

**Professing an interest in First Nations History:
Reflections on Teaching Native/settler relations in a Canadian University**

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Part A. Introduction

As an historian interested in Native/settler relations in Canada, I make it a point of including issues of importance to First Nations within the courses I teach on Canadian history. This has often been difficult to do for a number of reasons. Students at my university show a decided lack of interest in Aboriginal Peoples, (what do they have to do with us?); in my survey courses, I am obligated to cover a broad swath of history in a short period of time, meaning that I have to choose which history to privilege and which to exclude. Finally, given the structure of history as a discipline, I find it difficult to incorporate Aboriginal perspectives on the events I have chosen to include. How does one teach a circle in a discipline that emphasizes linearity? Raising this question points to others that are even more fundamental to the study and teaching of Native/settler relations: why should a circle be included in this history and what are the benefits in doing so?

This paper will combine personal experience with scholarly literature, both Aboriginal and non, in order to explore these questions further. Perhaps, as a result, I will be better able to overcome the difficulties I presently face when researching and teaching the history of Native/settler relations in Canada.

Part B. Brief Historical Overview of Native/Settler Relations in Canada

First there were the Indigenous Peoples of Turtle Island. Then came various settler populations, most notably from Spain, France and England. As a result of imperial struggles, England came to be the dominant European power in North America. In 1763, the English monarch issued the Royal Proclamation of 1763. In this document, a policy was established in which the French, living in what was now British North America, became subject to English law and the First Nations² were given certain guarantees with respect to their abilities to maintain control over their lands. Specifically, the Crown created a procedure whereby Indian lands could be transferred to the settler populations but only through the Crown and only through the consent of the First Nations. In return for transferring land, the First Nations would receive some sort of compensation. The Royal Proclamation was passed in direct response to grievances of the First Nations who were resisting English claims to their lands and who were resisting the imposition of English laws on their communities. The Royal Proclamation is an ambiguous document however because it refers to the First Nations as both subjects and allies. (Milloy, 1997) Also, the ambiguity lies in how various people have interpreted its provisions, some arguing that the Proclamation is akin to an 'Indian Bill of Rights,' others arguing that the Proclamation confirmed British and then Canadian sovereignty over Indian lands and over the Indians themselves. This ambiguity continues to the present day. (Morris, 1992)

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²Throughout this paper, various terms to denote the indigenous peoples of Canada will be used, including First Nations, Indians, Native People(s) and Aboriginal People(s). In general, the choice of which term to use will be dictated by the temporal positions these terms have in Canadian history and historiography. The author recognizes that these umbrella terms take away from the diversity of indigenous cultures that exist in this country and will use the specific tribal or national names of the peoples when possible.

In 1850, in accordance with the provisions of the Royal Proclamation of 1763, and as a result of resistance to encroachment on Indian lands by settlers, the Robinson Huron and Robinson Superior Treaties were signed between the British Crown and the First Nations inhabiting the lands in Canada West from the shores of Lakes Huron and Superior, north to the height of land. These treaties served as the model for future treaties, known as the numbered treaties, which were negotiated between the Crown (Canada) and the First Nations from Ontario to British Columbia, from 1871 until 1921. Canada did not negotiate any treaties with the First Nations of the Maritime provinces, although the British Crown prior to Confederation did. Canada also did not negotiate any treaties with the First Nations in Quebec until 1975 and did not negotiate any treaties with the First Nations of British Columbia and the Yukon until the 1990s. Canada is currently involved in negotiating treaties with the Dene of the Northwest Territories and has negotiated a Land Claims Agreement and Self-Government Act with the Inuit of the eastern Arctic. The terms of these various treaties and agreements vary and so therefore does the relationship between Canada and the Aboriginal signators.

The numbered treaties exemplify the ambiguous relationship between the Crown (Canada) and the First Nations as set out in the Royal Proclamation. First Nations entered into negotiations in hopes of securing rights to their lands and their traditions and the Canadian government entered into negotiations in hopes of acquiring Indian lands. Based on the wording of the treaties, both sides can claim that they got what they wanted. First Nations were given the right to hunt and fish over the tracts surrendered but these rights were 'subject to' settler demands for agricultural lands or access to natural resources. First Nations asked for and received help in learning how to farm and they were granted schools on their reserves. They also agreed to abide by the laws established by the Crown. These clauses may seem to suggest that the First Nations agreed upon a program of assimilation, that they wished to become 'white' by learning white ways through farming and/or schooling and by accepting white laws. Their interpretation of these provisions is however quite different. According to the First Nations, they asked for agricultural instruction and schools as a means of learning the 'white man's ways' not as a means of becoming white. In asking for these things, they did not sign away their rights to self-governance nor their rights to live according to their customs, values and religious beliefs. (Tobias, 1988)

The western First Nations of the numbered treaties were interested in learning white man's ways because their societies were facing some grave crises: their people had been ravaged by various European diseases, most notably small pox, and their traditional economy was in severe distress because of the precipitous decline of the buffalo, their economic staple. They recognized the power that white societies had, they knew of their ever growing populations, their industrial economy and their military potential, if not power, as a result of the almost constant wars to the south between the United States cavalry and their 'American Indian' counter-parts. Canada's First Nations reasoned that learning about the types of power the whites had, would or at least could, be of benefit to them in dealing with their crises. It made perfect, if regrettable, sense to investigate farming as an alternative to the buffalo hunt, given that the buffalo were dying out. It also made sense to learn about how white people communicated, and how they interpreted the world. It did not make sense to the First Nations to give up their values, their independence or their own views of the world.

