Pedagogies of Inheriting: Kitchen Table Conversations

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Abstract: As an Indigenous and settler research collective, we explore the ways in which our positionalities as university educators, as well as our Indigenous and settler students' positionalities, shape the pedagogies we employ to create spaces for decolonization, Indigenization, and reconciliation. The concept of *inheriting* opens up a critical analysis of how we are differently positioned within historical and ongoing forces of settler colonialism, as well how we each engage particular relationships, responsibilities and processes of change as the "doing" of inheriting. We contemplate the concept of inheriting as a potential framework to approach decolonizing and Indigenizing our pedagogical practices as scholars and educators.
We come from different disciplinary roots (Indigenous Studies, education, social work, linguistics) and theoretical perspectives (Indigenous theories, continental memory studies, settler colonial theories) and we have brought diverse ideas into a common space that we refer to as our kitchen table, a relational space that hosts and holds the resonances, tensions, and incommensurabilities between traditions of thought and accountabilities within which we each situate ourselves as educators. Each of us offers concrete examples of the praxis of inheriting and relationality in three types of classrooms: with Indigenous students only, with both Indigenous and settler students, and with settler majority students. Our exchanges have led to a series of critical questions that include: what does it mean to actively, intentionally, and critically inherit the settler colonial structures and diverse relationships in which we teach and learn? What kinds of practices of inheriting open up pedagogically, in terms of taking responsibility, foregrounding the relations of settler colonial capitalism and ongoing occupation of Indigenous land? How might inheriting be a site of contextualized and embodied learning for differently positioned students? These generative questions have helped to animate our discussions using our kitchen table methodology.

Keywords: Indigenizing, decolonizing, transformative pedagogies, inheriting

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Introduction

We are Indigenous and non-Indigenous post-secondary educators who share a commitment to educating towards the decolonization of hearts, minds, relations, and structures, although the way that each of us lives out that commitment is shaped by her/their own specific positionality. For the Indigenous scholar educators in our collective, the work of decolonizing involves forging spaces in and outside of the classroom that centre Indigenous knowledges, languages, pedagogies, and realities. Accountability to the needs and aspirations of Indigenous students and communities assumes primary importance. The settler scholar educators in our collective see our central task in the classroom as one of peeling back the veil of everyday life to reveal and challenge—for ourselves and for our students—the ways in which we are differently embedded in colonizing relations of power.

This collective article has its origins in a series of conversations focused on pedagogy, in particular pedagogical practices that clarify, complexify, and deepen student understandings of positionality and relationality. Despite our shared commitments as educators and colleagues, it has not been an easy conversation. We come from different disciplinary roots (Indigenous Studies, education, social work, linguistics) and theoretical perspectives (Indigenous theories, continental memory studies, settler colonial theories) and we have brought diverse ideas into a common space that we refer to as our kitchen table. A metaphor used by others (e.g. K. Anderson, liveworkwell.ca; Kohl and McCutcheon 748; Ladner 308; Reconciliation Canada, reconciliationcanada.ca), the kitchen table represents to us a place of informal engagement; it resonates with the familiarity and warmth of sharing conversations and ideas over a pot of tea but also impassioned and energized debate, contrasting thoughts, strategic positioning, even difficult moments. It provides a container–a holding-in-relation that allows for tension to be present and

expressed in ways that are generative as opposed to destructive, allowing space for working through misunderstandings and disconnections.

In this article, we envision the kitchen table as a methodology in two senses. First, we see "relationality" (Wilson 80; Johnson et al. 11) as the heart of the kitchen table not only as conducive to generating certain kinds of knowledge, but as core to these knowledges and to our very processes of knowing. Our research journey began with conspiratorial conversations over soup and was fed by the feast of an in-person retreat that included Lindsay's infant son, whose presence grounded our gathering and knowledge generation in the centrality of multi-generational relationships. Over the course of five years, and through a pandemic of accompanying lockdowns, our regular meetings over zoom created a rare space of sustained relationality; in this resilient space, we met again and again to iteratively and reciprocally re-examine the 'data' of each of our classroom practices in light of each other's re-interpretations, experimenting with the utility of the emergent concept of inheriting from Indigenous and settler ways of knowing and teaching. The trust and vulnerability engendered by friendship and brought into research allowed us to take risks in sharing thoughts and to be brave with our stories, with the faith that no statement made in this space risked being a 'relationship breaker.' The very act of returning again and again to the table came to constitute a practice—an ethic of remaining at the table.

More broadly, we have experienced the kitchen table as a critically reflexive relational space that shelters differing ideas and practices, and hosts and holds the resonances, tensions, and incommensurabilities between traditions of thought and accountabilities within which we each situate ourselves as educators. In alignment with broader feminist, anti-colonial, and post-empirical revisionings of social science, we see this informal, hospitable methodology as

questioning the formality and authority of Western academia in which we as professors are situated as experts with authority, mastery, and a monopoly on comprehensive universal knowledge. Risk-taking and trust-building over time open up a capacious space of pedagogical imagination that allows for speculating, messy weaving, sitting with unknowing and non-mastery, making and learning from mistakes. The unfolding spaciousness it fosters stands in sharp contrast to adversarial dynamics in academia and polarization in political spheres which increasingly shrink the collective space to imagine and deliberate.

