

## **RECKONING WITH CANADA AT 150: Indigenous Sovereignties and Critical Settler Perspectives**

Carleton University's Centre for Indigenous Research, Culture, Language and Education (CIRCLE) and the Indigenous and Canadian Studies Graduate Community  
March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2017 at Paterson Hall

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### **ABSTRACTS**

Arranged in order of presentation

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#### **SESSION IA: CREATING COMMUNITY**

##### **ROUNDTABLE - *Indigenous Faculty and Students' Experiences Navigating the Institution***

**Lily Ieroniawakon Deer (moderator), Kahente Horn-Miller, Zoe Todd, Fredrick Stoneypoint, William Lafrance & Summer-Harmony Twenish (Carleton University)**

As described by Sheila Cote-Meek, "... education for Aboriginal peoples has always been and continues to be part of the colonial regime – one that is marked by violence and abuse and has had devastating consequences" (Introduction, *Colonized Classrooms: Racism, Trauma, and Resistance in Post-Secondary Education*, Fernwood 2014.) This roundtable discussion will be an open dialogue between Indigenous faculty and Indigenous students on their experiences navigating and being present in higher education institutions. The conversation will ultimately depend on what each participant will choose to share, though some potential themes and topics may include: personal experiences as students and faculty in university, pedagogy used by Indigenous faculty within classroom setting, importance of relationships between Indigenous students and Indigenous faculty (ie: as mentors and role models), and the creation of an Indigenous community within Western educational spheres as support structures.

#### **SESSION IB: RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE LAND**

##### **PRESENTATION - *Weaving the Fabric of Everyday Life in an Alaskan Village***

**Sonya Gray (Carleton University)**

For my research project, *The Contemporary Story: Weaving the Fabric of Life in an Alaskan Village*, I returned to my hometown of Hoonah, Alaska to conduct my research. This research occurred during a ten day stay in August 2016, where I interviewed a total of 8 people who were both Indigenous and non-Indigenous. Using a contemporary story about a young man who saved an ailing and injured sea-lion that was attacked by killer-whales by feeding it, my interviews were based upon the interviewees reactions to and or knowledge of this story. I am able to tell this story because it is one from my family and clan: Taakweneidee or Sea Lion house. The basis for my research, founded upon the application of story as method, is to re-situate myself into this story as an Indigenous woman and clan member to be able to share the process of how knowledge is transmitted, laws are constructed and how humans and non-human animals govern their relationships to each other and the world around us.

For the presentation of my research, and to add to the Conference sub-theme of *Decolonization and Positionalities*, I'd like to present my research as an illustration of the non-positionality of the villagers on colonization or de-colonization. The relationships with land, non-human animals and economic systems, which are often deemed interchangeable and equivocal, consider events and socialization as temporary in time and space. In other words, to be colonized is to admit to a human-centric ideology.

**PRESENTATION - *Unsettling settler colonialism's spatialities: Indigenous claims to land in urban spaces***  
**Kanatase Horn (Carleton University)**

When thinking about Indigenous resistance to settler colonialism in Canada, one is likely to imagine a native protest, a blockade, or even the use of violence and physical conflict. Such actions are correctly assumed to be deployed by Indigenous communities to halt resource development, and the accompanying destruction of their traditional territories. An important highlight of these narratives of resistance is that the forms of resistance they describe are imagined to take place on the Canadian frontier, far away from urban spaces.

While these narratives hold merit, and describe historic, as well as ongoing displays of Indigenous resistance in largely rural areas, it is problematic to assume the only legitimate place for Indigenous claims to land is *beyond* the borders of the city, since this narrative has material consequences. That is, these narratives do not challenge settler colonialism's spatial logic, which has demarcated where Indigenous and non-Indigenous bodies are meant to exist. Simply put, Indigenous bodies, especially their accompanying claims to land, are assumed to exist outside of the city, which tends to delegitimize Indigenous (legal) claims to urban space.

