Transversing and Translocating Spiritualities

Epistemological and Pedagogical Conversations

Njoki Wane, Rose Ann Torres & Dionisio Nyaga

(Editors)

Copyright © 2019 Nsemia Inc. Publishers

All rights reserved.

This publication may not be reproduced, in whole or in part, by any means including photocopying or any information storage or retrieval system, without the specific and prior written permission of the publisher.

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the author's or publisher's prior consent in any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

First Edition: August 2019

Published by Nsemia Inc. Publishers (www.nsemia.com)

Editors: Njoki Wane, Rose Ann Torres & Dionisio Nyaga

Cover Design: Linda Kiboma

Layout Design: Bethsheba Nyabuto

Production Consultant: Matunda Nyanchama

Note for Librarians:

A cataloguing record for this book is available from

Library and Archives Canada.

ISBN: 978-1-926906-82-9

DEDICATION

We dedicate this book to our ancestors and to all the knowledge seekers…

CONTENTS

Dedication - iii

Foreword - vii

Acknowledgement - xiii

Preface - xv

Introduction - xv

PART I: SPIRITUALITY AS AN EPISTEMOLOGY

CHAPTER ONE - 1

Restoring Indigenous Identity By Re-Claiming Wholeness Through Balance and Harmony - S. N. Young

CHAPTER TWO - 29

Putting to Sleep the Wailing Ghosts of the Past: Exploring Historical Trauma and Spirituality - Hibah Sidat

CHAPTER THREE - 65

Incorporating Spirituality in Social Work Practice - Kevin Devotta

PART II: SPIRITUALITY AS REFLEXIVE THEORY AND PRACTICE

CHAPTER FOUR - 67

Transnationality, Indigeneity and Spiritual Awakening in the African Diaspora: A Reflexive Journal in two Voices - Martha Kuwee Kumsa and Samuel Omane Agyapong

CHAPTER FIVE - 99

Very Superstitious: Reclaiming Chinese Spiritualities to Transgress - Coly Chau

CHAPTER SIX - 123

Re-thinking Marx: Narratives of Women Healers in the Philippines Healing as Love - Rose Ann Torres & Dionisio Nyaga

PART III:SPIRITUALITY AND THEORETICAL COMPLEXITIES

CHAPTER SEVEN - 149

Emotional Contradictions: Queer Filipinos' Religious and Spiritual Engagements in the Diaspora - Fritz Luther Pino

CHAPTER EIGHT - 161

Dilemmas in Decolonizing Spirituality: Thoughts for Educators - Raz Rotem

CHAPTER NINE - 181

Anticolonial Education: Creating Space for Spirituality in Mathematics - Zacharia Cochrane

CHAPTER TEN - 203

Spirituality as a Means of Decolonizing Myself - Zakaria Habi

PART IV: SPIRITUALITY AS PEDAGOGY AND PRACTICE

CHAPTER ELEVEN - 221

Teaching Social Work Students to Become Responsive to Client's Spiritual Translocation - Abdelfettah Elkchirid

CHAPTER TWELVE - 253

Community Care as a Praxis - Njoki Wane, Dionisio Nyaga & Rose Ann Torres

CHAPTER THIRTEEN - 267

In Search of Unity: A Spiritual Praxis - Danny McGee

CHAPTER FOURTEEN - 287

Towards Wholeness: Redefining Educational Aims in a Post-Secular Age - Joshua Jones

CHAPTER FIFTEEN - 313

Infusing and/or Integrating Spirituality in the Classroom - Nana A. Bediako-Amoah

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS - 331

FOREWORD

Prof. George J. Sefa Dei [Nana Adusei Sefa Tweneboah]

Professor of Social Justice Education

Director, Centre for Integrative Anti-Racism Studies

Ontario Institute of Studies in Education (OISE), University of Toronto

Our intellectuality cannot be divorced from politics. Of major importance to our intellectuality maintaining it political and social relevancy is its role in pinpointing the contemporary issues facing our society. Anything to the contrary is engaging in a futile academic exercise to satisfy our intellectual curiosities while masquerading as social justice warriors. To respond to such intellectual irrelevancy is to imagine engaging in spirituality in a vacuum outside contemporary socio-political events.

We are witnessing political hypocrisy and idiocy of grotesque proportions. In fact, at the time of writing this Foreword, I am reminded of a US president whose clearly racist tweeting and vilification of immigrants from certain racial and geographical backgrounds is becoming naturalized and vindicated in some quarters. A cynic would say: why should we be surprised about all this given the recent global turn and particularly, the history of the pronouncements elicited by President Trump. Trump has his supporters alright. and he is serving them a bad meal of hate and race, gender, sexual and class baiting. History will only tell.

However, current developments have reached unbelievable, if not laughable, levels. In many ways, it is far beyond the pale! The chants I saw on television today, July 17, 2019 happening in North Carolina, from mostly White Nationalists at the President's rally, to 'send her back' referring to a US naturalized citizen of Somali heritage, Democratic Representative Congresswoman Ilhan Omar is so frightening and heartbreaking. It is chilling, unsettling and disturbing to some of us. Such chants must worry any decent human being on this planet, let alone the US. Have we lost our souls and spiritual sense of self and collective? Equally troubling is the refusal of most US Conservative politicians, and even the much-maligned liberal media personnel, from outright calling out the President a racist! If telling citizens of a nation to 'go back to

where you came from' is not racist, then what is? Can you imagine the First Peoples of the now occupied North American Lands saying these same words to Whites and other visitors when they first got here? I am glad they welcome everyone. They had the soul and spirit to cherish global humanity. Now, to be fair there are rising voices in the US chastising the President and his die hard supporters.

But how did we get this far and how do we get ourselves from this messiness?

I do not think simply stating that, 'hopefully, the next US election cycle in 2020 will get rid of the President' is the right answer. That is reductionist and simplistic and fails to see beyond the now and the history of racism that has built the American nation-state. The fact is that there is a racial cancer on the morality and conscience of the US populace and more its social and spiritual fabric. As adults, and society at large, we often talk about the character and morals of the younger generation and yet we stay silent on global community. How do we develop a sense of humane responsibility to each other, to respect our communities and environments and to fight for fairness, social justice and peace? I am fully convinced that the contemporary morass of morality or moral depravity only highlights the importance of spiritual rebirth and renewal that will engender hope for a new humanness and also give back to us a deep sense of caring and decency. To take such a socio-spiritual trajectory is not to equate spirituality and religion. Equally it is not dismissing the intellectual agency and knowing of those who define their spirituality through their religiosity. My claim is the need to re-imagine us as spiritual beings.

Like everything else, spirituality is a contested ground. There are different cartographies of spirituality spread across the global landscape. The varied geo-spatial definitions and expressions of spirituality point to the power of multiple knowing. Some communities openly speak about their spiritualities by wearing their spirituality as badge of honour and devotion to a worthy cause (tangible spirituality). Others remain silent and hardly acknowledge their spirituality and its existence in the open. Then there are those who are hostile to spirituality from the position of misunderstandings, often equating spirituality with religion and fundamentalism. For the latter, teaching spirituality in schools opens space for injury to bodies that see themselves as spiritual. This is a misread conception of spirituality that stems from selective

mis-capturings of the basic essence of spirituality and spiritual values. We live and express our spiritualities through our relations with others, around us, our physical and natural environments, and our relationships with a Creator or Supreme Being in the metaphysical realm of human existence.

I write this Foreword from the position of embracing the Indigenous and decolonial spiritualties. To me spirituality is embedded in Indigenous ways of knowing and being. Similarly, decolonial spirituality compels action even when it is not apparent outward. As a social justice advocate, I have always maintained that we are moved to act because of deeply held spiritual beliefs about fairness and our understanding of justice. I see spirituality as giving us the intellectual tools and the epistemological and pedagogical space to interrupt conventional knowledge. Spirituality is an entry point to decolonization of minds, bodies and souls.

I share the views of scholars who argue that spirituality allows Indigenous and marginalized communities to centre their worldviews, world senses and cosmogonies, and to provide alternatives/counter perspectives to dominant knowledges, experiences, colonial narratives and cultural memories as a way of decolonization (see Smith, 2008; Kovach 2012, 2009; Dillard, 2006; Wane 2002). As Postlethwaite (2016) noted, spirituality is linking self-transcendence, a search for human connections, interdependence of humans and animals, and the development of meanings, purpose, transformation and relationships in life and the afterlife. Spirituality is about connecting, belonging, respecting, relations of mutuality, generosity, giving and sharing. In effect, spirituality is not imposed but rather intrinsic.

This explains why decolonial spirituality cannot be lodged in the same critique of fundamentalism. A discussion of decolonial spirituality cannot be rendered a hegemonic discourse. In fact, we cannot evade the power issues embedded in debates over spirituality.

This book clearly goes against the grain, challenging the continuing denial of a place for spirituality in our school system. Contributors resist the easy, seductive and cunning play of putting spirituality in a back banner in education broadly defined beyond schools and schooling. Education is everything we do to know understand and live our worlds. Spirituality in education is about understanding our relations to a Supreme Being/Creator, to Mother Earth, to the

Land, Sea, Sky and Universe. It pertains to our sense of human communion and the relationship between the inner and outer selves, the individual and the group and our varied communities.

A discussion of spirituality must bring to the fore the ontologies and epistemologies that shape or define our understanding of spirituality. Within Indigenous cultures, spirituality is about relations to the Land, Sea, Sky and Universe. Spirituality connects us to the past, present, and future. Through spirituality we comprehend life, its challenges and limitations and possibilities.

As noted in Dei, Darko, McDonell, Demi and Akanmori (2018) spiritual ontologies represent “philosophies of life and customary ideologies about everyday social practice and human action”. These ontologies when evoked, help us to destabilize “imperial cultural worldviews” (Smith 2008, p. 165) while also presenting us with critical knowledge for “cultural decolonization” ends (Mazrui, 2003).

As colonized and Indigenous peoples, our spiritual ontologies and epistemologies are learned through cultural expressions steeped in our rich local traditions, folklore, as well as other folkloric productions, including myths, mythologies sages, songs, fables and tales. Such ontologies carry with them Indigenous epistemologies, attesting to, and educating about, everyday human experiences and social practice.

It is noted that Western science knowledge cannot fully comprehend the power and efficacy of Indigenous spiritualties because of its standards of defining rationality and logic. Hence the denial of spirituality and emotions as not ‘valid knowledge’. By countering such ideas as what is deemed as valid knowledge we can analyze and understand Indigenous spirituality within the framework of their own rationality and cultural logics (see also Mudimbe, 1988) speaking about African philosophies in general.

In many ways, the argument is made that spirituality is cultural and historical specific and there are geographies of knowledge that constitute an understanding of spirituality. We cannot ask learners to leave their spirituality behind when they enter classroom spaces. For many learners, their spirituality is all they have in face of the constant bombardment about their cultural inferiority within the orbit of Eurocentric schooling and education. It is their spirituality which allows these learners to keep their sanity, humanity and dignity in such spaces.

Reading the collection of essays in this book, I am very emboldened by the various contributors' understandings of the knowledge base conveyed in spiritual ontologies. By taking up spirituality as an epistemology, reflexive theory, subversive pedagogy and anti-colonial practice, the book is able to broach serious questions of Indigeneity, identity, wholeness of Being, transnationality and the power of spiritual awakening in the global diaspora and the public and academic spheres. The theories embedded in the essays help bring readers deeper insights into the link of spirituality, schooling and education (see also Shahjahan, 2004; 2005). Clearly, readers are presented with knowledge about spirituality and education that inform new educational imaginings and imaginations. For contemporary learners and educators, we have the onerous and worthy task of developing anti-colonial education that is fully anchored in spirituality as both epistemology and practice to help young learners develop a strong sense of identity, self and collective respect, agency and empowerment to community building. If Indigenous and decolonial spirituality is about calling into question coloniality and existing unequal relations of schooling and education then all educators and learners need to understand how spirituality provide the base [substructure] knowledge to teach, learn and know about social justice, equity, fairness, resistance and collective social responsibility.

Let end with a simple but difficulty question: How has it been possible for the academy, through its privileging of Western philosophical/ intellectual traditions, to maintain some success in marginalizing Indigenous spiritual discourses? While the answer may be simple or complex, depending on where one sits, I will only confess that I am thrilled that many scholars are now openly challenging a knowledge injustice and crisis, letting their spiritual voices be heard. This is significant as it opens possibilities of new spiritual futures for a different academy; one in which some of us who are colonized, Indigenous and racialized bodies can feel a sense of 'true' belonging. It is a new home.

