Western epistemic dominance and colonial structures: Considerations for thought and practice in programs of teacher education

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Abstract

This article is an exploration of the dynamics of contemporary colonialism in the Canadian settler nation-state in the context of programs of teacher education. From my perspective as a settler-scholar-teacher working in teacher education, I explore the imposition of Western forms of knowledge production in higher education in settler dominated academic spaces. Through a *coloniality* lens, I consider the ways that educational spaces in higher education continue to support and perpetuate structures of colonialism through an epistemic monoculture based in Western scientific materialism. I particularly explore the ways the imposition of a Western secular cosmology silences and resists Indigenous knowledges, pedagogies and perspectives in institutional spaces. Through story and scholarship, I draw out the complexity of epistemic dominance and problematic discourses that manifest in pedagogical encounters in programs of teacher education. Reflecting on the epistemic collisions that emerge in these encounters, I consider decolonial pedagogical practices with adult students that trouble problematic narratives and discourses that are pervasively shared in Canadian society, and engage expectantly, meaningfully and generatively with forms of resistance that arise in this complex context.

Keywords: *coloniality; settler colonialism; epistemic collision; teacher education; difficult knowledge; resistance*

Introduction

My name is Jeannie Kerr and I am a settler-scholar-teacher[1] grateful to be engaged in thinking, writing, and teaching on the ancestral, traditional, unceded, and overlapping territories of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations. I am a second generation, white settler of Scottish and Irish heritage[2] teaching at a research-intensive Canadian university in a program of teacher education. In this article, I explore the dynamics of contemporary colonialism in the Canadian settler nation-state in the context of programs of teacher education. I explicitly choose to research and teach in this context, as I view teacher education programs as pivotal spaces where problematic narratives and discourses in Canadian society might be revealed, challenged, and interrupted; and not thoughtlessly re-imposed in schools and society more generally. In this article, I explore the imposition of Western[3] forms of knowledge production in higher education in settler dominated academic spaces, and the ways this continues to support structures of colonialism. I particularly explore the *epistemic collisions* that emerge when engaging Indigenous knowledges in educational spaces through the imposition of a secular cosmology and neutral positioning of Western scientific materialism. Through story and scholarship, I draw out the complexity of epistemic dominance and problematic narratives and discourses in programs of teacher education, and consider decolonial teaching practices with adult students that engage expectantly, meaningfully and generatively with the forms of resistance that arise in this complex context.

I am starting with a story in order to provide more texture to the theoretical ideas in this article, and thus hopefully draw out the complexity and multiplicity of epistemic experiences that manifest in real places. I call this story *You're not the Garden I had in Mind* and the title is a not so subtle reference to Thomas King's spoken word performative piece "You're not the Indian I had in Mind"[4] that speaks to the dynamics of non-Indigenous people misunderstanding and projecting stereotypical fantasies onto Indigenous peoples.

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[1] Claiming an identity as a *settler* warrants a discussion that exceeds this format. I would only briefly acknowledge that this identity is meant to acknowledge my and my ancestors' participation in problematic and ongoing colonial relations. My practice of identifying in this way emerged from my reading of Paulette Regan (2010).

[2] I implicitly argue in this paper that scholars naming their ancestry and location acknowledges the geo-politics of knowledge and can be seen as a decolonial scholarly practice. I have debated whether or not to identify the ancestry or heritage and location of scholars that I cite in this article. I have chosen not to impose an ancestral/hereditary connection to scholars that do not generally acknowledge this in their own scholarly work.

[3] The term *Western* in relation to knowledge exceeds the geographic use of the term, and is meant to refer to knowledge practices that emerged from peoples and historical events in Western Europe, and through colonial practices have become instituted not just in the geographic *West* but also in places across the globe influenced by multiple forms of colonialism.

[4] Thomas King's (2007) spoken word performance piece is available at: http://www.nsi-canada.ca/2012/03/im-not-the-indian-you-had-in-mind/

"You're not the garden I had in mind"

I'm walking to a small section in the Garden[5] that Julia has directed our little group of six towards on this sunny, summer morning. I breathe in the fresh early morning air deeply as I raise my arms and stretch out my back in anticipation for the work to come. I feel thoroughly content and relaxed. My plans for bringing the teacher candidates in our course in philosophy of education out of the classroom and into this Garden have been received enthusiastically and thoughtfully. On the way to the Garden, as a larger group of 20, we engaged in friendly and excited talk about developing our philosophical ideas on pedagogy into the space of a garden, and the chance to be out of the classroom. Any concerns I had about this experience have dissipated and I'm eager to engage with the Garden, the teacher candidates, and Julia's provocative research project located in the Garden.[6] In response to my offer to provide service to the Garden, as a gesture of reciprocity for the Garden and Julia's efforts on this day, we've all been directed to different sections to weed or harvest in small groups of 5 or so. I am particularly interested in the ways the teacher candidates will take up this ethical relation of reciprocity that I have been learning from Musqueam people and other Indigenous scholars. As I look around at this large Garden I appreciate the abundance of food growing in the rows and sections, and feel admiration for the people that have been cultivating this space. As I approach the smaller section indicated by Julia with my group, my confidence leaves me at once and I'm momentarily frozen. This space does not look like the rest of the Garden. I've encountered a melange of plants that, in my view, are growing all over each other without a discernible pattern. I have no idea what it means to weed in this spot that I don't recognize as a garden. In my mind, questions jump out: "Where are the rows?" "Where is the garden?" I sense the teacher candidates are looking to me for direction as to what to do, and I feel anxious in my lack of knowing. I recognize my lack of capacity and look hopefully for Julia. I'm somewhat relieved as she makes her way over to us and explains that this section of the garden is a replication of Mayan gardening practices. Julia quickly advises what to do and goes back to another group, but I'm still utterly lost.

The Garden vignette provides a lens to the complex dynamics of non-Indigenous peoples engaging Indigenous knowledges, perspectives and pedagogies in Western educational spaces.

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[5] This Garden was an organic market garden and outdoor classroom in a ¼ acre space at a Canadian University. The Garden provided collaborative, hands-on, immersive, arts-based, and experimental learning opportunities adjacent to academic classroom spaces. Since this time, the Garden has been moved to a remote agricultural testing area to make way for a private college and residence.

