

# ALL RESEARCH IS A STORY: RECLAIMING INDIGENOUS RELATIONSHIPS IN ACADEMIA

A Student-Centred Conference hosted by Carleton University's  
Centre for Indigenous Research, Culture, Language and Education (CIRCLE)  
March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2015

PAPER ABSTRACTS

SESSION IA: RESTORYING

(9:15-10:45)

## **'This Belt Preserves My Words': Contesting the Colonial Archive of a 1655-58 Franco-Haudenosaunee Encounter**

Oliver Anderson (Carleton University)

My presentation examines two different histories of one single event: the dramatic evacuation of a French mission amongst the Onondagas in 1658. It compares the well-known version of this story told in Western historical accounts with a very different oral history that accompanies the Remembrance Belt, a wampum belt held within the Onondaga Nation. I will show how the Remembrance Belt's oral history was excluded from the academic record as a result of the practices of early ethnologists and historians who instead privileged European documentary history. I will draw on scholars such as Audra Simpson and Julie Cruikshank to demonstrate the underlying structures of authority and dispossession in this contest of history, and why this oral history should now be included in academia.

I will finish my presentation by showing how these two opposing histories have been forced to confront one another at a public history site in Syracuse, New York, once known as the "French Fort." Because of this heated contest between European and Indigenous historical legitimacy, this site has transformed into a Haudenosaunee Heritage Center, which is eager to recast the local importance of Haudenosaunee heritage, traditional knowledge, oral history and heal the effects of colonialism which began with the initial encounter in the 1650s.

## **Restorying the Relations: A Settler Journey of Decolonization toward a Theology of Liberation**

Joëlle Morgan (St. Paul University)

"The challenge lies in how, in the present, interdependent peoples *restory*." ~Jean Paul Lederach~

Engaging in a *restorying* process is essential for the decolonizing needed to overcome coloniality (a concept that points to the ongoing reality of colonialism) in Canada. To seek just relations between Indigenous and settler peoples who must continue to live in what Laura Donaldson calls the "contact zone," requires a deep listening on the part of settler peoples to the stories of Indigenous peoples.

This presentation draws on my ongoing doctoral thesis research. I will recount, through autoethnography, the story of a church community's involvement in righting or just relations with Indigenous peoples. This particular story is that of the lived experience of a group of settler people grappling with the colonial legacy on unceded Algonquin territory and engaging in the struggle to decolonize. By rooting this research in local experience, I can draw out themes and concepts that point toward a settler theology of liberation.

A settler theology of liberation requires efforts to un-settle patterns of dominance that have shaped and continue to shape the relationships between the Indigenous peoples and those of us who have come later to Canada as settlers. Drawing on the work of George Tinker (Osage) and Andrea Smith (Cherokee), among others, I will explore the concept of liberation as that of healing. The shift toward a principle of healing can open avenues toward a *consientisation* that offers tools for restorying relations in, on and with this land.

### **Dismantling Dominant Settler Narratives of History in Canada**

Phil Abbott (Trent University)

In Canada, narratives of history taught in schools and disseminated by the media often work to obfuscate colonization leading to widespread ignorance of the colonial past. These narratives render Indigenous presence on the land invisible, disregard the violence of the colonial process, and justify settler presence and governance within the nation-state. This research draws a correlation between such distorted narratives of history in Canada and the continued unbalance in settler and settler government's relationship with Indigenous nations. The research also explores how such distorted narratives of history impact historical consciousness within broader Canadian society and how these dominant narratives are disseminated and maintained. Through discourse analysis, the federal government's presentation of history in citizenship study guides and promotional material for the recent bicentenary celebrations of the War of 1812 are found to be consistent with this trend.

While recognizing the importance of acknowledging and respecting history as told by Indigenous nations it is also crucial that settlers articulate and disseminate settler counter-narratives. As a settler I seek to explore settler counter-narratives in Canada and how they can work toward a more balanced relationship between Indigenous Nations and settlers. Settler counter-narratives are critical, decolonizing, and link the continuation of settler colonial relationships in Canada to the current realities facing Indigenous nations.