References cited:

Dei G. J. S., Isaac Darko, Jadie McDonell, Suleyman Demi, and Harriet Akanmori, 2018. *African Proverbs as Epistemologies of Decolonization*. New York: Peter Lang.

Dillard, C.B. (2006). *On Spiritual Strivings: Transforming and African American woman's academic life.* Albany, NY: SUNY Press

Kovach, M. (2009). *Indigenous Methodologies: Characteristics, Conversations, and Contexts.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Kovach, M. (2012). Treaties, truths, and transgressive pedagogies. In E. Coburn (Ed.), Socialist studies: Special Issue on: *Transgressive Pedagogies and Research,* 9(1), 109–127.

Mazrui, A. A. (2003). Towards Re-Africanizing African Universities: Who Killed Intellectualism in the Post Colonial Era?. *Alternatives: Turkish Journal of International Relations,* 2(3 & 4).

Mudimbe, V. Y. (1988). *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy, and the Order of Knowledge.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Postlethwaite, M. 2016. "Wairua Spirituality and Motivation: The Connection Between Wairua and Motivation for Maori Academics with Doctorates", Unpublished PhD, Dissertation, School of Indigenous Graduate Studies, Te Whare Wānanga ō Awanuiārangi, New Zealand.

Shahjahan, R. A. (2004). Centering Spirituality in the Academy: Toward A Transformative Way of Teaching and Learning. *Journal of Transformative Education*, 2(4), 294-312.

Shahjahan, R. A. (2005). Spirituality in the Academy: Reclaiming from the Margins and Evoking a Transformative Way of Knowing the World. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 18(6), 685-711.

Smith, L. 1999. *Decolonizing Methodologies.* London: Zed Books.

Smith, L. 2008. *Decolonizing Methodologies.* London: Zed Books.

Wane, N. (2002) African Women and Spirituality: Connections between thought and action. In E. O'Sullivan, A. Morrell & M. A. O'Connor (Eds.), *Expanding the Boundaries of Transformative Learning: essays on theory and praxis,* (pp. 135–150). New York: Palgrave

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Writing a book of this magnitude and nature can only be understood as spiritual process. Writing is also a political process of presenting our truths in ways that misread and disqualify totalitarian knowledge baskets. To that end, spirituality is as political as any process meant for social justice. This book would not have been possible without the contribution of many scholars, who decided to go beyond their spiritual comfort and present an orientation that reflexively questioned dominant conceptions of spirituality and politics.

This book is a reimagined piece meant to flip and celebrate different conceptualizations of spirituality/ies in ways that open wider (and far-reaching) conversations meant to unsettle dominant and market-based perspectives of belief systems.

Accordingly, we thank all contributors for their masterpieces that not only enriched this book but will go a long way in disturbing settled spirits. We also thank Nsemia Inc. Publishers for offering to publish this collection and the reviewers for their editorial guidance. We are grateful to Prof. George Dei for the well-tailored and spiritual foreword that spoke the breadth of the subject covered in this collection.

PREFACE

INTRODUCTION

This is an edited book that looks at renewed visualization and understanding of spirituality. The book investigates the meaning of spirituality and explore other writer's conceptions of spirituality/ies. It also seeks to work with that complexity to provide a tentative understanding of spirituality/ies. We acknowledge and consider the different meanings of spirituality/ies within academic circles. That said, there is a need to bring a new conceptualization of spirituality as an epistemology and a pedagogical tool. It seeks to fill existing gap by introducing different formulations of spiritualities and how they speak to teaching and practising social work and education. The book is distinctive because it captures the discussion of spirituality as a body of knowledge and a way of life.

The book presents a powerful and salient views of spirituality from different cultural, spatial and social points. For a while, spirituality has been erased in research, policy, classroom and in everyday practices. This is caused by colonial understanding of spirituality as emotional, and dangerous to the existence of rational knowledge. That said, this book seeks to counter such claims; by calling for a renewed vigour on the part of academics and practitioners in incorporating transgressive forms of spiritualities. It will be an essential read for graduate and undergraduate students undertaking social science subject like social work, political science, anthropology, sociology and other art disciplines.

This edited collection is composed of four sections. The first section is SPIRITUALITY AS AN EPISTEMOLOGY. Under this section the following papers are included:

"Restoring Indigenous Identity by Re-Claiming Wholeness Through Balance and Harmony". Young states that Whiteness, in Canada and globally, has become an ideological premise of society, far beyond initial defining factors of an identity marker, or an attribute. Whiteness has established and maintained power through relations over those defined as the "Other", or the non-white citizens. Assimilation and ethnocide continue to result in many Indigenous Peoples (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit) surrendering their Indigenous identity

as the subjugated "Other" within a white dominant society. Reclaiming of identity is an essential component in the development of cultural and personal sovereignty, in moving towards re-defining Indigeneity and the restoring wholeness for Indigenous Peoples.

"Putting to Sleep the Wailing Ghosts of the Past: Exploring Historical Trauma and Spirituality" is in this spirit towards healing and recovery that Sidat explores historical trauma as it relates to spirituality. She argues the need for traumatized communities to reclaim their spiritualities as they move towards healing and recovery and transform their pain into a powerful, life-giving force.

"Incorporating Spirituality in Social Work Practice", Devotta wants to argue in favour of a universal adoption of spirituality in social work practice. To do so, he will explain the difference between spirituality and religion. A brief history of social work practice in North America, including its colonial history and present, will follow, before he finally delve into the pressing questions: why should we, as social workers, incorporate spirituality in our social work practice, and how do we do that?

The second section is "SPIRITUALITY AS REFLEXIVE THEORY AND PRACTICE". The following papers are part of this section:

"Transnationality, Indigeneity and Spiritual Awakening in the African Diaspora: A Reflexive Journal in two Voices". Kumsa and Agyapong use a reflexive approach to explore the *fish-out-of-water* experiences of two diasporic Africans and their struggles in reaching back from their transnational locations to reclaim some aspects of their ancestral spirituality. It discusses the paradoxical realities of rejecting and reclaiming, essence and contingency and being and becoming, as they struggle to weave together the dissonant of their experiences. The context in which this paper is imagined and produced is the advisor-advisee relationship and their journey through the advisee's doctoral dissertation. It is written in their two voices, coming together and rhyming at times but drifting apart in discord at other times. The authors reflect on their respective research projects as they attempt to weave together strands of the material and the spiritual, the biographical and the historical, the personal and the political and the local and the global aspects of their lives.

"Very-Superstitious": reclaiming Chinese spirituality to transgress". Utilizes superstition as spirituality, in that it is the ways of knowing, being and doing. It can be beliefs and practices

shaped by religion, "folk religions", syncretisation of religions and philosophies.

"Re-Thinking Marx on Alienation through the Spiritual Lens of Indigenous Women in the Philippines". Torres and Nyaga discuss a philosophical re-orientation of Marx in his theory of alienation in relation to the Aeta Indigenous women's healing practices through spiritual lens. It explores how Aeta Indigenous women disturb Marx's thought on alienation through their healing practices. In this narrative qualitative study, Aeta Indigenous women healers expressed their love, reciprocity and respect to their community through their healing practices. The paper argues that such perspective is necessary towards decolonizing education and practice.

The third section is "SPIRITUALITY AND THEORETICAL COMPLEXITIES". The following papers are included in this section:

"Postcolonial Contradictions: Spiritual Intimacy and Religiosity of Queer Filipinos in Canada". Pino explores lived reality and cultural practice of queer Filipinos in the diaspora: their ongoing and enduring relationship with dominant religion for spirituality. The author argues that by examining such cultural situation would generate an analytic concept that attends to the complex intersection of queer sexuality, religion, and spirituality.

"Dilemmas in Decolonizing Spirituality: Thought for Educators" Rotem wrote this paper for educators who consider the place of decolonization and

spirituality as part of their work and their personal growth and development. Rotem's positions in this paper is that anti-colonial and anti-racist framework are helpful analytical tools entering a decolonization process. However, decolonizing spiritual beliefs and selfhood involves an examination and decision making on an ontological and epistemological level, of which anticolonial and anti-racist frameworks are not equipped to chart. In this paper, Rotem will touch on some of the dilemmas that are part of processes of decolonizing spirituality, based on the personal experience of myself and acquaintances, and within the literature. The focus of this paper on dilemmas highlights that decolonizing spiritually involves choice making. Rotem suggests here that the process is ultimately a very personal one. Therefore, no single formula can be provided for the dilemmas of decolonizing spirituality: it is up to individuals

to make their own choices. As such, the issue of spirituality in schooling to remain a challenge for educators.

"Anticolonial Education: Creating Space for Spirituality in Mathematics". Cochrane reiterates that spirituality has a contentious relationship with modern education, with opinions varying widely on its place in schools. For Cochrane mathematics, spirituality is a topic that is rarely given consideration for its role in developing mathematicians. The purpose of this paper is to consider the relationship between spirituality and mathematics education, particularly in the context of Ontario, Canada. It becomes a question of: how has spirituality influenced mathematics and is there space in mathematics classrooms for spirituality? Cochrane initial assumption holds that spirituality is mostly absent from current pedagogy in Ontario mathematics and that this has been influenced by the colonial legacy of schooling in this province.

The last section is **"SPIRITUALITY AS PEDAGOGY AND PRACTICE".** We included the following papers in this section:

"Teaching Social Work Students to Become Responsive to Client's Spiritual Translocation". Elkchirid identifies how spiritual/ religious translocation affects social work practice, how it aligns with professional ethics of social work, and how it can be integrated into social work educational curriculum. The author also explores the necessary research required to successfully integrate spiritual/ religious translocations into social work curriculum.

"Community Care as a Praxis". Wane, Nyaga, and Torres look at Indigenous peoples and their place in neo-liberal world. The paper identifies the divergences between mainstream social work treatment and traditional healing. The paper explores the different ways of practices among the Embu community in Kenya in terms of healing, spirituality, education and governance and how they can invoke conversation for change.

"In search of unity: A Spiritual Praxis". McGee talks about the diverse nature of the English as a Second Language (ESL) student body. McGee states that as a holistic educator it is important to blend spirituality in pedagogy while maintaining a space that is anti-oppressive and inclusive. The classroom must be open and comfortable environment that fosters transformative learning. The author includes activities that engage students interests and stimulate critical thinking and awareness. The author reiterates

that it is necessary to use materials that reflect the wider context in ways that centre social justice and transformational education.

"Towards Wholeness: Redefining Educational Aims in a Post-Secular Age". Jones presents several over-arching ideas related to spirituality and the many forms in which it may be connected to, and employed in, education. It is intended to invite others to join in the discourse of spirituality and expand on, critique or reject the notions of coloniality. The author attempts to synthesize and connect different ideas put forth by prominent theorists in a way that harmonizes, and situate them within a framework that conceptualizes student development and growth as belonging to one of five areas: body, mind, heart, soul and spirit.

"Infusing and/or Integrating Spirituality in the Classroom Focus". It attempts to address and analyze the complexities students of African/ Black heritage face if we, without any thought, infuse and/or integrate spirituality in the classroom. Using an anti-colonial framework and George Dei's article "Spiritual Knowing and Transformative Learning" as the foreground, Tweneboah asserts that a superficial approach to the "infusion and/or integration" of spirituality in the classroom would further jeopardize the achievements of African/ Black students, it minimizes the possibilities of where we (African/ Black students/parents/community) see ourselves within education and continues the onslaught of subtle forms of the "push- out."

PART I
SPIRITUALITY AS AN EPISTEMOLOGY

CHAPTER ONE

RESTORING INDIGENOUS IDENTITY BY RE-CLAIMING WHOLENESS THROUGH BALANCE AND HARMONY

S. N. Young

School of Social Work, Ryerson University, shane.young@ryerson.ca

Abstract

Whiteness, in Canada and globally, has become an ideological premise of society, far beyond initial defining factors of an identity marker, or an attribute. Whiteness has established and maintained power through relations over those defined as the "Other", or the non-white citizens. Assimilation and ethnocide continue to result in many Indigenous Peoples (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit) surrendering their Indigenous identity as the subjugated "Other" within a white dominant society. Re -claiming of identity is an essential component in the development of cultural and personal sovereignty, in moving towards re-defining Indigeneity and the restoring wholeness for Indigenous Peoples.

Keywords: Indigenous Peoples, Worldviews, Identity, Wholeness, Spirituality, Medicine Wheel, Decolonization, Assimilation

1.1 Introduction

Some may say they spend their whole lives, attempting to figure out who they are. While others, may despite they have a solid understanding who their true identity, as guided by culture, values and beliefs. The place one positions themselves, or variety of these two perspectives one may perceive themselves, is a very personal and imperative for cultural sovereignty.