The federal government also recognized the grave crises faced by the First Nations of the prairies. In response to this, and for other reasons, the government passed its first Indian Act in 1876 and it was this act, as opposed to the treaties, that the government used as a basis for their dealings with the First Nations. The First Nations were not pleased because the Indian Act, aside from continuing the protective provisions with respect to their reserve lands as stipulated in the Royal

Proclamation, also gave the federal government legislative power to impose its idea of governance on the reserves, its idea of education, its idea of religious beliefs and its idea of economic livelihood. (Manore, 1986) Many authors have argued that the purpose of the Indian Act was to assimilate Native Peoples into white society. (Tobias, 1988; Miller, 1989) I disagree however because assimilation means to have 'others' disappear as others and this can only be accomplished if these 'others' are given complete access to the dominant society. The Indian Act however did not accomplish this goal, not because the people responsible for pursuing it failed, but because that was never the intent of it in the first place. For example, the Indian Act was designed, among other things, to encourage First Nations to be economically 'self-sufficient' but within a white, meaning capitalist, context. (Manore, 1986) By insisting that First Nations be self-sufficient, the Indian Act prevented Indians from competing equally with their non-Native neighbours; if one cannot compete in a capitalist economy, one 'fails.' Thus, the Indian Act was a policy that racialized First Nations' place in society, leaving them marginalized rather than integral, leaving them dependent rather than sovereign.

Following World War II, when civil rights movements of the marginalized burst forth on every continent, the First Nations in Canada joined in the protest. The dominant society was willing to listen, at least to a certain extent. Non-Native Canadians were aghast at the levels of poverty on the reserves, the drop-out rates in school, the number of First Nations people in jail relative to the rest of the population, the rates of illness and infant mortality etc. They desired equality for the First Nations as did the First Nations themselves; however each group's definition of equality differed significantly. The dominant society believed that the Indians had a separate status in society and it was this separateness that had marginalized them. The Indian Act and the Department of Indian Affairs had kept Indians on the side-lines and prevented them from assimilating into mainstream society and therefore this act had to be repealed and the department abolished.

Pierre Elliott Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada from 1968 to 1979 and then 1980-1984 offered to do just that in a white paper, (ironically named), his then Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs, Jean Chretien, presented to the House of Commons for discussion in 1969.³ Indian activists, mostly from the west, denounced the white paper and countered with their own 'red' paper. In this statement of the Alberta Indian Chiefs, they argued that the white paper was simply the ultimate form of assimilation and they insisted that any negotiations of the relationship between them and the government and hence white society, acknowledge the treaties first, not the Indian Act, and then continue from that point.⁴ Recognizing the treaties as a basis of negotiations would reaffirm the Native understanding of their relationship with the settler society. It would acknowledge their ability to self-govern, their nationhood and their rights to practice their culture as they chose. In presenting the red paper, the Alberta Chiefs demonstrated their understanding of equality which was not that they were to be treated the same within a white context but that they were to be respected for their differences within a red context. Trudeau responded to the protest by shelving the white paper.

Shortly thereafter, in 1973, the Supreme Court of Canada came out with an earth shattering decision that overturned the legal understanding of Aboriginal rights in Canada that had been established by a court decision nearly 100 years previously. In the St. Catherines Milling and

³Canada, Minister of Northern and Indian Affairs, 'Statement of the Government of Canada on Indian Policy,' 1969.

⁴Alberta Indian Chiefs, "'Citizens Plus' The Red Paper Reply to the Government's White Paper,' 1970.

Lumber Co. case of 1888, the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, the highest court of appeal for Canada at the time, ruled, among other things, that Indian rights to land did not pre-date the Crown's claim to sovereignty, that the rights were usufructuary only and the result of the Crown's generosity towards her Native subjects. (Morse, 1992) In 1973, in the Calder decision, the court recognized a pre-existing Aboriginal title to lands within the province of British Columbia that could only be extinguished by the federal government. When Trudeau learned of this decision, his response was, 'Well I guess you do have rights after all.' (Dickason, 2002)

From this case, have come others that have gradually expanded the meaning of Aboriginal rights in Canada. Currently, there seems to be a retrenchment against further expansion, but nevertheless, the Calder case initiated a process whereby First Nations have been able to negotiate a better position for themselves within the Canadian federal union. This is best exemplified by the entrenchment of 'existing' Aboriginal rights in the Constitution Act of 1982 and the negotiations of the so-called 'modern treaties' with the First Nations of British Columbia, the Yukon and the Inuit of what is now called Nunavut.

Part C. The post-historical context of teaching the history of native/settler relations.

Now what to make of this rather lengthy introduction? It reflects my own, very basic, understanding, as it has developed over the years, of the history of my country. I have gone from an ignorant person to an ashamed person to a reasoned person to an angry one as I learn more and more about my past. Ignorant because before taking a university course on 'Indian-white relations' as it was then called, I knew literally nothing of the First Nations peoples on this continent; ashamed because once I did learn something, I learned that my tolerant, liberal and even generous country, as I had understood it to be, had initiated policies that were racist and imperialist and that consequently caused a great deal of harm to the First Nations; reasoned because in gaining an understanding of First Nations people and their cultures, I could then re-evaluate my own understanding of myself and of my culture as a Euro-Canadian; angry because, as a patriot of this country and someone who believes in its ideals, I do find it hard to accept some First Nations' critiques of Canada and their desires for self-determination. In going in these 'four directions', I have mirrored the directions that the historiography of Native/settler relations has followed, noting that despite the increased knowledge of the relationship, it is still being presented from a non-Native point of view. Yet, given we now supposedly live in a post-colonial world, if that is true, then this non-Native perspective is insufficient because it perpetuates the privileging of the colonizers at the expense of the colonized. If I, as a professional historian, am to live up to my ideals of presenting a balanced and fair account of the past, then I must de-colonize my H/history, and my presentation of it, both in writing and in teaching. How to do this?

