary definitions to Indigenous women, which maintained that the “ideal woman” involved subordination to men and not individual autonomy. Power and privilege do not belong to non-white women under patriarchal regimes (47). The intersects of race, gender, and patriarchy oppress Indigenous women and children to prevent the growth of a population. The need of colonizers to eradicate a population, in numbers, limits the amount of Indigenous people that they must take responsibility for—especially after the removal of bands and sovereignty. This would also ensure that patriarchy would replace matriarchy. Matriarchy, an egalitarian form of community composition, was at the core of many Indigenous communities prior to colonization. Prior to colonization, Indigenous women were powerful guides who were childrearers, led ceremonies, and formed the centre of the family. Post-colonization, Indigenous women were forced to adhere to patriarchal norms that made them submissive to white colonial society. Therefore, patriarchy normalizes the notion that women, especially Indigenous women, are to be excluded from a place in society, especially from powerful places where they were involved in decision making. Under patriarchy the notion that women, especially Indigenous women, are to be excluded from employment, education, and social structures is prominent. Patriarchy normalizes and naturalizes the idea of whiteness and the racial discrimination that exists towards Indigenous women in Canada.

The colonial and patriarchal violence that is continuously experienced by Indigenous women is evident in the research found in the Murdered and Missing Indigenous women and girls (MMIWG2S) report that was issued in June 2019. The research is significant as it is “due to the existence of colonialism that Indigenous women and girls of all ages and from all clans and bands either have their fate unknown because they have gone missing and/or have been brutally murdered” (Brant and Lavell-Harvard 1). The Canadian federal government has inflicted violence against Indigenous women and girls for over 100

years because of the existence of patriarchy through laws, policies, and institutional structures.

Therefore, the historical roots of patriarchy are found in white supremacy and colonial domination, which are in line with the ideas of whiteness that is present on some university campuses in Canada. These ideas of whiteness create a pervasive structure of exclusion and inequality for Indigenous people.

Indigenous People in the Academy

The ideas of “whiteness” and “white heterogeneous” principles exist to be able to re-assert modes of imprisonment, the construction of identities, and the marginalization of Indigenous women (Henry et al.). For example, when we look at the history of Indigenous women, the power of conversion and civility to whiteness is what the French Jesuits wanted to perpetuate when they were put in charge of residential schools and Indian hospitals in Canada. These constructed identities are perpetuated within spaces and places, such as academic institutions, due to the distribution of white power.

The power that is exerted in academic institutions is statistically obvious, as there is an underrepresentation and lack of spaces for Indigenous women as academic staff, faculty, and/or students. According to the figures provided by the CAUT Education Review Report about University campuses, out of 76, 555 university professors and lecturers working in institutions across Canada, only 1.2% are Aboriginal professors (1,071 in numbers). In the same report, figures of students across the same campuses, 5% are Aboriginal students and less than 4% of the workforce (staff) is made up of Aboriginal people (Suzack 99). According to the 2011 Canadian census, 29% of Aboriginal adults had not graduated from high school when compared to 12% of their non-Aboriginal counterparts (Truth and Reconciliation Commission 194). The general working-age population that received a university-level education was 21.2% in 2011, and 24.7% in 2016 (Statistics Canada). Further statistics indicate that Aboriginal parents who have attended residential school and obtained university education was listed at 7%, and Aboriginal parents who have not attended residential school and obtained university education was listed at 10% (Truth and Reconciliation Commission 193).

The analysis of the above-mentioned statistics provides a contextualization of the underrepresentation of Indigenous people, especially women, in the academy as staff, faculty, and/or students. Members of the dominant white culture create racist spaces in the academy where Indigenous people always feel like the “other” (Seshadri-Crooks 144; Truth and Reconciliation Commission 193).