As I reflect on the first 20 year of my life, I remember the memories shared with members of my dear family. I reminisce the smell of the salt water mist from the Atlantic Ocean, and the mid-summer breeze while playing tag with my twin brother on the acres of field lands owned by my grandparents.

My life, positioned in one of great privilege, lacked in my ability to ground myself in who my true "self" truly was, and is. My up-bringing surrounded heavily on our connection to land, not as a basis of culture but rather as a way of life in rural Newfoundland. In my early 20's I relocated to urban Toronto, where I *discovered* I was Mi'Kmaw –and have spent more than 10 years, trying to make sense of who I was, and where am I going. So, the question is, who am really I?

My journey is not unique, but rather is a story which is all too com-mon within many Indigenous communities, communities which have been overcome by continual assimilative policies meant to "kill the Indian". Former Newfoundland Premier Joseph Smallwood pronounced that there were "no Indians on the island of Newfoundland" in 1949, when the province joined confederation, this was destructive to the Indigenous People who occupied these lands, as they had no legislation –the Indian Act to protect them as the first peoples. My desire to attain and maintain wholeness is continually met with tensions and policies of interference. Wholeness is not static, but a sense of being that is fluid and constantly evolving. Wholeness, after all, is what we need to achieve to be at one with ourselves, our communities, and as peoples.

1.2 Wholeness as a Worldview

Since time of creation, Indigenous peoples alike have been passing down wisdom from generation to generation, through cultural values and beliefs, ritual and customs, and through ways of being, knowing, and doing. This wisdom provides as a vision of connection for all living and non-living things, to the spirit world and to all that has transpired from past and all that will unfold in the future.

The essences of wholeness and interconnectedness lead to another fundamental Indigenous concept: balance. Balance involves the inclusion of all aspects of one's internal and external life and imply the requirement of a balanced attribution of energy, attention and care between all components of a human being, i.e. the physical, the emotional, the mental and the spiritual, and between all related systems. Marie Battiste (2000), a Mi'kmaw authour and educator from the Potlotek First Nation, equates wholeness to that of a flower with four pedals. She suggests that when it opens up, one "discovers

strength, sharing, honesty and kindness. Together these four pedals create balance, harmony, and beauty" (Battiste, 2000, p. 79). This correlation showcases the interconnectedness of the values, as an example, strength. If a person is whole and balanced, then they will be in the position to fulfil their roles and responsibilities. However, if the person is not balanced then they will be weak, physically or psychologically, when will enable them from being adequate to fulfil their roles and responsibilities, individually and a part of the collective whole (Bastiste, 2000). Attaining harmony is perceived as a necessity for Indigenous communities, which has been additional imperative due to imposed assimilative policies. Policies that have interfered with Indigenous communities right to self-determination and free-will and disrupting individual and community harmony and well-being. Failure to do so puts people and the environment in positions of vulnerability and danger. Harmony is health and well-being, disharmony is illness. Like heart disease, cancer or diabetes, disharmony causes malfunctions in other parts of the body being affected, be it at the individual or at any other level of society.

The Anishinawbe, encompassing those of shared culture and related languages of the Algonquian First Nations of the Great Lakes, refer to their balance and harmony as "The Whole Anishinawbe Person" (Dumont, 2008). The Whole Anishinawbe Person consists in balance and harmony of the Spirit, which is at the core, and the four levels of being; soul-spirit, the heat, the mind, and the physical body. Each of these four levels of being are interconnected and interrelated, and should one become unbalance, then the harmonious state of the whole is disrupted, or one becomes unharmonious.

Through the words of an Ojibway Elder, James Dumont (2008), each facet of The Whole Anishinawbe Person encompasses;

> ***The Spirit -Core, or MANIDO****;* is the spirit at the very center of our being. It is the originator and motivator of all will, desire, consciousness, and actualization. The spirit is, in essence, energy. As such, it is the life-force.
>
> ***The Soul-Spirit, or ADJITCHAUG****;* is the level of first appearance – the "image" generated by the spirits' imprint on life essence. An entity is thereby originated that houses the spirit, protects it, and actions as the sprit's access to the real of created reality.

The Heart, or ODE.IMAH*;* is the level of our being that is the pulse of life itself. At the heart level the desire to be, to know, to create, and to touch life is attached to the seed bed of becoming by the threads of rhythmic unfolding. It is here that the spirit's desire to actualize the life-force unites with the compassionate course of creativity, and all of creative expression becomes conditioned by kindness, joy of being, and yearning for the highest quality of the affirmation of life. The heart-level makes the "dream of the spirit" and "way of the heart". It is in this sense of the level of deepest feeling and loving regard for all of created life.

The Mind, or INENDUMOWIN*;* is the conscious and intelligent drive of the spirit to envision, know, and actualize being, and then to recognize, experience, and comprehend the vitality of created life. The intention of the spirit is activated into emergence by the soul-spirit and is guided by the compassionate desire of the heart. The "higher wisdom" of the heart informs and directs the intelligence of the mind toward appropriate and affirmative re-flection, thought, and creative process.

The Physical Body, or WEE.OW; is the outmost aspect of our being. It is the part of us that touches physical and experiential reality directly through our immediate senses of sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell. It includes all aspects of perceived reality through these senses. The "body" level also comprises the most immediate behavioural aspects of our being. Through the wonders of the body the spirit is able to "touch life" directly and actualize its intensions and desires.

The Aboriginal worldview and philosophy of life and wholeness, it follows that for those a part of all creation, animate and inanimate, hold responsibilities to work together through reciprocity. This essence of reciprocity means that each person, acknowledges and accepts their assigned responsibilities as a part of the collective whole –that is, fulfillment of one's responsibilities attends to the well-being of the whole, including family, community, geographical context or world, which evidently also include future generations. Wholeness in many ways is a sense of responsibility and subsequent accountability for one's own welfare, and for that of all creation.

1.2.1 Conceptualizing Wholeness

Capturing wholeness in one concrete definition is challenging, as the literature is dependent on the context in which the definition is intended. Whole-ness from a mainstream sense most often related to happiness. Moreover, the importance of being happy then falls on the individual, to understand the reasoning for their unhappiness, and ultimately being fearful of being sad, frustration or even failure –as the opposing emotions to happiness in this case. Without contextualizing elements of our state of unhappiness and ultimate goal to attain happiness to become whole, we are often enticed by religious or spiritual rituals that have been commodified or in my opinion, appropriated, for economic gain. Yoga in its physical senses is often referred to as a form of therapy or exercise. Although adapted into the West in recent history, the notions of attaining balance and a harmonious state has been a vital component to many Indigenous communities far beyond colonial con-tact. Understanding what the essence of harmony entails, calls for an onto-logical foundation or framework to which it can be understood.

1.2.2 The Circle

Indigenous worldviews most commonly portrayed by a circular or holistic vision. The circle represents the cyclical and harmonious pattern of life. Ac-cording to most North-American Native cultures, “space is spherical, and time is cyclical” (Graveline, 1998, p. 59). From an Indigenous perspective, the circle also symbolizes unity, wholeness, continuation, perpetuity, inseparability, completeness, balance, security, equality, comfort and health. The well-known Sioux Medicine man, Hehaka Sapa or Black Elk summarized the significance of the circle from his Native way of seeing:

> All things created by the Great Power, He made in the shape of a circle. The sky is circular, and I heard that the earth is round like a ball and the stars too are round. The wind, in its greatest force, whirls. The birds make their nests in the form of a circle because they have the same religion as us. Our teepees were circular like the birds’ nests and were al-ways arranged in a circle – the circle of the nation, a nest made of many nests where the Great Spirit wished that we protect and nurture our children (cited in Sioui, 1989, p. 13).

The circle is also a reminder that important universal spiritual principles of behaviour such as love, kindness, patience, sharing, caring, honesty, truthfulness, trustworthiness, justice and humility are conducive to well-being and healthy relationships.

The "circular nature [of the circle]" explains Mehl-Madrona (2003) "ensures that the whole is addressed [as it] informs us that all its elements are related to each other" (p. 99). No single element at any level or of any kind can thus be treated in isolation. Mehl-Madrona (2003) further states that "action or work on one element leads to potential change in any other element" (p. 99). Systems theory also maintains that balance is essential to health (Andrea, 1996) and stipulates that change in one component of a system has a rippling effect on all other components (Barker, 2003; Miley, K.K. O'Melia, M. and DuBois, B. 2004). Indeed, Duran & Duran (1995) confirm that the Indigenous way of thinking and seeing the world is a systemic one. This view affirms, for example, that the fish, the lake and its entire surroundings, must all be treated equally in order for well-being to be restored and sustained. Such a view is also fully and truly ecological. The 'unfolding paradigm' thus stems from an ancient source: The Medicine Wheel.

Moreover, the Medicine Wheel combines both the 'emic' (based on cultural particularities) and 'etic' (based on universally shared human characteristics) (Canda & Furman, 1999; Massé, 1995) approaches to helping and is adaptable to a variety of cultures. Human cultures differ in a number of ways: in their value systems, worldviews, guiding principles, thinking and learning processes, customs, practices and means for attaining goals. However, in their fundamental nature, human beings share many similarities with regard to the four components of the Medicine Wheel. Their basic needs are the same; they feel similar emotions in similar situations; harmonious relationships, identity, recognition and a sense of belonging are individual aspirations in all cultures; human beings of all backgrounds have capacities for creative, rational, logical and intellectual functioning; all humans have choice of thoughts and attitudes when confronted with moral and ethical issues; desires for the spiritual qualities of love, justice, unity and peace and for general happiness are universal.

1.2.3 Conflicts of Diverging Worldviews

The current political climate dismantles Indigenous worldviews. Leroy Little Bear (2000) explains that;

> Any individual within a culture is going to have his or her own personal interpretation of the collective cultural code; however, the individual's world view has its roots in the culture - that is, in the society's shared philosophy, values and customs. If we are to understand how [Indigenous] and Eurocentric worldviews clash, we need to understand how the philosophy, values and customs of [Indigenous] culture differ from those of Eurocentric cultures (p. 78).

Henderson (2000) attests that the colonial ideology "fabricated civilization and positive law. These methods prevented the imaginary subjects of the state of nature from contradicting the Eurocentric universal" (as cited in Battiste, 2000, p. 69). This resulted in the dismissal of empirical evidence that was not in direct alignment with the colonial ideology, such as Indigenous worldviews. Henderson (2000) states that the "colonial thought asserts that all differences are final, thus confining Indigenous [Peoples] to alienation in perpetuity. This return to universalism is a potent ideological weapon" (as cited in Battiste, 2000, p. 69).

Postcolonial ideologies today are positioned to continue the colonial project of assimilation and removal of the Indian from Indigenous Peoples. Neoliberalism has been detrimental in shaping the modern climate in which further disrupts Indigenous right to self-determination and autonomy. Baines (2011) defines neoliberalism as:

> An approach to social, political and economic life that discourages collective or government services, instead encouraging reliance on the private market and individual skill to meet social needs in the social welfare arena, this approach has resulted in reduced funding for social programs, new service user groups and work placements with fewer resources and in-creased surveillance, management control, and caseload size. World-wide it has resulted in a growth of poverty, decrease in democracy, and increased social and environmental devastation (p. 30).

The premise of variant worldviews between colonial societies

and Indigenous communities is conflicted by the overarching dominance, and the subjugation of the latter. Colonial worldviews are positioned in the realm of science, which compartmentalizes knowledges and focuses in understanding the broader related depiction. In contrast, Indigenous communities adapt a holistic approach to understanding of the whole, the interrelated and interconnectedness of all living and non-living parts of existence.

1.3 Spirit & Spirituality

Often times, spirituality is seen as synopsis to religious –but they cannot and should not be used interchangeably. Cyndy Baskin (2016), a Mi'kmaw and Celtic scholar and educator, concludes there has been a shift in the helping profession in recent years, largely due to the Western shifting views of individualism and materialism, how she puts it, "as it is no longer working for people" (p. 170). She further states that "many people are realizing that spirituality that encompasses connections to others, to community, and to the land may bring some meaning and fulfilment to their lives (Baskin, 2016, p. 170). Much like the suggestions brought forth by Dumont (2008), Baskin (2016) related wholeness and spirituality to the interconnectedness and interrelatedness of one's inner and outer worlds. Baskin (2016) premises religion as "a cultural system integrating teachings, practices, modes of experience, institutions and artistic expressions that relates people to what the perceive to be transcendent" (p. 171). Moreover, spirituality within an Indigenous context further encapsulates the self.