Why 'Inheriting'?

Around this kitchen table, one of the ideas that we have been exploring together is the concept of *inheriting.* The idea of inheriting has been a generative holding place for multiple streams of thought, traditions, and practices, all bearing on the pedagogical challenge of understanding ourselves in active, dynamic relation to past, present and future (relations) on Indigenous lands. For us, this concept opens up different ways of conceiving our work; at the same time, what we each bring to the table has foregrounded the ways in which our different formations shape and constrain how we translate this concept into our classroom practices. For each of us, pedagogies that Indigenize, decolonize and ground the conditions for Indigenous sovereignty and possible future reconciliation entail working against those colonial ways of knowing and being that refuse implication, responsibility, and complex webs of relating (Donald 91). We are using the concept of inheriting as a way to surface multiple and interconnected relationships of which we are a part and to which we are accountable: with Indigenous peoples; with diverse settler peoples; with our own ancestors and generations to come; and with the Land and the more-than-human web of life. If settler colonialism operates through the refusal, denial, and imposition of relationships, we take up inheriting as a way to fully immerse ourselves and our students in grappling with and

embracing our responsibilities to the past, present, and future, much in the way LaDuke speaks about “intergenerational accountability” (142–144). *Inheriting* is an active verb inviting engagement and action, rather than an *inheritance* that may signal “possessive individualism passed on down the patriarchal family line” (Sandilands 177–181).

In considering temporal-spatial dimensions, we are reminded of the dynamic proximity of past, present and future through the philosophy of Blackfoot scholar Leroy Little Bear. As he writes:

> Blackfoot think of time on a two-day operational sense. There is “now,” “tomorrow,” and “day-after tomorrow.” And backwards, “now,” “yesterday,” and “day-before yesterday.” Beyond the two-day limit, forward or backward, past and present amalgamate and become one and the same. Plains Indians are not incapable of talking or thinking of the distant future or past, but it is always done with the “constant flux” in mind. One of the implications arising out of this notion of time is that the ancestors are always only two days away. (Little Bear 5)

Furthermore, Little Bear reminds us that time is intimately tied to place: “The Earth is where the continuous and/or repetitive process of creation occurs. It is on the Earth and from the Earth that cycles, phases, patterns - in other words, the constant motion or flux - can be observed” (3).

We further acknowledge the influence of Haudenosaunee/Anishinaabe scholar Vanessa Watts who also uses the term *inheriting* in discussing the deeply spiritual relationships among all beings in Creation, including humans, non-humans and places that have their own foundational agreements of co-existence and responsibilities (148). She argues that Western domination and removal of Indigenous peoples from traditional lands have eroded Indigenous relationships and responsibilities to place, contending that “the ability of we Indigenous peoples to inherit elements of our cosmologies amidst the transformed, industrialized places has also been

compromised" (148). She further critiques how Indigenous sacred ceremonies have been absorbed into the State's assimilationist multicultural agenda that allows ceremonies such as "smudging" to settle comfortably into corporate settings from the boardroom to negotiating tables (161–163).

Our use of *inheriting* is also in dialogue with historical memory studies and pedagogies of remembrance (Simon, *Pedagogy of Witnessing* 4). Historical memory studies constitute an interdisciplinary field of inquiry into memory as a cultural formation (including disciplines of cultural studies, museum studies, critical heritage studies, and history and history education; examples include Simon and Ashley 247, Lehrer et al. 1, and den Heyer et al. 1). These fields share a common understanding of memory and the past not as static objects of study, recollection or even commemoration but rather as collective practices of constructing shared significance and belonging in the present with an implied trajectory into collective futures.

As educators, we recognize settler colonialism to be our lived reality and the lived reality of our students, and as something to be critiqued and dismantled in concrete terms and on an ongoing basis, rather than as something to be discussed on a purely historical or theoretical level. For us, the concept of inheriting opens up a critical analysis of structural power—how we are each differently and intersectionally positioned within historical and ongoing forces of settler colonialism and Indigenous sovereignty—as well as attention to individual intention and participation, the "doing" of inheriting. The "doing" of inheriting can be resistant, critical, honouring, refusing, oblivious, complicit and more, but it is *active* and a significant site of pedagogical intervention.

To elaborate on this "doing" of inheriting, the article proceeds with our five individual contributions around the table, each writing in one's voice from particular formations and

responsibilities, positioning oneself in relation to the project of inheriting, and offering observations of the ways this informs our individual practice of pedagogy in place. Following is a discussion that picks up on salient threads to refine and launch a call to fellow educators to explore these understandings within their relations and contexts of practice.