Well for me, as a non-Native person, I think I must educate others like me out of their ignorance. I must then help these people deal with their shame by providing historical context and leading them to reason about themselves and their society. Then I must struggle with them in their anger against the criticisms coming from some First Nations scholars and leaders by adopting a more inclusive, respectful approach to Native/settler relations. Now, how to do this?

In turning ignorance into knowledge, I would first propose re-writing the Canadian meta-narrative, yet again. The first Canadian meta-narrative, depicted most Indians as uncivilized and savage, save for a few enlightened, 'more intelligent', individuals who chose to support the British and then Canadians against enemies; these Indians are presented as fragments (or figments?) of a past world and have no relevance to Canada today. The second Canadian meta-narrative, which arose out of the civil rights protests, depicted Aboriginal or Native Peoples as innocent (or dare I say noble?) victims of state duplicity. As a result of the government stealing Native lands, taking

Native children away from their parents and insisting on assimilation, the 'natives' were left with poverty, social distress and low self-esteem. In this meta-narrative, the First Nations are denied any agency and the Canadian public assumes no responsibility for government policies, even though it is the public that elects the governments into office. The First Nations' relevance in this instance is to demonstrate the failings of the Canadian state in realizing the Canadian ideals of multicultural tolerance. Currently, students coming from the public school system are being exposed primarily to this second meta-narrative. (Though vestiges of the first remain; while Native Peoples are no longer described as uncivilized, they are still, by and large, part of our past and not our present.) While I do not deny that state policies were harmful, even devastating, I do not see the First Nations as passive victims of an overpowering state. Thus, when teaching students about Native/settler relations, I try to present a third meta-narrative, that being that the First Nations (as opposed to Indians or Natives) are actors in the history of Native/settler relations and that the relationship between the First Nations and the state is much more complex than the second meta-narrative would suggest. I also emphasize the point that the Euro-Canadian public is just as much a part of policy formation as is the state.

Examples of how this third meta-narrative differs from the previous two are found in its examination of the treaties, and in its treatment of the government's economic and educational policies in the nineteenth century with respect to First Nations. The first meta-narrative depicts treaties as acts of generosity on the part of the Crown. The Indian peoples who signed them surrendered their lands for certain considerations in return. The second meta-narrative declares that Canada, in essence, stole the land from the First Nations through the treaties and left them destitute. The third meta-narrative presents Richard White's idea of the *A*middle ground: 'the place where the two cultures met, tried to understand each other through their own cultural perspectives and often failed to do so.' (White, 1991) My own research on Treaty #9 demonstrates how the text of the treaty and its application by all the signators can be interpreted by them in their favour. The clauses mentioned above about the Indians being granted the right to hunt and fish over the tract surrendered but 'subject to' the needs of the settler populations is an example of this as is one of the treaty commissioners, D.C. Scott's famous quote:

To individuals whose transactions have been heretofore limited to computation with sticks and skins our errand must indeed have been dark. They were to make certain promises and we were to make certain promises but our purpose and our reasons were alike unknowable. (Titley, 1986)

In this passage, D.C. Scott is describing the treaty negotiation process as an equally unknowable one by both sides of the treaty. Further on in the passage, he goes on to discuss the legal and political framework under which he, as a treaty commissioner and representative of the federal Department of Indian Affairs, had to work, illustrating very well the 'reality' of the treaty from the non-Native point of view. Sharon Venne, in her article on Treaty #6, does an excellent job in revealing some aspects of the 'reality' of this treaty from the Native point of view.

With respect to the idea that the treaties meant Indians surrendered their lands, Venne counters with an insightful commentary on the idea of sharing. She argues that 'sharing the land through treaty-making was a known process' and that the treaties the Plains Cree entered into with the British Crown were considered to be the same as the treaties they had negotiated previously with the Assiniboine, Saulteau and Dene. (Venne, 1997)

This idea of sharing is something that most Canadians have heard about but I suspect not really understood. Venne provides insights into what sharing meant to the Cree and to the treaty:

When the Elders speak about the role of women at the treaty, they talk about the spiritual connection of the women to the land and to treaty-making. The Creator gave women the power to create. The man is the helper to the woman, not the other way around. Women are linked to Mother Earth by their ability to bring forth life. The women sit beside the Creator as a recognition of their role and position....

Because of this spiritual connection with the Creator and Mother Earth, it is the women who own the land. Man can use the land, protect and guard it, but not own it. Women can pass on authority of use to the man, but not the life of the earth.

As a result of the fact that the women owned the land because of their spiritual connection to it and to the Creator, the Chiefs who entered into Treaty #6 could not have surrendered the land to the British Crown because they did not have the authority to do so. (Venne, 1997)

Sharing had other meanings during the negotiations as well. When Lt. Governor Morris, acting on behalf of Queen Victoria, negotiated Treaty #6, he

spoke of the poverty and starvation of the Queen's people who wanted to farm the lands of the Indigenous peoples. The Queen was appealing on behalf of her children for the use of the land to the depth of the plough. The Queen did not want to own the land, the fish, the animals, the plants, the water, or the birds. Her people had their own animals (cattle, pigs, sheep) and their own birds (chickens, ducks, geese).