[6] Julia Ostertag's arts-based installation titled "Threads sown, grown & given" was located in a large corner of the Garden and the basis of her PhD research. The installation depicted a classroom of 24 student desks meticulously plotted in a grid, with a teacher's desk at the front. The desks were grown from flax seeds, and there were cedar frames with upward growing beans and sunflowers for walls. Windows were hung from the cedar showing stark black and white images of historical school gardens in Nazi Germany and North American "Indian Residential Schools". Julia and I have collaboratively presented on our experiences with teacher candidates in this installation (Ostertag & Kerr, 2013).

At the time of this story, I had the good fortune of being mentored by brilliant Indigenous scholars that invested a great amount of time and energy teaching me. I had also been reading a vast amount of Indigenous scholarship from scholars around the world, as well attending numerous talks and events by Indigenous scholars and community members over a period of years. Through all of this, I had been developing an appreciation of the importance of land and place to knowing. Also, I had been appreciating the need to have Indigenous perspectives within and about teacher education. In short, I saw myself as fairly knowledgeable through all of my reading and activities, and fairly self-aware of the potential imposition of problematic Settler narratives and Western modernist thought on my own educational assumptions in my role as an instructor. In my thoughts and in my planning for teaching a class in philosophy of education, I was hoping to bring these considerations together with a group of teacher candidates. I wanted the teacher candidates to have this opportunity to expand self-reflexively on their own ways of thinking about teaching and learning through providing opportunities to interact with land and Julia's research project. My plan was to question dominant assumptions on land and pedagogy and to help teacher candidates get ready to listen to Indigenous perspectives – but to do so in a course not specifically designated by the academy to engage Indigenous perspectives.

In the Garden, in my surprise encounter with a manifestation of Indigenous knowledge[7], I realized that despite my awareness of potential settler impositions, and the desire to reveal and challenge these impositions, my decolonizing aspirations would always be a humbling work-in-progress. In this story, as I walked up to this section of the Garden, I fully expected to see neat and ordered rows arranged according to the rules of Euclidian geometry, and that my task would be to reimpose the order that *nature* had worked against by pulling out anything not in the confines of a row. Despite my desire to meaningfully engage Indigenous perspectives, I paradoxically expected my culturally influenced ideas about a garden and land to be universal and that I would know how to be and act in the situation. I held these assumptions despite my intellectual grasp of Julia's installation in another section of that Garden as speaking to colonial impositions and violence on land and people. In this moment, I could not even recognize this garden as existing, and in fact ended up enacting and perpetuating the dynamics of invisibility that I was seeking to critique with my students. This garden experience thus brought some clarity to me in terms of the complex dynamics of a privileged European body in relation to knowledge and power. In my encounter with this particular manifestation of Indigenous knowledge, albeit knowledge interpreted by non-Indigenous student gardeners, my reaction was first paralysis and then extinguishment or erasure based on a Eurocentric epistemic orientation. Within my role as instructor in a higher education institution similarly immersed in a Eurocentric epistemic orientation, I occupied the privileged position that enabled me to enact these problematic relations.

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[7] I would point out that this garden section was planted by non-Indigenous student gardeners and replicated practices of corn growing that rely on relational dynamics, and was not a formal project or installation. I cannot comment specifically on the reasons for the emergence of this section of the garden, and the relation of the gardeners to Indigenous knowledges and practices, as I was not involved in the work and this encounter was a number of years ago.

In this article, I will discuss the aspects of this story that link to the themes I am considering in four sections. In the first theme, I will explore the epistemic monoculture that emerges from Western cultural traditions of thought and practice that dominate educational spaces, and consider how these knowledge-making practices affirm and perpetuate a structure of coloniality. In the second theme, I will consider the imposition of a Western secular cosmology that silences and resists Indigenous perspectives, knowledges and pedagogies in Western institutional spaces. In the third theme, I will discuss my experience of these dynamics in a program of teacher education, and draw out the epistemic collisions that happen when secular institutional space is challenged from a contrasting Indigenous ontology. In the fourth and final theme, I will discuss practices in teacher education programs that might be considered as decolonial options that seek to address the challenges raised in this article.

The Western epistemic monoculture that perpetuates colonial relations and practices

In my view, coloniality scholarship provides a useful lens to understand the ways that colonial relations and practices are affirmed and perpetuated through the domination of Western epistemic perspectives in academia, and society more generally; in real places and not metaphorical spaces.[8] In particular, I rely on the work of Walter Mignolo as he sets out the larger framework of coloniality. I also attend to coloniality theorists who are similarly located in the global South: Ramon Grosfoguel, Anabal Quijano, Boaventura de Sousa Santos, and Catherine Walsh, as well as George Sefa Dei working in the Canadian context, who each address various concerns around knowledge practices in relation to coloniality. In this section, I will also rely on settler colonialism scholarship through Patrick Wolfe and Lorenzo Veracini, located in Australia, so as to complicate and add depth to some of the notions explored in coloniality scholarship and articulate the dynamics of colonialism in a Settler nation-state.

Coloniality scholarship emerges from the dual understandings that there is a societal need for ongoing decolonization, and that such theoretical and practical work cannot happen solely through a Western European perspective or form of scholarship. Coloniality scholars critique scholarship that does not call attention to the place of enunciation of thought, and stress the epistemic requirement to centre thought from *the subaltern*. In my interpretation of this work, the position of subaltern is created through the colonial encounter. The requirement in this work, then, is to name and attend to *silenced* epistemic perspectives, or what is referred to by Santos (2009a) as practicing "epistemic recognition." The requirement is to draw out the political in knowledge practices through attending to the epistemic contributions of peoples of the global south and Indigenous traditions of thought and practice in research and practice (Dei, 2011, p. 2; Grosfoguel, 2007, p. 212).

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[8] See Tuck & Yang (2012) for more detailed thought on the limits of decolonizing work framed solely as metaphor.

Coloniality scholars provide a distinct interpretation and critique of modernist thought as related to colonial violence. The rise of modernist thought leading to the 17th century Western *Enlightenment* has been critiqued through various lenses in *post-modern* scholarship. In general, the Enlightenment is seen as the project of establishing objective foundations for knowledge that was taken up by such thinkers as Descartes, Locke and, later, Kant. These Enlightenment scholars sought to establish *reason* as a methodology that exists abstractly and as the basis for the justification of knowledge (Bernstein, 1983, pp. 115-117). Thus, in the modern era there was a marginalization of the idea that knowledge could be understood as oral, particular, local, and timely, in favour of an understanding of knowledge as written, abstract, universal and timeless (Toulmin, 1990, p. 34). Daniel Carey and Lynn Festa (2009) argue that this sort of rationalist foundationalism at the heart of Enlightenment epistemology simultaneously centres its own perspective, while positioning any other epistemological orientation as uncivilized, irrational, or superstitious (p. 8); thus, making a strong connection between modernist epistemology and colonial dominance.