Table Conversations: Situating Ourselves and Our Work within Pedagogies of Inheriting

Lindsay Morcom

I am *Wiisaakode-Anishinaabekwe*, a mixed-heritage woman, descended from Indigenous people, refugees, and Settlers. I live a life that is reflective of my love of and connection to my Anishinaabe ancestry, and I do my best to live up to Anishinaabe teachings daily in my life and my work. I am also connected to my German and French heritages, and those backgrounds influence my life and understanding as well. For me, two-eyed seeing is not a metaphor (Iwama et al. 5). It is a very real way of experiencing the world, and it presents me with a particular set of challenges and responsibilities as a person engaging in decolonizing and reconciliatory work. My father, from whom I have inherited my mixed Anishinaabe ancestry, has taught me that mine is not a partial inheriting or a lesser role; rather, it is necessary if we are ever going to achieve societal reconciliation. Inheriting as I see it is a process of picking up and carrying our various bundles. I've picked up a mixed bundle as someone who inherits colonization having both benefited and suffered from it. It can be difficult sometimes occupying a complex, mixed identity that isn't always clear to everyone. However, I believe that my perspective, and my family's heritage, is a vital way of seeing and understanding the complexity of the societies in which we live. This complexity is a part of my striving to actively, intentionally, and critically take up the fullness of my inheritance and parse what exactly my unique heritage calls me to do.

My understanding of inheriting and temporality is also informed by living on traditional Anishinaabe territory, where Algonquin Anishinaabeg have walked since time immemorial. Their legacy, and my inheritance, is quite literally written into the land. Just over an hour from my front door, in Bon Echo Provincial Park, stands Mazinaw Rock. It features rock art paintings that continue over a 2.5 km stretch of sheer cliff ("Mazinaw Pictographs"). It takes my breath away to stand in the shadow of the rock and realize that these paintings have been left for Anishinaabe descendants over generations. Closer to home are *manòmin* (wild rice) beds that are still accessed by members of my community, and that community leaders have fought against commercial harvesters to preserve ("Manòmin is the Heart of the Community"). We access the beds in a traditional way, by canoe, and harvest and process the *manòmin* in a ceremony that reminds us of our responsibilities to this place and to each other. These histories, practices, and places remind me that temporality must be viewed as cyclical; the past is inextricably tied to the present and future. I also understand, through the land, what responsibility means through time. For hundreds of years the Anishinaabeg have held the Dish with One Spoon treaty with the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. This treaty is viewed, as treaties should be, as a way of living rather than a historical event. The Kingston urban Indigenous community to which I belong is both Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee, with guests from other Nations as well. To make our community work, we live the Dish with One Spoon every single day.

As a teacher, the realities that I have inherited influence my teaching. I understand that decolonization and Indigenization are difficult processes. Just as temporality informs my understanding of my relationships to land and others, it also informs my approach to teaching. I know that it often takes time for my Indigenous students to feel comfortable embracing their Indigeneity in Western educational contexts and find the courage to teach and research in an

unapologetic, courageous, Indigenous way, given the fact that most if not all of them have experienced oppression and attempted assimilation through education. It also takes time for my Settler students to come to terms with their relationships to the lands on which they live, and to take responsibility for recognizing and dismantling oppressive colonial structures. As a person of mixed heritage, I am able to see into and understand both of these realities.

I strive to create a space where students are safe to ask questions, grow, and explore. Guided by Elders, smudging is at the heart of this safety. Smudging is a spiritual practice in which medicines are burned; in our context it includes sage and sometimes sweetgrass. Each participant wafts the smoke over their head to think good thoughts, their ears to hear good things, their eyes to see good things, their mouth to speak good words, and their heart to carry good things in their heart. It can also be used to clear negativity or bring positivity into a space. It is both a prayer and a commitment to trying to live in a good way. Through smudging, my students and I not only seek clarity for ourselves, but we promise one another to see, hear, and think the best of each person, and to carry good things in all of our hearts. We refer to our efforts as "listening with smudge ears." Including smudging in my classroom is an act of honouring temporality and place because the medicines connect us to the land and remind us of our responsibilities to the Earth and all our relations. Smudging within the context of a Western educational institution like Queen's University is a tangible way to decolonize a deeply colonial space, and to help myself and my students decolonize ourselves as well. Spending time together in ceremony allows us to build relationships in the classroom and beyond with openness, honesty, and full acknowledgement and acceptance of who we all are. Most of all, it allows us to come together with love to pick up our unique bundles and strive to be the best ancestors we can (LaDuke 142).

