'Dreaming New Visions': Indigenous Thinkers on Decolonising Education

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Abstract

De-colonial thinking and action must grapple with the antithetical nature of education: that it has the potential to both liberate and oppress. In the Canadian context, for instance, settler society used residential schools in the assimilationist mission to 'kill the Indian' in the Indigenous child, and education is now considered by Indigenous leaders as a site for building more than just relations (TRC, 2012; Donald, 2011). This article turns close attention to two Indigenous theorists to think through this tension: Linda Tuhiwei Smith, and Sandy Grande, who have been selected due to their importance in this field. Their work is particularly valuable due to their ability to identify and critique some core traits of colonial power that have been felt across continents and borders in different colonial contexts (meaning they have influenced leading scholars and practitioners internationally) (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). While Smith's work considers research methods, and how they take shape within higher education, to examine and inform research design and ethics, the focus of this paper is on the implications of her arguments for education and pedagogy specifically (Smith, 2012). Grande's work looks explicitly at education, and within a cultural and historical backdrop distinct from Smith's: Indigenous peoples and schooling in America (Grande, 2015). This article advances that in positioning these theorists together, it is possible to see key themes emerge across different contexts. In particular, it illuminates how colonisation operates through epistemic violence articulated and reproduced through education, and how making space for subjugated knowledges through education is a key step in decolonisation. Crucially, it is suggested in this paper, this must involve pedagogical shifts that reflect the subjugated knowledges of colonised peoples, and not simply curricular nods to their cultures, histories and experiences.

Keywords

Decolonising education, pedagogy, epistemic violence, subjugated knowledges

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Introduction

This article looks closely at two Indigenous theorists, Linda Tuhiwei Smith (2012), and Sandy Grande (2012), to think through colonial underpinnings of conventional Western education, and possibilities for decolonisation. This article advances that in positioning these theorists together, it is possible to see key themes emerge across different contexts, and these themes provide scope for future decolonial praxis in education. As a settler-Canadian raised on unceded Indigenous territories, and as both a former student of the Canadian education system and subsequently a curriculum designer for the system I have witnessed and benefited from inequalities that disadvantage Indigenous people. It is not simply part of my experience, but part of my ontological makeup. Working with Indigenous peoples in the field of education through my doctoral and more recent research has illuminated the textures of these inequalities, and their rootedness in wide-spread colonialism. While the earliest colonists of Canada's Indigenous peoples (and indeed many other peoples) were primarily British, in taking up an academic post within the United Kingdom I was surprised to discover how the conversation on colonisation seems even more limited than that of Canada's (Sund & Pashby, 2020). The call to decolonise is therefore one I feel a responsibility to respond to in my teaching and writing. In order to adequately and respectfully engage with the two key texts, I employ a 'settler witnessing' methodology which takes into account my role as a settler and, in accordance with Indigenous frameworks, my responsibilities to store, care for, and share Indigenous perspectives or stories, and implement Indigenous epistemologies (Nagy, 2020). In keeping with the responsibility to implement Indigenous epistemologies, this paper will close with some discussion of my own efforts at decolonial pedagogical practices. Indigenous with a capital I is the standard usage in post-colonial texts.

The United Kingdom, like Canada, has a colonial legacy that continues to devastate many. Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2015-2015) comprised of testimony from survivors of Canada's residential school system that was spearheaded by British settlers (which, for generations forcibly removed Indigenous children from their homes and subjected them to egregious physical, sexual and emotional abuses), called on settler society and governments to address this violence and subjugation through re-education (TRC, 2012). Movements like Black Lives Matters are making similar calls to the UK education at all levels (Gebrial, 2018). One vital step in

decolonising education, it is suggested here, is hearing and heeding subjugated knowledges (Kimmerer, 2013). If the medium for learning and teaching is our pedagogy, and if the medium is indeed the message as Marshal McLuhan famously suggested, the message that unchecked Eurocentric pedagogies convey is one of colonial power (Grade, 2015; McLuhan, 1964). Crucially, I will suggest, decolonising education means not simply inserting facts, narratives and cultural production of marginalised communities into curriculum, but making meaningful space within the educational sphere for the epistemologies and pedagogies that root them.

The focus on Sandy Grande (with a focus on her text Red Pedagogy, 2015), and Linda Tuhiwai Smith (Decolonizing Methodologies, 2012) in this paper is owing to their importance in this field. In my wide reading of decolonial works through my doctoral research examining the possibilities of decolonising education through children's literature and critical literacy practices (Bagelman 2015), and through subsequent work with Indigenous communities in Canada on decolonial narratives (Bagelman, 2018) both Grande and Smith stood out as influential Indigenous scholars whose critical voices on the nuanced manifestations of epistemic violence towards Indigenous peoples make a very significant impact on decolonisation praxis. Their work is particularly valuable due to their ability to incisively identify and unpick some core traits of colonial power that have been felt across continents and borders in different colonial contexts meaning they have influenced leading scholars and practitioners internationally (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Grande, for instance has been authoritative from the American and South American context (Darder, 2017) to the English context (Youdell, 2010), while Smith has informed pedagogical and methodological praxis from the Australian context (Davis, Sumara & Luce-Kapler, 2000) to the Canadian context (Adelson, 2005). Both have been included in compendiums such as Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research, shaping the discourse on decolonising education (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

While these Indigenous thinkers speak to indigeneity and the lands in which they are embedded (America, New Zealand and Canada) their teachings are far reaching and incite a closer examination of colonialism in the UK and its very direct impacts on education, and BAME communities (De Jong, Icaza, Vázquez & Withaeckx, 2017).