To better understand these issues, my paper will explore the Zibi condo development project in Ottawa, Ontario, where a condo developer is currently planning to build on lands the Anishinaabeg (Algonquin) people have never surrendered via treaty, and more importantly, lands they consider to be sacred. These factors ground the Anishinaabeg people's displays of resistance to the Zibi project. However, beyond the difficulties associated with making a successful legal claim to halt/prevent development, the Anishinaabeg must confront, and ultimately unsettle, settler colonialism's spatial logics, and the assumption that there are no other claims to Canadian urban space. In other words, my paper will explore the complexities of when Indigenous people challenge settler colonialism's geographies.

**PRESENTATION - *Is the Kumik in a Skyscraper at Terrasses de la Chaudière in Hull, Québec a sacred space?***  
**Judy Jibb (University of Wales Trinity St David)**

This paper discusses whether the Kumik lodge is a sacred space. Built inside a skyscraper that headquarters Canadian government aboriginal affairs administration that overlooks the sacred waterfalls Akiko or Great Kettle of Boiling Water or Chaudière Falls, in the Ottawa River landscape. French explorers met Algonquin hunters and gatherers here four centuries ago. Indigenous cosmologies are complex but typically held all nature as animate. Today the dominant paradigm of scientism is evident in the surrounding office towers and hydro turbines. In researching the sacred, Eliade recommended the phenomenological approach, he thought sacred could occur naturally or could be human-built. From the evidence, the Kumik is a human constructed space made sacred in the acknowledgment and repetition within it of ideas from Algonquin spirituality. New trends are emerging where individuals are claiming back the landscape and small installations like the Algonquin lodge inside a workplace seem to be re-establishing this connection.

**PRESENTATION - *Decolonization and Deindustrialization in Northern Resource Communities***  
**Bruce Mckenna (University of Ottawa)**

My MA research takes Northern Manitoba as an area of focus through which to evaluate questions which I believe are common throughout the Canadian Shield country. This region was gradually colonized through the fur trade, and transformed into a part of Canada by the development of an industrial resource economy in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As a student in Political Thought, I am concerned with the types of ideological understandings that have driven processes of colonization, and with opening up decolonial intellectual paths through a critique of those understandings. It seems to me that the decline of the industrial north shows us something about the inherent flaws of the modern project. In Northern Manitoba, the coupling of capitalism with scientific rationality and a degree of state planning was supposed to bring about a brighter future based on economic expansion through the exploitation of natural resources. A century

later, things are not so bright. Lakes have given way to tailings ponds, low-lying country has been flooded for hydroelectric projects, and Cree communities face appalling poverty and poor health. What progress has there been?

I would like to suggest that by engaging with the histories and experiences of the original inhabitants of the North, and interpreting the collective reality of economic decline, those of us of settler and immigrant descent can re-imagine the political values which in the past we have taken for granted. How might the experience of deindustrialization inform a decolonial politics of ecological sustainability, solidarity with indigenous people, and economic justice?

I have so far drawn substantially on the work of historians such as Frank Tough, Jim Mochoruk, and James Waldram, and on interventions by indigenous theorists such as Glen Coulthard and Taiaiake Alfred. This is very much a work in progress, and I would be pleased to hear criticism from scholars and community members.

## **SESSION IIA: INDIGENEITY AND THE VISUAL ARTS**

### **PRESENTATION - Barry Ace: *Beads and Motherboards***

**Anna Paluch (Carleton University)**

Reclaiming traditional Indigenous artistic practices can be seen as a form of survivance and material activism. Odawa artist Barry Ace understands this concept, as his work uses traditional materials as well as new materials to help tell his own stories, culture and life through beadwork. The term survivance was reintroduced into scholarly discourse by Anishinaabe scholar Gerald Vizenor, as a term to describe the presence of Indigenous peoples in contemporary society through survival and resistance. Adapting to new situations, and in the creative sense, new materials, shows that “tradition clearly isn’t a static thing but something that changes constantly”<sup>1</sup>, a concept that is familiar to Ace, who incorporates very unique, new materials into his traditional beaded art pieces; computer parts.