1.3.1 The Spirit as the Core, or Center

The Indigenous worldview is comprehensive and spiritual in nature (Bopp et al, 1984; Laugrand, 2002; Mehl-Madrona, 1998 & 2003). It is indeed impossible to discuss this worldview without considering spirituality as a vital element since it is seen as pervading every aspect of life (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996). The invisible spiritual world and the visible material world are not seen as separate entities. Spiritual influences are all pervasive and interacting with all elements in the flow of physical life. Both spheres of life are viewed as being interconnected and inseparable, the concepts of spirituality and life being perceived as one and the same (Royal Commission, 1996). Dumont (2008) attests that spirit-

centered, as a primary value, “presupposes the centrality and primary importance of the spirit in all beings of creation. Since all beings are possessed of a spirit, then all beings must be accorded equality, respect as “persons”, and a right to life and quality of relationship” (n.p.). Moreover, “all things and all thoughts are related through spirit” (Cajete, 1994, cited in Hart 2002, p. 46). For example, air, water, the sun (fire), and mother earth are the combined sources of life for humans and other beings. If any one of these elements becomes exhausted, death and annihilation are a sure consequence. Thus, these basic elements are highly valued and respected in the Indigenous peoples’ ecological worldview.

According to Morrisseau (1998), the Native significance and purpose of spirituality is “the process and relationship we have with our greater power... the part of you which helps you see the beauty along the way...[and] the goodness in [others]” (p. 88). One can presume that it may be more important to develop our ‘being’, than to grow in our capacity for ‘doing’ or ‘having’. It also implies being part of nature, that is, connected to and respectful of all of creation, since all created things are considered to have a spirit and to be alive (Ross, 2006). Graveline (1998) explores the development of several constructs that form the basis of an Indigenous worldview which she refers to as “self-in-relation” (p. 57), that is: immanence (respect for all life forms), interconnectedness and balance.

In this perspective, every created thing and every human being are respected, valued as sacred and connected to the whole of creation and to the Creator. This worldview is therefore ‘fully ecological’ in the sense that it is considerate of all types of relationships: human to human, human to non-human, human to the Creator. This implies a call for respect of ‘Mother Earth’ and all it contains. Indeed, it considers “the health of the Earth as central to human existence and wellbeing” (Coates, 2003, p. 57).

1.4 An Understanding of Indigenous Identity

The development of identity involves a variety of influential factors which affect its formation. According to Lalonde (2006), “though persistence or continuity is foundational to any workable definition of self, we are not born with arguments at the ready concerning how we ourselves (or anyone else) ought to be understood to change and

yet remain "the same" person". It is apparent, then, that there is a progressive narrative to be told and heard—a story about how young people come to defend notions of their own continuity in the face of inevitable change.

Collective identity is derived from historical, cultural and political experience, and there is much pressure and expectation that it should, nay must, be historically and traditionally framed. This is evident in the calls by some Indigenous intellectuals for a return to a cultural or traditional frame-work as an act of resistance and a measure of authenticity. Smith (2001) identifies the power of 'belief in an authentic self ... (by appealing to) an idealized past when there was no colonizer ... to our authentic selves as a people' (p. 73).

Identity, shaped by personal and collective history, belongs to con-temporary peoples; and rights are claimed under contemporary conditions in which cultural practices are always contested and in flux (Borrows 2002, LaRocque 1997, 2001). Cultural or legal formulas that measure authentic identity according to earlier regimes effectively freeze culture in time, as though it were dead. Identity is contextualized by culture, nationalism, and collective experiences of self-determination or subordination.

Indigenous Peoples who have lived in and utilized their local environment for generations have developed unique relationships and knowledge of their environment through careful practice and observation, communication with others, and through the values and world view they possess. Scholars generally agree that there are core cultural commonalities that emerge as a consequence of particular political economies and world-views of land-based cultures (Stewart-Harawira 2005, p. 32-55; Kuokkanen 2007). Most profoundly, Indigenous philosophical differences from West-ern liberal philosophies relate to how land is viewed. As Sioux scholar Vine Deloria Jr. explained decades ago, the reality of the land is inextricable from Indigenous world-views: "American Indians hold their lands -- places -- as having the highest possible meaning, and all their statements are made with this reference point in mind" (Deloria 1973, 75; Kuokkanen 2007; Ladner 2005, p. 938; Smith 2001, p. 99; Stewart-Harawira 2005, p. 136-37). And it is in their assault on the land, by colonial appropriation and by capitalist exploitation, that colonial and settler states and their corporate

clients also fundamentally assault Indigenous identity (Stewart-Harawira 2005, p. 133). Similarly, Lawrence (2004) takes the view that colonialism's assaults on Indigenous knowledge are implicit in legislative regulation of Indigenous relationships with land, and hence, of cultural and identity formation and transmission (p. 37-44).

These distinctive ways of looking at the world and understanding individual and community relationships to particular parts of it are characteristic of Indigenous philosophies, traditions, and hence, of identities. It is the tie to land that informs the core of Indigenous cultures and identities. This becomes the touchstone that references indigeneity in the world of 21st century globalized culture, in a world that is not yet post-colonial.

1.5 Moving Beyond Interference

Discussion surrounding the realities for Indigenous communities today, can-not and should not be written without acknowledgement of historic events, which has greatly impacted their rights of Peoples. Indigenous peoples were never a part of this project, rather seen as persons who have not been "adequately assimilated/marginalized/destroyed" (Krebs, 2010, p. 97).

1.5.1. Inference Onto Identity Through Assimilation

Colonialization intended to dismantle the Indigenous identity by disrupting Indigenous autonomy and self-determination. The perception within a colonial society is that one is positioned to be self-sufficient and are "responsible for the hardships they face through colonialism" (Krebs, 2010, p. 98). Those who divert from this, such as Indigenous communities who were self-sustaining pre-colonialization, posed a threat to the structure that provided comfort and stability to those who benefit from Canada's colonial foundations. To foster assimilation to disrupt the Indigenous identity, colonial interference excluded Indigenous Peoples and groups that did not adapt their core plan for imperialism in Canada, and of the West.

Indian Act. The Indian Act was created in 1876, as a strategy to conquer the Indigenous culture by assimilation and removal practices. Implying laws affecting Indigenous Peoples, the Act gave colonial ideologies the ability to perpetrate throughout Canada,

socially, politically and eco-nomically. More specifically, the Act bestowed power to the federal government and its representatives which subsequently invalided and disrupted Indigenous right to self-determination and autonomy. The white settler political structures that created the Indian Act that regulated Indigenous Peoples to undesirable parcels of reserve land, that built residential schools for Indigenous children exist in the racialized governance of public space: "the outlawed [Indigenous] body and the racialized places it signifies rupture the firm borders of liberalism's universal body politic, threatening and obliging a moment-by-moment reconstitution of the colonizer's identity and that of the colonial nation space itself" (Gill, 2002, p. 176). The continual attempts to remove the Indian from Indigenous Peoples, has resulted in a complex and diverse group of people. Indigenous people have assimilated, some have a strained relationship with their identity, and those who wholly identify as Indigenous as the core of their being.

Indian, As Defined by The Act. Canada has maintained a tremulous relationship with the Indigenous Peoples from the very beginning, enacting discriminatory laws and policies to reduce the number of "status Indians" for which it accepts responsibility under the constitution. For an example, active gender discrimination against a First Nations woman who "married out" –that is, married a non-Indian male – was part of federal legislation by 1869, and was incorporated onto the 1876 Indian Act. The women deemed "married out" would relinquish her Indian status, forfeiting all her "rights" as an Indigenous person. The Indian Act was not only a method in which the Federal Government of Canada could forfeit their responsibly as per the Constitution, but it also created instability among Indigenous Peoples. Holmes (2002) stated that;

> The combination of restricting membership and encouraging enfranchisement resulted in an [Indigenous] population in Canada that became divided in a way that was inconsistent with their own history and internal identity and that interfered with traditional patterns of social and political organization (p. 24).

In review of the Indian Act, Holmes (2002) suggests that "the Indian Act is a seriously flawed piece of legislation that has persisted for over a century and become institutionalized and entrenched" (p. 30). The Act

is in complete opposition to the core values of Indigenous Peoples and it fails to consider their right to self-determination. When in retrospect, Indigenous Peoples "are reluctant to abandon the Indian Act because it both symbolizes the duties owed the Crown and provides protection of community resources against alienation by individuals and outside interests" (Holmes, 2002, p. 30).

Residential Schools & Sixties Scoop. Residential Schools where established by the Canadian Government in the late 1800 to 1980's, although some suggest they were not fully eradicated until the mid-90's. The schools were erected all over Canada, and under Federal Government Control, were run by the Catholic and Protestant officials – with the sole purpose to remove First Nations children from their homes and communities through coercion to educate them the European way. Duncan Campbell Scott, head of the Department of Indian Affairs and founder of the residential school system (1920), stated that:

> I want to get rid of the Indian problem. I do not think as a matter of fact, that the country ought to continuously protect a class of people who are able to stand alone… Our objective is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic and there is no Indian question, and no Indian Department, that is the whole object of this Bill.

As a form of ethnocide, the schools would ensure that the citizenry of Canada would mirror that of the colonizers, a method to assimilate the "Indians". Indigenous children were ripped from their homes, communities and cultures, and placed in school to ensure they took the "Indian of out the Indian". Furthermore, Residential schools wiped out use of native languages and traditional religious beliefs and practices to instill Christianity -- a pro-cess of "disculturation" and "untraining".

The Sixties Scoop references the period from approximately 1961 to the 1980s, which saw mass removal of Indigenous children from their families into the child welfare system, in most cases without consent of their families. The Department of Indian Affairs estimate that there were 11, 132 Indigenous children adopted during the Sixties Scoop (Indian Affairs records in the Royal Commission report from 1996). However, recent reports suggest the number is more than 20, 000. Of these children, 70% were adopted by non-Indigenous homes, where Indigenous children were not just removed from their immediate

families; they were removed from their com-munities and extended family members who could have offered support (Sinclair, 2007, p. 66). Perhaps most damaging of all, they were removed from their culture, with the accompanying loss of identity.

In the case of Residential Schools, and then with the Sixties Scoop, Indigenous families were not provided any meaningful or culturally appropriate child welfare services. Rather, apprehension of the Indigenous child transpired as a standard of practice with child welfare authorities. Denouncing Indigenous children their right to their families and culture was still presumed to be acting "in the best interests of the child". Those who hold to this view argue that the Sixties Scoop was not coincidental; it was a consequence of fewer Indian children being sent to residential school and of the child welfare system emerging as the new method of colonization (Johnston, 1983, p. 26). In a 2015 report, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015) wrote, "what has come to be referred to as the 'Sixties Scoop'…was in some measure simply a transferring of children from one form of institution, the residential school, to another, the child-welfare agency" (p. 68).

1.4.1 Whiteness & Cultural Confusion

The interrelated and interconnected relations of colonialist ideologies and Indigenous communities has been tumultuous. Colonial interference meant a mixing of ethnicities, the colonialists and Indigenous Peoples. This exists within familial units, where some or all members may identify as Indigenous, yet some members may receive superior treatment based on their perceived identity. It is the perception of 'whiteness' which disrupts the validity of Indigeneity, and disruptive to the core identity of the familial unit. Kivel (1996) explains that whiteness is "a powerful fiction enforced by power and violence. Whiteness is a constantly shifting boundary separating those who are entitled to have certain privileges from those whose exploitation and vulnerability to violence is justified by their not being white" (p. 19).

Raven Sinclair (2007), an Indigenous scholar, has done extensive work in areas around the political interference of Indigenous communities by Western ideologies. Sinclair (2007) estimated that during the Sixties Scoop, a staggering 70% of Indigenous adoptees

were placed in non-Indigenous households (p. 66). This disruption in Indigenous identity formation manifested through ideological agendas which were meant to "civilize" Indigenous Peoples, with the purpose to assimilate them into mainstream society (Sinclair, 2007, p. 68). Due to political agendas of Indigenous genocide and ethnocide, Sinclair (2007) attests that the development of "a cultural identity of one's biology when raised in a different cultural context is exceedingly different" (p. 72). As an example, Indigenous adoptees into non-Indigenous families undoubtedly experience a tumultuous journey in their identity development. Although lacking the cultural need of their biological being, Indigenous adoptees are placed in non-Indigenous homes that subtly mask "otherness", yet this does not diminish once they leave their familial circle, or even in their adopted familial circle (Sinclair, 2007, p. 72).