It is an ethic in Cree culture that those who are in want will be provided for. When Morris portrayed the Queen's children as suffering and starving, it would have been against Cree values to turn his request for help down. Nevertheless, they did not agree to his request until Morris had given them assurances that everything would remain under the jurisdiction of the Cree 'as intended by the laws of the Creator.' Portraying the treaty negotiating process and the treaty terms in this manner demonstrates the complex political arrangements that were being worked out between the Native and settler populations from the mid 1800s until the mid 1900s. They highlight the middle ground that existed between the two cultures, and the misunderstandings that arose as a result, they reveal the First Nations leaders capabilities and astuteness and make them actors in the process, agents of their own destinies rather than helpless victims. Finally, seeing the treaty from the Cree perspective, one is struck by the fact that it is the Cree, not the Canadians, who are the powerful ones and that they are being charitable in their agreement to share their lands with those who are in need. This puts the history of the treaties as portrayed within a non-Native context on its head. It also demonstrates why the First Nations would consider the treaties to be foundational to their current relationship with the Canadian state and not just historical artefacts.

The victimization of First Nations by the Canadian state is another theme of the second meta-narrative that I attempt to address in the third meta-narrative. Much of the blame for current Native distress has been directed towards the state's efforts to 'take care of' the First Nations by teaching them white ways, by insisting on assimilation. Particular notice has been given to the state's policies with respect to agriculture and education.

With the decimation of the buffalo on the prairies during the 1860s and 1870s, the federal government felt obligated to teach Indians how to farm. In this way, their old economy based on the buffalo, which for all intents and purposes no longer existed, would be replaced by an agricultural one. The First Nations were equally aware of the ramifications of the declining buffalo herds and were interested too in learning how to farm. However, Nature's power and government ambivalence about the real goals of the Indian Act hampered the development of an agricultural

economy on the reserves.

Farming on the prairies in the nineteenth century was an extremely difficult undertaking for Native and non-Native alike. In the last half of the century, rarely did a growing season go by in which there was not some sort of natural disaster which ruined most of the crops. Native and non-Native farmers alike had to contend with early or late frosts, drought, insect blight and hail. Nevertheless, farming on the prairies was possible and many farmers were able to realize bountiful crops. As the nineteenth century progressed however, the farmers that were successful were increasingly non-Native rather than Native. This is not because Native farmers were necessarily less capable or less knowledgeable about farming but because they operated under even greater constraints than their white neighbours. For example, historian Sarah Carter has chronicled the implementation of the Department's agricultural policies and revealed that one prominent Indian official, Hayter Reed, instituted a policy that prohibited Indians from buying and even owning farm machinery. (Carter, 1990)

Technological advancements in farm machinery were eagerly sought by prairie farmers who realized the benefits of increased production that these technologies would bring. First Nations farmers were among this group and endeavoured to purchase the new machines. Hayter Reed, however ordered that they not be allowed to do so, arguing that they were too primitive to use such complex machinery and to understand the financial implications of such large purchases. Thus, while their non-Native neighbours were using tractors, binders and reapers, Indian farmers had to rely on horse- or oxen- driven ploughs and scythes. Without the ability to purchase the new technologies, Native farmers could not compete with their non-Native neighbours. Without the ability to compete in a capitalist economy, Native farmers were marginalized in that economy and thus impoverished. The state's response to Native 'failure' as farmers was to place the blame on the Natives themselves and racialize them as lazy, primitive and backward, meaning incapable of adapting to white civilization. (Carter, 1990)

Students can draw many lessons from this example. Certainly, there is a clear demonstration of the harmful actions of the state against the First Nations as argued in the second meta-narrative, but what I also hope students learn is that the First Nations were not primitive or insistent on following their traditional life-ways. For the second meta-narrative, in denouncing assimilation (which is appropriate) suggests that First Nations should have been left alone, should have been left as they were. In other words, the second meta-narrative leaves Indians hunting and fishing and in so doing, leaves the First Nations in the past, 'stuck' in their traditions. Vine Deloria, a Sioux historian, has this to say about Indian traditions:

Everyone doesn't have to do everything that the old Indians did in order to have a modern Indian identity. We don't have to have every male in the tribe do the Sun Dance. We need a larger variety of cultural expression today. I don't see why Indians can't be poets, engineers, songwriters or whatever. I don't see why we can't depart from traditional art forms and do new things. Yet both Indians and whites are horrified when they learn that an Indian is not following the rigid forms and styles of the old days. That is nonsense to me but it has great meaning to a lot of people who have never considered the real meaning of cultural change and national development. (Warrior, 1995)

The idea of Indians as historic relics is pervasive. In a 1996 decision of the Supreme Court of Canada, the court ruled that Aboriginal rights could only be recognized if the activity being pursued, such as fishing, could be proven to have been undertaken in the past. (Isaac, 1999, p.428) If the First Nations could not prove they pursued commercial (as defined by the courts) fishing activities pre-European contact, then they could not claim an Aboriginal right to fish for

commercial purposes. The court ruled that Aboriginal rights were 'frozen' in pre-contact times and the education system, by teaching the second meta-narrative has frozen the First Nations in that time as well. The third meta-narrative demonstrates instead that the First Nations realized the need to adopt a new economy and acted accordingly, both through fighting for economic support in the treaties and then in learning how to farm.

Another difficulty I have with the second meta-narrative is the disconnection it creates between the state and the public. The second meta-narrative blames only the federal government for the problems faced by First Nations today. This disconnection in the past seems to carry into the present as the students I teach seem to make no connection either between themselves and their current government. To demonstrate the connection between the public and state policies, I present the Department of Indian Affairs' policies with respect to haylands.

Before there had been any significant non-Native settlement on the prairies, the federal government issued hay lands to the First Nations. Some of these hay lands were on the various reserves and some were not. However once settlement reached these Aboriginal communities, then the haylands that had been reserved for their use were 'thrown open' for the settlers. Why? Democracy in action. Let me explain further: in 1889 the Stonies and Red Pheasant Indians of the Battleford Agency in Saskatchewan complained that they had a surplus of hay but were not allowed to sell it. At the same time a certain Mr. W. McDuvall, M.P. received a petition from the settlers in the area who were feeling great resentment because the haylands chosen for the Indians were supposedly the best and those which settlers had been previously exploiting. The settlers stated that if the government continued its present policy, settlement would be retarded in the area. The petition ended with the comment that this matter should be considered for the advantage of the government and the M.P.s own career. The settlers also accused the Indians of cutting hay on lands that were not theirs.