This presentation will show that by re-inscribing traditional Indigenous narratives through his unique style of beadwork, Barry Ace creates a cultural revolution, combining traditional materials with the computer parts; Ace Indigenizes and decolonizes the technology. His work also raises awareness on social issues such as supply to clean water on reservations, and Missing and Murdered Indigenous women. He shows that tradition and technology are capable of coexisting together – the digital age allows for easy and fast flow of knowledge, but stepping back and being tactile adds another dimension to this knowledge. Barry Ace has learned how to maneuver himself through these two worlds of traditional materials and technological advancements.

[1] Deborah Doxtator, "Basket, Bead and Quill, and the Making of 'Traditional Art,'" in *Basket, Bead and Quill* edited by Janet E Clark, Thunder Bay: Thunder Bay Art Gallery, 1995: 12

### **PRESENTATION - *On Approaching Contemporary Art***

**Jocelyn Piirainen (Carleton University)**

In an article titled “Is There an Indigenous Way to Write about Indigenous Art?”, Richard William Hill recently contemplated “in purely practical terms, how would you bracket off Indigenous culture? Where do you draw the line? No more pop culture?”<sup>1</sup>

Had certain Indigenous artists bracketed off pop culture, the Indigenous pop culture-oriented exhibition Neon NDN would have been something quite different. In this Information Age, pop culture is everywhere and it's not surprising many contemporary Indigenous artists engage with popular characters from film, television, video games, comic books, even corporate symbols and brand names. Through interacting with, reclaiming, and repurposing popular culture, 20 Indigenous artists that were featured in Neon NDN challenge a number of stereotypes and Hollywood tropes that have been set against Indigenous people and culture in general.

Along with the influences of pop culture within contemporary artistic practice, I hope to open up a discussion on the future of Indigenous contemporary art - what does the future look like for indigenous artists?

An alternative to this would be to discuss my position as one of a handful of Inuit curators (possibly within Canada) and how I managed to “luck out” with this exhibition; in curating Neon NDN

<sup>1</sup> Richard William Hill, “Is There an Indigenous Way to Write about Indigenous Art?”, Canadian Art May 25, 2016, <http://canadianart.ca/features/indigenous-way-write-indigenous-art/>

**PRESENTATION - *The National Gallery of Canada Transformation: Assimilation or Reconciliation?*  
Chloe Barker, Natasha Beedie, Carly Crawford & Ali MacMillan (Carleton University)**

Our student research group of both mixed Indigenous and settler heritage, is in the midst of completing a discourse analysis of the exhibition, acquisition and research policies of the National Gallery of Canada (NGC) in order to identify gaps which exclude, erase or diminish Indigeneity within this institution. We believe that this project is imperative as the gallery approaches its celebration of Canada’s 150th anniversary of Confederation while simultaneously merging its Canadian and Indigenous art collections together and renovating said galleries. Our group aims to discover whether the NGCs policy and recent actions align with the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions calls to action, four of which directly apply to museums and archival institutions. As Canada’s premiere gallery, the NGC is a pivotal institution both domestically and internationally, rendering it crucial to assume a leading role in adopting best practices which reflect a reconciliatory attitude.

As other Canadian art institutions, such as the Art Gallery of Ontario, assemble ambitious exhibits which attempt to acknowledge Canada’s colonial past, the NGC at the time of this writing has not released any information regarding the reasoning behind the merger, the intended outcome or the resulting exhibition. Under the guise of “building anticipation” Canadians during a landmark year for tourism, have symbolically and physically been excluded from the conversation, with the Canadian galleries being closed to visitors for nearly six months. This analysis will attempt to answer the question of how committed the NGC is to meaningful collaboration with Indigenous people surrounding this process and what the larger ramifications for Canadian museum and archival practices in the future may be.