Indigenous faculty that are hired are forced to interact with departments and people that do not want or appreciate their presence. Due to the existence of these difficult and isolating environments Indigenous faculty, programs, and/or departments are usually isolated in separate spaces and buildings. Due to the federal governments' lack of responsibility towards giving access to resources for the education of Indigenous peoples, there are virtually no Indigenous students in university classrooms. Furthermore, even though major Canadian universities are government funded, and many clans and bands receive funding, there are few spaces occupied by Indigenous students as not all the funding reaches the students it is allocated for.

Indigenous students, especially female students, find little space for Indigenous perspectives in most academic disciplines and most research approaches. As cited by Linda Tuhiwai Smith in "Decolonizing Methodologies," "Indigenous and ethnic studies programs have struggled to survive in rather hostile environments. Indigenous faculty, staff and students have found the institution to be toxic" (111). Research cultures that are developed within Canadian universities are usually framed around colonial ideologies that usually constrain the academic domain of Indigenous people. Many racialized and Indigenous scholars, academics, researchers, and students have suggested that only;

Specific types of knowledge are recognized as legitimate, which excludes forms that diverge from the Eurocentric norm. This reinforces the negative messages and stereotypes that therefore create a primary site of "racialization and exclusion from mainstream University life" (Smith 112).

The white colonial mentalities that are entrenched in the academy and in various university structures in Canada reinforce the marginalization, assimilation, and eventual elimination of Indigenous women who are in either the role of staff, faculty, and/or students. As examined by Cheryl Suzack from the University of Toronto, there are various strategies that are implemented by Canadian universities to silence Indigenous people, especially women. Among these strategies are: (a) those that create isolating situations where Indigenous faculty are continuously excluded, overworked, underpaid, and overburdened; (b) those that avoid equity practices that include "making space" for Indigenous students, which means no targeted enrolments in both undergraduate and graduate programs; and (c) those that insist that Indigenous staff, faculty, and/or students, and community members are to be grateful to non-Indigenous people for any movement towards changing exclusionary procedures (Suzack 97).

The Equity Myth written by Henry et al. analyzes the "University" as a site where institutional and structural racism is prevalent (Henry et al. 5). As cited, "racialized, non-white and Indigenous scholars tell the stories of exclusion, marginalization, and interactions with colleagues that perpetuate both structural and institutional racism in subtle, complex and sophisticated ways" (115). This mentality only leaves room for those that are non-racialized and non-Indigenous, and provides academic freedom to those that are white and privileged. Based on this mentality, situations are perpetuated where Indigenous research, knowledge, academics, and students are most often disregarded in Canadian universities. Many Indigenous people, especially female staff, faculty, and/or students in Canadian universities are made to feel that they do not belong because universities are regarded as places of privilege and those that are non-white are seen as "the other" (Seshadri-Crooks 144). When we look specifically at Canadian universities, we cannot help but acknowledge two important aspects when dealing with race and racism. Firstly, the reproduction of a curriculum that is based on "white colonial and elitist mentalities," and secondly, that racialized and Indigenous scholars have experienced racial discrimination at the institutional and structural levels within Canadian universities (Baskin 25; Henry et al. 115). Through an analysis of Canadian universities, there is a recognition of the result of "powerful discourses of racial categorization" (Henry et al. 133). Due to the existence of overt racism in many Canadian universities, Indigenous staff, faculty, and/or students feel unwelcomed, unrepresented, and often invisible. Underrepresentation in the academy is at the forefront of this discussion as this is about more than just failing to meet statistical targets. Racialized Indigenous faculty are "largely aggregated in certain disciplines; but are almost absent in some areas of the University," which is problematic (Absolon 37).