Mignolo takes this post-modern critique a step further and argues that modernity has a flip side that is relatively ignored in Western based scholarship. He argues that Western European modernity created an image of itself, in the Renaissance and Enlightenment eras, as *Western Civilization*, and presumed itself as the arrival point of human existence and as the point of reference of global history (Mignolo, 2011, p. xiv). He argues that through these beliefs a problematic side of modernity materialized in an imperial structure of coloniality. He refers to this as the *coloniality-modernity* relationship which formed together in the mid 15th century, and established in space and time a perpetuating structure of racism and patriarchy, "that created the conditions to build and control a structure of knowledge, either grounded on the word of God or the word of Reason and Truth" (Mignolo, 2011, p. xv; see also, Deloria, 1973, pp. 275-281 for a more detailed discussion of European colonial imperialism intersecting with Christianity).

Ramon Grosfoguel captures the idea of *coloniality* in an illuminating way when he states that what arrived in sovereign, non-European territories was not just a selection of representatives of a colonizing nation, nor just an economic system of labour and capital; what arrived was a complex world system embodied in the "European, capitalist, military, Christian, patriarchal, white, heterosexual, male," who "established in time and space several entangled global hierarchies" (Grosfoguel, 2008, p. 5). Understood in this way, coloniality is a perpetuating spatio-temporal **structure** that imposes intersecting global hierarchies in terms of race, class, gender, sexuality, spirituality, economic system, and geography, that organizes bodies into complex hierarchal social organizations. It is a system of inequity and privilege that moves through time, claims geographic spaces, and is perpetuated through material and discursive epistemic practices in social and institutional spaces. As Grosfoguel (2008) argues: "Coloniality allows us to understand the continuity of colonial forms of domination after the end of colonial administrations, produced by colonial cultures and structures in the modern/colonial capitalist world−system*"* (p. 8).

Anabal Quijano further extends the concept of *coloniality* and the *global hierarchies* to theorize a *colonial power matrix* organized around the socially constructed notion of race. Quijano argues that *race* is the key element of the social classification of colonized and colonizers. Unlike previous instances of colonization, "the superiority of the dominant under European colonialism became related to biological superiority, producing new social identities using physiognomic traits as external manifestations of their 'racial nature'" (Quijano, 2007, p. 171). Quijano goes on to argue that the produced geocultural identities form the basis of distribution of work around the globe: The system of "salaried, independent peasants, independent merchants, and slave and serfs, was organized basically following the same 'racial' lines of global-social classification" and organized under a euro-centred world power (p. 171). Thus, colonialism produced an economic power structure that effectively classified the world's peoples into a hierarchy of superior normalized bodies and inferior racialized bodies that was used as justification for the both the *benevolent* and violent domination of *non-white* bodies by *white* Western European bodies.

Quijano's ideas on race are an important element in coloniality theorizing and are significantly engaged in settler colonialism scholarship. Settler colonialism scholarship similarly positions colonialism as a structural phenomenon – rather than a historical event (Wolfe, 2006, p. 388) – but also engages a more detailed consideration of the notion of race. Patrick Wolfe (2006) points out that racialization is not all of one kind, but relates to colonial desires that manifest in specific ways. Wolfe contrasts the antithetical racialization of Indigenous and African descendants in the United States, where legal frameworks supported the elimination of Indigenous peoples while simultaneously expanding African descendant groups, so as to ensure access to Indigenous peoples' land simultaneously with access to African descendant peoples' labour (p. 387). Lorenzo Veracini (2010) makes a related analytic distinction by considering positionalities within colonial dynamics in terms of *Indigenous*, *Settler* and *Exogenous Other* – noting the distinctions between those who migrate to Indigenous territory, but do or do not manifest a colonial sovereign capacity in relation to being racialized (p. 3). The focus on race in these discussions centres, instead of elides, the distinctive experiences and perspectives of peoples coming to Indigenous territories to *settle*. This also complicates the identity of "settler", and views those peoples migrating to Indigenous territories not as a singular monolith, but as peoples with complex diasporic and migrational histories that position them differently within colonial encounters related to privilege, power and racialization processes.

Important to the coloniality paradigm, and the central point of this article, is the notion that intersecting hierarchies and processes of racialization are supported by modernist epistemology and the centring of Western epistemic perspectives. Mignolo identifies the key to maintaining the invisibility of this structure of domination and oppression is the *hubris of the zero point*. Mignolo argues that the *zero point* is the epistemological location that places a privileged knowing body as occupying a detached and neutral point of observation, and from this neutral place "maps the world and its problems, classifies people, and projects what is good for them" (Mignolo, 2011, p. 118). Grosfoguel adds to these thoughts through noting that a

particular Western modernist view of knowledge is able to dominate by masquerading as universal knowledge and present itself as the god-like view of truth – "It's a point of view that conceals itself as being beyond a point of view" (Grosfoguel, 2007, p. 214). As Quijano argues, the European paradigm of rational knowledge not only grew in the context of colonialism, but was also a foundational part of the power structure of domination (Quijano, 2007, p. 174).

Thinking again to my experience in the Garden, it becomes obvious how pervasive and sometimes subtle these epistemic dynamics become when intersecting with a privileged settler body. In the Garden, despite my decolonial aspirations, I still imposed a culturally laden view of gardens, a view that I had been raised in Western society to perceive not only as universal, but also culturally neutral or 'natural'. Reflecting on my Eurocentric encounter with this Mayan-based garden, I realized the depth of my assumptions and commitments that came from being raised and educated in a Western modernist society, and my tacit expectation that my ideas are universally understood and will be reflected back to me in my encounters – despite my claims to the contrary. I also witnessed my incredible readiness to impose my ideas on others (the human and non-human others) from a very secure and problematic set of assumptions. My settler body has become used to engaging in knowledge that manifests European epistemic assumptions and commitments – I am immersed in this. My lifelong participation in Western social life, where my cultural assumptions are continually privileged and reflected back to me as neutral and universal, frames the challenges of engaging in these conversations and the power structure of the context. As Dei points out: "knowledge production is not an innocent or neutral project" (Dei, 2011, p. 4). In my own work and practice, I am neither innocent of the colonial dynamics I discuss, nor neutral in the dynamics of power and history in which I am embedded.