The Dominion Land Agent had his own complaints. He reported in November, 1889 that the Indians were able to use only half of their allotted land (which totalled 8,000 acres). The Department agreed that this amount of acreage was excessive and agreed that in future, only what was considered absolutely necessary would be allocated to the Indians. This decision was taken in spite of the fact that the accusations made by the Dominion Land Agent were perhaps unfounded. Indian Agent Williams reported that, on the contrary, it was white settlers who had cut hay on Indian lands and this had been done without permission. Williams then declared that the settlers' dissatisfaction really stemmed from the policy of the Dominion Land Agent who let his friends monopolize the haylands allocated to the settlers through a partial designation of permits and that the Indians were being used as scapegoats. Williams therefore recommended that the Indians be granted an isolated block of land, for example the north side of the Saskatchewan River. Though in this instance, the agent defended the Indians' rights, he advocated non-competition with the local settlers, thus encouraging a policy of self-sufficiency and isolation rather than assimilation and competition.

The policy developed by the Indian Department in regards to hay lands was decidedly beneficial to the white settlers. Hay reserves granted to Indians were considered only temporary and could be thrown open to white settlement when population warranted. This policy was arrived at by mutual agreement between officials of the Department of the Interior and the Indian Department and stipulated that 'As soon as the lands are required for the purposes of actual settlement, of which one year's notice will be given, it will be necessary to remove the [hay] reservation.' It was expected that the Indians would grow their hay on their own reserves. (Manore 1986)

Now consider what it would have meant to have hay lands thrown open for settlement. You've

worked them for a couple of years, either haying them for your own cattle with the intention of increasing the herd or haying them to sell the surplus to other Indian or white settlers. You have got a business going on here and quite a profitable one too and then poof! the Indian department says the haylands are no longer yoursB you have got to limit yourself to the resources on the reserves. Your response? Some of you will likely give up and that is what some First Nations people did as well. Some of you will protest (to no avail) as did some other First Nations people and some of you will perhaps find another way to make a living as was the case of some of the First Nations.

Students hearing this lecture usually conclude that this is one more example of the big nasty government oppressing the Indians. That is certainly the conclusion I have heard drawn by my students who have been given this sort of information in their earlier schooling and there is truth in that argument. However, placing the blame solely on the government disconnects the students from their own political culture or system. Clearly, with respect to the haylands issue, the federal government was very sensitive to the threat of losing votes. It had to be, because it existed within a democratic, that is rule by the majority, framework. As a result, the political power of the settlers was a factor in determining government policy. Thus, the settlers themselves, that is, the public, should share in the blame in the implementation of government policy. If the electorate was responsible for the development and implementation of federal Indian policy then, what are their (our) responsibilities now? Raising this question creates the possibility that the students today in disassociating themselves from the past and from current their government, are continuing to support the state's colonizing policies that exist today. Something my students would probably find distasteful.

With respect to education, the focus of historical inquiry has recently been placed on the legacy of the residential school system. Residential schools were schools established by the Department of Indian Affairs in an attempt, as one missionary claimed 'to kill the Indian in the child.' By their very nature therefore, the residential schools were sites of violence with Indian children being the victims of them. (Milloy, 1999) The schools had a curriculum that focused on Christianity, English was the usual language of instruction and students were punished, if they spoke their mother tongue. The schools also had a practical component in their programs as boys learned how to farm or to cobble shoes and girls learned how to run a household, either as some-one's wife or a domestic servant. Beyond the school's inherent violence, many children suffered from physical abuse (which was acceptable in some forms in non-Native society) and from sexual abuse as well. Consequently, the churches who administered the schools and the federal government who funded them are currently facing legal action for damages caused to these survivors, (and 'survivors' is a very good word to use considering that less than 50% of the children who went to these schools lived through the experience). Both the churches and the federal government have since publically apologized for their roles and actions in the residential schools.

The residential schools and their legacy are a shameful part of our, of my, history and most students, when they learn about what went on in the schools and the government's program of assimilation are shocked that such a thing would happen in Canada, land of the 'strong and free', land of multicultural toleration. But aside from the emotional response, there is little else that the students take from this aspect of the history of Native/settler relations, little else they learn about Native agency and the processes of Euro-Canadian colonization. Once again, I make the point that the state carried out this policy sometimes for as long as three generations on some reserves without nary a spark of interest on the part of the public as to what the government policy was and what it was doing to Native children. In fact, the public supported a program of assimilation at the time, as long as it did not cost too much. If the government underfunded schools so that the buildings were drafty, leading to high incidences of illness in the schools, so that the children had

to spend more time working the farms than learning the 3Rs in order to grow food for themselves because the churches could not afford to buy much, then is not the public to blame as well for the tragedy of the residential schools? (Miller, 1996) Secondly, and more to my point, Native leaders and parents consistently asked for white schooling but just as consistently resisted residential schools. The type of education they wanted was one of relationship and is best exemplified by the initiative of Chief Shingwauk from the Upper Great Lakes region.

Shingwauk was a chief and shaman of the Upper Great Lakes Anishnabe from around the time of the War of 1812 until his death in 1854. As a leader, Shingwauk was determined to find a way to help the Anishnabe adapt to the changes brought about by European settlement. In the 1830s, guided by personal observations of European culture and by visions, Shingwauk moved his people to Garden River, located just outside Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario. By doing so, he hoped to establish a permanent community based on agriculture, with supplementary income raised through the sale of mineral and forest resources.