**PRESENTATION - *The Settler Colonial Logic of Secularism: Investigating Sovereignties through Symbols of Authority*  
Stacy Swain (University of Ottawa)**

Each sitting within a session of the Canadian House of Commons opens with the procession of the ceremonial mace, which is an ornamental staff that symbolizes the authority of the Speaker. The mace is a secular symbol and thus a political one, tied as it is to the ruling order and the sovereignty of the British Crown. While symbols of the Crown’s sovereignty are inextricable from the settler colonial logic that undergirds contemporary Canadian sovereignty, such objects have been normalized. What if, however, a symbol of the authority of an alternative and former sovereignty were to appear within a Canadian political, legal, or legislative context? Beginning with 1990 as a key moment in Indigenous-Canadian relations and proceeding to 2016, this paper traces appearances of the eagle feather as a symbol of Indigenous sovereignty in interactions involving the state. Rather than addressing the meaning or experience of spiritual symbols in themselves, this paper utilizes a critical religion approach to focus upon how Canadian normativity – with a settler colonial logic– both constrains and enables the deployment of such symbols and affects their potentiality. By examining how the construction and classification of the eagle feather as a religious or spiritual symbol occurs against a backdrop of state secularism, we might better understand the interplay between Indigenous discursive practices and structural or objective state violence.

**SESSION IIB: BRIDGE-BUILDING AND RECONCILIATION**

**PRESENTATION - *Reconciliation amongst Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth through participation in reciprocal youth exchanges***

## **Jaime McCullough (Carleton University)**

Approximately 150,000 Indigenous youth were removed from their homes to attend government run, church based residential schools. The first residential school was established in 1935 and the last one closed in 1996. The residential school system was part of a colonial project which displaced Indigenous children from their land, prohibited their language and traditions.

In 2008 the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) was established as a response to the Indian Residential School legacy. The commission concluded with a report that included 94 calls to action. Two specific calls to action involve reciprocity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth, these are 63 and 66. Call to action #63 iii, states “building student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy and mutual respect” (TRC, 239) and # 66, “we call upon the federal government to establish multi-year funding for community-based organizations to deliver programs on reconciliation, and establish a national network to share information and best practices.”(TRC, 245)

To reconcile and to establish mutually respectful relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, we have to acknowledge the historical truths of the residential school system. One method of reconciliation is participation in reciprocal youth exchange programs; where youth spend one week in each other’s community and learn the traditions and customs. The reciprocal youth exchange program expose youth to intercultural understanding within Canada. During the one week youth exchange, youth foster a better understanding of a different place, culture and language. The exchanges promote youth engagement and are a form of culture revitalization. Stereotypes and falsehoods that have been created by years of colonization are transformed into truths as the youth make connections with each other and develop a strong respect of another culture. These youth exchanges play a role in decolonization, as they provide a platform for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth to connect and develop a mutually respectful relationship with each other on common ground.

## **PRESENTATION - *Building from the Bottom Up: The Social Work Pledge for Reconciliation* Kristy Townshend & Elaine Waddington Lamont (Carleton University)**

In 2015, based on the testimony of approximately six thousand Aboriginal people placed in residential schools as children, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) produced a document with ninety-four ‘Calls to Action’ to “redress the legacy of residential schools and advance the process of Canadian reconciliation” (TRC, 2015, p.1). The five foremost calls to action directly address inequities in Child Welfare. In an effort to take a small step toward answering these calls, the students of the 2016 Master’s of Social Work Foundation year program at the Carleton University School of Social Work organized an event called *Building from the Bottom Up: Discourses of Reconciliation and the Role of the Social Work Profession*, held on Nov. 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2016. Following the presentations from a distinguished panel of Indigenous and Non-Indigenous guests, the participants at the event used the “Touchstones of Hope” developed by Cindy Blackstock and colleagues to facilitate discussion. These Touchstones are: 1) Truth telling; 2) Acknowledging; 3) Restoring; and 4) Relating. The groups were instructed to direct their discussion towards developing language for a “Social Work Pledge for Reconciliation”, using the Hippocratic Oath from the medical profession as a guide. The resulting pledge was drawn based on the outcomes of group discussions, then reviewed by the event’s speakers, and other stakeholders. As a group, we have vowed to take this pledge at our convocation ceremony, and also strive to create avenues for continued conversation, relationship building, and social change surrounding reconciliation within our communities.