Acknowledging that modernity-coloniality coincides with and is related to the rise of the nation-state, Santos argues current *globalizations* reflect the growing asymmetries of global power originating in colonialism, and discusses these asymmetries in the context of modernist epistemology (Santos, 2009b, p. 109). Santos contends that we are globally in a situation of epistemological monopolization that has produced a monoculture of *rigorous scientific knowledge* that is inadequate to understand meaningful questions (Santos, 2009a). Santos argues that we need to practice *epistemic recognition* when addressing our questions – recognizing both the absences and emergences with regard to the presence of diverse knowledges and perspectives and the related tie to colonialism (2009a). Santos provides strong critiques to the current epistemic practices dominating Western institutions, and also a path to interrupt these practices.

The coloniality paradigm does not limit the critique of Western knowledge practices to the modernist and positivistic strains of Western paradigms, but also to Western critical theory. Catherine Walsh identifies the geo-politics of critical thought, which continues to dominate from Western perspectives, without self-analysis of the location and relation to domination of the enunciation of knowing. In her analysis, the problem is not in and of itself with European thought, but with the lack of self-consciousness of its intimate relation to power in the modernity-coloniality structure (Walsh, 2012, p. 13), which results in the continued subalternization of "other" knowledges, philosophies and frameworks (p. 14). Walsh insists we

name and consider epistemic spaces and places, and the ancestors they invoke, as a praxis of intervention and critique, and that critical theory, when continually represented from a similar location and ontology, thus presents as an "ethno-philosophy with its own local history marked by gender, race, class, region, and so on" (Walsh, 2012, pp. 12-13). I interpret Walsh's work to argue that a coloniality lens requires critical theory and critical pedagogy to consider its own geo-political relation to colonial privilege, and ensure that there is ontological plurality present in the knowledge making practices of critical work.

As in the experience of the Garden, the point is not that there is something wrong in itself with the way I understood gardens based in my cultural participation. The problematic engagement was the imposition of my Western based ideas of a garden in a way that allowed my imposition to be invisible, and the resultant inability to even see the Mayan-based garden, thus completely erasing the garden itself. Epistemic practices are never neutral, but emerge from our participation in forms of social life in real places. This significant point is one that needs to be appreciated by Western scholars relying on epistemic perspectives that have emerged from Europe, and the power dynamics that make this epistemic location invisible. As Canadian scholar Christine Ceci (2000) argues in relation to the demands of recognizing our positionality or *situatedness* in inquiry: "those who attempt to take the knowledge and leave the power behind or put it aside are, inadvertently or not, operating in the realm of privilege; that seeming neutrality is itself a mark of privilege" (p. 71).

In this section, I have been attempting to make visible the cultural locatedness of Western European knowledge making practices, and the related connection between the presumed epistemic neutrality underlying these practices and colonial forms of continued domination. This argument aligns with arguments made by Marie Battiste (Mi'kmaw Nation) and James (Sa'ke'j) Youngblood Henderson (Chickasaw Nation) in delineating the Eurocentric nature of educational practices in the Canadian context (2009). I also draw attention to the idea that the history and continued occupation of Indigenous territories, in the form of settler nation-states, is also a reality that is generally made invisible in the context of Euro-centred educational institutions, and the privileged bodies that direct these institutions. In the next section, I will consider the complexity of epistemic dominance in the context of institutional spaces in Canada and the U.S, and my understanding of the epistemic collisions that occur in these spaces related to normalized secularism and privileged social positions. I will also consider my relation to epistemic dominance as a settler-scholar-teacher voicing concerns that have already been voiced by Indigenous scholars for some time.

The dominance of a secular cosmology in Eurocentric institutions

In my view, British scholar Stephen Toulmin, Canadian/Mahayana Buddhist scholar Daniel Vokey, and Indigenous scholar Michael Marker, together explain the dominance of modernist ontological assumptions in Canadian and U.S. educational contexts that serve to marginalize meaningful engagement with Indigenous perspectives. The central point that I derive from these

scholars is that a secular cosmology emerges in modern institutions through dominant Enlightenment metaphysical assumptions, and cosmologies that do not align with a secular view are marginalized from public institutional space.[9] Invitations to Indigenous perspectives in educational institutions are thus tempered. On one level Indigenous perspectives are invited and welcomed in a multicultural relativistic invitation, but when these perspectives present ontological notions that are contrary to dominant Western assumptions, the invitation is shown to be limited.

Toulmin (1990) locates the dominance of secularized public institutions as arising from the escalation of religious zealotry in the emergence of modern Europe, and the desire to establish foundations in rationality and a new "cosmology where the epistemological foundations could be guaranteed" (p. 83).[10] Vokey explains that the *disenchantment* of the Western worldview emerged through *forms of social life* that embody *mechanistic* ontological assumptions and commitments of Western empirical science. Vokey (2001) argues that the root metaphor of the cosmos as a machine emerged from the perceived success of Newtonian physics and brings with it deterministic, materialistic, reductionistic, and atomistic assumptions and commitments (p. 110). Significant for this discussion is the assumption that, "because the world-order is accidental and contingent, it is seen to be without inherent meaning or purpose (reference to Pepper, 1942, p. 197), and thus the universe is "wholly indifferent, if not actually hostile, to human interests and desires" (p. 111). In the Garden vignette, this is similar to my unacknowledged epistemic assumption that nature would be working against the order imposed by the garden, thus revealing a deeply embedded modernist perspective in my relationship with land. Toulmin argues that there was a crash of cosmology and epistemology in the Western world through the devastation of the religious wars, and modern science arose to explain the new ordered relation of the natural world as stable and in dichotomous relation with the human world (pp. 112-113). Vokey explains that the intellectual culture of the Western world continues, through the rise of secularized institutions, to be shaped by mechanistic ontological assumptions, and those things that cannot be validated according to its "methodological canons still tend to be received sceptically if not dismissed or ignored" (p. 345).

As was previously discussed, these modernist epistemological commitments emerge with and through the structures of coloniality, and it is through this intersection that the challenges of bringing Indigenous perspectives meaningfully into educational spaces are fully understood. Michael Marker articulates the nature of the *epistemological collisions* that occur in Western educational institutions when the mechanistic assumptions of modernist ontologies are challenged by Indigenous perspectives based in contrasting ontologies. Marker's analysis also reveals that these moments do not emerge solely in response to contrasting Indigenous

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[9] See Shahjahan, Wagner & Wane (2009) for a more detailed discussion of secularized spaces in higher education.