**SESSION IB: EDUCATION**

(9:15-10:45)

### **"Let's Talk About Sex, Baby": Post-Secondary Teaching and Indigenous Erotic Visual Arts**

Charlotte Theresa Hoelke (Carleton University)

Scholar Chris Finley is critical of Native Studies academics who leave "sexuality" out of their scholarship. Finley argues that: "It is time to bring 'sexy back' to Native studies and quit pretending we are boring and pure and do not think or write about sex. We are alive, we are sexy, and some of us Natives are queer." Finley and others are concerned with how "sexual colonization" has historically and continually worked to oppress the sexual bodies, lives and identities of Indigenous peoples. Sexual colonization manifests in many forms, and has had great consequences, such as: the imposition of western heteronormative modes, understandings, and practices of sexuality and genders on Indigenous peoples; western-created negative stereotypes and misconceptions of Indigenous sex and sexuality such as the hypersexualized "dirty squaw" and "Poca-hottie"; and the widespread sexual violence that occurred at boarding schools in the United States, and residential schools in Canada. Cherokee scholar Qwo-Li Driskill asserts that "as Native people, our erotic lives and identities have been colonized along with our homelands," while Anishinaabe writer Kateri Akiwenzie Damm argues that for us "to heal... our own stories, poems and songs that celebrate our erotic natures must be the antidote." To this, I would add the erotic visual arts. In this presentation I will first explore how selected Indigenous visual artists respond to, and resist sexual colonization through their erotic works. Then, I will demonstrate how these artworks can be used as a decolonizing educational tool in Native Studies and other post-secondary classes.

### **Reshaping Teaching Methods and Approaches in Caribbean Communities**

Jeffrey H. Zavala (York University)

In this presentation I will be discussing the current systemic barriers when teaching within Caribbean communities, along with examining various approaches experienced through my own lived realities of working and living in Caribbean Diasporic communities. Furthermore, I will demonstrate the importance of utilizing traditional knowledge from Indigenous communities for teaching purposes across the Caribbean in order for students to 'uncover local realities'. This presentation will be an ethnography discussing various fieldwork techniques, research ethics and methods to obtaining traditional knowledge from Indigenous communities.

## **Community Centered Education as a Tool For Healing Intergenerational Trauma Transmission in First Nations Students**

Genesee Walker-Scace (Carleton University)

This paper explores education as a tool to mitigate the intergenerational transmission of trauma among First Nations students. The paper applies the Historical Trauma Transmission model (HTT) to demonstrate that culturally relevant, community based education aids in resolving transmission of trauma. According to the theoretical aspects of HTT, trauma is perpetuated in communities and families because of an inability to identify and heal past trauma in the current generation, ensuring that the dysfunctional coping methods that often occur do not continue into successive generations. HTT further asserts that Aboriginal peoples' lack of control of their own livelihood and poor cross - cultural understanding between Aboriginal peoples and non-Aboriginal peoples leads to trauma transmission. The paper demonstrates how education tailored to the cultural and community needs of First Nations students addresses each of these barriers through case studies in the province of Nova Scotia, British Columbia and Saskatchewan. When education is developed locally with the support of community stakeholders, education outcomes are stronger and cultural bridges are built. The paper will be presented, and a follow-up discussion on the benefits of culturally sensitive education as a healing tool will take place. Attendees to the presentation will be encouraged to share their experiences. Personal sharing of educational experiences in indigenous pedagogy or on-reserve schools will be encouraged.

### **SESSION IIA : RESISTING COLONIZING STRUCTURES AND INSTITUTIONS**

(11:00-12:00)

#### **Settler-Colonial Economics in Canada**

James Arruda (York University)

The purpose of this presentation is to start a critical discussion about the colonial aspects within the economics discipline in Canada. In other words, can economics be decolonized, or at least be subjected to an anti-colonial or anti-oppression perspective? As a work-in-progress, this project requires an early critical orientation from Indigenous and Indigenist scholars and researchers.