The "White Privilege Perspective" was analyzed in *The Equity Myth*, which expanded upon a story of the mobilization against a female Indigenous faculty member for teaching an Indigenous worldviews course. The resistance and hostility from white students were based on overtly racist and discriminatory policies and procedures that existed in a specific Canadian university. As cited by Kobayashi and Henry, "Overt racism exists in policies and dynamics that often rule selection, promotion, tenure decisions, and most exclusionary behaviours" (Henry et al. 133). This is linked to the notion of storytelling, and the sharing of the total life experiences of Indigenous women to expose marginalization and oppression. By sharing the story, it created an awareness of the recognition of the overt racism, and created a shift towards equity and acceptance. This experience challenged the fact that colleagues fear losing

credibility for speaking out against those who do not want to incorporate Indigenous knowledge in the academy. This challenged the glass-ceiling that keeps Indigenous knowledge secondary and subservient (Henry et al. 115). Therefore, the analysis of the “White Privilege Perspective” and storytelling are necessary and poignant as they present a resistance and formulation towards creating a movement of inclusion and representation of Indigenous people, especially women, in the academy. Furthermore, this will create changes to places such as the academy to avoid situations where Indigenous women as faculty, staff, and/or students are continuously excluded, overworked, underpaid, and overburdened.

Theoretical Frameworks and Analysis

This section identifies various theoretical frameworks and avenues for further research. I believe that these are particularly valuable in drawing out the lessons we can learn from the impact of colonialism and whiteness on academic structures, and how to influence the Indigenization of the academy. It is important to note that full application of each framework is beyond the scope of this paper, so my aim here is to introduce each framework as a promising approach for further investigation.

Intersects of Race and Gender

The intersects of race and gender are connected to colonization and the capitalist accumulation of wealth, and the white regimes of power that historically and continuously impact Indigenous people in Canada. When examining colonization and capitalist accumulation, the ideas of forced enslavement, marginalization, assimilation, and eradication of Indigenous women come to mind. Therefore, the colonization of Indigenous lands by white settlers was done in the name of capitalist accumulation of lands, and was used to justify hostile takeovers and the enslavement of Indigenous women. In their article, “Decolonization Is a Not a Metaphor,” Tuck and Yang began their discussion of colonization of Indigenous people, especially women, by identifying the fact that white settlers coined such terms as “slaves, savages and unnatural,” which are the negative stereotypes that continue to currently impact Indigenous women (Tuck and Yang 4). The race and gender-based discriminatory practices under colonialism that are found in academic structures can be connected by examining Fanon, Roedgiger, Davis, and Seshadri-Crooks.

The concept of the subaltern discussed by Antonio Gramsci, and the concept of the “racialized other” that was outlined by Frantz Fanon, are interconnected and applicable to an analysis of whiteness and the way

that Indigenous people, especially women, are defined. Throughout colonial history in Canada, whiteness defined Indigenous people as being the subaltern, and “the racialized other,” in order to be referred to as being undesirable, racialized, and only being deemed for menial tasks such as slavery and/or those that need to be “excluded, marginalized and eradicated” (Hart 4; Fanon 111). Race is also determined and categorized by those that are white to marginalize, infantilize, ghettoize, and even eradicate groups of people from white societies. As indicated, in the article “The Legacy of Slavery” by Davis, whiteness categorizes the identities of those that are non-white to establish superiority and exert power over those that are defined as different. Visual differences are defined based on the idea of accentuating differences rather than accepting differences. Thus, the definition of the “racialized other” is based on what people look like to create exclusionary and inclusionary procedures. Discourses of race penetrate social visibility—the ideas of racial difference construct the symbolic order. The symbolic order is based on the way that race is socially constructed to build upon the fact that it is acceptable to discriminate and exclude various subjects, which usually end up being non-white and/or Indigenous subjects from a population.

This symbolic order is usually developed by those in power that are white, to “fix the notion of superiority” (Roedgiger 17). By “fixing the notion of superiority,” the symbolic order that perpetuates a system that induces the social and legal validation of race as a natural order and discourse becomes fixed. As outlined in the article entitled “Wages of Whiteness,” written by Roedgiger, the development and justification of slavery was accomplished because of the legal and social domination of the white identity. Those that are non-white are given roles of slaves and/or dominated by those that are white. This has paved the way for race and gender-based discriminatory practices and procedures that are exerted over Indigenous people. Therefore, this has created situations of regulation, marginalization, and exclusion of Indigenous people, especially women in the academy. By analyzing the intersects of race and gender, there creates an awareness and breakdown of the practices, to be able to move towards inclusion and equity.