[10] It is worth noting that while both Toulmin and Mignolo problematize modernity, Toulmin places the timing of modernity with the 17th Century European rationalization of the natural sciences, whereas Mignolo places the start of modernity in European imperial/colonial aspirations in the 15th Century. My arguments in this article agree with Mignolo's timing and related focus.

perspectives, but also emerge from the embodied ethical challenge of Indigenous peoples to colonial violence and silencing in real places.

In general, a great deal of Marker's work describes local educational conditions in the Pacific Northwest area of the United States, and the hostilities and conflicts that develop when Indigenous peoples assert both treaty rights and sacred relations to land. There is one particular context and incident that Marker analyzes and details that brings all of these ideas together in a cohesive way, that has enabled me to understand the complexity of these ideas in educational contexts. Marker (2006) describes the experience of the Makah people in Neah Bay and the community decision to pursue the traditional whale hunt, in the spirit of reclamation of traditional sacred practices and in reassertion of treaty rights; and also the racist backlash by white settlers in the community (p. 1). Within this contentious community context, Marker describes a 13 year old boy that was mistreated by classmates at the local school for asserting he wanted to grow up to be a whale hunter. The boy's mother, through discussion with the principal of the school, arranged to come to the boy's class to present an educational session on Makah beliefs, practices and treaty history (p. 7). The classroom session ended with an offering of whale meat. This educational session later devolved into angry complaints by white parents, complaining of the non-educational nature of the session, portraying the session as religious beliefs being taught to their children without scientific basis (p. 7). The principal's decision on the matter was to grant that the parents could remove their children from class during any of these "cultural presentations" (p. 7).

In Marker's analysis, he finds that the parental claims rely on the assumption of neutrality of a scientific worldview, but also emerge from a problematic history of colonial relations with Indigenous peoples and land in that place (Marker, 2006, p. 8). On one level there is an epistemic tension between the sacred and scientific ontological assumptions, and the power of educational institutions to reassert epistemic dominance in relation thereto. Marker argues that schools privilege a form of knowledge that presumes the cultural neutrality of science, and this is consistent with Vokey's analysis of the emergence and dominance of the mechanistic worldview. On another level, Marker points out that Indigenous peoples' presence stakes a claim to moral and epistemic preeminence based on ancient and sustained relationships to land (p. 5). He argues that the history of "Indian-White relations" is a narrative of colonization and subjugation in particular places, and also a "local history of ecological destruction and how the contemporary structures on the landscape surrounding the school and community were hammered into form" (p. 10).[11] Marker's analysis demonstrates that the *invitation,* by educational authorities in settler nation-states to Indigenous knowledges, exists in relations of power. Such invitations are extended conditionally, and require that the dominance of scientific *neutrality* and its preeminence remain unchallenged and undisturbed. Contrasting ontological assumptions introduced by Indigenous bodies are interpreted as challenges, and are met with a noticeable

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[11] See also Tuck and Yang (2012) where they engage in a discussion of the problematics of limiting decolonization discourse to metaphor and the need to repatriate land, suggesting that Indigenous relations to land exceed symbolism and are a material reality (p. 7).

level of anger and resistance by settlers in these spaces. I would argue that Marker explains, through this example, the ways that settler authorities, communities and individuals problematically engage with Indigenous perspectives as *difficult knowledge* through silencing or denying the context of colonial violence to Indigenous peoples and territories. By difficult knowledge I mean knowledge that manifests problematically as it references incommensurability, historical trauma and social breakdowns (Pitt & Britzman. 2003, p. 756). Marker also demonstrates that settlers then avoid the responsibility of this *knowledge* by labeling Indigenous peoples as *difficult*.

Epistemic collisions in teacher education

From my experience, non-Indigenous teacher candidates perceive Indigenous perspectives as *difficult knowledge* in varying degrees. A few years ago I taught a course in teacher education that sought to meaningfully engage located Indigenous perspectives and shared Indigenous-settler histories in Canada. I would point out that the opportunity to even have such a course and theme emerges from incredible efforts over an extensive period of time by Indigenous scholars in the Canadian educational context, such as Jo-Ann Archibald, Lorna Williams and Marie Battiste, along with many people working in various capacities. In general, the course proceeded well and the students engaged with perspectives and texts, and there was some detailed questioning and examining of settler narratives. I felt the students were engaging in a thoughtful way, but not a transformative way and was thinking of ways to deepen the experiences in the course. Consequently, I arranged to work once again with Julia to provide an opportunity for the students to consider themes related to land and pedagogy through participating in the next phase of her arts-based installation.[12] The students were generally more quiet than usual, and both Julia and I noted that the students had generally avoided deep engagement around the themes of land, pedagogy and Indigeneity in the workshop.

That afternoon I also invited an Indigenous scholar to the course to extend the discussion into Indigenous perspectives on pedagogies and relationships. Prior to the scholar's arrival I had shown a short film called *Pelq'ilc: Coming Home*[13] by Euro-descendant scholar Celia Haig-Brown and her niece Helen Haig-Brown (Tsilhqot'in Nation) that traces a Secwepemc communities' resurgence and reclamation of language and formal education. The scholar arrived during the film and, after I introduced the scholar, he played a hand-made musical instrument and discussed learning, representation, practice and Indigeneity in educational contexts. The

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[12] The next phase of Julia's arts-based installation "threaded conversations" was hosted by Julia in an indoor room and involved a visual display of the outdoor installation, the hanging windows and reflections by the previous group of teacher candidates. The plan for the students' participation in this phase was to engage in open conversation about the project and themes, and weave with the flax that Julia had harvested and spun.

[13] "Pelq'ilc: Coming Home" is a 33 minute documentary by Celia Haig-Brown and Helen Haig-Brown (emerging from Celia Haig-Brown's 1986 research with former students of the Kamloops Indian Residential School) which asks the question "What is the place of education in the regeneration of culture?"

students had been generally invited from the outset to ask questions, but when the scholar discussed Indigenous notions of spirituality in terms of pedagogy, one table of students started a heated and prolonged questioning of the scholar. The mood and tone of this table of five students was passionate and in my view aggressive. One teacher candidate *advised* the scholar that he should not use the word spiritual if he expected to speak about public education. I also noted a general level of passivity in many of the other students, shown through a lack of engagement with the ideas presented and the scholar himself.