The economics discipline is definitely a social construction. Just as many other sciences, it was constructed by a small group of individuals with certain privileges. Hence, it becomes interesting to understand for whom and what society it was constructed for, and for whom it was not. For instance, feminist economics has challenged this androcentric academic body by re-centering gendered inequities into the analysis. Although the recent wave of feminism (and antiracism) has encouraged intersectionality in its analysis, it is still in the early steps of critically engaging colonialism, let alone settler-colonialism (Tuck et al., 2012, and Dua et al., 2005).

The ecological economics movement has also confronted neoclassical economics by reforming important pillars – scale, distribution and efficiency – and redirecting the attention of economists to the biosphere. However, this North American academic development has not fully embedded itself in its political context, namely settler-colonialism on Turtle Island. My focus will examine the oppressive and colonial aspects of (neoclassical and ecological) economics. This approach will then study the capitalist market as a colonial tool, which has oppressed, and still does oppress, Indigenous people in Canada. Hence, this implication disorients the neoclassical and neoliberal trajectory of economics.

## **Full Circle: Indigenous Social Work Practice**

Annie Kingston Miller (Carleton University)

For the first eighteen years of my life I grew up in an environment that provided me with a strong connection to the land and its associated rhythms. During the school year I lived with my Mom and sister in a rural area of Central Ontario. During the summer we would visit my Dad, who worked with First Nations communities in northern Ontario and Alberta and with Indigenous communities in South and Central America. It wasn't until I began attending school in an urban centre that I realized how growing up in a rural area had fundamentally shaped the person I had become. I witnessed startling inequalities during my time spent living in Indigenous communities, which fostered in me a deep desire to affect change. I desired to learn more about how the environments in which people live, work, play and raise their children affect their health and well-being. Since beginning my studies in social work and physical sciences at Carleton, I have focused on learning more about the social determinants of health, in relation to Indigenous people. As a student of mixed settler and Indigenous ancestry, I have also spent time reflecting on how my bi-cultural personhood affects my social work practice.

An attitude of mistrust continues to confront health care providers, social workers and other service providers who work in Indigenous communities. Through my study of Indigenous languages, cultures, spiritualities and history with colonial agents, as well as my knowledge of culturally competent care, I endeavour to work to overcome this barrier by creating a space where Indigenous people feel safe, respected and included. My presentation will focus on the findings of a learning objective I identified in my social work honours integrative seminar: to develop a deeper and more nuanced understanding of Indigenous social work practice through a literature review of the work of Indigenous scholars and interviews with practicing Indigenous counsellors and social workers. The presentation will highlight my findings, leaving conference attendees with ideas of how to create a culturally safe space, in any helping profession, in which Indigenous peoples first respected, welcome and safe.

### **SESSION IIB: LAND, THE ENVIRONMENT AND HOME**

(11:00-12:00)

#### **Testing Nunavut's IQ: Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and Climate Change Policy in the Canadian Arctic**

Holly Jones (Carleton University)

The consequences of anthropogenic climate change present a very immediate and significant challenge to Inuit. Researchers have increasingly drawn upon Inuit expertise to investigate evidence of climate change and to explore the human-environment interactions at risk from rapid environmental change. Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (IQ) is an embodiment of all aspects of traditional Inuit culture and can be described as a uniquely Inuit epistemology. Despite the creation of an IQ Task Force by the Government of Nunavut (GN), the territorial policy development structure currently used to address environmental and climate issues has proven insufficiently flexible and fails to consider the traditional context of Inuit cultural principles. Research will investigate the relationship between IQ principles and the Qallunaat (Euro-Canadian) structure of the GN and will aim to determine how IQ can be used in governance and policy development both in Nunavut and across the circumpolar Arctic to address a climate change agenda. Through a comparison of the UNESCO Traditional Knowledge Initiative framework for climate change adaptation policy and current GN agendas and strategies involving IQ, a considerable disconnect between global economic development goals within Western policy systems and Indigenous values and governance systems is demonstrated. Advancing the field of climate change research in the North is incomplete without collaborative action and an understanding of distinct Inuit cultural knowledge and the context in which it exists. This understanding can be promoted through the application of IQ in policy development.