Blackstock, C., First Nations Child & Family Caring Society of Canada, & National Indian Child Welfare Association.

(2006). *Reconciliation in child welfare: Touchstones of hope for Indigenous children, youth, and families*. Ottawa, ON: First Nations Child & Family Caring Society of Canada.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada [TRC]. (2015a). *Calls to Action* [Pdf file]. Retrieved from: [http://nctr.ca/assets/reports/Calls\\_to\\_Action\\_English2.pdf](http://nctr.ca/assets/reports/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf)

**PRESENTATION - Discover Canada and its Effect on the Relationship between Immigrant and Aboriginal Communities**

**Rebecca Wong (University of Ottawa)**

This paper examines the study guide (titled Discover Canada) for immigrants written by Citizenship and Immigration Canada. It analyzes the representation of Aboriginal communities to newly arrived Canadians. This article demonstrates how the processes of nation-building, citizenship and settler nationalism influence how new immigrants view Aboriginal communities. The need to create a national Canadian identity results in an identity founded mainly upon British and French contributions. This identity focuses on the economic contributions by the British and French, which in turn results in the erasure of Aboriginal heritage. Throughout the process of citizenship, the state outlines the characteristics of citizens, valorizing civic obedience to European models of governance. This delegitimizes other forms of governance, most especially Aboriginal ones. This article also demonstrates how the entirety of Discover Canada is a perpetuation of settler nationalism. Aboriginal nations are given mention and are consequently incorporated into the national dialogue rather than portrayed as distinct societies. This article explores how Discover Canada perpetuates an incomplete and stereotypical perspective of Aboriginal people in Canada. In the year of Canada's 150th anniversary, the relationship between Indigenous and immigrant communities is becoming increasingly important. Bridging the gap between those who have continued to live here even before Canada existed and those who are just arriving may be crucial to the decolonization of Canada.

**PRESENTATION - *Empowering through Disengendering: The Issues of International Recognition***

**Jordan Mota (McMaster University)**

This paper seeks to problematize the concept of international recognition politics. Namely this paper will look at the boomerang effect as presented in Keck and Sikkirk's work, which outlines a path for activist recognition through appealing to international actors. This being a currently popular avenue for Indigenous sovereignty recognition, the intention of this paper will be to problematize this, by seeing it as no different then seeking recognition from the state itself. Although there is political value in seeking recognition from both national and international liberal nation states the inherit paternal relationship of recognition politics, namely the power of recognition being in the hands of the colonizer, still perpetuates the subordination of Indigenous peoples. This paper will then turn to Latin America, where the layering of colonialism has forced many Indigenous communities to seek self-legitimization through transnational activist networks, and in turn challenge the very gendered relationship between the liberal state and Indigenous peoples. It is important that we look to the self-legitimizing efforts of transnational activist networks, for it is here where the power to legitimize is taken away from the colonizer and returned to the colonized. For in order to end the cycle of violence and victimization of colonialism we must challenge the gendered relationships of not only the colonial nation state, but also the international regimes of which the nation states participate within themselves.

**POSTER PRESENTATION - *Evolution of Yucatec Maya Teaching Practices***

**Mariana Dominguez (University of Ottawa)**

Research in language teaching is important because it helps us know what has and what is being done in the field, as well as the areas that need more inquiry (Stern, 2009). Simultaneously, it is important to develop linkages between indigenous people in the world. This study talks about Yucatec Maya, a Mexican oral-based indigenous language spoken in the three states of the Yucatan Peninsula which is currently being taught to Spanish speakers, to people of Maya ancestry who want to improve their speaking or writing skills, and to foreign researchers for academic purposes. Drawing from social constructivism, the purpose of this instrumental case study (Creswell, 2013) was to explore the development of Yucatec Maya teaching practices of an experienced Yucatec Maya teacher over the past three decades, identifying pedagogical changes and decisions made during this time, and to investigate his influence

in the training of new generations of Yucatec Maya teachers. Results show a self promoted development in the identification of students' profile and implementation of class dynamics, design of course content and materials, and approach to language teaching and teacher training. Although the data presented in this poster is not exhaustive, it helps to have a better idea of the challenges this teacher has encountered in his career and how he has overcome them. By continuing to explore these topics we could get a better understanding of how Yucatec Maya is currently being taught and then proceed to suggest pertinent actions for the field.