Methodology: Indigenous storytelling and settler witnessing

As I pay close attention Indigenous perspectives on the systemic dismissal of Indigenous epistemes in this paper through knowledge production and schooling (such as Indigenous understandings of animacy, holism and relationality) (Macfarlane,

Glynn, Grace, Penetito & Bateman, 2008), employing a decolonial methodology here is not only appropriate but necessary. It is a move toward not simply discussing but enacting decolonisation and allyship. As such, the methods I use will be in keeping with the time-honoured and socially valued method of storytelling for Indigenous peoples to offer a culturally-relevant handling of this topic (Iseke, 2013). Specifically, framing Smith and Grande as storytellers forming a significant decolonial narrative proves more valuable in this case than looking at their works through a conventional systematic literature review method. Systematic literature review methods have their origins in Western medicine (Grant & Booth, 2009, P. 91), and while applied to many fields to open up often rich critical discussions, resonances of the hard sciences remain: literature is regarded as 'data', and the aim is 'comprehensiveness'. The works of Smith and Grande, however, take issue with such a disaffected handling of knowledge, and notions of mastery.

Instead, storytelling resists scientific comprehensiveness and is deeply affective, as it hinges on the relationship between story, storytelling, and the listener (Rifkin, 2015). As an Indigenous scholar and Canada Research Chair of Indigenous Education Judy Iseke argues the story is a practice in Indigenous cultures that sustains communities, validates experiences and epistemologies, expresses experiences of Indigenous peoples, and nurtures relationships and the sharing of knowledge (Iseke, 2013). Holding that Indigenous theory is a form of story (Kimmerer, 2013), I maintain that my research role as a white settler is one of 'settler witness' to these stories, and as such I have embraced a 'settler witnessing' methodology - a method which involves a process of storing, caring for, and sharing the Indigenous story that has been offered, and, finally, implementing Indigenous epistemologies (Korteweg & Root, 2016).

Witnessing a story, according to Indigenous practice, involves accepting responsibility to store, care and share the knowledge being told (Korteweg & Root, 2016). As settler scholar Rosemary Nagy writes: "witnessing particularly enacts the Indigenous principle of reciprocity. Our responsibility as witnesses is to share what we have learned, particularly with other settlers, and to "disrupt our settler-colonial complicity while we build respectful relations"' (Nagy, 2020: 232). It is my aim that this paper will reflect active listening, and an act of sharing what I have learned from these thinkers in the service of disruption. Decolonization, Paulette Regan asserts in 'Unsettling the Settler Within', "requires not only the sharing of testimony and the active listening of witnesses, but the embrace and implementation of Indigenous epistemologies and methodologies" (Regan, 2010).

The settler witnessing methodology is nicely exemplified by Root and Korteweg's research project, which aims to identify the colonial underpinnings of environmental education by listening to and reading nidgenous testimony or story with the aim of decolonising the curriculum and pedagogy (Korteweg & Root, 2016). Korteweg and Root explain how they employed settler witnessing as a methodological framework:

> "…by learning, witnessing, and teaching the [Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug First Nation] story, we engaged in an affective learning process attuned to difficult knowledge that improved our environmental educator responsibilities to be more accountable for ethical relationality (Donald, 2012; Wilson, 2008) with Indigenous peoples and Land-based pedagogy (Wildcat, McDonald, Irlbacher-Fox, & Coulthard, 2014) in our teaching praxis" (Korteweg, Root, 2016: 180).

My usage of settler witnessing as a methodology has also been informed by Paulette Regan's text 'Unsettling the settler within: Indian residential schools, truth telling, and reconciliation in Canada' (Regan, 2010) and Rosemary Nagy's work 'Settler Witnessing at the truth and reconciliation commission of Canada (TRC)' (Nagy, 2020). In both instances, the settler authors demonstrate how privileging Indigenous perspectives through bearing witness to oral and textual storytelling is a basis for solidaristic scholarship, and can provide fertile ground for future decolonial praxis. They applied this method to attending, analysing and writing on the TRC, which not only meant they could use their platform to carve out new spaces for Indigenous perspectives to be heard in academia, but they also made explicit the implications of these stories for settler society.

