NITAOWAHSINNOON: THE WORK OF RECONCILIATION IS FOR NEIGHBOURS TREATY 7 LANDS INTERSECT WITH DESIGN EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT:

This paper discusses the use of pedagogies of difference, civic trust, design education and design thinking as a source and method for reconciliation with Canada's First Nations and Aboriginal Peoples. In 2015, Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission's *Calls to Action* included missives for post-secondary educators and universities as one of the keys to healing and correcting the acts of cultural genocide that are a part of a 100-year history in our country. Geographies, land, and story are critical to First Nations and Aboriginal communities. As such, dialogues and inclusion of Aboriginal peoples form the basis from which Aboriginal and non-aboriginal student projects and course work in social innovation will occur.

Keywords: human-centred, aboriginal, first nations, pedagogies of difference

INTRODUCTION

For over 100 years, the goal of government policies in Canada, as they pertained to Aboriginal peoples were to eliminate Aboriginal governments; ignore Aboriginal rights; terminate the Treaties; and, through a process of assimilation, cause Aboriginal peoples to cease to exist as distinct legal, social, cultural, religious, and racial entities in Canada. The establishment and operation of residential schools were a central element of this policy, which can best be described as "cultural genocide." (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015).

Before I started my career in higher education in 1997, I had been invited to work with the four nations of the Blackfoot Confederacy for close to four years in my role as a visitor studies specialist at the Glenbow Museum in Calgary, Canada. As a member of the Niitsitapiisini team, I was gifted knowledge from Tom Blackweasel, Doreen Blackweasel, Andy Blackwater, Jenny Bruised Head, Louis Crop Eared Wolf, Charlie Crow Chief, Rosie Day Rider, Leo Fox, Sheen a Jackson, Earl Old Person, Allan Pard, Jerry Potts, Pete Standing Alone, Jim Swag, Danny Weaselchild, Frank Weasel Head, Charente-Maritime Wolfleg, and Herman Old Yellow Woman. I went on to work with residential school survivors, with Doug Dokis of the Dokis First Nation in northern Ontario. Being the recipient of knowledge, story,

ceremony and prayer for these many ears is seen in many ways as a university education from the four nations of the Blackfoot Confederacy and Ojibwa communities.

Moreover, I will always remember the friendship and sharing of a fellow staff member Cliff who came from the Siksika Nation East of our city. I will never forget standing with him on the landing between two sets of stairs, looking out a picture window in Chief Old Sun School in Siksika, as he told me this was the place where for three years, he could see his family's home, kilometers away, but could not visit. And, on days where he spoke his language or disobeyed his educators, he would be pushed or tripped down the stairs behind us as punishment. This was his story as it was told to me.

Almost 20 years later, design educators and post secondary students - both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, have a completely unique opportunity and may indeed have role in acknowledging legacies of residential schools and facilitating reconciliation with Canada's First Peoples.

In order to redress the legacy of residential schools and advance the process of reconciliation, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, among many 'Calls to Action' (2015), outline the following as they pertain to Canada's post-secondary institutions:

1. We call upon law schools in Canada to require all law students to take a course in Aboriginal people and the law, which includes the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (the recommended framework for reconciliation), Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal-Crown relations. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism (Recommendation 27). Although this action focuses on law students specifically, it is repeated throughout the report as a key action for many different educational contexts - a call to action across the academy.

2. That the federal, provincial and territorial government, in consultation and collaboration with Survivors, Aboriginal peoples, and educators provide the necessary funding to post-secondary institutions to educate teachers on how to integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms (Recommendation 62.ii). Indigenous knowledge is inextricably linked to familial oral traditions, which in turn are linked to specific physical geographies, ways of knowing, relationships, ancestral linage, prerogative, and story.

3. That the Council of Ministers of Education maintains an annual commitment to Aboriginal education issues, including building student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect (Recommendation 63.iii). Intercultural understanding is essential to one's ability to relate, communicate, and appreciate diversities. At a deeper level, intercultural practice compels one to be aware of one's own culture, the culture of others, the divisions within and between each, and loop how these dynamics influence perspectives and behaviours such as stereotyping and marginalization or, conversely, inclusion, empathy and mutual respect.

It is at these intersections, a commitment to provide accurate knowledge of Canada's Aboriginal peoples, their histories, their rights, their present and presence; a commitment to

appreciating and engaging, with consent, indigenous knowledge, relationship to the land, culture, and language; and, through commitments to intercultural practices - that design educators and students, Aboriginal and non-aboriginal, can work together as one source of active reconciliation.

Further, we are poised to accomplish this work through so-called 'pedagogies of discomfort', by working with the land and community as a platform for understanding, and by engaging the tools of design thinking.