### **This Isn't Home: Reshaping Neekanan (Our Home)**

Kateri Lucier-Laboucan (University of Toronto)

Housing conditions on First Nations reserves across Canada have often been described by many as alarming. Images of decrepit single-family housing that permeate recent news reports illustrate the urgent need for action. Despite the challenges involved in addressing such a significant social issue, this is also an incredible opportunity to re-define and re-consider how housing is designed and constructed within First Nations communities. Having spent my early childhood years living on my remote reserve in northern Canada, I witnessed and experienced these impoverished housing conditions. Unfortunately, this continues to be the norm among the vast majority of First Nations communities in Canada, particularly in the North. In addition to inadequacies with construction and unsuitable building materials for northern climates, the house design commonly used on many reserves does not reflect the needs or way of life of the First Nations People. Rather, one could argue that the design of the houses illustrates and contribute to the continued colonization of Our People. In light of the legacy of colonization along with the rapid population growth among First Nations communities, the need for well-constructed, sustainable, sufficient and culturally appropriate housing is increasingly urgent. For this reason, my research project addresses housing issues in northern Canada utilizing my reserve of Fox Lake, Alberta, as a case study. This research project will demonstrate how architecture can be transformative in improving housing that better reflects the traditional way of life of the Woodland Cree People while responding to the ever present realities of over crowding and poor housing conditions.

#### **SESSION IIIA: IDENTITY AND NAMING**

(1:00-2:00)

#### **Kanuhelatuksla – Words That Come Before All Else:**

#### **An Onyota'a:ka Way of Known through The Words of the Thanksgiving Address**

Neil Cornelius (Trent University)

The Thanksgiving Address is used to open all gatherings of the Onyota'a:ka/Oneida people in the traditional Longhouse. It also used in the community to open important gatherings and meetings. It is sometimes called the Opening as well as being termed The Words That Come Before All Else. It is a Haudenosaunee acknowledgement of Creation beginning with the ground and moving up to the skies. As it is done in the Onyota'a:ka language, the richness and Traditional knowledge embedded in the words are not imparted to Onyota'a:ka language learners.

The proposal involves the Oneida Nation of the Thames. The process would examine the words of the Thanksgiving Address by community members who are fluent Onyota'a:ka speakers, in order to learn the deeper cultural content contained in the words they say and hear. The images the words invoke in the minds of fluent speakers need to be revealed to Onyota'a:ka language learners. The fluent speakers would translate and interpret the words one by one in the research. My involvement would involve my presence in every step of the process in participatory action research approach.

The final document would become the property of the Onyota'a:ka people for use as a teaching tool as they continue to teach the Thanksgiving Address in the various Onyota'a:ka language programs. It would also serve as a model for development of other Onyota'a:ka materials containing traditional knowledge.

### **Worried Heart: Coming to Terms with my Dual identity”**

Sara Anderson (Carleton University)

In academia, the study of identity is normally limited to observations and discussions of external groups. Rarely do scholars have the opportunity to take a critical and introspective look at their own identity in any meaningful manner. However, one of the hallmarks of Aboriginal epistemology and pedagogy is understanding the relationality of knowledge (Champagne 2012) and being able to negotiate one’s own identity in the context of the learning environment. In an attempt to include Aboriginal pedagogy in the university classroom, the final project of ARTH 4005 (“Topics in Contemporary Aboriginal Art: Creative Engagement with Aboriginal Self-Portraits: A Discourse on the Nature of Self-Representation”) proposes to go one step beyond offering students a chance to be self-reflexive on paper: students are required to create a figurative self-portrait and reflect on it in the context of the readings, presentations and the work of other artists. As a métis student, I find the topic of identity to be culturally and politically-loaded, and this perspective is reflected in my self-portrait. In an individual presentation format, I will present my self-portrait as a work-in-progress and reflect on my struggle to come to terms with my dual identity(ies) in the context of the colonial spaces of Canada and the university. Emphasizing the family as the location of culture and identity for urban Aboriginal peoples (Lawrence 2004), I look back at the past to my two family’s diverse histories in order to continue moving forward into the future.