I interrupted the question period due to the nature of the questions, which seemed to me to be more like demands to reform his ideas than actual questions. The scholar certainly could handle the questioning, but I felt that an invited guest had been shown a level of disrespect and I felt the need to intervene. Shortly after the class, an email arrived from a student that claimed to represent the cohort's dissatisfaction about the experiences that day. While I did address this entire event as a learning opportunity in our next meeting, the point of sharing this story is to draw out the simmering and obvious anger of a number of students. In my view, there was something about an Indigenous body in the classroom asserting an embodied sovereignty, rights and knowledge that turned Indigenous knowledge into intensely *difficult knowledge* for some of the students, and resulted ultimately in anger and a demand to reform this knowledge – a clear feeling of resistance and path of action that sought to extinguish Indigenous perspectives. I also noted that for many students, this difficult knowledge manifested avoidance and a surface level of engagement with the ideas –a toned down version of aggressive resistance and anger. Again, there were also a small number of students who were thoroughly absorbed in the presentations, but I noted that these students were looking at the floor in discomfort and passivity during the aggressive 'questioning' of the Indigenous scholar.

The responses of these students reminded me of an experience written about by Celia Haig-Brown (2008) when she reflected on the challenges of working in this cross-cultural academic space; the responses also reminded me of myself at different times. In Haig-Brown's article she recounts an experience of bringing Indigenous and non-Indigenous graduate students together on a panel to present on Indigenous based research projects to her non-Indigenous academic colleagues. The response by her colleagues to Indigenous peoples and perspectives in academic space was more politely veneered than my experience with the teacher candidates, yet her paraphrasing of the aftermath echoes loudly: "*These presentations are too emotion-based, too focused on spirituality and some romantic and essentialist notion of an inviolable past*" (Haig-Brown, 2008, p. 258). Haig-Brown also draws attention to the attitudes of her colleagues during the presentation, which I would argue are quite similar to my observations of some of my students. She recounts that there was little desire to enter into productive discussion, in that "responses took the form of harsh opposition" and a "desire to stop such work, to re-form it" (p. 258).

These moments detail resistance to *difficult knowledge* that manifest in refusals to know. As Australian scholar Cathryn McConaghy (2003) explains, drawing on the psychoanalytic theory of Jacques Lacan, these encounters are marked by "a passion for ignorance" (p. 17).

McConaghy argues, from her experience in Australian settler encounters in education, that at the heart of this passionate refusal to know is an incapacity on the part of the individual to knowledge in which one is implicated (p. 17). I interpret McConaghy's notion of *incapacity* as a resistance to knowing based on fear of what such knowledge might disturb. There is a lot at stake, in relation to both the psyche of settlers and material benefits that have been conferred through privileged social positions that manifest complexly in these encounters. In their article "Decolonization is not a metaphor" (2012)*,* Eve Tuck (Aleut) and K. Wayne Yang detail a number of settler moves to innocence that seek to avoid the implications of material benefit and privilege. The cohesive narrative of the self as an ethical subject in a benevolent nation-state is at stake, as well as the form of privileged life steeped in material benefit and opportunities. Indigenous counter-narratives that challenge dominant narratives, which serve to affirm settler rights to land and ethical preeminence, are often resisted by settlers in both extreme and subtle ways.

Adding to this complexity are the diverse perspectives and claims to space and voice, within what settler colonialism theorist Veracini conceptualizes as the triangulated relations of *Settler/Exogenous Other/Indigenous,* in higher education classrooms (Veracini, 2010). In my teacher education classes, the majority of the non-Indigenous students would not identify as settlers for various reasons. First, most of the white students strictly identify as Canadians and resist thinking of themselves as otherwise. One student let me know during class that she was troubled that I referred to myself as a settler. Second, the majority of the students are not born in Canada, are not white, nor do they trace ancestry to Europe or identify family history as participating in settler colonization from European nations. This is the position that Veracini conceptualizes as *Exogenous Other*, thus noting the distinction of experiences in migration to Indigenous territories in relation to sovereignty and power. Veracini argues that, "Settlers are made by conquest not just migration" (Veracini, 2010, p. 3). He draws attention to the need to understand that the European and Euro-descendant settlers establish themselves as normative, and carry a collective sense of entitlement to sovereignty, which contrasts with the position of *Exogenous Others* that have not moved to establish a political order (pp. 17-18). Haig-Brown (2009) also engages these ideas and draws on the complications of the diaspora, contrasting settling for profit with settling to escape war, famine and oppression (p. 9). Malissa Phung (2011) conceptualizes her position within the Canadian context, identifying her ethnicity as Sino-Vietnamese, as being a *racialized Settler* in order to recognize complicity in the ongoing colonial project, while noting the distinction of experience related to racialization and relation to power (p. 294).

I draw on the ideas of these scholars to highlight complications within the classroom space that centres whiteness, Euro-descendancy, particularly the dynamics of power and privilege circulating between myself, my students, the institution, and Indigenous scholars and knowledge holders. Subsequently, resistance to Indigenous knowledges, perspectives and practices manifests in complex ways. There is a form of resistance connected to privileged social positions, related to Eurocentric forms of knowledge and whiteness – something I share with

some of my students. Resistance in educational spaces can also be taken up through positioning oneself outside of complicity – being able to see oneself as not actually occupying Indigenous territory and implicated in colonial dynamics. The space becomes more complex with my position as a white Euro-descendant settler and that I hold a position of power as instructor. I am in a position to represent ideas and perspectives of Indigenous scholars and knowledge holders, and have great concerns over appropriations of Indigenous knowledges, perspectives and pedagogies. It is with these complex power dynamics in mind that I consider how I engage decolonial practices in teacher education.

Engaging in decolonial practices with adult students in teacher education

In my work with teacher candidates, I realize that a significant portion of teacher candidates I come into contact with do not predominantly share my interest and priority for engaging with Indigenous perspectives and decolonial work. Most Indigenous teacher candidates at my university enroll in a separate Bachelor of Education program created for Indigenous students and, subsequently, there are very few Indigenous teacher candidates in my classes. Some teacher candidates, as I have shown, heartily resist this engagement with a desire for extinguishment of the ideas and a wish to extricate conversation from complicated histories and positions. Despite these challenges, I argue, that requiring teacher candidates to engage in a critical practice of questioning their own impositions and priorities and that requiring teacher candidates to engage with Indigenous perspectives is a request to understand the material and discursive aspects of the context in which they desire to teach in - a Settler nation-state - and it should be an essential ethical requirement for any teacher in this context, not something separate. The challenge is that people in settler nation-states have been immersed in problematic narratives that impose a view that Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada occupy separate realities, leading to faulty assumptions that Indigenous concerns, perspectives and realities should be the preoccupation solely of Indigenous peoples. My challenge has been considering how I will do this work of engaging with difficult knowledges, as an instructor, in a way that does not result in an epistemic collision with my students and a refusal to engage. My challenge is also to consider how I may be appropriating and/or silencing Indigenous scholars that have been articulating these perspectives and Indigenous knowledges for some time. In this section I will consider some potential decolonial pathways that I have found that make visible what has been intentionally made invisible, and directly acknowledge the emotional landscape at play, and my relation to privilege.