BACKGROUND

Calgary is a city in the province of Alberta, Canada. It is situated at the confluence of the Bow River and Elbow River on geography of both foothills and prairies at the eastern Base of the Canadian Rocky Mountain range. The city of Calgary has a metropolitan population of over 1.2 million citizens. The city is home to the second-most corporate head offices in Canada among the country's 800 largest corporations.

The modern city maps onto territorial lands that are shared, utilized, and cherished for both their deep histories and modern use by Canada's Treaty 7 nations. Treaty 7 refers to a local peace Treaty made in 1877 between two nations - the nations of the Blackfoot Confederacy - the Siksika, Piikani and Kainaiwa; the Tsuu T'ina (or Sarcee Nation), the Stoney Nation - the Bearspaw, Chiniki, and Wesley Goodstoney; and, Her Majesty the Queen. Indigenous nations across Canada negotiated these treaties with integrity and good faith, based on their inherent rights (Treaty 7 Tribal Council et al., 1996).

In dispute, and misunderstood by most Canadians, is the Doctrine of Discovery - the politically and socially accepted basis for presumptive European claims to the land and riches of this country, used to justify colonization (Williams, 2012; Miller, 2010; Miller 2005), which is violently at odds with inherent rights and spirit of Treaty negotiations.

Further, it must be understood that land, language, culture and identity are inseparable from

Aboriginal spirituality and wellbeing. Residential school survivor and Anishnaabe Elder Fred Kelly explains:

"To take territorial lands away from a people whose very spirit is so intrinsically connected to Mother Earth was to actually dispossess them of their very soul and being; it was to destroy whole indigenous nations. Weakened by disease and separated from their traditional foods and medicines, First Nations peoples had no defense against further government encroachments on their lives. Yet they continued to abide by the terms of the Treaties trusting in the honour of the Crown to no avail. They were mortally wounded in mind, body, heart, and spirit that turned them into the walking dead. Recovery would take time, and fortunately they took their sacred traditions underground to be practiced in secret until the day of revival would surely come . . . I am happy that my ancestors saw fit to bring their sacred beliefs underground when they were banned and persecuted. Because of them and the Creator, my people are alive and I have found my answers" (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015, p.281).

Much of the current state of troubled relations between Aboriginal and non-aboriginal Canadians is attributable to educational institutions and what they have taught or failed to teach over many generations. At the same time, education is seen as the key to reconciliation and a remedy for gaps in historical knowledge that perpetuates ignorance and racism in the country.

PEDAGOGIES OF DIFFERENCE

Nation building has been the emphasis in formalized Canadian history curricula, taught for generations, and thus few non-aboriginal Canadians have the foundational knowledge to fully appreciate the multi-generational sources of and cultural disruptions to Canada's First Nations and Aboriginal peoples. Few Canadians have the opportunity, or sadly, the appetite, to engage in the difficult work of reconstructing beliefs, values or assumptions about Canada's First Peoples. And where they do sincerely, they lack the confidence or with good intentions are paralyzed by fears of making mistakes and creating additional harms.

Boler and Zembylas introduce their thesis of the 'pedagogy of discomfort' in the seminal text, Pedagogies of Difference - Rethinking Education for Social Change (2003). In the development of critical thinking skills, the authors acknowledge that educational approaches that encourage understanding of norms and differences require both cognitive and emotional labour. These pedagogies require that both educator and student move beyond their 'comfort zone' - those inscribed cultural and emotional terrains that we occupy less by choice and more through hegemony. These comfort zones remain largely unexamined because they are familiar and seemingly represent common sense.

Pedagogies of discomfort recognize and problematize those emotional dimensions that frame and shape daily habits, routines, and unconscious complicity with hegemony. We are asked as educators and, in turn, ask of our students, "How do we enact and embody dominant values and assumptions in our daily lives and routines?" By identifying or questioning our emotional reactions and responses (i.e. emotional stances), we begin to identify our unconscious privilege as well as invisible ways that one complies with dominant ideologies (p.108).

Boiler and Zembylas assert that pedagogies of discomfort are quite specifically counter-hegemonic. Left unchecked, emotional stances encourage people to not recognize how institutionalized racism, for example, affects one's self or others. We desire not to see problematic and unethical differences (p. 114). Moreover, dominant ideologies are propped up by popular histories, not as Barzun (1950) notes, " . . . what I shall not blush to call Unpopular History." Among the TRC's Calls to Action (2015), learning about residential schools histories is seen as crucial to reconciliation, but can only be effective if Canadians also learn from this history in terms of repairing broken trust, strengthening a sense of civic responsibility, and spurring remedial and constructive action (p. 296).