A key aim of this paper, to amplify Indigenous and colonised voices within British educational discourse and practice and is reflected by my settler witnessing. As public memory scholar Roger Simon remarks, "there is a difference between learning about and learning from" (Simon 2013: 136). In the drive to generate 'new contributions' to our fields through our research and publications, doing the work of listening and contextualising (especially in regards to marginalised work) is, as Indigenous scholar Robin Kimmerer outlines, often considered less urgent and valuable - it is seen as less rigorous and academic (Kimmerer, 2013). This 'expert culture' is endemic to the colonial frameworks of knowledge production with which decolonial scholars at the heart of this paper rightly take issue (Smith, 1999). These traditions are not mere academic trifles, but, as I explore within this paper, a part of a larger colonial project that has translated into real, lived oppression (from the cultural

genocide of Indigenous peoples in Canada's residential schools, to the greatly hindered educational outcomes of black students in UK schools today) (Wright, 2013).

Who bears witness? Locating myself within decolonial praxis

The complexities of being a white settler of Jewish descent in Canada has and continues to inform my self-understanding and commitments as a researcher and educator. As a social worker caring for domestic abuse survivors in the Canadian arctic (the place of my birth), my mom was given gifts by Inuit and Dene women in the shelters: handmade toys, baby clothes, and caribou jerky (to teeth on) for me and my sister as infants. Government protocol dictated that gifts should not be accepted by social workers, despite the great importance of gift-giving in Inuit and Dene societies (Armstrong, 2007). The rabbit-fur-trimmed puppet and baby moccasins carefully stitched out of hide that now sit on my bookshelf say much of my settler ontology. The gifts embody reciprocity that these women and my mom quietly practiced. They are a reminder that colonial protocols or practices may need to be disrupted to make positive change, and the manifold ways non-Indigenous peoples can use their unearned settler privilege to do so.

Spending most of my life on the unceded territories of the Coast Salish peoples (Vancouver Island, British Columbia) where ongoing colonial practices of discrimination, dispossession, and assimilation damage Indigenous peoples' wellbeing, rights and freedoms in both visible and invisible ways (as officially recognised by Canada's TRC), I am acutely aware of the need to answer the call for decolonial action (Daschuk, 2013; Niezen, 2017; TRC, 2012). In reflection on my own schooling in Canada, I have been struck by the lack of learning on colonialism, Indigenous history, law, governance, culture and thought that was made available. Like many settlers of my generation, it was only in my university studies that I heard mention of the eugenics practices, starvation policies, cultural prohibitions and other atrocities inflicted on Indigenous peoples at the hand of the Canadian state (Daschuk, 2013; Niezen, 2017; TRC, 2012).

It was therefore exciting to me that I might be able to contribute to a shift in colonial and Indigenous critical literacies while developing curriculum for school boards for a University of British Columbia-based NGO following my first graduate degree. After being contracted to generate educational resources exploring 'critical histories of Alberta' for Alberta Heritage (within the government ministry of Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women) in 2009, we worked to generate materials addressing the colonial residential schools system. The material was deemed too

mature by the ministry, despite the holocaust being part of the Alberta curriculum for the same age group, and they instead published a resource on the experiences of Ukrainian settlers.

In this and many other encounters, I saw what Canadian Indigenous scholar Dwayne Donald describes as "the prevailing curricular and pedagogical assumption […] that Aboriginal issues, perspectives, and knowledge systems are only relevant to Aboriginal students" (Donald, 2011: 102). Such a retreat not only thwarts movement towards more just relations, but obfuscates our relations entirely. Rather than retreat, Donald implores educators to embrace a "decolonizing form of curriculum theorising that troubles the pedagogy by reconceptualising Aboriginal-Canadian relations in more ethically relational ways" (ibid). Informed by my experiences as a settler, this 'troubling' has been the spirit of my research, teaching, and work with Indigenous peoples.

Retrieving and remaking

In *Decolonizing Methodologies,* Smith (1999) a Maori scholar from New Zealand (Ngati Awa being one of the Maori tribes to which she has ancestral links), stresses the role that research has played in constructing a colonial ways of thinking. She argues that establishing the West as the gatekeepers of knowledge and entrenching epistemic violence expressed through institutions like schools has shaped a colonial imaginary about Indigenous peoples that, in turn, has profound material effects on the history and lives of Indigenous peoples the world over: "research is one of the ways in which the underlying code of imperialism and colonialism is both regulated and realized" (Smith, 2012: 7). It is therefore necessary for Indigenous peoples to claim space in institutions like universities and assert their own voices within research, theory and writing. Considering the role that research 'on Indigenous peoples' has played in the violence inflicted on Indigenous peoples, a central aim of her text is to offer a specific critique or politicisation of positivist research, the knowledge it produces, and its effects. This unsettling of Western research is a responsibility of non-Indigenous researchers as well as Indigenous academics, Smith emphasises. Her second aim is to offer alternative methods for conducting decolonial knowledge production or research – primarily led by Indigenous peoples and secondarily adopted by non-Indigenous peoples on Indigenous terms.