Jan Hare

As an Anishinaabe scholar and educator, who has been working on Musqueam lands for over twenty years, the concept of inheriting brings to mind the cultural teaching of 'hands back, hands forward,' from the late Musqueam Elder, Dr. Vincent Stogan, also known as Tsimilano. I was first introduced to this teaching by mentor, friend, and Stolo scholar, Dr. Jo-ann Archibald, when we became colleagues at the University of British Columbia (UBC). She has re-storied this teaching many times in her mentoring and guidance of students, staff, and faculty in classrooms and social and cultural gatherings, much in the way Tsimilano did in his years spent mentoring and teaching at UBC. In those moments, and in her own writings, she recounts the teaching she received from Tsimilano:

> In our gatherings, he often asked us to form a circle in order to share some good words and thoughts to establish a comfortable environment before beginning our work together. In the circle, we extend our left palm upwards, to symbolize reaching back to receive teachings (knowledge and values) from the Ancestors and those who have travelled before us. We are given the challenge and opportunity to put these teachings into our everyday lives. We then have a responsibility to pass those teachings to others, especially the younger generation, which is shown when we put our right palm downwards. (Archibald and Parent 4–5)

Following her explanation, we would physically clasp the hands of the person to our left and to our right in the configuration described in this cultural teaching. It is both experiential and relational.

What I have come to appreciate about enacting this teaching is that I am simultaneously linked to the past, present, and future. Within my Anishinaabe worldview, there are no restrictions for the movement between and among these moments in time. Rather, there is an interplay between past,

present, and future, where the past can persist into the present and future. Among other Indigenous intellectual traditions, this perception of time allows for movement that can occur in both directions. Therefore, Indigenous knowledges are not bounded in the past, even though this is how they are often positioned in teaching and learning. Instead, these knowledges are dynamic and responsive to ever-evolving contexts (Battiste 122).

While Watts (148) suggests that Indigenous people were compromised in their ability to inherit from the past, Tsimilano directs us towards a more active stance against the disruption of colonialism. Seemingly, the concept of inheriting does not hold for Tsimilano if we consider that he does not want us to depend on an inheritance, but rather make something of our past, present, and future on our own terms. Tsimilano's teaching asks for us to reach back to our ancestors for knowledge, stories, and languages with the responsibility of bringing these ways of knowing to future generations. This allows the ancestors to not only exist in our past, but to endure within the spiritual realm while still present in our material and physical worlds, including landscapes, family and community relations, or cultural practices.

As I contemplate this metaphor of inheriting for my own pedagogical practice with Indigenous learners, Tsimilano's guidance reminds me that teaching can be enhanced for Indigenous students through deliberate strategies that empower them in their own journeys of resurgence and sovereignty. I teach in an Indigenous-led teacher education program, situated within a mainstream teacher education program that can make Indigenous students vulnerable to reproducing mainstream approaches with Indigenous classrooms and communities (Costagno 11–12). Structuring learning environments that prepare Indigenous students to address the broader needs of Indigenous communities requires recognition that their experiences, traditions,

and languages are a legitimate source of knowledge within coursework. In doing so, Indigenous pre-service teacher identities and aspirations are centered in the learning process.

Digital storytelling has become an effective educational tool for teaching Indigenous learners, especially as it is a mode of expression that supports and upholds Indigenous oral traditions. Its multimodal nature allows for the creation of counter narratives, where students can assert their own truths of past, present, and future. In previous work with colleagues (Sam et al. 6–7) we describe the *Digital Grease Trail Storytelling Project* where Indigenous pre-service teachers chose local geographical sites, markers, or landscapes to weave together digital media, oral histories, land-based learning, and Indigenous knowledges. In one such example, teacher candidates challenge dominant social media and mainstream news that fail to make visible the violence that Indigenous women and girls experience on a northern Canadian highway corridor in remote northern British Columbia. Their local knowledge and histories link the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) in Canada to broader issues of colonialism, patriarchy, and sexualized violence. Their story calls for awareness about MMIWG in Canada and elsewhere through social media campaigns. When learners turn to land, family, and community to (re)tell Indigenous stories through digital narrations, they can begin to challenge the dominant narratives that have been constructed about them to reinterpret landscapes and reimagine their lives based on their own terms.

Lynne Davis

The classroom encounter represents a distinct moment of inheriting. All that is past, present and future converge in a single act of becoming. The selection of texts and activities, the physical arrangement of the classroom, the structured power relations that flow between student and instructor and between students, the multi-layered histories carried by each individual, the

presence or absence of ceremony, and the facilitation style of the classroom leader help to define the potentialities of the educational moment. Inheriting as a verb gets played out in the decisions enacted by the classroom leader and students as they perceive inheriting in the moment—the negotiating of Indigenous and settler identities in the Michi Saagiig territories of Treaty 20 and the Williams Treaties where Trent University is located.

The classroom is the site of a complex set of decisions manifesting in that temporality. And so that pedagogical moment holds that act of inheriting as a verb. The resulting encounter can go in so many different directions. This nexus of what we're talking about as inheriting comes into existence in a momentary way in the classroom and becomes a pedagogical potentiality that affects people's self-perceptions and intersubjective experiences in a dynamic, alive space.