Much like proclaiming whiteness, the claim for Indigenous authenticity is another colonial act of interference to divide and conquer. Charles Taylor (1994) suggests two problematic assumptions that structure the policing of Indigenous identity. First, he suggests we assume there is an ideal of authentic indigeneity, which artificially imposes a binary of authentic/non-authentic. Second, we assume that since an authentic indigeneity exists, we also believe we can recognize it (Taylor, 1994). Contrastingly, in-authentic indigeneity must also exist and be recognizable. Harris (2013) provides a concise explanation of the intensity of performing and policing of authentic indigeneity;

> There is a great deal of symbolic capital that ensues from authentic performance, especially in the absence of group access to important economic and political resources. Who establishes the boundaries within which one must perform? Forces both from within and outside of indigenous communities seek to construct, define, name, and police indigenous identities, and in doing so, a constant battle ensues in the shifting sands on which the play for authenticity is per-formed. (Conklin, as cited in Harris, 2013, p. 12)

The binary categorization of authenticity limited several participants from feeling adequate to occupy Indigenous spaces. The need to validate authenticity is what limits the ability for those belonging to more than one race/ethnicity to identity as a dual, or a combination

of more than one category. Furthermore, identifying as more than one can be construed as not wanting, or unable, to be confined to one and subsequently not adequate. Whiteness as the dominant culture, inflicts the assumption that any other identity is “othered”, and subsequently second. Being authentically Indigenous, then, is impacted by the adherence to white presenting skin tones, as inclusion and validation into dominant society.

1.4.2 *Decolonizing* Colonial Interference

To decolonizing may not involve the total disruption of what has come to be known as colonial Canada. According to Tuck and Yang (2012), “decolonize (a verb) and decolonization (a noun) cannot easily be grafted onto pre-existing discourses/frameworks, even if they are critical, even if they are anti-racist, even if they are justice frameworks” (p. 3). Moreover, the notions of decolonization often fail to incorporate Indigenous peoples, or their “struggles for the recognition of our/their sovereignty, or the contributions of Indigenous intellectuals and activists to theories and frameworks of de-colonization” (p. 3). This, then, is appropriative in nature as “decolonization is not a swappable term for other things we want to do to improve our societies and schools. Decolonization doesn’t have a synonym” (Tuck & Yang, 2013, p. 3).

Tuck and Yang (2013) state that their interpretation of the moves to innocence, which capture the essences that;

> Everything within a settler colonial society strains to destroy or assimilate the Native in order to disappear them from the land - this is how a society can have multiple simultaneous and conflicting messages about Indigenous peoples, such as all Indians are dead, located in faraway reservations, that contemporary Indigenous people are less indigenous than prior generations, and that all Americans are a “little bit Indian.” These desires to erase - to let time do its thing and wait for the older form of living to die out, or to even help speed things along (euthanize) because the death of pre-modern ways of life is thought to be inevitable - these are all desires for another kind of resolve to the colonial situation, resolved through the absolute and total destruction or assimilation of original inhabitants. (p. 9)

It should be known; however, that for “Indigenous people, the critique of history is not unfamiliar, although it has now been claimed by post-modern theories” (Smith, 1999, p. 33). Moreover, the political positioning of Indigenous people is that their lives reflects that: “there are numerous oral stories which tell of what it means, what it feels like, to be present while your history is erased before your eyes, dismissed as irrelevant, ignored or rendered as the lunatic ravings of drunken old people” (Smith, 1999, p. 31).

In educations system, it is imperative that review curriculum in areas pertaining to history, while acknowledging Indigenous people, the descendants of many generations of peoples who have called these lands, known formally as Canada, their home. The strategies in which need to be implemented need to inform settlers and non-Indigenous people of the lands’ deep Indigenous roots. Disruption of the “typical Indian”, and acknowledgment of the countless Indigenous peoples who embark on not being confined to the colonial terms of “Indianness”. Beyond acknowledging the history of Indigenous peoples and colonial Canada, is a process of owing the realities of history, one which Canada and its citizens much take responsibility. Canada’s wealth, in monetary terms, is held by a selected few. Moreover, Canada’s wealth, as a colonized nation, benefits all citizens. What must not be taken for granted is that this wealth is accumulated at the expense of Indigenous peoples.

Decolonization is not a process which entails solely Indigenous peoples, but rather, all people living in Canada, as people who all have been distorted by colonialism. To decolonize, entrusts the involvement of Indigenous people and settlers, who together towards sovereignty and self-determination. A movement for decolonization must be premised on a parallel process of self-determination. While Indigenous nations continue to assert their autonomy and nationhood, non-Indigenous settlers must also assert their own autonomy within their respective communities and resist their governments’ attempts to further consolidate its control over all communities, Indigenous and non-Indigenous alike.

1.5 *Re*-Identifying Indigeneity in "Multicultural" Canada

The terms race and ethnicity are often used interchangeably; however, the use of both words within similar parameters is not only problematic, but incorrect. One must ask; Are people cultureless? Or performative dependent on the circumstance? Is there a sense of culture for people who ascribe to whiteness, identify as Indigenous yet foster privilege?

> In 1971, Canada was the first country in the world to adopt multiculturalism as an official policy. By so doing, Canada affirmed the value and dignity of all Canadian citizens regardless of their racial or ethnic origins, their language, or their religious affiliation. The 1971 Multiculturalism Policy of Canada also confirmed the rights of Aboriginal peoples and the status of Canada's two official languages.
>
> Canadian multiculturalism is fundamental to our belief that all citizens are equal. Multiculturalism ensures that all citizens can keep their identities, can take pride in their ancestry and have a sense of belonging. Acceptance gives Canadians a feeling of security and self-confidence, making them more open to, and accepting of, diverse cultures. The Canadian experience has shown that multiculturalism encourages racial and ethnic harmony and cross-cultural understanding (Government of Canada).

The realities of our society, and concepts that favour multiculturalism; Varadharajan (2000) writes that:

> The unsavoury history of Canada's treatment of its Indigenous peoples and its immigration policies—as well as the unmistakable presence of those who are sometimes patronizingly referred to as "visible minorities"—have in part been responsible for Canada's interest in engaging cultural differences. This interest has led to the idea of a cultural mosaic as distinct from a cultural melting pot, such as is found south of the border. All parts of the mosaic, however, are not created equal. The mosaic occasionally implies satellite cultures revolving around the two founding cultures or invokes the concept of unity in diversity, neither of which negates the peripheral status of "other" cultures. Even if one envisaged the mosaic as a whole that exceeded the sum of its

parts, the opposite would not be permissible: that is, the parts could not exceed the whole and are more or less contained by it (p. 144).

Identity is an essential element of the human condition. The existence of a Euro-Canadian cultural overlap that continues to obscure Indigenous identity reflects a possible truth about the development of a national identity in Canada. The social space where perspectives between the multiple ethnic and racial groups in Canada intersect cannot adequately reflect a national concept of identity when this kind of overlap occurs; the dominant society has too pro-found an impact upon those categorized as subjugated within Canada's social hierarchy (Rohmann, 1999). Arguably, then, many of Canada's Indigenous peoples have adopted non-Indigenous traditions, values, and institutional customs to such a significant extent.

Indigenous culture and identity, and non-Indigenous culture and identity—are intended to refer to how the respective histories, cultures, values, and experiences are manifest in individual and collective ideals and behaviours, as seen in Figure 1. By using a Venn diagram to represent an existing, dynamic social system, this intersection should be characterized as an area where culture and identities of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples are prevalent. The area of concern, as represented in Figure 1, is the space where the two contrasting identities' overlap, as the area of negotiation. Deer (2011) states that, "the strength of a shared identity can be de-pendent on the role in which identity, ethno-cultural identity in particular, is prevalent in an individual's self-concept. Identity may be a potential important element of citizenship because it may be regarded as the tool with which individuals and groups define themselves, and their relationship to their community" (p. 9).

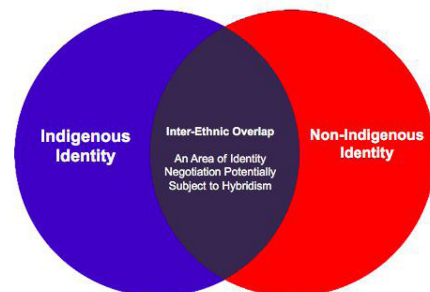

Figure 1: Contrasting Cultures, Area of Identity Negotiation. (Deer, 2011)

1.5.1 *Re*-Claiming Wholeness

The notions of wholeness are fundamental within Indigenous cultures, as wholeness entrusts a harmonious state of being. The Medicine Wheel metaphor contains all the traditional teachings and can therefore be used as a guide on any journey, including the educational process. While there is some variation in its teachings and representations, the underlying web of meaning to Medicine Wheels remains the same: the importance of appreciating and respecting the ongoing interconnectedness and interrelated-ness of all things. Understanding of attaining this harmonious state can be explained through the teachings through utilizing the medicine wheel. Cree Elder Michael Thrasher outlines (as seen in Figure 2), the gifts of the four directions, he explains that; "In the east the gift of vision is found, where one is able to "see." In the south one spends time in which to relate to the vision. In the west, one uses the gift of reason to figure it out. In the north, one uses the gift of movement to do or actualize the vision (Bell, 2014). The nature of the Medicine Wheel is the intricate, or web, or meaning which is consistent among Indigenous cultures, which demonstrates the importance of appreciating and respecting the ongoing interconnectedness and interrelatedness of all living and non-living things.

The issues associated with the removal of ceremony, and denial of Indigenous heritage and ancestry for Indigenous Peoples who have, voluntarily or involuntarily, surrendered to colonial manifestations of identity, is the inherent inability to regain a sense of wholeness as defined by the ceremonial teachings of the medicine wheel. The Medicine Wheel explained by Elder Thrasher can be instrumental in the restoration of reclaiming one's Indigenous identity. This rendition of the medicine wheel, explores each of the four directions, as;

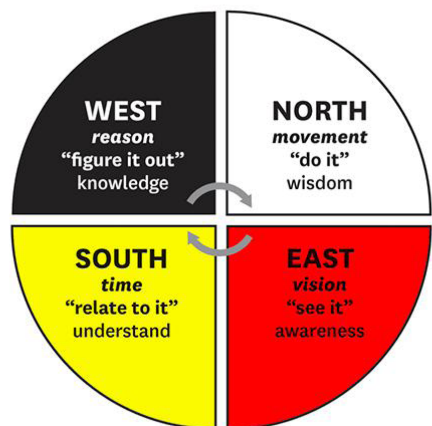

Figure 2: Medicine Wheel

East the gift of vision is found, where one is able to "see." In the south one spends time in which to relate to the vision. In the

> west, one uses the gift of reason to figure it out. In the north, one uses the gift of movement to do or actualize the vision (Bell, 2014, para. 6).

According to Absolon (1994), in following the path of Medicine Wheels "the fourth direction involves creating a healing movement towards change – this is possible only when the other components have been acknowledged" (p. 18). Bell (2014) explains the medicine wheel (Figure 2) as a process of moving from the "doing" phase which is positioned in the north, which requires "taking the knowledge gained from all the directions and enacting that knowledge" (1994, para. 7). Moreover, the process of utilizing medicine wheel teachings is one that involved healing and learning demands which involve "continuous and ongoing reflection of oneself in relation to others – thus balance must be maintained while embracing change" (1994, para. 7). Graveline (1996) states that "the teaching and healing process is evolutionary and cyclical in nature, as is the continuum of medicine wheels. It begins with a desire to understand and identify with the balance, wholeness and interconnectedness expressed in the medicine wheel" (p. 182).

To *re*-gain wholeness, requires a balance and movement by the north-ern direction, which requires one to re-visit the other directions to achieve this 360-degree vision (Dumont, as cited in Stigelbauer, 1992). By going to the east where one visions to transform that which is, one can actively create a better life for oneself and others. Indigenous people can envision how they can be active in the "creation of oppositional analytical and cultural space" (Mohanty, 1994, p. 148). Visioning allows them to engage in the hopeful utopian thinking necessary for radical transformation. Once a guiding vision is received or created, strategies can then be planned to help actualize it. Each person then has the responsibility to do the work required to fulfill the vision (Cajete, 1994).

1.6 Conclusions

Indigenous people are not only *re*claiming their ancestors as Indigenous, but also themselves. The issues rests with restoring and reclaiming of identity to ensure the disrupted by colonial interference of the last seven generations is not repeated in the next seven. Moreover, that Indigenous youth and com-munities are

supported within a culturally appropriate context where they are able to heal with and by their own communities. Being white is easy, being Indigenous is not. Whether an Indigenous person can ascribe to white-ness, or not, being able to be included into dominant society affords privileges to which subjugated and marginalized populations are not. The new wave of reclaiming identity among Indigenous people, particularly among children and youth, is vital for the vitality of the next seven generations. Mindful that identity as an Indigenous person can be a plethora of things as a person is comprised of many features, or identity markers, which collective represent a community –individually or collectively.