While Smith often aligns herself with Feminist thinking, and acknowledges it offers useful tools for transformative Indigenous research, she sees the need to co-opt, adapt, and revise existing theory, to create theory not currently represented in

academia and give way to decolonial methods. These methods can provide Indigenous communities with frameworks to lead their own research for decolonial ends, and feed knowledge production, which is then articulated through education and informs all other state institutions (Smith, 2012: 37).

Smith identifies not just research but *research, theory and writing* as a triad that inscribes settler power in troubling ways. The triad embodies a host of assumptions that become taken-for-granted, for instance: notions of human nature inherent in social contract theory, which presents humans as agents who act upon (and are not a part of) nature. These assumptions are *so* taken-for-granted that Smith (drawing on Michel Foucault [1984]) claims it forms a sort of 'archive' or foundation for thinking (Smith, 2012). This archive was formed by approaching knowledge (for instance, knowledge of Indigenous peoples) as a resource to be mined or extracted, examined and (in this spirit) Indigenous peoples and their knowledge have become either commodified or filed away. The commodity this research produces benefits settler communities: "At a common sense level", Smith writes, "research was talked about both in terms of its absolute worthlessness to us, the Indigenous world, and its absolute usefulness to those who wielded it as an instrument" (Smith, 2012: 3). To borrow a Derridian term, as long as research, writing and theory draws on this archive, it is already in *"ruins"* long before it sets out to collect data and present findings (Derrida, 1993).

While research traditions have established exclusionary notions of what constitutes 'good' knowledge, education is the way this is conveyed to the young (Foucault, 1984; Smith, 2012). Smith therefore considers education to be a central site of oppressive colonial power: "…through the curriculum and its underlying theory of knowledge, early schools redefined the world and where Indigenous peoples were positioned within the world" (Smith, 2012: 33). The institutional structure of schools allowed and still allows for the knowledge produced through research, writing and theory to form a discipline (in the Foucaultian and academic sense of the word) and to be disseminated to the masses. Education is able to cement colonial mindsets established by research, and in doing so, present ways of knowing as 'valid knowledge' and actively dismiss other forms of knowing (Smith, 2012). To succeed in academia, Smith laments, Indigenous peoples have been forced to assimilate into this framework (or: internalise oppressive discourses) and reproduce it through their research. Education has thus often been an alienating rather than an empowering force for Indigenous communities, Smith suggests.

Smith stresses "[T]here can be no 'postmodern' for us until we have settled some business of the modern[...] there is unfinished business" (Smith, 2012: 34). It is a

necessity to do some "researching back" and "writing back" before critical theory will be successfully transformative for Indigenous peoples (Smith, 2012: 7). Smith further writes;

> "…efforts by governments, states, societies and institutions to deny the historical foundations of [colonialism] have simultaneously denied our claim to humanity, to having a history, and to all sense of hope. […] To resist is to retrench in the margins, *retrieve what we were and remake ourselves*" (: 4).

Literature about, on, and by Indigenous communities has gotten stuck at the 'retrieving' stage, but must also focus on 'remaking', Smith suggests. "Despite the extensive literature about the life and customs of Indigenous peoples, here are few critical texts on research methodologies which mention the word Indigenous..." (Smith, 2012: 5). Otherwise put: transformative and decolonial methods require a connection between the past (retrieving) with the present and future (remaking) (ibid).

While Smith stresses retrieving and remaking in critical texts, this can also be said for direct pedagogical practice. While working to support a First Nations Health Authority project "Food is Medicine" in British Columbia, I was able to see the importance of retrieving and remaking working in tandem. The project, explored 'Unsettling food security: the role of young people in Indigenous food system revitalisation' (Bagelman, 2018), provided funding and resources for Indigenous elders to facilitate place-based education programs about Indigenous food systems, cooking and feasting for younger generations, engaged in the retrieval of vital knowledge that has been threatened by colonial policies such as potlatch bans that prohibited feasting (from 1885-1951), residential schools that disconnected children from their family and community teachings (from 1831-1996). Children and elders, for instance, took part in plant walks, in which elders identified edible and medicinal plants using Indigenous and English names, discussed uses and respectful harvesting. Remaking took the form of the children and youth developing educational materials based on these teachings for their own and for settler communities using the Indigenous methods of storytelling, place-based learning, and visual narrative. Considering ways in which this careful pedagogical practice can unfold in more formal educational settings as well, informed by Smith's thinking, is the ongoing work of decolonisation.

The colour of pedagogy

Sandy Grande, a Native American scholar from the United States, is from the Quechua Indigenous group. While Grande shares many aims with Smith, Grande (2015) places

a stronger emphasis on the role of education in ongoing oppression but also as a site of transformation. In her introduction, Grande identifies the central concerns that she deals with in *Red Pedagogy* (2015);

> "[...C]ritical theorists have failed to recognize and, more importantly, to theorize the relationship between American Indian tribes and the larger democratic imaginary. This failure has severely limited their ability to produce political strategies and educational interventions that account for the rights and the needs of American Indian students" (:1).