### **SESSION IIIA: DECOLONIZATION & "UNSETTLING"**

#### **PRESENTATION - *An Open Letter to My Whiteness***

**Julianna Morin (Carleton University)**

"An Open Letter to My Whiteness" is a spoken-word piece that addresses the ways in which I am decolonizing my own body. I acknowledge that my body is a zone of contact and conflict between indigeneity and settler-colonialism. The colour of my skin screams out my complicity with the horrors of history and is my underserved inheritance from the historic labours of my settler-colonizer ancestors to advance the devastating progress of the colonial machine. My whiteness secures a place for me in many privileged spaces, including in academia. But I am not a white girl; I am an indigenous woman.

I am a non-status indigenous person. This social identifier means that generations ago, following a sexist, racist amendment, by the Canadian Government, to the already inherently discriminatory Indian Act, my ancestors were stripped of their title, their few remaining rights, and their humanity. One result of this was that I was raised off-reserve, without connection to my ancestors' traditional territories, language, teachings, or cultural values. I remember growing up in a completely colonized environment, not realizing that the deep-seated discontent I felt was my spirit's expression of cultural dissonance.

I am Anishinabek. My clan is the loon, a cultural distinction which endowed my peoples with the traditional responsibility of facilitating important social discourse within our communities. As a social work student, I am honoured to be able to carry-on the work of my ancestors by creating opportunities for communication within my communities. In openly addressing my whiteness from a decolonial, intersectional feminist perspective, I explore both the unique pains and privileges of being "white-passing", as well as construct my own authentic indigenous "self".

#### **PRESENTATION - *Catch and Release: An RCT Approach to Grappling with the Hypocrisy of Western/Settler Logics***

**Ariadni Athanassiadis (Carleton University)**

Thomas King in *The Truth About Stories* writes, "[t]o every action there is a story," and for every story heard we must reflect on how we will live, or not live our lives differently. And so it is with the stories I have sought out, heard, read, and been a part of since beginning my MA in the Department of Indigenous and Canadian Studies. Each course has been its own collection of stories flowing and merging with stories of a life off campus as a legal professional in the field of intellectual property, a field conceived and generally executed according to Western socioeconomic practices. Throughout this experience I have grappled with the persisting hypocrisy of Western and settler logics that non-Indigenous individuals and society must fully acknowledge their role in. Without doing so, we will not be able to disengage from these logics and choose decolonizing ways of being and living. Guided by the stories of Indigenous experience and wisdom I have had the privilege to learn, I have been exploring the field and practice of Relational Cultural Theory (RCT) as a framework through which to identify, unpack and disengage from the Western and settler logics permeating the story of my life, as it interweaves with the life stories of others in this place and time. I offer the account of this personal, unfolding paradigm shift in how I engage in all my relations, in service of imagining the next 150 years on Turtle Island.

**PRESENTATION - *British Canada 254: re-positioning the struggle for decolonization in Canada***  
**Aedan Alderson (York University)**

This presentation draws upon my ongoing dissertation research in order to argue that Canada's 150 year celebration of confederation is an urgent attempt by the settler government to re-affirm the post-colonial assumptions of the Canadian state. Through Interrogating the presupposed independence of the Canadian state since constitutional-patriation 35 years ago, this presentation questions the implications of talking about decolonization without confronting the state of British-rule over Indigenous land in Canada.

Particular attention will be paid to the rise of nationalist discourses in the colony during the past 254 years since the end of the 7 years war when Britain declared itself the only nation that settlers could buy Indigenous land from via the Royal Proclamation and subsequent treaty system. Drawing on comparative historical research this talk will highlight some of the ways that Britain has distanced itself from its treaty responsibilities through the misrepresentation of the Canadian state as independent. In doing so, it re-positions the ongoing expansion of settler colonialism and struggles for reconciliation and repatriation of Indigenous land here in Canada within the context of global struggles against British imperialism. Revisiting the legacies of broken promises between the Canadian state and Indigenous nations with this in mind, this talk invites participants to ask themselves: What does it imply for reconciliation and decolonization if the Queen of England is the head of the Canadian state? How might re-envisioning settler Canada as a modern British colony affect the tactics used in fighting for treaty rights, settler-Indigenous allyship, and Indigenous resurgence?