To this space, I bring my lived experience as a white settler woman, with eastern European Jewish, diasporic and Buddhist subjectivities. For most of my academic life, I have been embedded in the Trent community. The students in my classes, like myself, are immersed in a rich environment of Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee traditional teachings, resurgence theories and actions, language recovery, Indigenous performance, story-telling and environmental commitment. My fourth-year classes engage Indigenous and settler students in exploring the challenges of Indigenous-settler alliance-building, drawing on Indigenous resurgence and settler colonial theories. The pedagogical processes are both unsettling and affirming. One of the potent assignments I use is called "My Colonial Story," inspired by the decolonizing autobiography developed by Haig-Brown (12) and the colonial biography following Freeman (xix) in *Distant Relations*. The assignment asks students to explore how they came to be on Indigenous lands. Indigenous students reflect on how their own stories have been shaped by colonization, often through violence and painful encounters with the state. For many settler Canadian students,

it is the first time they have delved beneath the surface of a simple ethnic label. It sends them back to their families to speak with parents, grandparents, aunties and uncles and sometimes older generations. Photos and diaries that have long laid dormant are pulled out of boxes and attics. Migration stories are shared, sometimes family escapes from extreme violence as parents and grandparents searched for safety. Many of the stories have not been told before because no-one asked to hear them or because children were being protected from hard truths. Overall, this family research brings the students and their own colonial histories into direct conversation with settler colonialism. Many students turn their research into digital stories they can share with others.

In the Michi Saagiig territory where Trent is located, the Michi Saagiig Nishinaabeg are being confronted by cottagers who oppose the rejuvenation and cultivation of manoomin (wild rice) in local lakes (Simpson, *As We Have Always* 34; Anderson and Whetung 36). Ongoing struggles to protect Indigenous land, waters and food sources—from Standing Rock to Wet'suwet'en to the Tyendinaga blockades—provide important entry points for students to grasp or reinforce recognition that they themselves are part of the unfolding story of Indigenous-settler relationships and occupation of Indigenous lands. Rather than belonging to some long ago past, the same racist beliefs and attitudes that underpinned historical genocidal policies reveal themselves as alive and well in this very moment. Moreover, settler students come to realize that family members as well as themselves carry and perpetuate this settler consciousness (Regan 11; Battell Lowman and Barker 13; Mackey 10). Students can be supported in understanding how social, ideological, economic, political and ecological forces converge in a particular moment. This conjunctural analysis reveals how inheriting in the moment is an instantiation of the past and at the same time embodies what future generations are inheriting.

I believe in the journey as a process of becoming. Chris Hiller points to the necessity of both learning and unlearning in changing consciousness (423). Turning comfort into discomfort is a critical challenge in transformative teaching with settler students (Regan 28; DiAngelo 55; Boler and Zembylas 108). Paradoxically, I have found that in order to normalize discomfort, it is first necessary to create a safe, supportive environment where a community of learners becomes willing to examine inheriting in the moment with its risk of discomfort. Chris Hiller described how settler allies who work on Indigenous land issues, report "a-ha" experiences that result in new understandings (423). How can the educator spark "a-ha" moments, moments where inheriting past, present, future converge in shifts of being? For me, it is a slow dance, starting by shaking gently on ingrained understandings at first, and picking up the tempo as trust builds in the classroom and students are prepared to take more risks with their learning. Out of the mix of people, place, and process, new insights may be catalyzed in the moment. My colleague and mentor Marlene Brant Castellano (personal communication) has referenced this intense learning moment as a spark of energy that has the power to transform and spread outward, multiplying its impacts as it touches others.

Transformation entails responsibilities—to continue learning, to take action, and to join with others who share a lifelong commitment to a movement for change. Anti-colonial action and Indigenous resurgence have gone on in the past (Simpson, *As We Have Always* xiii) and they will go on after us; we are situated in this moment within a flow of events, a flow of action and a flow of responsibilities that transcend generations. In Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee contexts, it is an understanding of oneself within the seven generations that reach back and reach forward—a temporal flow that is both linear and circular at the same time.

Chris Hiller

As a white settler woman working primarily with settler social work students, the work of inheriting often begins with reflecting together on our membership in communities that have been and continue to be deeply implicated in the settler colonial project. We begin by asking ourselves questions posed by Senator Murray Sinclair, former chair of Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission: *Where do I come from? Where am I going? What is my purpose? Who am I?* ("Murray Sinclair Reflects" 16:43–2039*).* And especially for settlers*, what am I a part of?*

Amidst discussions of social work history, policy chronologies, government actions and inactions, and social movements, pedagogies of inheriting involve becoming critically curious about our impulse as settlers to dissect, decry, and thus distance ourselves from 'past' colonial atrocities, and learning instead to see ourselves as participants in and inheritors of the 'colonial present.' This learning is guided by iterative engagement with the brilliant work of Indigenous scholars and activists who trace long continuities of colonial policies and genocidal practices in relation to broader and deeper continuities and resurgences: of Indigenous legal orders, sovereignties, and forms of reciprocal recognition (Corntassel 88–89; Simpson, *As We Have Always Done* 181–183); of diplomacy and treaty-making (S. Hill 39–41; Simpson, *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back* 112–114); of Indigenous jurisdictions, title, and rights (Manuel and Derrickson 115–118); of sacred understandings of reciprocal relations with Land, Water, human and more-than-human relatives (Bédard 95–96; Borrows, "Earth-bound" 55).