Grande addresses the shortcomings of Western critical theory and also the lack of Indigenous scholars participating in critical discourse (which leads to a failure to identify and deal with major gaps in "Indian education"). She suggests that these factors combined result in the marginalisation of Indian American education in educational discourses. Her books' title 'Red Pedagogy' says much of her context and political project. Firstly: 'red' has been a colonial term used to describe Native Americans, so in using this derogatory term as a Native American woman instead of a term like 'Indigenous', which can obscure historical violences, Grande emphasises the oppressive nature of the relationship between first people and settlers. Secondly, red is closely associated with revolution. Grande's work sees this *speaking truth to historical and cultural violence* as a foundation for revolution, and decolonial pedagogy as the site of transformation or revolution itself (Grande, 2015). Red Pedagogy embodies both explanatory frameworks to "understand the complex and intersecting vectors of power shaping the historical- material conditions of Indigenous schools and communities" (: 29) and creative frameworks (new theoretical frameworks for regenerating/developing richer research/education). Grande summaries: "the quest for a new red pedagogy is thus, at base, a search for the ways in which American Indian education can be deepened by its engagement with critical educational theory and for critical theory to be deepened by Indian education" (Grande, 2015: 28).

Like Smith who identifies the need for retrieving and remaking in transformative theory (to connect the past, present and future, and think outside of a linear progressive schemas), Grande writes: "…what distinguishes Red pedagogy is its basis of hope. Not the future-centered hope of the Western imagination, but rather, a hope that lives in contingency with the past" (Grande, 2015: 28). While Smith focuses on the oppressive role of positivism in Western research and thought, Grande identifies liberal democratic ideology as particularly harmful to education and Indigenous-state/Indigenous-settler relations. Grande argues that:

"…while all societies may work to shape the biology and consciousness of children, modernist societies and their attendant institutions shape consciousness in ways that are profoundly destructive and unsustainable."
(: 28)

Grande (2015) claims this approach to learning is unsustainable because it prizes the following academic traits, which stand at odd with Indigenous teachings:

1) Independence, which dismisses the role of community in the learning process 2) achievement, which suggests the end of education is to increase individual worth and enrichment rather than community enrichment 3) protestant work ethic, which disciplines subjects 4) humanism, which positions individuals as masters of own destiny in a world where everything is knowable 5) dismissal of spirituality, which suggests spirituality can exist, but it is irrelevant to knowledge 6) "Detachment from sources of local and personal knowledge": which bestows educators or experts with the authority to identify knowledge and 7) detachment from nature: one stands outside of nature to know it (Grande, 2015, p. 70-71).

Grande suggests that the failures of modern education and critical pedagogy to adequately address the structural oppression of Indigenous peoples and needs of Indigenous learners hinges on such liberal democratic frameworks. Grande (2015: 47) writes

"...liberal models of democracy, 'founded upon discourse and practices of structural exclusion,' have given rise to liberal models of education that are deeply inadequate to the need of American Indian students".

Even more pointedly, she states: "The deep structures of American democracy and its attendant institutions, including schools, have been designed for the express purpose of extinguishing tribalism." Indigenous students may only succeed in a liberal model of education if they are able to effectively exclude their own Indigeneity and embody the aforementioned traits that are consistent with a good liberal subject. This is consistent with Foucault's analysis of Western power and progress: modernity cloaks its power in notions of justice or kindness (eg. policing promotes safety, and achievement targets in education promote opportunity) when, in fact, they are just as or at times more oppressive than the overt expressions of power in the past because their cloaks make them more difficult to see and contest (Foucault, 1980).

The term hidden curriculum, which is generally used to describe the unwritten rules, codes and lessons that are conveyed but not openly intended (Wren, 1999) is

particularly apt here: the need for Indigenous students to assimilate in order to succeed in school, as Smith identifies, is often hidden behind rewards (by way of praise or top grades) for writing, speaking, thinking and comporting in ways that reflect settlers' standards. This underscores the need for decolonial work which works to unmask, reveal and challenge the spectre of colonialism in education.

Extraction and colonisation of the mind

In the same way that one cannot present a homogenous account of colonised peoples' knowledges, Smith and Grande do not suggest all Western ways of knowing are in the service of colonisation, but rather, they identify the positivist paradigm (born through the Enlightenment and consistent with contemporary liberal democracy) as a nexus of colonial violence. Assessing positivist methods is vital to decolonial work, since the pervasive methods reflect a set of conventions on how knowledge is gathered and codified. Smith suggests: "The notion of research as an objective, valuefree and scientific process for observing and making sense of human realities is taken for granted by many social scientists. Philosophers of science refer to this attitude as "…positivism'" (Smith, 1999: 174). Cree scholar Willaim Ermine (2006) explains, "One of the most contentious issues for Indigenous Peoples has been how research is conducted within the perimeters of scientific thought and discourse" (: 21). 'Positivism' here represents a larger epistemological structure that runs through most engagements with Indigenous peoples. According to Smith:

> Western research is more than just research that is located in a positivist tradition it is research which brings to bear, on any study of Indigenous peoples, a cultural
>
> orientation, a set of values, a different conceptualization of such things as time, space
>
> and subjectivity, difference and completing theories of knowledge, highly specialized
>
> forms of language, and structures of power (Smith, 2012: 42).