Ethnographic Storytelling and Decolonization

At the root of my examination of the resistance to whiteness by Indigenous women via ethnographic storytelling is the concept of decolonization. By focusing on ethnographic storytelling by Indigenous women, there is a formulation of a resistance to colonization, and this creates an education for non-Indigenous people on the acceptance

of differences rather than their negative magnification. This will create a breakdown of the order of racial and discriminatory structures within academic institutions. Through education, there can be a deconstruction of “white mythologies,” and the dispelling of the “racialized other” (Davis 27). This is classified as decolonization, as there is the promotion of social cohesion and the overcoming of identities, and acknowledging that every individual has a value. This will allow for the creation and reception of equity practices for Indigenous women, as faculty, staff,

Dua as they cited that decolonization needs to be taken seriously to create the shift towards recognizing the existence of forced assimilation of Indigenous people by the government to the dominant white culture. For example, many Indigenous people are cut off from their own communities, language, culture, and ceremonial practices whether they live on and/or off reserves (Lawrence and Dua 121; Anderson 127).

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and/or students in academic institutions where whiteness has perpetuated exclusion.

Decolonization is about listening to these experiences, and through action, remove the colonial mentality and violence from consciousness to reinforce equality. In their article, “Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor,” Tuck and Yang cite that decolonization is not just talking about the impact of colonization on Indigenous people because it is not a metaphor. It is about listening and creating actions. This is what Tuck and Yang referred to as “decolonize our schools,” and “use decolonizing methods,” and “decolonize student thinking” (Tuck and Yang 3). For Bonita Lawrence in her chapter entitled “Mixed-Blood Urban Native People and the Rebuilding of Indigenous Nations,” Indigenous communities decolonize by becoming immune to the agendas of white people. As a form of decolonization and reinforcement of Indigenous identities, there is the resistance towards “white colonial mentalities” through sharing of stories and collective experiences (Lawrence 102). Decolonization would mean not only the collaboration of Indigenous communities to revolt against colonial structures, but also the formation of alliances between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. Non-Indigenous people need to challenge the existence of racism, discrimination, and marginalization against Indigenous communities in institutions such as the academy as part of decolonial work (102). Tuck and Yang indicate that decolonization is important and necessary because there is no foreseeable positive outcome given that the Canadian government has, and continues, to ignore their role in the past, present, and future of Indigenous people (Tuck and Yang 25). This is referenced by Lawrence and

Canada that will make room to break down the stereotypes and stigmas. Through alliances and education, there can be a movement towards decolonization.

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Indigenous Feminism

Indigenous feminism is important to this paper and to the analysis of the amplification of Indigenous voices to contextualize the ongoing impact of colonialism on Indigenous women and communities. The stories of the experiences of brutality in captivity and/or the dealing with intergenerational trauma opened a window to an activist stance against colonial governments. The concept of racism and discriminatory practices that are foundational to colonialism need to be reconsidered, resisted, and removed from current Canadian consciousness, and in places such as the academy by referencing Indigenous feminism. “Feminism, when linked to Indigenous women, is both a theoretical approach and an activist stance” (Green and Bourgeois 7). The definition of Indigenous feminism, which is fluid and evolving, draws on one or more elements of Indigenous cultures, “Which is the connection to the land, territory through relationships framed as a sacred responsibility predicated on reciprocity and definitive ideas of culture and identity” (4). Making connections between ethnographies, Indigenous feminism, and resistance towards colonialism has allowed for Indigenous communities to be brought

closer together; especially because only recently have the truths about Indigenous people in Canada been spoken about and accepted as an activist stance against colonial governments. “Feminism has worked to remove the binary definitions that are given to Indigenous women that were/are based on white colonial attitudes” (Stevenson 46).