**PRESENTATION - *Rejecting Reconciliation in Search of Settler Uncertainty***  
**Kirk Kitzul (Carleton University)**

The paper investigates the use of "Reconciliation" by the Canadian Government and how government discourse influences what the process of Reconciliation means for Canadians. I examine the first appearance of "Reconciliation" following the Oka Crisis in 1990 and follow the word through the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples to its use today under Justin Trudeau's Liberal Government. Utilizing the work of Métis scholar David Garneau, I propose using "Conciliation" instead of "Reconciliation" in attempt to unsettle the promise of a Canadian future.

**SESSION IIIB: STORYTELLING & MEDIA**

**PRESENTATION - *Storytelling in the Digital Age***  
**Laura Gagnon (Carleton University)**

My name is Laura Gagnon and I am writing a proposal to read a story that I created for my 4<sup>th</sup> year Communications Seminar called "Storytelling in the Digital Age". I wrote this story as a form of healing from the loss of my Grandmother, Charlotte Ashpenaquestcum. The reason why I would like to share this story is because it helped me visualize how my Grandmother vanished. I have never met my Grandmother who was an Anishnabe-kwe and was from the fly-in reserve Fort Hope, Ontario. The title of the story is called "The Spin Cycle" and it tells the story of parts of the investigation from Mary Anne, her daughter's perspective. I received an A for this assignment and the Instructor had explained that when a student receives an A that it would be the type of work that he would publish without question. So, as stated above, I would like to read the story aloud, to share my story, to share my strength and to share my strength with others who have lost or never met family members. She is one of the spirits who I sing to when I drum and that is a connection that will never be torn.

**PRESENTATION - *Resistance through beautiful things: The Rematriation of Inuit Facial Tattooing***  
**Katherine Snow (Carleton University) and Martha Attridge Bufton (University of Alberta)**



In the early 1800s, a southern “lady” went north and chronicled her experience in a book entitled *A Peep at the Esquimaux: Scenes on the Ice*. Commenting on “Esquimaux” women, she observed that they had big lips, tiny dark eyes and unclean faces—perhaps due to their facial tattoos. By the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the traditional Inuit practice of welcoming Inuit girls to womanhood with tattoos had ceased, discouraged or oppressed by the colonization of the north.

In an act of resistance, if not resurgence, Inuk filmmaker Alethea Arnaquq-Baril made the decision to be tattooed and has inspired other Inuit women to do the same. There are now more than 200 women in the circumpolar region engaging in this practice and a growing number of Indigenous tattooists who are creating this “embodied knowledge” using both modern and traditional methods.

The purpose of our graduate research project is twofold. One, we analyze Arnaquq-Baril’s journey in the context of Indigenous resurgence in Canada. Informed by the work of Indigenous scholars such as Audra Simpson, Taiaiake Alfred and Shawn Wilson, we argue that while different in nature and strategy from politically charged, land-based flashpoints, such as the First Nations blockade at Oka or the Innu struggle to preserve their homeland Nitassinan, the rematriation of Inuit women’s tattooing is an example of transformative social action. This act of “resistance through beautiful things” has led to the internationally recognized documentary film, *Tunniit*, and facilitated a renewed interest in traditional Indigenous tattooing around the world, thus demonstrating that non-violent and everyday acts of resistance can be powerful agents for decolonization.