My approach to pedagogies of inheriting has been shaped profoundly by opportunities to sit with and learn from Indigenous Elders, Knowledge Keepers, colleagues, and students, and particularly those who embody the profound depth, revolutionary truth, and immense beauty of Anishinaabe teachings about 'All my relations.' The way I teach and look at the world also has

been transformed by Ermine's concept of the "space of ethical engagement" (193), which lays out conditions for life-altering self-reflexive encounters between those shaped by settler worldviews and those who embody an Indigenous gaze which "projects from the memory of a people and is, in essence, the continuum of a story and a history" (199). I am grateful as well for the work of settler scholars to 'unsettle the settler within,' "not just in *words*, but by our *actions* to fully recognize and engage the history of colonization, violence, racism, injustice, and cultural trauma that is still alive" (Regan 26), and to contemplate what it means for non-Indigenous people to "live in Indigenous sovereignty" (Carlson-Manathara with Rowe 111). Always in this work, Tuck and Yang's pointed critique of "settler moves to innocence" (10) rings loudly in my ear, reminding me how easily we (white) settlers become preoccupied with securing the futurity of our claims to space, place, history, and identity, and of how short our attention spans and commitments are when it comes to being truly accountable for how we participate in ongoing Indigenous displacement and dispossession.

I teach at Renison University College at the University of Waterloo, which is located on the traditional territories of the Haudenosaunee, Anishinaabeg, and Attawandaron peoples, and specifically on lands set aside in perpetuity for the Haudenosaunnee of Six Nations of the Grand River Territory by the Haldimand Treaty of 1784. It is a 'settler-ized' place where clashes over history, knowledge, identity, and land are largely occluded, but also a place that offers a rich and complex set of relations to inherit. One of my favourite courses to teach at the College is a seminar on decolonization and social action, which provides a space for students and me to contemplate the specific responsibilities we carry, as well as the purpose and gifts that we might bring, in relation to struggles toward the "repatriation of Indigenous land and life" (Tuck and Yang 21) that animate the land under our feet.

My aim in this course is to encourage students to engage with diverse Indigenous voices and perspectives, with a view to coming to see ourselves in light of multiple shifting subjectivities: those of (white or racialized) settler, occupier, perpetrator-colonizer, uninvited guest; but also those of treaty person, adopted relative, two-legged, (potential) ally. Together, we explore how each positionality serves as a lens for seeing anew how we are related to First Peoples, to each other, and to the Land that sustains us all; we explore too how each positionality infers different accountabilities, responsibilities, and possibilities for renewed relationship. Following Carlson-Manathara, we ask: How might we learn "more loving and accountable ways to be good relatives to Indigenous peoples and lands" (27)? And what does living into these relationalities demand of us in this place, in this moment?

Some of the most powerful learning in our course comes through engagements with the Two Row Wampum and the *Tehontatenentsonterontahkhwa,* or the Covenant Chain of Friendship. The Covenant Chain is a "wampum of alliance" (Freeman and Van Katwyk 65) created by the Haudenosaunee to complement the *Two Row Wampum,* metaphorically linking the European ship and the Haudenosaunee canoe together and to the land (Hill and Coleman 351). Inheriting involves sitting with and reading the works of Haudenosaunee Elders, Knowledge Keepers, land defenders, artists, and community members, taking in rich and diverse understandings of the meaning of the Chain and the deep knowledges and values that inform it. We learn how the central metaphor expressed through the wampum has evolved through intercultural negotiation: from a rope easily frayed, to an unbreakable iron chain, to a chain of silver that "could be polished from time to time to renew agreements, make amends for any transgressions, and restore peace" (R. Hill 21). We discuss the Chain's history, how responsibilities to honour and maintain it have been upheld or abrogated; we also acknowledge the truth of its current state of

disrepair, with links rusted and hardened by settler colonial structures, practices, assumptions, and ways of being. Those of us who are settlers begin to ask ourselves difficult questions about the ways in which we benefit first from the existence of that chain, and then from its denial. For all of us, Indigenous and settler, inheriting involves listening deeply and learning from our Haudenosaunee "older brothers" how to "shake the dust" from the chain (Hill and Coleman 341), how to polish it to keep it bright, and how to hold firm to it as a lifelong commitment to relationship and alliance building.