The positivist approach, she suggests, cannot be disentangled from its set of ontological, social, cultural and value systems which stand at odds with many Indigenous ways of knowing and being. Smith gives the example of traveller's stories: "Travellers' stories were generally the experiences and observations of white men whose interactions with Indigenous 'societies' or 'peoples' were constructed around

their own cultural views" (Smith, 2012: 8). Smith asserts that positivist approaches linked to past centuries,

> "…are still employed to deny the validity of Indigenous peoples' claim to existence, to land and territories, to the right of self determination, to the survival of our systems for living within our environments" (Smith, 1999: 1).

Smith and Grande agree a central quality of positivist research is this quest to extract knowledge/wisdom, images, and 'artefacts' from the community, interpret that which has been 'collected' using predetermined methods for the benefit of the researchers and those who will access the 'findings'. They express a deep incommensurability with this research sensibility and Indigenous epistemologies. This was directly expressed by Indigenous peoples I have worked alongside: many on the island of Alert Bay in British Columbia expressed an initial reluctance to take part in my doctoral participatory action research, for instance. They had been disappointed by prior work done in their home – work that was demanding of their time yet was never made available to the community or had a practical use for locals - work that passed university ethics protocols but failed to consider their own (Bagelman, 2015). As Ermine puts it, "Unless the underlying assumptions that drive academic research processes are exposed and dispelled, there can be no inquiry that is respectful, empowering or transforming ..." (Ermine, 2000: 24).

Grande's (2015) emphasis that "…the Western form of education completely eliminated the other through all means of dominance; [education is] a central strategy of colonization" speaks to the need to focus efforts of decolonisation or anti-colonisation through pedagogy and educational practices (Grande, 2015: 8). It is unsurprising that Grande and others consider the role of educators to be a political and potentially radical one. Colonial education, Grande illuminates, is part and parcel of the extractivist and positivist approach in which the goal has been to replace traditional wisdom with Western ideals in order to extract a trained, disciplined workforce:

> Indian education (by settlers) was never simply about the desire to 'civilize' or even to deculturize a people, but rather, from its very inception, it was a project designed to colonize Indian minds as a means of gaining access to Indian labour, land and resources. Therefore unless educational reform happens concurrently with analyses of the forces of colonialism, it can only serve as a deeply insufficient (if not negligent) band aid over the incessant wounds of imperialism (Grande, 2015: 19).

This is significant for classroom-based practice: simply adding materials and methods which might be seen as culturally responsive for Indigenous and marginalised students will fail to incite change. The underlying epistemic foundations of education, and the ways in which they exclude, require explicit attention and reworking. Grande (2015) further reflects on how alienating the material and structure in public education was and how mainstream schooling often puts Indigenous students at a disadvantage: "school children are encouraged to develop as progressive, competitive, rational, material, consumerist, and anthropocentric individuals" (Grande, 2015: 71). This contradicts many traditional values of ecological, community-oriented, intergenerational, place-based learning, in her experience, and can prevent meaningful engagement of Indigenous children in their learning environments (ibid).

Though many may have a vague sense that education can be wielded as a tool to colonise, Grande and Smith's work helps to tease out how and why this is the case. However, while Smith and Grande use the 'West' to indicate the colonial, I wonder to what degree this term fails them and other decolonial scholarship. The West, here, is considered the birthplace of colonial epistemologies and practice, however I contend that colonial thought cannot be so easily mapped. Decolonial scholar Dipesh Chakrabarty writes that major shifts in what the West as a category might signify have, and continue to take place:

"The West does not any longer connote any civilizational superiority. Nor does it act as any kind of middle ground any more in the politics of culture" and yet its common usage seems to suggest a static category with unchanging features (Chakrabarty, 2012: 150).

These discontinuities and over-simplifications lead Chakrabarty to write of the 'West': "the word figures with much reduced significance in contemporary cultural debates" (Chakrabarty, 2012: 138). Making the West a synecdoche for colonialism also misses the diffuse nature of colonial epistemes and practices. Indeed, there are long colonial histories and epistemes in the Eastern hemisphere (with peoples from Taiwan, Tibet, Hong Kong and the Uighur facing ongoing oppression, to give just a few examples). Certainly, Smith and Grande have felt the views and ways of Europeans, specifically, imposed on their peoples so it is unsurprising that the West has seemed like a useful categorisation - but as their work takes issue with coloniality at large (and its impacts on Indigenous peoples globally), it seems worthwhile to complicate the colonial geography.

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A move away from the 'West' and towards colonialism as a conceptual category may also encourage less dichotomous views on education. For instance, at times Smith and Grande present clean distinctions: education in the West values competition, Indigenous education values collectivism. It is evident from both traditional pedagogies originating within parts of Europe and the United Kingdom (Pagan, Mennonite, and Quaker) and contemporary ones (Montessori, Stiener, free schools, and critical pedagogy with its attendant praxis), that collectivism is also embraced in the 'West'. Colonialism as a conceptual category may enable us to think of connections between different colonial contexts and also connections between liberatory pedagogies across geographical bounds.