By examining bell hooks as part of my analysis of feminism and ultimately Indigenous feminism, I have concluded that women cannot be equal to men under Western laws and/or social structures because no two men are equal in

Audra Simpson; Tuck and Yang; Lawrence and Dua; and Henry et al. Allies are defined as, “The dominant group members who work to end prejudice in their personal and professional lives and relinquish social privileges conferred by their group status to give support of non-dominant groups” (Henry et al. 5–8). Allies, then, are not fighting someone else’s battle; they are aligning themselves within a battle (5). Non-Indigenous allies can become educated by Indigenous people, especially women, about the experiences of “racial tensions” and discriminations that exist,

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western, white, patriarchal societies. Indigenous women cannot be considered equal to Indigenous men because Indigenous men, in fact, are not considered equal to white men. Under western laws and colonial patriarchal regimes, Indigenous people are not considered equal to white people (Brant and Lavell-Harvard 14). The intersects of race and gender are necessary to connect to Indigenous feminism because it is due to the negative constructs of race and gender towards Indigenous people that creates the barriers and discriminatory practices by which they are confronted. This is significant because according to bell hooks, oppression and discrimination impact everyone that is non-white in similar fashion—thus, the changes that need to occur to achieve equality under the feminist movement requires all people to be involved to perpetuating equality. This is what bell hooks calls the “multi-dimensional gathering of both genders to fight for the raising up of women and entire collective entities” (bell hooks 3; Green and Bourgeois 70). When Patricia Monture-Angus discusses the barriers to becoming a lawyer as a Mohawk woman, she has done this to draw attention to the continuing impact of colonization to this distinct population in university settings, but also to create an impact and influence change. By being overt about oppression, there is a movement away from assimilation to end the “white homogenous practices” that are at the core of discriminatory practices in the academy. This will pave the way for the achievement of positions for Indigenous staff, faculty, and/or students.

Allyship and the Responsibility of a Settler Educator

Alliances between Indigenous women and non-Indigenous white women were reinforced by scholars such as

especially within the academy. This education formulates a resistance against these practices to end barriers to education and employment (Silman 8). The formulation of these alliances will allow for the acceptance of differences and break down the construction of the “racialized other.” Through this education, guests become aware of their role and responsibilities towards Indigenous people, which includes acknowledging privilege. This paves the way to build a knowledge-base and create awareness towards Indigenous frameworks, methodologies, and ways of being to become a part of the academy (Koleszar-Green 15) As a settler educator, who is white, I fully take my lead from Indigenous women who can no longer do all the work to be able to create a movement towards changing oppressive structures within the academy (13). As a guest of Indigenous people, who is a settler, who is still learning to be a guest, I will work in alignment with Indigenous women to listen to their needs and wants to ensure that Indigenous ways of knowing and being in the world “survive and thrive” (13).

The article entitled “What Is a Guest? What Is a Settler?” by Ruth Koleszar-Green has provided the clarity to understand that I am a guest of Indigenous women and lands, also known as a settler, still learning to be a guest of Indigenous people. Ruth Koleszar-Green and Kathy Absolon share similar sentiments that colonizers were guests and they were supposed to respect their roles, as well as the roles of Indigenous people. They were supposed to learn from Indigenous people about how to live on the land and respect the lands that did not belong to them. They were supposed to respect Indigenous people, the treaties they made via wampum, and they were not expected to take what was not theirs.

Instead, they “Foiled the dish, took lands that were not theirs and they took more than what was expected of them. They were ungrateful guests who felt no connection to the lands” (Koleszar-Green 167; Absolon 37) Indigenous people are the original owners of this land, not just based on economics, but based on the fact that their spirituality, livelihood, teachings, and culture are integrally linked to the lands upon which they live. They use the lands and animals that live on various territories as symbols in storytelling and teachings as well as to draw strength from. As a white ally and settler educator, it is my responsibility to point out the importance of the connections to the lands by Indigenous people, and the fact that white colonizers stole the land to eradicate a culture and peoples. It is worth noting that the land, the community connection, is what colonialism wanted to break in order to perpetuate racial and discriminatory practices and avoid giving Indigenous people, especially women, their rightful places in the academy.