In my work I have been relying on the ideas of curriculum scholar Dwayne Donald (Papachase Cree) and educational scholar Susan Dion (Lenape-Potawatomi) to reveal problematic dominating narratives and assumptions at work in the Canadian educational context. In this section, I would like to consider the challenge of revealing the problematic narratives that Donald and Dion articulate so as to enable teacher candidates an opportunity to actually *listen to*

Indigenous perspectives and knowledges and to enable the teacher candidates, and myself, to be *taught by* these perspectives. I reference this idea of being *taught by* from Gert Biesta (2013), wherein we are shown something that can "enter our being from the outside" (p. 457), as we undergo an experience of something that transcends what is currently possible and immanent in our traditions of thought and practice (p. 453). I engage with Indigenous scholarship in the post-secondary classroom in a way that positions myself as being *taught by* Indigenous scholars and extend this engagement to my students. I draw out my own position as a learner with my students, while centering the geo-political aspect of the ideas. I also understand that Indigenous perspectives present contrasting ontological and epistemological perspectives that have aspects, as I have demonstrated, that are rejected in Western academic contexts. Therefore, my more modest project is to reveal the need to engage with Indigenous perspectives in mainstream academia, and consider how to assist non-Indigenous teacher candidates in getting ready *to listen*. In the context of the privilege I have tried to describe, this requires that non-Indigenous peoples, such as myself and the teacher candidates, listen self-reflexively. This means following Marker's ideas on engaging history, hegemony and the self (Marker, 2003, p. 367) and a coincident willingness to have assumptions and commitments disturbed through being *taught by* Indigenous scholars and knowledge holders.

I understand the work of both Dion and Donald, who each work and write on teacher education, as encouraging self-reflexive practices with teacher candidates, as I understand the notion of self-reflexivity through Michael Marker. These scholars each trouble dominant narratives and discourses concerning Indigenous peoples and the ways these narratives and discourses encourage a denial of relationality between Indigenous peoples and settlers/settler dominated societies. Dion (2007) describes her work as a "critical pedagogy of remembrance" (p. 330). She invites students to write stories of their relations with Indigenous peoples, which she notes most often devolves into a "perfect stranger" orientation (p. 331). Then, drawing on Roger Simon's thoughts, she invites students to draw images from their past and then juxtaposes this over time with work by "Aboriginal" peoples that inspire critical questioning of knowing, identity and representation, thus allowing students to self investigate their investment in and commitment to dominant discourses (p. 332). Donald (2012) provides an analysis of Indigenous-Settler relations that is similar to Dion's "perfect stranger" through development of the semiotic device of the "fort". Donald argues that narratives and discourses about Canadian nation building and civilization devalue Indigenous peoples, and erroneously teach that Indigenous and Settler peoples occupy separate realities. I find that Donald's work helps students draw out and question dominant and often unchallenged problematic assumptions through the iconic fort image, and that students can critically relate the problems of the fort imaginary to their own memories and relationships. I find Donald and Dion each provide ways to think about opportunities for students to come into relation with the otherness of knowledges and the otherness of themselves. I link their ideas meaningfully to the work of Marker (2003) and his insistence on considering Indigenous perspectives with an appreciation of history and power and the implicated position of the self (p. 367). Marker's priorities promote a notion that we can learn ethically through

appreciating the otherness of ourselves, and our forms of social life, in relation to power. I also consider that I am being taught by the work of Donald, Dion and Marker, as I engage with teacher candidates.

Haig-Brown (2009) also provides self-reflexive ideas for practice with teacher candidates that bring forward Indigenous perspectives in a context of highly diverse and complex social locations. Haig-Brown invites her students to write their own stories of the ways the students come to be in the place together – tracing ancestries of always being in that place, or the myriad ways the students have come to the place (p. 14). Haig-Brown's work is an invitation to participate in a "decolonizing autobiography" through sharing her own story of coming to be in a First Nations territory in Canada, and inviting students into narrating their own histories and paths. Her work highlights the opportunity to bring students into discussion of "race, colonization, Diaspora, class, gender and decolonization in ways that expand rather than shut down" conversation and learning (p. 15). I find Haig-Brown's practice provides me with a way to forefront my ethical struggles as a settler as generative opportunities for my students, but with an appreciation of the responsibility to student vulnerability and diversity in complex historical relations. This is an opportunity to discuss together the complex ways we are figured in educational contexts within a settler nation-state, and to consider our participation more thoughtfully and politically.

Within this article I can only provide a glimpse of the ways I have been extending these ideas in my teaching practice. In my work, I have extended Haig-Brown's autobiographical idea to include students' culturally influenced pedagogical assumptions and commitments related to significant relationships and educational moments as the framework for the autobiographies. I see this as an opportunity to understand oneself as non-neutral through bringing greater awareness to the (in)formal educational experiences gained through participation in a form of social and cultural life. I invite students to articulate and make visible their basic pedagogical assumptions and commitments and to appreciate the cultural influence (i.e., non-neutral status) of how these ideas have developed. I ask students to return repeatedly to these articulations as they are *taught by* Indigenous knowledges and pedagogies, and reflect on the ease and also the resistance they encounter in themselves.

I would argue that resistance to Indigenous perspectives should be expected given the patterns of colonial relations in Canada, and could be addressed through bringing Haig-Brown's decolonizing autobiographies together with analysis of settler policy documents related to Indigenous peoples. I first thought of this approach when reading Ann Chinnery's (2010) work on *critical historical consciousness* in the context of teacher education, and her experience of working with the ideas of Roger Simon's Testimony and Historical Memory Project from the University of Toronto. In this work Chinnery drew teacher candidates' attention to Indigenous literature and testimonies of residential school survivors. In her paper, Chinnery shares her disappointment in that "the testimonies had apparently done little to shake up [teacher candidates'] negative (and often socially sanctioned) stereotypes... the common feeling around the room was one of indifference and a thinly veiled moral superiority" (p. 400). Out of

frustration, Chinnery decided to actually just read portions of the Indian Act of 1876; the Gradual Civilization Act of 1857; and sections from a bill put forward in 1920 by Duncan Campbell Scott, head of the Department of Indian affairs at that time (p. 400), which in turn ended up moving the students into more depth of engagement with problematic history that had previously been avoided (p. 400). Chinnery considered that the teacher candidates' indifferent response to the testimony of Indigenous peoples resulted from the saturated role of testimony in our society that had potentially desensitized students to the power of testimony (p. 401).