The Commission adopts the definition of "civic trust" put forward by justice scholar Pablo de Greiff (2008) as it relates to the role of apologies in reconciliation processes: "Trust involves an expectation of . . . commitment to the norms and values we share

 . . . not the thick form of trust characteristic of relations between intimates, but rather 'civic' trust . . . that can develop among citizens who are strangers to one another, but who are members of the same political community. Trusting an institution, then, amounts to knowing that it's constitutive rules, values and norms are shared by participants and that they regard them as binding. Reconciliation, minimally, is the condition under which citizens can trust one another as citizens again (or anew). It presupposes that both institutions and persons can become trustworthy, and this is not something that is merely granted but earned" (pp. 125-127). de Greiff emphasises that above all, it is important to understand why taking a certain course of action gives us reason to believe that this will lead to certain outcomes.

THE ROLE OF DESIGN THINKING & DESIGN EDUCATORS IN FACILITATING TRUST

In order to understand how design thinking and design educators can contribute to trust and reconciliation, one must first examine the reductive conceptions of difference regularly encountered in educated practitioners who embrace critical inquiry. Boiler and Zembylas (2005) discuss three models of difference.

The Celebration/Tolerance model of difference (p.109) demonstrates and calls one to be accountable for benign comparisons, for example, it is simple to understand that we eat different foods and even though we are different, we can respect and honor one another's choices. However, these tolerances are not neutral nor do they address power, systematic institutional, educational or economic factors that inhibit choice. We risk mistakenly assigning these choices as multicultural preference and assuming equality because it feels good. The emotional stance becomes a dangerously 'benign' tolerance. The opportunity for design educators is to ensure that both Aboriginal and non-aboriginal students to look at, not away from the truths, traumas, and multi-generational realities facing Canada's First Nations as they face their experiences of cultural genocide and what losses of land, culture, language and family means during this time of reconciliation. This will be outside of our respective comfort zones but this activity is quite well-practiced in design thinking pedagogies.

The Denial/Sameness model of difference (p.110) discusses how liberal individualism conveniently denies or erases difference, mistaking "we are all the same" thinking with a commitment to assimilation and misunderstanding the complete significance of cultural heritage. Put differently, the dominant culture seemingly gets to decide when and why differences are important. This denies the ways in which power shapes and seeks to erase differences. We engage in an emotional stance of denial. The opportunity for design educators is to have learning communities practice accepting the truths of Canada's First Nations, differentiating one's experience. Actions and activities include building relationships with Aboriginal peers, educators, community leaders, and elders to learn about the historic and territorial uses of the city or communities therein, learning more about etiquette and protocol, learning more about different First Nations and Aboriginal communities and what

makes each unique, seeking perspectives on problems, checking one's assumptions, and by utilizing design practices that are user-driven, empathetic, and consentual.

Design thinking methods should encourage and inspire collaborative creativity to solve problems in a conciliatory manner.

Finally, the Natural Response/Biological model of difference has been used to justify xenophobia by explains fear of differences as a natural emotion or as a feature of being human. This model denies and rationalizes the one's fear and power to justify the oppression of other groups. The emotional stance is excusing one's self from accountability. Actions and activities include a commitment to self-awareness, creating collaborative projects that encourage participation, the sharing of intercultural knowledge, listening with care, and utilizing new understandings in decision-making and crafting solutions. In design thinking, the point is people, their intelligence and experience.

The TRC recommendations underscore, at the community level, where contact between Aboriginal and non-aboriginal often minimal or marred by distrust and racism, Have the potential to establish respectful relationships by being 'good neighbours'. This means being respectful – listening to and learning from each other, building understanding, and taking constructive action to improve relationships (p.364).

THE HOPES FOR SOCIAL INNOVATION AT MOUNT ROYAL UNIVERSITY

Design educators, through design thinking processes, have the tools to counter the problematic, emotional stances and facilitate reconciliation in Canada by choosing educational projects and activities that compel students to take responsibility for how differences are produced and perpetuated. In seeking solutions, we can embody pedagogies that challenge individual beliefs, interrogate and positively influence psychosocial relationships, with the goal of building relationships and earning trust.

Understanding the ethical dimension of history is especially important. Educators and students alike must be able to make ethical judgments about the actions of their ancestors while recognizing that the moral sensibilities of the past may be quite different from their own in present times. They must be able to make informed decisions about what responsibilities today's society has in addressing historical injustices (p. 297). Educators who engage critical pedagogies will be asking of themselves and their students to deconstruct worldviews, identities, and beliefs that are long-held.

At Mount Royal University, First Nations' achievements knowledge, histories and perspectives remain, as is the case with many other Canadian post-secondary institutions, woefully underrepresented and underutilized. Battiste, Bell and Findlay (2002) cite Erica Irene Daes from the *United Nations Working Group in Indigenous People* from UNESCO Conference on Education held in July 1999, "Displacing inertia and systematic discrimination against Indigenous peoples, legitimized by the cognitive frameworks of imperialism and colonization remains the single most crucial cultural challenge facing humanity. Meeting this responsibility is not just a problem for the colonized and oppressed, but also the defining challenge for all peoples. It is the path to a shared and sustainable future for all peoples."