Lisa Taylor

I approach the practice of *inheriting* as a settler scholar formed by movements that are both internal to and critical of Western educational knowledge traditions, including critical pedagogy, intersectional antiracism, anticolonial and decolonial education, and historical memory studies (Simon, "The Paradoxical Practice of Zakhor" 9). I also situate my work in teacher education within a broader movement by Canadian educators and institutions to take up the 2015 Calls to Action issued by TRC (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada 238) specifically to this community, including what I understand as a call to do the work of critical inheriting—to *do* the critically reflexive and collaborative work of *undoing* the weaponization of our field as a key institution of colonization (Sinclair 7). This manifests particularly within history education, a key site of this work that involves pedagogical building up students' critical self-reflexive historical consciousness by: tracing the continuity of what is positioned as a distant past; cultivating a sense of oneself as an historical actor within the historical present; and assuming historical responsibility to the past and the future from a stance of implication, entanglement, response-ability, accountability, and answerability (Stein et al., "Beyond Colonial Futurities" 23).

Critically inheriting the internally contentious Western educational knowledge tradition within which I've been formed involves a practice of discernment and vigilance about the premises, tools and traps of this tradition, in order to participate in discussions that dismantle its epistemic and institutional hegemony, including its claims of universality. Lummi scholar and history educator, Michael Marker, undoes this claim when he writes, "I have learned from Elders and knowledge holders that Indigenous meanings of history include realities beyond what Western minds consider to be historical truth" (185).

Doing the work of critically inheriting the field of history education includes the internal critiques and challenges to other premises, including the partitioning off of the past and present, the unilinear, unidirectional, and *teleological* organization of time, and the focus on time over place.

Roger Simon's elaboration of a "pedagogy of remembrance" ("Paradoxical Practice of Zakhor" 9) mounts just such a challenge in that it refuses to separate the past off from the present as an object of: study; evidentiary assessment; or commemoration. Rather, Simon proposes remembrance as a collective ethical and political practice of *inheriting* in this historical moment—of working through the present significance of what is positioned as past. His pedagogy of remembrance curates and stages students' active and psychically fraught engagements with representations from a violent past in ways designed to bring the testimonial force of those artifacts to bear on students' historical consciousness of the relationships and responsibilities they are called to in this moment. In other words, he shows pedagogy can amplify the ways that artifacts and survivor accounts from violent histories speak to each of us as historical actors in the present with a testimonial force that interrupts and unsettles the taken-for-grantedness and apparent inevitability of our lived worlds as currently organized. In

short, Simon argues that the voice of the past has the potential to crack open contemporary hegemonic relationships, assumptions, habits, structures of feeling and knowing as well as the solipsism of the present, and to galvanize students' attentiveness to a wider range of relationships of implication, obligation, and reciprocity. In light of the past, our consciousness of the significance of this historical moment *calls us* to take up responsibilities to past and future generations to shift the course of history.

I'm interested in how pedagogies of historical memory encourage critically reflexive *inheriting* through practices of historical consciousness based on perceiving the contingency of this historical moment and actively inhabiting one's embeddedness within historical processes (Taylor, "Pedagogies" 217). When inflected by the urgency of climate and biodiversity crises, pedagogies of remembrance and inheriting offer me a vocabulary for articulating the significance of the more-than-human and intergenerational relationships (to past and future generations) that call each of us to our role and responsibility in this exact time and place of action.

For a future teacher, this invites a shift from thinking about education as a career choice or transactional contractual relation to understanding education as an intergenerational community that one is joining, a community that both carries the ongoing demand for answerability as a key institution of genocidal settler colonialism, even as each member is called to transform this community. Framing our learning as inheriting means we're called to build our consciousness informed by relationships in place and across time so that learning about settler colonialism is not reduced to a topic of study. Rather, in writing their family histories (Freeman xix), my students trace the consequences that every amendment of and resistance to the *Indian Act* has had for the access, opportunities, and worldviews made available (or not) to their family and the material legacies accruing in their lives. In forest walks (see for example Kimmerer, "GIFTS OF

THE LAND"), they set intentions to attend to their ongoing debt to the Land for their wellbeing, and consider ways to live in good relations to this Land (Liboiron 5), to the Abenaki ancestral land protectors, and to future human and more-than-human generations to whom they are becoming-ancestors (Kimmerer, "Build Good Soil" 183).