I would argue that the effectiveness of the role of settler policy documents in unsettling teacher candidates might also be explained in another way. I had the opportunity to speak with Musqueam Elder Larry Grant at length about his thoughts on ways that I could work with teacher candidates in transformative ways.[14] Interestingly, Elder Grant advised that I should return to the documents in and related to the "Indian Act", but his explanation did not relate to the lack of power of testimony. Elder Grant advised that the documents gave non-Indigenous students an opportunity to see themselves and their society in ways they have been taught not to think about. The documents were written in a time where polite veneers are absent, bringing students into a less mediated encounter with the racism and elitism of settler dominated society, and disabling the pervasive settler narrative of the benevolent nation-state. Analysis of settler policy documents has the effect of making visible the mechanisms and agents of oppression in settler society. This interruption and critical questioning of settler narratives creates the conditions whereby all students might develop the capacity to actually *listen* to the testimony and perspectives of diverse Indigenous peoples, and see these testimonies as speaking to societal problematics, always understood differently, yet demanding collective attention, an appreciation of relationality, and an ethical response.

Throughout my experiences I have learned about the importance of attentiveness, of *being ready to listen*. I would venture that there should be attentiveness in programs of teacher education to some potential ways to help teacher candidates get ready to listen to perspectives that may be difficult for them. I do not think it is possible to avoid resistance in this endeavour, and there are many benefits in bringing the likelihood of resistance out in a transparent way. I am not talking here about well founded resistance that would emerge from being told how to think and what to believe, but resistance to engaging with open discussion of discourses and narratives that circulate and position us all in complex ways, and the ways we might understand this self-reflexively as an educational practitioner in a settler nation-state. Gert Biesta (2012) argues that resistance is a potentially generative feeling that emerges from our encounters with the material-discursive world, and it is how we work with resistance that determines its generativity. As he states: "The first thing that the experience of resistance teaches us is that the world we live and act in – and this includes both the material world and the social world – is not a projection of our mind but has an existence of its own" (pp. 94-95). He suggests that generative pedagogical

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[14] This was an unplanned meeting that lasted for 45 minutes during the dinner break at Vancouver City Hall on April 30, 2013 at a session I attended titled "The Changing Face of Racism". Elder Grant was attending in an official capacity and I was a guest. I view this *chance* meeting and the time that Elder Grant devoted to me as a gift. Elder Grant gave me permission to share his advice when I communicate these ideas publicly.

encounters occur when teachers help students engage with their resistance through negotiating a middle ground where neither the self nor the "other" is destroyed (p. 95). Negotiating the middle ground is avoiding a context where the student would need to be extinguished in the encounter with the other, but the student is also not attempting to extinguish the other. In the context of epistemic plurality and recognition, this would involve a willingness to listen to Indigenous scholars and knowledge holders in a way that engages with the opportunities of being *taught by* them.

In my view, the middle ground provides a space where non-Indigenous teacher candidates might engage more thoughtfully and self-reflexively with Indigenous perspectives. In this space, the middle ground would be worked at through respecting and maintaining the sense of self of the teacher candidate, through inviting them to speak and make sense of their resistance and ideas, and listening to what they say, so as to engage in an open conversation. It would mean not leaving teacher candidates stuck in guilt and unable to process it. At the same time, it would also require speaking with teacher candidates in a way that lets them see how and when they are imposing on Indigenous perspectives that emerge from circulating discourses, narratives and the limitations of any epistemic perspective. This would be similar to the situation in the Garden story, where I needed to think and move through my settler impositions on the garden. In that experience, I created the unacceptable condition where a garden is no longer a garden. I was both imposing a cultural perspective, yet at the same time stuck and unable to act and teach meaningfully. Through my impositions, I extinguished the garden, and then needed to work this out through considering the circulating ideas about what gardens are, the power to enforce this understanding, and how these ideas present as neutral. Recognizing my imposition and problematic relation in the story emerged from the felt quality of the experience – I was frozen and then anxious. I would suggest that strong emotional reactions in these moments are generative to recognizing something meaningful is happening. Teacher candidates could be asked to pay great attention to their embodied emotional reactions to conversations and other pedagogical encounters, as a guide to working in the challenging place of the middle ground. I am arguing here that it is important in teacher education to discuss and think about the topic of resistance with teacher candidates as pedagogically generative and desirable, yet note the emotional and psychological challenges of maintaining and attending to the self and relations within the middle ground space.

Conclusion

In brief summary and conclusion, I have engaged with *coloniality* scholarship to explain the context of epistemic dominance that continues to constrain and limit Indigenous perspectives, knowledges and pedagogies in Eurocentric educational spaces. I have also engaged with *settler colonialism* scholarship to enhance the conceptual relation to the Canadian settler nation-state context. Colonial dominance is most often hidden from educational conversations in the Canadian context, behind a benevolent multicultural façade that ignores the history and current

reality of settler violence and the ongoing occupation of Indigenous territories. In this article, I have tried to bring forward my perspective as a settler-scholar-teacher, one that has been unsettled by thinking through the ways I have thought and acted within this dynamic. I have grown increasingly aware that I have been formally educated in ways that have encouraged me to unquestioningly take up privilege and resist acknowledging the violence and marginalization that has been the lived reality for many Indigenous peoples in Canada and globally. In this article, I have tried to think about my own decolonial work, as an instructor in a program of teacher education, in a way that invites teacher candidates into a conversation on history, power, and the ways that educational systems have created a context where privileged participation has been portrayed as neutral. I have considered the ways that dominant settler narratives, which misunderstand Indigenous peoples and settler-Indigenous relations, might be questioned, along with openly engaging the resistance to Indigenous perspectives that frame settler dominated contexts. I have suggested practices in teacher education that engage a self-reflexive practice through autobiographies, and combined this with settler policy documents to engage in pedagogical practices where non-Indigenous teacher candidates do not look at themselves as neutral and their epistemic practices as universal – where non-Indigenous peoples in educational spaces can learn to *listen to* and *be taught by* Indigenous scholars and knowledge holders. I am hoping that my own experiences as an unsettled settler, and one who engages with others in critical self-questioning, might engage a broader conversation on decolonial and decolonizing practices in real places and in real ways.[15]

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