Earlier this year, among many initiatives to address reconciliation, Mount Royal University embarked on a new Social Innovation Concentration which ensures that students develop city-wide projects where the city is considered our studio, mindful of our robust civic culture, through engagement with our civic government, utilizing design thinking processes, and through interrelationship and collaboration with all community members starting with Treaty 7 communities, Elders, and influencers.

Our projects are inclusive of nine courses which include an Introduction to Social Innovation, Histories of Social Innovation, Facilitating Social Innovation, Storytelling and Systems, Agents of Social Change, Civic Innovation, Social Enterprising, Human-Centred Design, and a capstone Social Innovation Lab. Unique to this curricula at Mount Royal University is that students from any university in our city can apply and become a part of the program. Five of the courses are new and as such, have integrated *TRC Calls to Action* and pedagogies of difference (Figure 1).

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action (2015)					
	+Histories of Residential Schools +Treaties and Aboriginal Rights	+Legacy of Residential Schools +Intercultural competencies +Human rights	+Intercultural competencies + Compare and confront 'place' +Practicing reconciliation	+Intercultural competencies + Challenging positions of dominance +Practicing reconciliation	+Intercultural maturity + Inclusive practices + Conciliatory solutions focus
Design Thinking in Social Innovation Curricula					
	Histories of Social Innovation	**Facilitating Social Innovation**	**Civic Innovation**	**Human-Centred Design**	**Social Enterprising**
Learning from Treaty 7 First Nations					
Sensory	+Treaty 7 relationship to the land as shared by the nations +Etiquette and protocol	+Representation and consultation expectations + Lived oral practices from traditions +Consensus	+ Creation and star stories +Living culture +Lineage and ancestral use of neighbouhoods and our city	+Community consultation and seeking advice +Elders and ceremonialists +Prerogative	+Representation +Modeling and bridging the way for others +Demonstrating humility and gratitude
Cognitive	+Worldviews, norms/values, +Differentiation commonalities with/among	+Commitment to engagement and consent +Engage and analyze conflicts	+Present and presence +Engage and transform differences	+ The work of neighbours +Engage and transform differences	+Actions and behaviours of accountability, consultation, respect
Emotional	+Respect Engaged	+Empathy(s) Responsive	+Relationships Receptive	+Mutuality(s) Humility	+Reconciliations Balanced
Desired Outcomes					
	+Increase understandings of dominance and injustice +Build capacity for empathy +Engage with discomfort	+Re-construct understandings +Enact/embody empathies +Demonstrate accountabilities, justice, address inertia	+Strengthen personal and professional responsibilities +Enact/embody courage +Use emotional stance as a tool	+ Engage constructive action, create conditions for trust, embody nuanced understanding	+Engage constructive actions that enact/embody trust 'anew' and sustain conditions for forgiveness

Table 1. Design Education & Reconciliation Opportunities

Our students will work across the curriculum of social innovation and, in every course, be asked to first explore, be inclusive of, and be accountable for the authentic stories and voices of our city and communities not yet told. They will seek out new relationships with

and knowledge of our First Nations and Aboriginal peoples, the stories of their lands, and essential components of their living and historic culture.

Because these social innovation courses are cast against the background of our city, of Treaty 7 lands themselves, our hope and expectation is to shift some of the most organizationally bureaucratic cultures (i.e., City Hall) by developing a cadre of change-makers and city planners who understand and are guided by the lands, language, stories and relationships to First Peoples. We are aided at Mount Royal University by our Iniskim Centre - an academic support centre for First Nations, Metis and Inuit students whose mandate includes increasing awareness of distinct culture, history and protocols, while offering a wide range of programs and services that increase enrollment and retention of Aboriginal students.

We are motivated during this time of reconciliation to do better and differently as educators.

We have much to learn and we are grateful for the opportunities that all participants have afforded us in the work, memories, and statements given and shared from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. We are humbled to open these dialogues and engage a new generation of students, graduates, and ultimately citizens in seeing themselves differently using the land and our city.

"I know that reconciliation is happening in Canadian society when Canadians, whoever they live, are able to say the names of tribes with which they are neighbours; they're able to pronounce names from the community, or of people that they know, and they're able to say hello, goodbye, in the language of their neighbours.... That will show me that they've invested in finding out the language of the land [on] which they live...because the language comes from the land...the language is very organic to where it comes from and the invitation to you is to learn that and to be enlightened by that and to be informed by [our] ways of thinking and knowing and seeing and understanding. So that, to me, is reconciliation." Victoria Wells (p.364).

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