Doing this work of critical inheriting includes my attention to the limitations to this framework, especially in my practice of these as a settler scholar. To begin, the continental philosophical traditions that inform pedagogies of historical memory and ethical remembrance are rooted in Eurocentric colonial modernity. This tradition includes conceptions of a public sphere and humanist responsibility that are themselves products of Judaeo-Christian messianic, teleological conceptions of history, Enlightenment principles of progress, theological hierarchies of being and Cartesian dualism of mind/body and anthropocentrism (see Kureethadam 248; Simon, "Innocence without naiveté" 46; de Oliveira 19). As these have been recruited to the project and ideologies of land theft, they constitute colonial ways of being through the denial of Indigenous sovereign governance systems and foreclose understandings of the iterative, Land-based processes of our entanglement and inheriting, "the ever-emerging traces and sediments of human, and the more-than-human, relationships with the natural world, welding layers of metaphysical and physical reality together" (Marker 187). There is therefore a philosophical and cosmological specificity to this framework of inheriting, one that is deeply implicated in the ongoing coloniality of power and commitments to settler futurities (Tuck and Yang 10).

Lummi scholar Michael Marker articulates the stakes when history educators identify and challenge these epistemological and ontological commitments: "If the curricula … does not examine the ways Indigenous people understood—and understand—the universe through advanced knowledge systems and deep ecological consciousness, the history of residential

schooling may reveal the darkness of racism and cultural genocide and fail to show the light of Indigenous wisdom that was devastated by the catastrophes of colonization" (196).

Delineating these incommensurabilities between European and Indigenous knowledge traditions, Marker grounds his educational practice not in a universalized diachronic history of human protagonism, rather, in Coast Salish historical consciousness that emerge[s] from "the essential 'place-ness' of Indigenous history" (Marker 188) and can only be learned by "tak[ing] students to the place where the story exists on the land" (191).

In one example, Abenaki Wendat artist Christine Soui-Wanaloath asked my students to reflect on, embody, and express their relational accountability within *wdakiw8* (Abenaki territory) by co-creating *Mkuigo* (Taylor et al.) that visually traces the arteries entangling, sustaining but also pulsing each of us into action. In one action inspired by this collective art-based and Land-based teaching, students published a short documentary interviewing prospective and current students, successfully lobbying for greater recognition on campus of our university's role in colonization and our responsibilities for the roles we play in "the next 175 years" (Taylor, "The Next 175, Together") on *wdakiw8.*

The Kitchen Table as Methodology: Iterative Messiness

Our sharing in this article represents a distillation of five years of conversations. At times, our kitchen table space became material as we met in person at conferences, first presenting papers and then finishing with a table filled with food and conversations – Calgary, Vancouver, Toronto. But more often, our kitchen table was metaphoric as we navigated on-line conversations, all the while plunging into a new world of learning how to translate transformative pedagogies into on-line formats and practices.

The process of composing this article has been a messy one. We have brought a multiplicity of storylines, metaphors, concepts, and even disciplines that have at times mixed awkwardly, contradicted each other, and gone in very different directions. That has added richness to our discussion, and it corresponds very naturally with the work we do in decolonizing ourselves and our classrooms, which is complex and messy in itself. This article has not been an attempt to offer a framework or recipe for decolonization. We believe that the grey areas that result from this approach offer a more authentic, rich, and nuanced way to consider decolonization than might be found in prevailing academic writing styles in which we lay out, analyse, and solve problems. We also recognize that our kitchen table, iterative and messy as it is, needs to be a space of radical acceptance that sets the table for relational accountability, not a refusal of it. To achieve that, each of us had to come to the table with deep commitment and love for our subject, our students, and one another. Decolonization is more than a problem to be solved, and we ask that readers embrace this messiness and invite it into their own consideration. The conversations have not been easy ones, but complex and difficult. After a long discussion, we might end with "We have a complexity"...which is a good thing. In the end, it is these conversations and the knowledges they foster that deepen our own commitment to stay at the table.

Conclusion

We found that generative questions were gifts to one another. A good question would send us off in new directions, delving into concepts and metaphors that gathered resonances from the diversity at the table. Often there was a return to earlier conversations that would deepen with

new insights. We now offer some of these questions to others who may want to initiate their own kitchen tables with colleagues and friends:

- What does it mean to actively and intentionally inhabit and inherit the structures and relationships in which we live now?
- What forms of learning can practices of inheriting open up pedagogically?
- How might inheriting be a place of contextualized and embodied learning for differently positioned students?
- How might a pedagogy of inheriting help us to remain answerable to the disparate and incommensurable ways we are embedded (Tuck and Yang 6) in structural power relations, systemic colonization, and ongoing resistance and resurgence?
- How do we facilitate difficult 'ah-ha' experiences in a context of love?

This sharing of questions and experiences represents a single moment in time – a kind of pause in the ongoing conversations. In this article, we have offered some contingent responses to these questions. As importantly, we have demonstrated our conversational process around the kitchen table. At this kitchen table, there has been room not only for the intellectual ideas that support our pedagogical practices in virtual and in-person classrooms but also for friendship. We make room for the relational processes in which each of us is embedded, including familial responsibilities, achievements, leadership, health challenges and tragedies. Relational accountability in action and the commitment to remain engaged extends to each other as well as to our classrooms and future generations.

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