Chief Shingwauk was also determined to find a way for his people to learn about European skills and religions. According to the oral history of the Garden River community, he found this way through a vision of a 'teaching wigwam.' The teaching wigwam was to be a place where his people and the settlers would come together and exchange knowledge and skills. While Shingwauk hoped to learn about non-Native ways in this process, he also hoped that non-Native settlers would learn things of value about Native ways. Each would learn from the other, each would take what was good and valuable from the other and each would therefore be enriched. To see his vision fulfilled, Shingwauk and five others set out from Sault Ste. Marie, either in the winter of 1832 or 1833, and snow-shoed to Toronto where Shingwauk had an audience with Sir John Colborne, the Lt Governor of Upper Canada. The eventual result of this trip was the establishment of the Shingwauk Residential School.

Since the time of Shingwauk, the Garden River people have fought against the residential school and fought for the establishment of a teaching wigwam. Shingwauk Residential School is now Algoma University College, an affiliate of Laurentian University in Sudbury, Ontario and while the College has not become the teaching wigwam of Shingwauk's vision, it has at least proceeded in that direction and left the residential school approach behind. (Manore, 1994; Miller, 1996)

The story of Shingwauk's vision is not the 'typical' treatment of Canadian educational policies with respect to First Nations that students currently receive. I make a point however of presenting this story, often in conjunction with the other, darker, story, for many reasons. Firstly, I present this story because when I visited Algoma University College and the Garden River First Nation when researching the history of Shingwauk Residential School, the Garden River people were campaigning to have the College renamed Shingwauk College and to have it become a 'teaching wigwam.' Consequently, the history of Shingwauk's vision was the story they wanted to tell me and I sensed the story that they wanted me to tell, not the one of physical and sexual abuse or pain and victimization. Thus, Shingwauk's vision is the story I published out of respect for their struggles in trying to transform Algoma University College into a teaching wigwam. Another reason for presenting Shingwauk's vision is to provide a different understanding of the history of education in the context of Native/settler relations. It places the residential school issue within a broader context and within a Native framework of resistance rather than a white one of victimization; it demonstrates some idea of what education was supposed to be for First Nations (relationship) as opposed to what education is to non-Native society (conformity) and therefore deepens our understanding of what the First Nations were negotiating for in the treaties. It also brings the relations between Native and settler societies into the present, where it belongs, instead of just in the past because some First Nations are still trying to fulfill Shingwauk's vision.

These examples demonstrate the third meta-narrative approach that I am currently constructing. However I recognize that rewriting the meta-narrative does not go far enough in decolonizing the history of Native/settler relations. The meta-narrative is still predominantly a Euro-Canadian perspective, with its emphasis on state policy and its effects on First Nations, even if there are references to Native agency and understandings. If the teaching of Native/settler relations is to be de-colonized, then greater prominence must be given to the First Nations themselves, their perspectives, their concerns, their understandings, their approaches, their values. The meta-narrative serves only as a first step in decolonizing Native/settler relations. What is the next? I would suggest undertaking a thoughtful reflection of our own Euro-Canadian culture. That we, Euro-Canadians, through the use of reason need to understand who we are in order to understand why we have acted in certain ways towards First Nations. Once that is done, or at least attempted, then perhaps we can start to re-construct a history of Native/settler relations that is de-colonized, which, I think, means a history that is inclusive rather than exclusive, that is respectful, rather than domineering.

Perhaps the greatest stumbling block for Euro-Canadians in trying to understand their cultural history is the fact that we perceive ourselves to be 'raceless.' Many of us see whiteness, to quote Stuart Hall, 'as an empty cultural space' and our identity therefore 'as white people only [takes] shape in relations to others.' (James, 1995) This racelessness has also been reflected in mainstream history because until recently, issues of race have not been considered relevant topics of historical inquiry. While race has been an *object* of study in terms of Canadian relations with First Nations, with various immigrant groups from Asia and in terms of other minority populations, these groups have always been 'othered' within the mainstream historical discourse. Race has not been applied by, or to, mainstream Canadians who are, for the purposes of this discussion, 'white.'

The failure of the majority in Canada to recognize that they are a privileged group, that is, white, means that they do not realize the culture of dominance that supports their privileged position nor its ramifications for those not part of their group. (James, 1995, p.23) Devra Weber has argued: 'Our western constructions of knowledge operate and have operated through expropriation and incorporation of a non-Western and foreign 'other'. ... [Canadian] and European concepts assume a past driven by a dialectic based on the relation between the subject, Europeans and the 'other' (the colonized, women, people of color, the working class, etc.)' (Weber, 1999) Further, Edward Said, in his discourse on the Oriental Other argues:

Within the framework of western hegemony over the Orient, ... there emerged a new object of knowledgeB a complex Orient suitable for study in the academy, for display in the museum, for reconstruction in the colonial office, for theoretical illustration in anthropological, biological, linguistic, racial and historical theses about mankind and the universe, for instances of economic and sociological theories of development, revolution, cultural personalities, national or religious character... (Hall, 1997, p.259.)

The same arguments can be made for 'Indianism.' When First Nations did become objects for study in academia, they were presented as a contrast to white culture with the parameters of the contrast being established by the dominant group. The othering of First Nations has led to creating stereotypes that have been disseminated through the first and second meta-narratives: primitive, uncivilized, helpless, noble victims and historical relics. Stereotypes are as powerful as the dominant culture that generates them and their persistence makes it extremely difficult to get beyond them.