#### **SESSION IIIB: HEALING AND HEALTH**

(1:00-2:00)

### **Extending the Metaphor of “Two-eyed Seeing” into Health Research: Reflections on an arts-based project on Indigenous Cancer Experiences**

Chad Hammond (University of Ottawa)

“Two-eyed seeing” is a celebrated metaphor coined by Mi’kmaq Elder Albert Marshall to express the value of holding multiple perspectives, especially when working in cross-cultural settings. “Two-eyed seeing” means keeping one eye each on the strengths of Indigenous and Western knowledges. We strive to maintain this orientation within our arts-based research with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples living with cancer, reflected in the use of storytelling, photography, and journaling. We find the “two-eyed seeing” metaphor applicable in many respects as we engage Indigenous communities in and around Ottawa, and we will present on four of the most important applications: a) reversing power differentials between the academy and Indigenous communities; b) honouring how cancer is represented within both Indigenous and Western knowledges; c) consulting with Indigenous community members on a meaningful process of sharing stories of cancer; and c) using multimedia arts-based formats to communicate Indigenous experiences with cancer.

### **Healing for Reconciliation**

Lizzie Wait (Carleton University)

As aboriginal culture becomes more greatly expressed within contemporary Canada as part of ‘spiritual healing,’ I am looking at how aboriginal traditional cultural concepts, teachings and holistic ideology naturally foster a solid and positive foundation for the forming of strong reconciling relations with the Canadian state. Having observed the consistent and dignified messages of trust, honesty, forgiveness (based on the seven grandfather teachings) within aboriginal cultural ideology, my research was inspired by the understanding that as increased effort is made to revitalize and restore aboriginal cultural and spirituality, this should enhance, and not deter, positive and forgiving relations with non-native Canadians.

Many thanks for all participants whose work made this year's Centre for Indigenous Research, Culture, Language and Education (CIRCLE) conference possible. Thanks also to the organizations at Carleton University for their encouragement and financial support, including Student Affairs, the Centre for Initiatives in Education, the Aboriginal Enriched Support Program, the Carleton University Institute on the Ethics of Research with Indigenous Peoples ([www.carleton.ca/indigenousresearchethics](http://www.carleton.ca/indigenousresearchethics)), the Centre for Aboriginal Cultural and Education.

Some information about these programs/institutions:

**Centre for Indigenous Research, Culture, Language and Education (CIRCLE):** The Centre for Indigenous Research, Culture, Language and Education (CIRCLE) strives to facilitate the research, and delivery of linguistic and cultural materials of the First Peoples of North America as well as all Canadians. A special focus is on cultural expressions linked with music and language, both for Aboriginal Canadians and other indigenous people. ([carleton.ca/circle](http://carleton.ca/circle))

**The Centre for Aboriginal Culture and Education (CACE)** has three Aboriginal Cultural Liaison Officers working collaboratively with Aboriginal (First Nations, Inuit and Métis) communities and other departments on campus such as the Undergraduate Recruitment Office, the Centre for Initiatives in Education, the Aboriginal Service Centre and the First Peoples Council to increase the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal students, faculty and staff. (<http://carleton.ca/aboriginal/>)

CACE supports Aboriginal students, faculty and staff through a variety of programs and services, including the annual Aboriginal Welcome and the Visiting Elders program. CACE hosts a number of Aboriginal social and cultural activities in Ojigkwanong (228 Paterson Hall). Aboriginal lectures, powwows and other cultural events provide a learning and sharing environment for Aboriginal students and promote knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal cultures, traditions, history, worldviews and contemporary issues.

**Carleton University Institute on the Ethics of Research with Indigenous Peoples (CUIERIP)** is a week-long summer institute where Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers learn about the ethics of research with Indigenous communities, particularly First Nations, Inuit and Métis in Canada. Participants learn in a collaborative environment and are led by Carleton faculty, research ethics professionals, and community-based researchers. ([www.carleton.ca/indigenousresearchethics](http://www.carleton.ca/indigenousresearchethics))