And two, we explore an alternative research methodology by presenting our results as a dynamic, multimedia website. Storytelling has not always been considered a valid Western research practice. However, as Indigenous scholars have stated, stories are central to knowledge production and transmission in First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities. As non-Indigenous scholars, we believe that we can answer the Truth and Reconciliation Commission call to build mutually respectful relations with First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples by developing a scholarly *praxis* that is appropriate for Canada at 150 because it honours a diversity of worldviews and voices. Our website combines text with audio and video recordings in addition to visual representations to create a hybrid narrative that attempts to reflect both Indigenous and non-Indigenous knowledge traditions.

**PANEL - *Critical Indigenous Media Interventions: Community, Identity, and Storytelling***  
**Anna Hoque, Darren Zanussi & Emily Putnam (Carleton University)**

Our CuPortfolio is a result of a multidisciplinary collaborative endeavor that examines Indigenous media interventions coalescing at the nexus of new media, humour, and remix culture. The guiding principle for the project was to have an accessible platform that academics and non-academics could utilize to inform at the individual and the community level. Indigenous media resurgence acts as an alternate mode of engaging communities in regenerative projects. A Tribe Called Red, Jackson 2bears, and Ryan McMahon provide possibilities for communities to undertake these projects when separated from the natural world: in media sovereignty projects, “land” is more loosely defined within the context of audio, video, and the interface of the web. The underlying premise for this project was to examine artistic interventions that seek to destabilize traditional conceptualizations of storytelling and repudiate colonial constructions of ‘Indian-ness’. Furthermore, the collaboration enabled us to reveal a unifying link that draws these artists together in the larger context of Indigenous resurgence. By usurping and deconstructing colonial narratives about Indigenous identities, A Tribe Called Red, Jackson 2bears, and Ryan McMahon’s artistic productions facilitate alternate ways for Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples to connect to Indigenous teachings and knowledge-making. While each artist’s emphasis is largely on ‘Pan-Indigeneity’, these projects offer a counter-narrative and lay the notion that Indigenous Peoples are relics of the past to shambles. By intervening through digital media, there is an emphasis on demystifying what it means to be Indigenous in the 21st century.

Indigenous use of new technologies is not a new practice; in fact, Indigenous communities are at the forefront of integrating new media technologies as avenues to keep language and culture accessible and vibrant. In geographic

spaces that span great distances, new media technologies function as intermediary platforms to foster community engagement outside the scope of tangible space. Digital and technological devices become an additional way to re-orient fragmented identities with a sense of cohesive, enclosed spaces celebrating traditional languages, rituals, and practices. These multi-media pieces work dynamically: obscuring and challenging settler notions of containment, transforming urban sites into Indigenous spaces, transfusing imagery, sounds, and language to expose colonial structures and celebrating Indigenous identities while exploring larger discursive ramifications of Indigenous Peoples' use of new media.

**KEYNOTE: “Be Safe, Nīcimos”: Indigenous Freedom and Curiosity in the Wastelands by Erica Violet Lee**

What does it mean to be safe and free in the context of a colonial state? The frontlines of Indigenous struggle are everywhere, now: from the prairies and rivers to city streets, and in classrooms. In a world where our movement is criminalized and our presence is resistance, Indigenous curiosity is radical vulnerability, memory, and futurism. Travelling toward an Indigenous feminist conception of freedom, we reclaim our homes in the world.

*Erica Violet Lee is a Nēhiyaw writer, student, and community organizer from misâskwatōminihk (Saskatoon), Treaty 6 Territory and Métis Homeland. (she will provide a longer bio for her introduction at the actual conference).*

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The keynote will open with the performance of a selection of songs by Larissa Desrosiers. Larissa is an emerging Anishinaabe singer/songwriter from Couchiching First Nation and Fort Frances in Northern Ontario. Her music is a blend of folk-inspired sounds and social justice issues, particularly around contemporary Indigenous issues in Canada. In addition to an active performance schedule, Larissa is also completing her third year of studies in the Bachelor of Music program at Carleton University. She studies with Lynn Miles in the Singer/Songwriter stream and is also pursuing a minor in Indigenous Studies. She is currently working on her first album and has recordings of performances on her songs available on YouTube.

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**For more information on the conference visit [www.carleton.ca/circle/student-conference](http://www.carleton.ca/circle/student-conference).**