Sarah Maddison is vital to the discussion on being a settler scholar. Maddison has cited in her book, *The Colonial Fantasy: Why White Australia Can't Solve Black Problems* that “settlerness” is bound up with whiteness and settler privilege, and that the word settler is supposed to be deliberately discomforting and underscoring the nature of non-Indigenous people in relation to land and territories (133). For Maddison, the dispossession of Indigenous people created the current economic, citizenship, and social integrity of non-Indigenous people. By recognizing this, it will be possible to conduct decolonial research to make changes alongside Indigenous people. This will allow for more non-Indigenous people such as myself to be able to recognize the responsibility towards Indigenous people, not to be a saviour, but rather to work alongside them. It is my responsibility as a guest-educator to create a movement towards changing oppressive structures that exist especially in places such as academic institutions. For me, this is connected to the concept of positionality. Positionality for those that are white allies is crucial to the analysis of knowledge, and the understanding of the experiences of Indigenous women. This idea holds that perspective is determined by gender and ethnicity, as it is relational to the social contexts in which these identities operate. Positionality is an important aspect of identity, such as race and gender, because they are relational markers of relational positions rather than essential qualities. White allies must understand the position that they hold as being able to dismantle the knowledge construction of those of various races and genders. White allies must understand that identities of Indigenous women can be accepted and erase the realities of prejudice, discrimination, and exclusion. By influencing whites in institutions

and governments, this creates a movement towards ending oppressive colonial mentalities.

Conclusion

As a guest educator who takes her lead from Indigenous women, my role and responsibility is to dismantle the taken-for-granted assumptions of Canada, while expanding on the negative impact and experiences of colonialism for Indigenous people.

This will create educational disruptions for non-Indigenous people to provide non-Indigenous learners a space to unpack and relearn about colonial history. This will allow for an analysis of the evolution of legislations, terminology, and practices that continue to perpetuate mechanisms of control and eradication against Indigenous people; therefore, dismantling and providing the decolonizing of institutional structures, especially within the academy.

My goals as a settler educator with this paper are to align with Indigenous women to: a) evoke inclusionary spaces; b) allow for the creation and reception of equity practices for Indigenous staff, faculty, and/or students; and c) allow for the expression of the existence of Indigenous and gender-based violence and discrimination without having it be dismissed as “angry and emotional” (Henry et al. 5).

I am a PhD candidate in the School of Gender, Feminist and Sexuality Studies at York University. My dissertation work focuses on the existence of race-based discrimination that is rooted in dominant white hegemonic colonial views that socially construct differences while examining the overlaps between race, gender, and sex that are used to oppress, marginalize, and eradicate those that are constructed as the “racialized other.” Formulating alliances to present the existence of these systems of oppression and marginalization are key to decolonization. As a settler educator, I focus on aligning myself within the battle that many Indigenous communities face to end the race and gender-based violence that is perpetuated in the employment, academic and legal and socio-political institutions, and structures.

My dissertation entitled “Indigenization of the Academy: Resistance and Rethinking Colonial Practices in Postsecondary Institutions through an Examination of Indigenous Framework Plans, Ethnographic Storytelling and Guest Responsibilities” will contribute to the literature on Indigenization and decolonization of the academy especially because it includes a cross-reference to the TRC and the Calls to Action. My dissertation examines postsecondary institutions that have implemented Indigenous Framework Plans in conjunction with points 6–12 in the TRC’s Calls To Action to respond to my overall research question is as follows: “What role do

Indigenous Framework Plans play in advancing Indigenization agendas at postsecondary institutions in Ontario?” The overall purpose of my dissertation is not only to compare but also to measure success rates and how to make those accountable to adhering to the Indigenous plan if change has not been implemented and/or change is slow moving.

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