Learning to decolonise

Grande stresses that successful educational reform, which for her is at the heart of decolonisation, must not only reassess alienating and irrelevant content of lessons but also the form through which they are delivered. Grande writes: "It is not only necessary for educators to insist on the incorporation of Indigenous knowledge and praxis in schools but also to transform the institutional structures of schools themselves" (Grande, 2015: 6). Within formal school settings "…appropriate on task behaviour is measured by the degree to which students behave as if they were in solitude, even though they are not" (Grande, 2015: 71). This is troublesome for many students, but in particular for many Indigenous students whose cultures often emphasise the importance of embodied and communal learning, Grande suggests. The process of decolonizing through education, which involves reassessing the basic structures of the school, requires critical methods or critical pedagogies to identify and deconstruct the operation of power in classrooms and institutions, and then rebuild a more empowering model. Grande writes:

> "Critical theories require that 'symbolic formations' be analysed 'in their spatio-temporal settings […] so that teachers have a greater sense of how meanings are inscribed, encoded, decoded, transmitted, deployed, circulated and received in the arena of everyday social relations" (Grande, 2015: 82).

> Through a pedagogical structure that provides methods for change, and not simply a "…spirit of resistance", disruption of colonialism becomes a possibility (Grande, 2015: 88).

A salient case of disrupting colonial practices through critical pedagogical methods is the use of 'teach-ins' during the Idle No More[1] movement. The pedagogical models operating behind teach-ins offered three distinct forms of resistance. First, it claimed a physical space for community learning, either outside of educational institutions in places like town halls, or in institutional spaces like university lecture rooms. Like a sit-in, this demands public (media) attention. Secondly (and unlike a sit-in), the teach-ins were not merely about occupying space to make a political statement, they were about disseminating important information and creating spaces of support for Indigenous communities to share ideas on resistance. Thirdly, teach-ins were about educating the non-Indigenous communities on Indigenous concerns and social realities (through self-representations of issues and not merely media representations), hence educating others on their specific needs for support, and educating to build empathy. Not only was the dialogue that was engendered during these teach-ins invaluable to Indigenous and ally-settler communities, the ideas developed in these sessions fueled various ongoing activist efforts (Barker, 2015).

This is not simply the work of Indigenous and other colonised peoples. In Indigenous scholar Leanne Simpson's reflections on extraction report by Kline (2013), she remarks that there is a responsibility of beneficiaries of white supremacy to:

> "…extract themselves from an extractivist thinking. Now more than ever, there are opportunities for [learning]. Just in the last 10 years, there's been an explosion of Indigenous writing. [T]hose threads that you follow and you nurture, and the more you nurture them, the bigger they grow" (Kline, 2013: 15).

When Naomi Kline asks Simpson what she considers to be an alternative to extractivist frameworks, Simpson answers:

> "The alternative is deep reciprocity. It's respect, it's relationship, it's responsibility, and it's local. If you're not developing relationships with the people, you're not giving back, you're not sticking around to see the impact of the extraction" (Kline, 2013:15).

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1 Idle No More is a social movement beginning in 2012 in Canada (and eventually international in scope), which aimed to raise awareness of, and interrupt, ongoing inequalities faced by Indigenous peoples. The movement was marked by peaceful protest, educational interventions and other forms of community mobilising.

Doing effective anti-colonial work through activism, research, writing, theory and education, and in daily practices requires profound epistemic shifts reflected in pedagogies and praxis.

Outlining the historical foundations of oppression and laying out the systemic problems with the current academy and public education, as these thinkers do, can and often does result in a certain pedagogical paralysis. Grande asks: "How can schools – which are deeply embedded in the exhaustive history of colonisation – be reimagined as sites of Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination" (Grande, 2015: 47). While Smith and Grande indicate the importance of this critical literacy and systemic change, they do not provide practical teaching tools to support these aims. Appreciating the deeply contextual nature of learning and teaching and the need for teachers and learners to have agency (not prescribed methods or materials), critical pedagogues rarely do (Giroux, 2020). I do feel, however, that change hinges on the practical, and in order to decolonise in a way that is consistent with the form of 'remaking' that Indigenous call for, direct discussions of classroom-based practice is important. Without this, settlers like myself run the risk of unhelpfully appropriating or misusing Indigenous methods and concepts - a risk which can result in the retreat from engaging with decolonisation that I have often seen in settler educators and institutions, as earlier noted. I hold that it is possible to have these practical discussions without didacticism or reductive manuals through once again employing the Indigenous storytelling method: educators accounts of good practice, which, like other stories are not meant to be generalisable but a springboard for praxis.