The damage that stereotyping does to Native/settler relations is great indeed; however, the construction of the Other has far greater implications than labelling would suggest, implications not only for First Nations but for the settler populations as well. Toni Morrison, in talking about slavery and relations between white and black in the United States has this to say:

[M]odern life begins with slavery.... From a woman's point of view, in terms of confronting the problems of where the world is, black women had to deal with postmodern problems in the nineteenth century and earlier. These things had to be addressed by black people a long time ago: certain kinds of dissolution, the loss of and the need to reconstruct certain kinds of stability. Certain kinds of madness, deliberately going mad... 'in order not to lose your mind.' These strategies for survival made the truly modern person. They're a response to predatory western phenomena. You can call it an ideology and an economy, what it is is a pathology. Slavery broke the world in half, it broke it in every way. It broke Europe. It made them something else, it made them slave masters, it made them crazy. You can't do that for hundreds of years and it not take its toll. They had to dehumanize, not just the slaves but themselves. They had to reconstruct everything in order to make that system appear true. (Weber, 1999, p.54, fn5)

Thus, for non-Native settlers, while the First Nations were being pushed from their lands, marginalized on its fringes, being denied their right to self-governance and to their Native identities, while their worlds were being 'broken,' mainstream Canadians were self-destructing their own world by pushing away their Christian values of 'doing unto others as they would have others do unto them', marginalizing their political ideals of equality and denying their role as colonizers over a land and peoples already in place when they first came to this continent. As a result, the history of Native/settler relations in damaging both cultures has created a relationship based on anger and denial.

I remember one seminar class that had in it about four Mohawk students and nine euro-Canadian students. The Mohawk students were extremely angry by the colonialist policies they had endured while growing up. The other students were perplexed by this anger, being ignorant of the history of Native/settler relations, and resented the accusations of racism launched against them by the Mohawk students. Aside from the uncomfortableness each group felt at being forced to share the same space for one hour, the tensions between the two groups ably demonstrated the anger created by the politics of dominance. It is an anger I have felt myself, given that I do think of myself as a decent human being and of Canada as a decent place to live. However, in preparing this paper, I read an 'Indian manifesto' by Taiaiake Alfred, a Mohawk scholar at the University of Victoria in British Columbia. Alfred was arguing that Indigenous Nations needed to return to their traditions in order to develop a way of being in the world that was not derived from, or a reaction to, Western hegemony. One particular passage demonstrated very well his apparent disdain for Canada's attempts to negotiate self-government agreements:

By allowing indigenous peoples a small measure of self-administration, and by forgoing a small portion of the money derived from the exploitation of indigenous nations' lands, the state has created incentives for integration into its own sovereignty framework. Those communities that cooperate are the beneficiaries of a patronizing false altruism that sees indigenous peoples as the anachronistic remnants of nations, the descendants of once independent peoples who by a combination of tenacity and luck have managed to survive and must now be protected as minorities. By agreeing to live as artifacts, such co-opted communities guarantee themselves a role in the state mythology through which they hope to secure a limited but perpetual set of rights. In truth the bargain is a pathetic compromise of principle. The reformulation of nationhood to create historical artifacts that lend legitimacy

to the political economy of the modern state is nothing less than a betrayal. (Alfred, 1999)

I must admit that in reading this passage and others like it, I was as equally dismissive of them as Alfred appeared to be of self-government. My reaction was one of anger that *my* government's efforts at trying to improve Native/settler relations was being dismissed and denigrated. And what of the First Nations who had signed self-government agreements? Is he not denigrating them as well? The point of these anecdotes is to demonstrate the reality of the power politics that are ongoing in this country and they will continue to generate anger as long as the dominant culture refuses to acknowledge its racialness and its concomitant privileged position.

The other problem with the culture of dominance is that it creates the idea that Euro-Canadian culture is universal. Who is it after all that does not desire equality, peace and freedom? The difficulty is that the applications of these ideals has been carried out within the context of power relations, with the result that some people have been more equal than others, lived in peace more than others and experienced more freedom than others. This is not just the result of state policies and their unequal application but because of the profound cultural differences that do exist within this country. Cultural differences that have been denied or ignored because they negate the premise of universality propagated by the culture of dominance.

There are profound differences between Euro-Canadian cultures and Aboriginal ones. For example consider education. In non-Native society, the '3 Rs' are emphasized that is reading, writing, and 'rithmetic. In Native societies, it's the '3 Ls', looking, listening and learning. I once attended a conference hosted by the Toronto Indian Friendship Centre and while there listened to Francis Boots, (Mohawk) talk about his experiences of Native and non-Native education. He explained that when he was very young, he and his siblings would gather around their grandfather in the evening and he would tell them stories of the animals, the earth and their relationship to these things. Then when he got to school, he was placed in a classroom of strangers and taught to read a book which talked all about Dick and Jane and their dog Spot. Dick and Jane he thought? Who are Dick and Jane and what have they got to do with me, with the animals, with the earth, with my relationship to all things?

This anecdote exemplifies the familial relations in education which were so important to traditional First Nations communities and which barely exist in non-Native ones. This is further demonstrated by the fact that the Mohawks use the word 'grandmother' as a word for teacher. This anecdote also raises the issue of curriculum and methodology and the need to decolonize them. Western society, since industrialization, has approached the world by compartmentalizing it into its various parts. In contrast, Aboriginal cultures emphasize interconnectedness. (Hampton, 1995) To use another example, while researching the history of the Shingwauk Residential School, I talked to a Native councillor at Algoma University College. He told the story of when he was in school taking a chemistry class. The teacher had all the students conduct an experiment with a particular sulfate compound and insisted that they all wear protective clothing because if the experiment went wrong, the chemicals posed a certain danger. He then noted that the chemicals they were protecting themselves against in the classroom were the same chemicals that were billowing forth from the Atikokan fossil fuel generating station, several miles from where he went to school. When he realized this, he was incredulous that his teacher and the white authorities around him had never connected their activities in the classroom with the activities of their colleagues down the road.