Acknowledgement. I, wholeheartedly, thank my ancestors who hold me each and every day, for my immediate family for their continued love and support, my partner for having a truly kind heart and soul, and for the amazing Indigenous community that has continued to embrace this conversation with me -- I am forever grateful.

Keep your stories and tell your stories; they will help guide you, define you, carry you, heal you – *I know mine have.*

References

Absolon, K. (1994). *Building Health From the Medicine Wheel: Aboriginal program development.* Paper presented at the meeting of the Native Physician's Association. Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Andrea, D. (1996). Systems Theory and Social Work Treatment. In F. J. Turner, Social Work Treatment. Interlocking Theoretical Approaches [4th ed., ch.25]. N.Y.: The Free Press.

Baines, D. (2011). *Doing anti-oppressive practice: Social justice social work* (2nd ed.). Halifax, N.S.: Fernwood Publishing.

Battiste, M. (2000). *Reclaiming indigenous voice and vision.* Vancouver: UBC Press.

Barker, R. L. (2003) . The Social Work Dictionary, [5th. Ed.]. Washington, D.C.: nasw Press.

Baskin, C. (2016). *Strong helpers' teachings: The value of Indigenous knowl-edges in the helping professions* (2nd edition.). Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press.

Bell, N. (2014). Teaching by the medicine wheel: an Anishinaabe framework for Indigenous education. CEA-ACE. Retrieved from www.cea-ace.ca/education-canada/article/teaching-medicine-wheel.

Bopp, J., Bopp, M., Brown, L. and Lane, P. (1984). The Sacred Tree. Leth-bridge, Alberta: Four Worlds Development Press.

Borrows, John. 2002. *Recovering Canada: The resurgence of Indigenous law.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Dumont, J. (2008). "The Whole Anishinawbe Person", in Indigenous Cultural Values, Behaviour and Identity. CSPI: Humber College.

Duran, E. & Duran, B. (1995). Native American Postcolonial Psychology. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Cajete, G. (1994). Look Through the Mountain: An Ecology of Indigenous Education. Durango, CO: Kivaki Press.

Canda, E. R. & Furman, L. D. (1999). Spiritual Diversity in Social Work Practice: The Heart of Helping. N.Y.: The Free Press.

Coates, J. (2003). Ecology and Social Work. Toward A New Paradigm. Hali-fax: Fernwood Publishing.

Deer, F. (2011). Aboriginal identity: A perspective on hegemony and the implications for Canadian citizenship. (Indigenous Education) in Education, 17(3), 2-16.

Deloria, V., Jr. (1973). *God is Red.* New York: Grosset & Dunlap.

Gill, D. (2002) The unspeakability of racism: Mapping law's complicity in Manitoba's raclized spaces. In *Race, Space, and the Law: Unmapping a White Settler Society*, S. Razack (ed.). Toronto: Between The Lines.

Graveline, F. J. (1998). Circle Works: Transforming Eurocentric Conscious-ness. Halifax: Fernwood Publishing.

Harris, M. (2013). Emergent Indigenous Identities: Rejecting the Need for Purity, in The Politics of Identity: Emerging Indigeneity. Sidney: UTS Publishing, 12.

Hart, M.A. (2002). Seeking Mino-Pimatisiwin: An Aboriginal Approach to Helping. Halifax: Fernwood Publishing.

Henderson, J., Y. (2000). The Context of the State of Nature. In *Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision.* Marie Mattiste (eds.). Vancouver: UBC Press. 11-38).

Holmes, J. (2002). The Original Intentions of the Indian Act. Ottawa: Joan Holmes & Associates Inc. 1-31.

Johnston, P. (1983). Native Children and the Child Welfare System Canadian Council on Social Development Toronto, Ontario, Canada. P. 26

Kerbs, A. (2010). Multiculturalism and Colonial Continuity: The Function of Disgust in the Politics of Recognition. In C. Lammert & K. Sarknowsky (Eds.). Travelling Concepts: Negotiating Diversity in Canada and Europe. Wiesebaden: Pollitikwissenshaftliche Paper-backs. 83-108.

Kivel, P. (1996). Uprooting racism: How white people can work for racial jus-tice. Gabriola Island, BC, Canada: New Society Press.

Kuokkanen, R. (2007). Myths and realities of Sami women: A post-colonial feminist analysis for the decolonization and

transformation of Sami society. In *Making space for Indigenous feminism*, ed. Joyce Green, 72-92. Halifax: Fernwood Press.

Ladner, K. (2005). Up the creek: Fishing for a new constitutional order. *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 38 (4), 923-953.

Lalonde, C., E. (2006). Identity formation and cultural resilience in aboriginal communities. In Robert J. Flynn, Peter Dudding & James G. Barber (eds.), *Promoting Resilient Development in Young People Receiving Care: International Perspectives on Theory, Research, Practice & Policy,* 52-71. Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press.

LaRocque, Emma. 1997. Re-examining culturally appropriate models in criminal justice applications. In *Aboriginal and treaty rights in Canada*, ed. Michael Asch, 75-96. Vancouver: UBC Press.

LaRocque, Emma. 2001. Native identity and the Metis: Otehpayimsuak peoples. In *A passion for identity: An introduction to Canadian studies* (4th ed.), eds. David Taras and Beverly Rasporich, 381- 399. Scar-borough: Nelson Thomson Learning.

Laugrand, F. (2002). Les religions amérindiennes et inuites. In M. Boisvert, (ed.) Un Monde de Religions, Tome 3, Les traditions de l'Asie de l'Est, de l'Afrique et des Amériques. Sainte-Foy : Presses de l'Uni-versité du Québec.

Lenroy, L., B. (2000). Jagged Work Views Colliding. In *Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision*. Marie Battiste (eds.). Vancouver: UBC Press. 77-85.

Lawrence, B. (2004). *Real Indians and others: Mixed-blood urban native peoples and Indigenous nationhood*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.

Massé, R. (1995). Culture et santé publique. Boucherville : Gaëtan Morin, éd.

Mehl-Madrona, L. (2003). Coyote Healing : Miracles in Native Medicine. Rochester, Vermont: Bear & Company.

Mehl-Madrona, L. (1998). Coyote Medicine: Lessons from Native American Healing. N. Y.: Fireside Books, published by Simon and Shuster.

Miley, K. K., O'Melia, M. & DuBois, B. (2004). Generalist Social Work Practice: An Empowering Approach. Boston, Pearson.

Mohanty, C. T. (1994). On Race and Voice: Challenges for liberal education in the 1990's, in *Between Borders: Pedagogy and the politics of cultural studies,* eds. H. Giroux and P. McLaren. New York, NY: Routledge, 1994, 148.

Morrisseau, C. (1998). Into the Daylight: A Wholistic Approach to Healing. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Ross, R. (2006). Dancing with a Ghost: Exploring Aboriginal Reality. To-ronto: Penguin Canada.

Rohmann, C. (1999). *A world of ideas: A dictionary of important theories, concepts, beliefs, and thinkers.* New York: Ballantine Books.

Royal Commission On Aboriginal Peoples (1996). Health and Healing. In Re-port of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, vol. 3, 'Gathering Strength' [Ch. 3]. Ottawa: Ministry of Goods and Services and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada web site: URL http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ch/rcap/sg/si23_e.html

Sinclair, R. (2007). Identity Lost and Found: Lessons from The Sixties Scoop. *First Peoples Child and Family Review,* 3(1). 65-82.

Sioui, G. E. (1989). Pour une autohistoire amérindienne: essai sur les fondements d'une morale sociale. Québec : Presses de l'Université Laval.

Smith, L. T. (1999). *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and indigenous peoples*. Dunedin, New Zealand: University of Otago Press.

Stewart-Harawira, M. (2005). *The new imperial order: Indigenous responses to globalization.* London and New York: Zed Books.

Stigelbauer, S. (1992). *The Individual is the Community; The Community is the World; Native Elders Talk About What Young People Need to Know.* Paper presented at the meeting of the American Educational Research Association. San Francisco, CA.

Taylor, C. (1994). The Politics of Recognition, in In Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition, ed. Amy Gutmann. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 25–73.

Truth and Reconciliation Canada. (2015). Honouring the truth, reconciling for the future: Summary of the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. Winnipeg: Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.

Tuck, E., & Yang, K., W. (2012). Decolonization is not a metaphor. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education, and Society*, 1(1), 1-40.

Varadharajan, A. (2000). The "repressive tolerance" of cultural peripheries. In M. Battiste (Ed.), *Reclaiming Indigenous voice and vision* (pp. 142-149). Vancouver, BC: UBC Press.

PUTTING TO SLEEP THE WAILING GHOSTS OF THE PAST: EXPLORING HISTORICAL TRAUMA AND SPIRITUALITY

Hibah Sidat

We hunger for these stories not simply because they address the religious and social divides of a time past but because they engage with painful contemporary realities ... We need these stories then to put to rest the ghost trains that wail in our sleep

(Kaul, 2001, p. 18).

Introduction

I want to begin by expressing what an arduous and brutal task it has been for me to write this essay. I spent a great deal of time scribbling down notes which make up the various pieces of my larger paper but which I have had to exert extraordinary effort to shape, re-work, and reconstruct into a coherent, whole essay.

Perhaps my experience writing this article on the subject of trauma acts as a sort of metaphor for the experience of a survivor of trauma like myself. Fragmentation, disorientation, and disarray are all states which an individual's system experiences following a traumatic event or series of traumatic events (Herman, 1992). A survivor thereafter must engage in onerous, painful, and sometimes lifelong efforts to piece herself or himself back together for recovery towards a healthier, more integrated self.

The American Psychological Association describes "trauma as an experience, either prolonged or episodic, that manifests outside of the limits of ordinary human experience," (Welch, 2015, p.101). Trauma may also be characterized as "anything that overwhelms our capacity to cope and leaves some form of disorganization in our nervous system and dysregulation in all of the systems of our body so [that] our emotions, physiology, and cognition are all disrupted at some level," (Yau, 2017, 7:29).

Extending past the individual experience and a single lifespan, trauma can become multigenerational and cumulative over time. This can be termed historical trauma, or what is referred to in

Indigenous knowledges as the *soul wound*. The term *soul wound* has been made synonymous with terms like historical trauma, historical legacy, intergenerational posttraumatic stress disorder, intergenerational trauma, and transgenerational trauma (Duran, et al., 1998). For the purposes of this article, the terms *soul wound* and historical trauma will be used interchangeably. Regardless of which term is used, the phenomenon is characterized by the mourning of the traumatic events of the past which has not been completed and the subsequent depression which are absorbed by the children from the time of their birth (ibid).

As a South Asian Canadian Muslim woman, I am a survivor of multiple forms of trauma -- individual and historical/multigenerational, personal and collective/community. Religious fundamentalist patriarchy, Islamophobia and anti-Muslim racism, and the displacement of the migration of my parents are only a few of the multiple forms of violence which have marked my body in a distinct way.

It is in the spirit towards healing and recovery that I explore trauma as it relates to spirituality. Throughout this chapter, I carry out an autoethnographic study by sharing some of my traumatic memories; this acts as a sort of healing exercise which makes my memories more coherent and less fragmented and hence, brings me closer to putting them to rest. Aside from the personal benefit I derive from this study, it is my hope that other members of traumatized communities as well as allies who are willing to listen with an open ear may also learn and benefit from my work. Trauma, especially that of racialized communities, and its widespread, deeply permeating impacts in society are poorly understood (Burstow, 2003). Throughout my narrative overview, I explore various notions of trauma, highlighting the importance of conceptualizing trauma from gendered and historical perspectives. I also consider more deeply the relationship between trauma and spirituality, and how the two affect each other. Ultimately, I argue the need for traumatized communities to reclaim their spiritualities as they move towards healing and recovery and transform their pain into a powerful, life-giving force.

Locating the Self

I wish to convey my positionality and explicate the ways in which I am “actively engaged in constructing meaning and interpretations,”

(Dei, 1999, p. 396). I believe that socially and politically locating myself is critical in order to ensure the legitimacy of my research.