In this spirit, I will close this paper with some tangible examples of engaging with themes of decolonisation in the classroom in the UK and applying decolonial methods in my own teaching. One such exemplar is a tone setting activity I use in HEI: after noticing that many of my students seemed to regard my Education Studies sessions on Canada's residential schools a shocking example of oppression through education, but one that is irrelevant to their lives, I began to ask student to map their personal connections to colonisation. While the vast majority of the students initially struggle to see any connection between their lives and colonisation, some small prompts such as: 'what are the migration patterns in your family history?' results in new reflections. Irish, Scottish and Welsh students start to use the language of colonisation and epistemic violence to understand how their literatures, languages and governance continue to be under threat. Students identify how family members who moved to far-flung places are indeed settlers who are implicated in complex power relations, or how family members were displaced by settlers. They discuss the ways in which cities like

Liverpool where we reside have been built on slave trade, with streets named after slave traders, and how these different forms of colonisation share many common features.

To illustrate the 'behind the scenes' elements of knowledge production (which reflects the dominance of positivist methods Smith discusses), I have students parse the university's ethical application forms, using annotations. Assessing these forms in light of Smith's work, students identify what the forms suggest about the relationship between researcher and the subjects of research, the temporalities and trajectories of research, what qualifies as a risk (and so on) and how this stands at odds with Indigenous and decolonial methods she outlines. Since ethics procedures are an obvious point or moment in the academy that determines what research can and cannot be done (Phipps, 2013), this parsing helps to illustrate to students using these forms themselves how particular ways of knowing are privileged before research even begins.

To encourage students to apply decolonial methods and not simply engage in content *about* decolonisation, seminars have proven a productive space to introduce Indigenous pedagogical frameworks such as the Australian Indigenous framework '8 ways', which indicates culturally relevant pedagogies such as tying concepts to local ecology (or: land-based learning) (Western New South Wales Department of Education, 2014). Students then alter or develop a lesson plan which reflects 8 ways. In the following seminar, I apply 8 ways to facilitate the session for instance: focusing on the 'community links' (which is one of the 8 ways), we engage in local perspectives on the topic being explored with a guest speaker, blogs or video, and consider how this learning can translate into a benefit for the community (perhaps while they work in school placements throughout the term).

Conclusion: pedagogy as a platform

While the 'answers' to the calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Canada have been slow and piecemeal, some hopeful shifts can be seen. Since my time working as a curriculum developer at UBC in 2009, for instance, educational materials addressing issues like the cultural genocide taking place in Canada's residential schools are not only deemed age-appropriate for elementary school classrooms, they have become a mandatory part of the mainstream curriculum in many provinces. Deeper pedagogical questions Smith and Grande bring to light, though, remain largely unanswered: such lessons on residential schools, for instance, are merely fit within existing educational conventions. The critical literacy on

colonialism in UK schooling is less developed still (Sund & Pashby, 2020), which motivates me to offer this article, and to reflect such discourses through my teaching (primarily of future educators) as a Lecturer working in British Higher Education.

Smith and Grande offer important critiques of colonial power and how it historically and contemporarily thrives in the educational sphere, and methods for decolonising which must involve what Smith calls "researching back, writing back, talking back" to reveal hidden curriculums and overt injustices, and "remaking" frameworks that refuse epistemic violence (Smith, 2012: 7). They note that some colonised peoples consider decolonial academic discourse to be a frivolous enterprise in light of more pressing material needs experienced by their communities (such as the needs for safe shelter, food, and employment). However, these authors insist theory, research, and writing that works towards developing Indigenous methodologies are not removed from practice, or separated from material experience of Indigenous communities. Instead:

> "Indigenous methodologies [...] disturb the metaphysics of colonial rule, not only in the academy, and model a way of life that draws Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in interrelationship to work for decolonization by marking, crossing, exceeding, and disrupting the colonial conditions of knowledge production" (Morgensen, 2012: 806).

Articulating subjugated ways of knowing and building pedagogical responses to colonial rule within educational spaces "is about transcending the basic survival mode...to dream new visions" (Smith, 2012, p. 158).

I have suggested that while Smith and Grande resist providing direct pedagogical guidance in their texts, some more practical discussion with the caveat that best practice is not generalisable but, as with story should be treated as incomplete, contextual and iterative but deeply generative, would further propel their decolonial aims. I have briefly provided some examples of decolonial praxis I have employed in the UK context to extend the theoretical conversation to a practical one.

The Indigenous theory explored here suggests non-Indigenous researchers, theorists and educators must extract themselves from extractivist thinking and, I would add, support emancipatory aims by offering their skills and resources. For this reason, I have attempted to place a spotlight on their work in this paper, using a settler witnessing approach. The starting point for this allyship within the British academy is explicitly identifying the ways in which pedagogical approaches and curricular choices in higher education and schooling are based in exclusionary colonial power (Regan, 2011). Making our classrooms a platform for decolonial thinking (from marginalised

thinkers) is a way to make fissures in this formidable power structure. Actively applying decolonial pedagogies in our practice is a way to deepen these fissures and create new openings.

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