Finally, there are profound differences in the way Native and non-Native languages are structured. The most common example used to exemplify the differences is the fact that there is no word for why in the Cree language. Rather their form of questioning is how do....? Consider what this

means for university style education which is built on the premise that information must be challenged through the use of why rather than comprehended through the use of 'how do.' The why question supports compartmentalization and the how do question supports connection and relations.

If I, as a teacher, insist on approaching Native/settler relations by asking why then how do I not avoid presenting a colonialist version of that history?

There are other qualities however that more clearly delineate the profound differences between English and Native languages. English uses a lot of nouns and adjectives. Most Aboriginal languages emphasize verbs. As a result, English often comes across as judgmental, as 'labelling' and therefore limiting in understanding. For the non-English learner, these nouns, these labels, often become the whole. Consider offender, student, pervert, hero. When one says student, one thinks of that person as just that. Adjectives too are often descriptions about things for example, horrible, disgusting, brave, generous but Aboriginal languages tend to prefer adjectives that give descriptions of things such as green, fast, thick. (Ross, 1996, chp.5)

Now why is the way languages structured relevant to the discussion of decolonization? For one thing, it helps to explain how devastating English language schooling could be for Aboriginal children. Imagine the culture shock of an Aboriginal child not used to judgmental language hearing, 'You are dirty', 'You are lazy' or 'You are savage'. Secondly, English also demonstrates some fundamental differences in concepts of gender in comparison to many Aboriginal languages.

In Mig'maw, the word for wife is the 'woman who cares for your heart' daughters are the ones 'who enrich your heart' and sons are the ones who 'test your heart'. Note that in Mig'maw, there is no gender. God is neither he or she but the Creator. Consider this aspect in the residential school setting again where God was a patriarchal figure presiding over a patriarchal society. One ramification of this god, as a result of gendered language, was the diminishment of the role of women in Aboriginal societies. Band councils, as established by the Indian Act, could only consist of men who were elected into office by men. The complete separation of women from the political sphere did not occur in Aboriginal cultures hence the very use of English assisted in altering the political structure within Aboriginal societies and in altering the portrayal of both Indian men and women in Euro-Canadian history books.

The few examples given here demonstrate the profound cultural differences that exist between Native and non-Native groups within Canada, something which the culture of dominance cannot respect. What it does instead is create and maintain uneven power relations among groups within society. This in turn leads to anger between the people who are dominated and the people who are not. The culture of dominance also negates all cultural differences by ascribing to the idea of a universal culture that professes to be neutral.

This last statement may be looked at askance by many Canadians, especially my students. After all do we not recognize difference through our multicultural policies and in fact uphold difference as a fundamental idea of Canadian national identity? My response to that is simply this: multiculturalism is not the same as cultural pluralism. It is the idea of cultural pluralism that we must accept if we are to de-colonize the History of Native/settler relations. In so doing, we can turn from our anger and embrace a history that is inclusive not exclusive, respectful not domineering. The intellectual benefits (among others) in doing so are, I would argue, enormous because we can, in fact, create the 'teaching wigwam' of Shingwauk's vision and thus expand our understanding of ourselves, of each other, and even of this 'country' exponentially.

Consider the concept of time. Western history deals with time as if it were linear. Native Peoples

understand that time is also circular. Does that suggest that Native history is doomed to repeat itself, whereas non-Native history never looks back? More seriously, what sort of questions would we ask about the past if we thought within a circle as opposed to a line? What of the idea of progress and the process of change? Could they exist within this approach to history or even, should they exist?

Additionally, Euro-Canadian history starts in Europe or with the landing of the first explorers along the St. Lawrence. For the First Nations, their history begins with 'time immemorial.' As Hugh Brody explains: 'Archeological evidence suggests that hunters have been in this region [the Northwest Territories] for at least 8,000 years, or since it became habitable again after the last ice age. Groups of hunters could have moved through the region during the ice age, and some artifacts point to human occupancy as long as 25,000 years ago.' (Brody, 2000, p. 131) That is before the rise of the Egyptian empire, the Sumerians, the Zhou dynasty in China, before the Hebrews made it to the promised land, before the era of Roman and Greek civilizations from which we get our intellectual heritage. That means that the European and subsequent Euro-Canadian presence in North America is, when considered within an 8,000 year time frame, really insignificant. How de-colonizing can one get with this realization?

Part D. Conclusion

Throughout this paper, I have taken you on a journey of self-exploration of what it has been like to teach and research in the field of Native/settler relations. I have started from a position of ignorance and experienced shame as I learned that my 'great' country had not acted as beneficently as I had thought towards the First Nations peoples of this land. I then searched for reasons for this betrayal of Canadian principles and ideals and discovered that in learning about First Nations, I needed to, and ended up, learning more about my own culture than about theirs. Nevertheless, the search for answers did bring me into contact with Aboriginal perspectives, either through conversations with Aboriginal individuals, reading and listening to Aboriginal stories, or through teaching Aboriginal students. Sometimes, these experiences left me feeling anger towards the First Nations and sometimes I was the recipient of anger from First Nations individuals. Regardless, my intellectual explorations have been of great benefit to me and I hope to my students as well. I have learned that First Nations are whole people, not just fragments of the past; that they do have a valid world view and a profound one, and that many of them are struggling just as I am with living in a world where the middle ground of Native/settler relations remains the predominant place of meeting rather than the 'teaching wigwam.' As a result, there is still an on-going struggle between me and the history of Native/settler relations; so, this journey must continue.

And by the way, I still don't know how to write a circle.

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