I am a heterosexual South Asian Muslim Canadian woman from a working class home. I apply the term 'Canadian' in the normative sense. I want to make it clear here that I do not use the term in order to accept the nation of Canada, a colonial project, which has been built through the systematic genocide of the Indigenous peoples of this land and on the backs of Black and racialized women and men via (forced) migration and/or enslavement. Rather, I only use the term 'Canadian' to locate myself in a present-day geographical sense.

As my family has been part of the patterns of migration to the West from post-British South Asia, we are implicated in systems of colonialism. "[I]nvasion is a structure, not an event," (Wolfe, 2006, p.388) and the process of colonialism is ongoing rather than something that was achieved in a single moment (Wolfe, 2006). As a settler on Turtle Island, I must recognize my responsibilities to uphold treaties between settlers and Indigenous peoples. Violence from patterns of displacement for many South Asian Canadian Muslims as well as from anti-Muslim racism in the West is inextricably linked to the violence of a colonial settler state.

My father is from Kathor, a village in the state of Gujarat in India, and my mother is from Karachi, a large metropolitan city in the province of Sindh in Pakistan. My parents immigrated to Canada in the 1980's following the promises of increased safety, greater opportunities, and an overall better life in the West. The scarcity in their native countries and the resulting insecurity, danger, and poverty made their immigration to the West a pursuit imposed upon them by the struggle to survive in a post-independence South Asia. The trauma from this insecurity, danger, and poverty left by British colonialists runs deep both in the broader South Asian continent as well as in my family in the form of intergenerational or historical trauma.

Just as the process of writing this paper has been difficult, especially painful has been the struggle to share some of my story; and worse, that of my family. As a South Asian Muslim Canadian woman delving into my personal experiences with patriarchy, I have to be aware that my work "runs the risk of being used as a means to shore up anti-Muslim racism and Islamophobia which thrives on sensationalism and the preoccupation of "rescuing" Muslim

women from backward and dangerous Muslim men," (Zine, 2008, p. 36). As a Muslim woman who understands her own agency, I do not ask to be 'saved' from oppressive Muslim men.

"I am also aware that my research is subject to political agendas that I am unable to control and may become inadvertently complicit in promoting," (ibid). I balance the need to challenge right wing Islamophobic agendas which exploit stories of oppressed Muslim women for their own political gain against the need to ensure that Muslim women gain authority over their own narratives. It is this very violence of Islamophobia which has silenced the voices of and hindered the healing of many Muslim women. I make an effort to rupture this barrier and voice my own story.

While a highly charged Islamophobic climate may act as a barrier, there are also other factors which challenge my writing. Delving into one's own trauma can be a painstaking process for someone who has lived in silence for so long. It is also confusing and bewildering when you are in the midst of your own healing. My mind feels clouded and filled with self-doubt, and without an immediate and clear narrative which I can share. Although I have spent the majority of my adulthood seeking therapy and improving my mental, emotional, and cognitive health, I find my journey towards healing ongoing. I will attempt to share the bits and pieces which I can express with confidence and clarity.

Patriarchal Trauma

I identify as a survivor of multiple forms of trauma. My upbringing in Toronto has been filled with ongoing sense of insecurity. I grew up in an environment of chronic stress for a number of reasons. What I wish to examine more closely is the intense control over my body that I was subjected to from a very young age. My bodily movement was strictly contained and regulated mostly between school and home, and allowed in very few other places. I was constantly questioned about the presence of males in the spaces I entered. The notion of *izzat* (translated from Urdu to mean 'honour') was mapped onto my body. This meant regulating my behaviour because the honour of the home lay with me (Zine, 2008).

I reflect on such patriarchal control over my body with regards to Herman's conceptualization of trauma as the result of the intersection of public and private kinds of social violence which are commonly divided along gender lines consistent with the types

of social violence each gender is ordinarily exposed to (Herman, 1992; Welch, 2015). For men, war and other types of combat prompt masculinized traumatization; not to mention the fact of masculinity itself, and the manifestations of idealized masculinity -- such as policing, fighting, and drug dealing -- as themselves being traumatizing to boys (ibid). Conversely, feminized versions of trauma are the result of continuous abuse at the hands of men that commonly begins at a very early age for girls via physical, sexual, and emotional forms of abuse (ibid).

By introducing a precise gendered element to trauma, Herman extends the individual experience of trauma from the personal to the political realm. In exploring gendered power relations, she also contends that those individuals most at risk for trauma are already disempowered (Herman, 1992; Welch, 2015). She further elaborates that psychological trauma is a disease of the powerless given that the abused become defenseless by "overwhelming forces that affect systems of care that provide people with a sense of control, connection, and meaning," (Herman, 1992; Welch, 2015, p. 104). Therefore, trauma functions as a "feedback loop of powerlessness: affecting those with the least power and then reinforcing that lack of power by interfering with internal mechanisms of self-care," (ibid). As if poverty and racism themselves had not already cast me to the lower rungs of society, the constant objectification of my body, the repeated instances of containment, restriction, and control over my bodily movement and my failed efforts towards fighting and resisting against such control resulted in a more intensified level of trauma for me (Herman, 1992).

Although Herman's work is incredibly powerful in illuminating the highly gendered and therefore political nature of trauma, there is a gap in Herman's analysis which renders her argument colonial, Eurocentric, and lacking cultural context for the abused in many non-White communities. It is in this effort to provide adequate cultural context that I further unpack core concepts which explain the dynamics in my home regarding the freedom which I was (not) allowed. The need for control over my movement and actions lay in preserving the *izzat* of my home/family. In other words, the honour of the home depended on my sexually modest behaviour (Zine, 2008). At the heart of preserving this *izzat* was the need to avert *fitnah,* i.e. temptation or, more specifically, the unruly power of female sexuality (ibid). The construction of my body as *fitnah* was

rooted in a fear of alluring and attracting negative male attention. In this way, the burden of building or destroying the reputation of my family was inscribed onto my body (ibid).

It is important to understand, however, that providing cultural context must not be mistaken or confused for attributing abuse or mistreatment to a particular culture or faith. Patriarchy and misogyny are universal structures that cross all cultural and religious boundaries; once the particularities of culture and faith are accounted for, violence against women looks the same everywhere. Herman's (1992) vivid descriptions on the 'captivity' of women in the domestic sphere deeply resonate with me and are proof of this:

> In addition to inducing fear, the perpetrator seeks to destroy the victim's sense of autonomy. This is achieved by scrutiny and control of the victim's body and bodily functions. The perpetrator supervises what the victim eats, when she sleeps, when she goes to the toilet, what she wears (p. 75).

Intersectional Oppressions

It is in the context of this last point regarding the regulation of dress that I want to share my particular experience with hijab. I wore hijab for twelve years. At the age of 13, I started wearing hijab largely as a response to familial pressure and as part of my duty to uphold the *izzat* of my home; this happened to be less than one year after the attacks of September 11, 2001. The covert and overt Islamophobia I faced since then soon turned hijab into my choice and a means of resistance against White supremacy. It was not until the age of 25 when I took off the hijab for three reasons: 1) I no longer found resistance against White supremacy a valid reason to wear hijab; 2) I felt that faith and seeking connection to God should be the intent behind donning the veil; and 3) I needed to protect my mental and emotional wellbeing after having faced further trauma from ongoing Islamophobia and anti-Muslim racism. Despite the fact that I now navigate the world as an invisible Muslim (but as a visibly racialized woman), developing my identity and navigating the world as a visibly Muslim woman in a post-9/11 world for 12 years has deeply affected me.

Clearly, I have been confronted with intersectional oppressions (Crenshaw, 1989): of fundamentalist religious understandings, on the one hand, and of gendered Islamophobia, on the other (Zine, 2006). My choices have situated my "Islamic womanhood in ways

that both affirm and challenge traditional religious notions," (ibid, p.1). At the same time, my choices were also subject to Orientalist depictions of veiled women that represent me as oppressed and backward (ibid).

Importance of History

I now want to shift my attention towards history. Understanding history is key to understanding trauma (Singh, 2015) and the basis for moving forward towards healing. In the words of Trask (1991):

> We do not need nor do we want to be liberated from our past because it is our source of understanding...We stand firmly in the present with our back to the future, and our eyes fixed upon the past, seeking historical answers for present-day dilemmas (p. 164).

The words of Trask display to me that the pain I witnessed growing up may not have been isolated in my home in Toronto, Canada and that there may be a causal connection to the history of the domination of the British in India. In order to better comprehend this connection, I look more closely at the notion of historical trauma or the *soul wound.*

Duran et al. (1998) explore the notion of the *soul wound* which they say has become part of the purview of Western scholars since the 1970's but which has been an essential part of Indigenous knowledge since Columbus arrived in the Western hemisphere and Cortez landed in Vera Cruz, Mexico. In this way, explanations of the *soul wound* are centuries old (ibid). This knowledge has only been relatively recently imparted from elders in a way that makes sense to Western academics and has been largely kept out of mainstream knowledge because of the "invalidating nature of Western gatekeepers of literature dissemination" (ibid, p. 351). The colonial lens has had an extensive history of distorting Indigenous knowledges (ibid).

> Duran et al. characterize the *soul wound* or historical trauma as follows:
>
> Historical trauma is more complex than surface exploration would reveal. Historical trauma is trauma that is multigenerational trauma and cumulative over time; it extends beyond the lifespan. Historical trauma response has been identified and has been delineated as a constellation of features in reaction to the multigenerational, collective, historical, and cumulative

> psychic wounding over time, both over the lifespan and across generations (1998, p. 342).

In order to understand this phenomenon in my own life, I trace my father's origins back to when the British first set foot in India. My father is from a town near Surat, the capital of the state of Gujarat and the first place where the British East India company arrived in 1608 in a ship called *Hector* commanded by William Hawkins (Adam Matthews Publications, 2018). Surat was the trading port used by the textile producers in Gujarat and was the most significant centre for the foreign trade of the Indian Mughal Empire who had already established trading arrangements with the Portuguese (ibid).

Over the years, the British East India company grew tremendously, not only driving the Portuguese out and gaining control of trade in Surat and the rest of India but also accounting for half of the world's trade during the mid 1700's and early 1800's (Cultural India, 2015). The company's mandate had expanded beyond its initial aim of simply reaping profits and went on to establish a trading monopoly throughout the entirety of Asia pacific, making them the flagbearers of British colonial imperialism (ibid).

The result of this imperialism has been the cumulative and multigenerational trauma which is excessively displaced among subsequent generations of South Asians spread out across the world (Singh, 2015). Historical trauma holds a number of distinct characteristics. For one, grieving of the traumatic events of the past has not ended and the subsequent depression are inherited by the children from the time of their birth (Duran, et al., 1998). In the context of the Holocaust and its effect on the Jews of Europe, Fogelman says:

> Jews in Europe have not found...effective means of coping, integration, and adaptation. Most are in a stage of complete denial and stunted mourning of their losses...They feel a great need to control their emotions, because they fear that if their intense emotions were given free reign, they might go insane... Survivors feared the uncontrollable rage locked within them, they feared they would be devoured by thoughts of avenging the deaths of their loved ones. These repressions result in "psychic numbing," (1988, p. 93).

This psychic tension often manifests into violence against the self (suicide) or projected outwards to a family member (e.g. domestic violence) or members of the same community. Freire has dubbed this phenomenon the internalized oppression model (Duran, et al., 1998). "The explicit and conscious act of killing involves the affirmation of life, which is nourished by that which is killed... Death belongs to life," (Curry, 1972, p. 103). Acts of killing or hurting one's family members are better understood in light of the many generations of imposed lessons (from colonial violence) that taught people how unworthy they were of life (Duran et al., 1998).

This conceptualization of the *soul wound* or historical trauma allows us to better contextualize the tremendous amount of sectarian violence in South Asia after the departure of the British from India in August 1947 and the subsequent drawing of borders along the Indian subcontinent (Singh, 2015). Partition displaced ten million people and killed over one million (ibid). Thousands died from malnutrition and contagious disease (ibid). Approximately 75,000 women were raped and abducted (ibid).

Even as a child, I remember my mother narrating stories of her parents instructing her and her siblings (who were very young children at the time) to hold broken bottles and to be ready to defend themselves against the mobs of attacking people outside their door in Dhaka (in present-day Bangladesh but part of East Pakistan at the time). The Hindu majority in the neighbourhood did not like the Muslim presence of my mother's family. I cannot even imagine the kind of childhood trauma this kind of ongoing violence has had on my mother and others like her which remains unmourned and unreleased.

> We hunger for these stories not simply because they address the religious and social divides of a time past but because they engage with painful contemporary realities ... We need these stories then to put to rest the ghost trains that wail in our sleep (Kaul, 2001, p. 18).

Trauma and Spirituality

There are a multitude of negative effects which trauma leaves on an individual's physiological and cognitive systems: "affect dysregulation (the inability to regulate emotions); dissociation and changes in consciousness (disconnecting different aspects of awareness, e.g. being upset by a smell but not knowing why);

changes in self-perception (view of the self as inferior or incapable); disturbances in relationships (mistrust); somatization (body memory, the body remembers something the mind cannot); and alterations in systems of meaning (loss of meaning and sense of purpose)," (Sutherland, 2017, p1). With the aim of understanding trauma in relation to spirituality, it is this last effect which I will be exploring in greater depth.

Wane (2002) contends that spirituality is something so personal, distinct, and individualistic that it cannot be captured in any neat definition. According to Palmer, spirituality is "the ancient and abiding human quest for connectedness with something larger and more trustworthy than our egos," (cited in Dei et al., 2000, p. 93). In contrast, among Native American Indian people, spirituality "evolves from exploring and coming to know and experience the nature of living energy moving in each of us, through us, and around us," (Cajete, 1994, p. 42). Despite their differences, there is a common pattern among all of these definitions of spirituality so that they all point to the individual's connection to the broader world, larger systems of meaning, and the understanding that these systems of meaning are deeply personal and intimate.

My initial understanding of the broader world and larger systems of meaning has been through religion. I was taught about religion, both in formal and informal settings, in a very rigid, conservative, and patriarchal sense; ironically, it was also a similar firm and structured form of Islam I took on but infused with my own feminist Muslim refinements which allowed me to make sense of the world amidst the chaos and injustice around me. I was deeply religious and strict in my practice until about the age of 21.

Part of the destruction of trauma is the injury to one's sense of trust and security in the world (Smith, 2004). A fundamental sense of trust is crucial to many areas of life. It shapes one's sense of self, one's relationships with others, and one's understanding of spirituality (ibid). Let us view this sense of trust in the world through the lens of attachment theory. Just as a child expects her or his parents to provide comfort, safety, and protection, humans ask for the same from their God or some other higher power (ibid). In other words, a spiritual relationship with a higher power is based on the promise that the higher power will be protective in times of difficulty or danger -- the same as a parent is for a child. The onset of a traumatic event violates this fundamental agreement. A sense

of contract between a person and her or his higher power is broken (ibid). "Traumatized people feel utterly abandoned, utterly alone, cast out of human and divine systems of care and protection that sustain life," (Herman, 1992, p. 52). This sense of betrayal towards God or a higher power may lead to anger and despair, which, in turn, may lead to feelings of guilt and shame (Smith, 2004).

The dissolution and aftermath of my forced marital engagement at the age of 21 had a particularly traumatic effect on me and was one of the last straws in undermining my entire faith in the belief system I had established for myself until then. I could not find, with clarity, the Divine answer I had been seeking; I was unable to rationalize and justify the series of tumultuous events I had faced throughout and during the aftermath of the engagement.

Since then, I went through a period of cynicism, unable to see the value in anything associated with Islam and problematizing or finding patriarchy and oppression in all things Islamic. The emptiness, anxiety, and sense of incredible vulnerability from that perspective eventually brought me closer to Islam again and to understanding that I require a relationship with Allah as well as with a broader community of critical Muslims.

I identify as Muslim and still hold a loyalty to its core values but without as rigid a commitment to its practice. Rather, I hold firm to the notion that every Muslim's practice is as fluid or structured as she or he needs it to be at that particular time in her or his life. I oscillate between strengthening my practice and being gentle with myself. I allow myself to be filled with the contradictions, confusion, and complexities which make us human. Although some people may point out my errors from a strictly Islamic perspective, I believe in the idea of a Compassionate and Forgiving Creator.

With a better understanding of the *soul wound* or historical trauma, we may state, in the words of Dr. Njoki Wane, that trauma is in the DNA. The presence of unresolved trauma, then, within ourselves and our communities necessitates active efforts towards healing. Many authors have cited the transformative power of spirituality to promote resistance and healing.

Reclaiming Spirituality as Resistance

Many people would say that to revisit the past is to stay in the past. I argue the opposite; that it is only through reaching into our past that we may move forward. As trauma is not locatable in the

first instance, it comes to haunt the survivor later on (Herman, 1992). As Herman has stated, "[a]trocities...refuse to be buried" and "denial does not work," (ibid, p.1). She compares traumatic events to ghosts who refuse to rest in their graves until their stories are told (ibid). Narrating and re-narrating is to keep the memory alive, to allow subsequent generations to understand the experience, and for survivors to connect through their testimonies of witnessing and sharing the burden of their stories (Singh, 2015).

There have been several works which capture the continuing impact of the violence of Partition on South Asian people, both in South Asia and around the globe. Some examples include *Borders & Boundaries* by Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin, and *The Other Side of Silence* by Urvashi Butalia (ibid). These texts give voice to female accounts of suffering from Partition violence (ibid). In *The Footprints of Partition: Narrative of Four Generations of Pakistanis and Indians*, Anam Zakaria examines Pakistanis and Indians transgenerationally passing down agonizing memories of the Partition (ibid). In *Partition Dialogues: Memories of a Lost Home*, Alok Bhalla interviews six Indian and Pakistani novelists about their lived experiences from the years around 1947 (ibid). There are also many artistic representations of the trauma of Partition, from short stories to films. *Train to Pakistan* by Khushwant Singh is a historical novel set against the backdrop of the Partition violence while *Cracking India* by Bapsi Sidhwa examines the Partition through the eyes of the Parsi diaspora settled in India (ibid). These are only some works which explore the legacy of Partition. Whatever the form of these works, these authors are reclaiming their stories, their voices, and hence, their spiritualities.

My own set of narratives which I have shared in this chapter are part of my own efforts to reclaim my story, my voice, and thus, my spirituality. A large part of my spirituality is my belief in the wisdom of compassion and understanding. It is written in the Talmud that the highest form of wisdom is kindness. Although I have endured a great deal of trauma, I do not believe any of my perpetrators to be 'bad' people. Rather, as a grown woman, I have overcome enough of my own grief, anguish, and anger to be able to see them -- whether they are inside or outside my home -- with greater clarity and compassion. I can see them as traumatized and also having been imbued with a different cultural logic but still often deeply compassionate, nurturing, loving, and supportive individuals. Some of them have made enormous sacrifices for me. I would

not be where I am today without them and through negotiation, compromise, and mutual love and support, we have collectively overcome many hurdles.

> We have already paid the price. It's time to accept the many blessings that the Creator has in store for us. We must honor our people who sacrificed everything through honoring ourselves. By healing ourselves, we will also heal the wounds of our ancestors and the unborn generations (Duran, et al., 1998).

Bibliography

Adam Matthews Publications. (2018). *Fort St George (Madras) Factory Records, 1655-1704*. Retrieved from http://www.ampltd.co.uk/collections_az/EIC-Factory-3/description.aspx.

American Psychiatric Association. (1994). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (4th ed.)*. Washington, DC: Author.

Burstow, B. (2003). *Toward a Radical Understanding of Trauma and Trauma Work*. Violence Against Women, 9(11), p. 1293-1317.

Cajete, G. (1994). *Look to the mountain: an ecology of indigenous education.* Skyland: Kivaki Press.

Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics. *University of Chicago Legal Forum, 1989, 1 (8), 139–67.*

Cultural India. (2015). *A Brief History of the British East India Company*. Retrieved from https://learn.culturalindia.net/brief-history-british-east-india-company-essay.html.

Curry, A. (1972). *Bringing of forms.* Colorado Springs, CO: Dustbooks.

Dei, G. S. (1999). Knowledge and Politics of Social Change: The Implication of Anti-Racism. *British Journal of Sociology of Education, 20, (3), 395-409.*

Dei, G. S., James, I. M., Karumanchery, L. L., James-Wilson, S. & Zine, J. (2000). *Removing the margins: the challenges and possibilities of inclusive schooling*. Toronto, ON: Canadian Scholars' Press.

Duran, E. et al. (1998). Healing the American Indian Soul Wound. In Y. Danieli (Ed.), *International Handbook of Multigenerational Legacies of Trauma.* New York, Springer US: 341-354.

Estenak, S. (2006). Redefining Spirituaity: A New Discourse. *College Student Journal, 40 (2), 270-281.*

Fogelman, E. (1988). Therapeutic alternatives for survivors. In R. I. Braham (Ed.), *The psychological perspectives of the Holocaust and of its aftermath.* New York, Columbia University Press: 79-108.

Herman, J. (1992). *Trauma and Recovery: The aftermath of violence – from domestic abuse to political terror.* New York, NY: Basic Books.

Iseke-Barnes, J. (2003). Living and Writing Indigenous Spiritual Resistance. *Journal of Intercultural Studies, 24 (3).*

Kaul, S. (2001). *The partitions of memory: The Afterlife of the Division of India.* London, UK: C. Hurst Limited.

Singh, R. (2015). Remember, Recover: Trauma and Transgenerational Negotiations with the Indian Partition in 'This Side, That Side' and the '1947 Partition Archive'. *Prospero: Rivista di letterature e culture straniere, 20, 183-199.*

Smith, S. (2004). Exploring the Interaction of Trauma and Spirituality. *Traumatology, 10 (4), 231-243.*

Sutherland, P. (2017). *How Caribbean clients construct experiences of trauma and distress and the therapeutic interventions of Caribbean healing traditions*. Retrieved from OISE.

Trask, H. (1991). Natives and Anthropologists: The Colonial Struggle. *The Contemporary Pacific, 3 (1), 159-167.*

Wane, N. (2002). African women and spirituality: connections between thought and action, In E. O'Sullivan, A. Morrell, & M. A. O'Connor (Eds.), *Expanding the boundaries of transformative learning: essays on theory and praxis.* New York, Palgrave Macmillan: 135–150.

Welch, S. (2015). *Existential Eroticism: A Feminist Approach to Understanding Women's Oppression-Perpetuating Choices.* London, UK: Lexington Books.

Wolfe, P. (2006). Settler colonialism and the elimination of the native. *Journal of Genocide Research, 8(4), 387–409.*

Yau, J. [scienceandnonduality]. (2017, February 14). *Spiritual Dimension of Trauma, Julie Yau* [Video File]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r31zwA51k_0.

Yusin, J. (2009). The silence of partition: borders, trauma, and partition history. *Social Semiotics, 19 (4), 453-458*

Zine, J. (2008). Honour and Identity: An Ethnographic Account of Muslim Girls in a Canadian Islamic School. *Topia: Canadian Journal of Cultural Studies, 19, 39-66.*

Zine, J. (2006). Unveiled Sentiments: Gendered Islamophobia and Experiences of Veiling among Muslim Girls in a Canadian Islamic School. *Equity & Excellence in Education, 39(3), 239-252.*

CHAPTER THREE

INCORPORATING SPIRITUALITY IN SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

Kevin Devotta

Introduction

As social workers, we often conduct biopsychosocial assessments of our clients, looking for strengths that can be used to empower them and noting areas of challenge. However, during the assessment, therapists often overlook an important domain: the spiritual (Hathaway, Scott, & Garver, 2004, Canda & Furman, 1999 as cited by Larsen, 2011). While part of reason for the neglect of the spiritual domain might be attributable to a general lack of religiosity among therapists (Hathaway et al., 2004), there may also be a misunderstanding of what spirituality actually is and why it should be incorporated into social work practice.

Incorporating or integrating spirituality into social work research and practice has historically been a struggle for researchers and practitioners (Oxhandler & Pargament, 2014). Certainly, there are some social workers who are currently integrating spirituality and spiritually-oriented activities into their work with clients (Larsen, 2011). Moreover, there is an increasing interest in spirituality and religion among social work educators, practitioners, and students (Hodge, Baughman, & Cummings, 2006). Many social workers who identify as religious or spiritual, in fact, report being interested and willing to engage the topic of spirituality with their clients (Oxhandler & Ellor, 2017). These developments help illustrate how spirituality is growing in its importance in the social work field (Brenden & Shank, 2012).

However, we cannot overlook that some practitioners argue against incorporating spirituality into social work practice, insisting that they are mutually exclusive (Larsen, 2011). There is a fear among some practitioners that encouraging the practitioner to engage with her or his spirituality will lead to proselytization (Canda & Furman, 1999 as cited by Larsen, 2011). Indeed, some research suggests that social workers who are explicit about their faith or spirituality are not accepted in all service settings (Deines, 2008).

In the Canadian context, the Canadian Association of Social Workers' *Code of Ethics 2005* and *Guidelines for Ethical Practice 2005* only mention religion in the context of the duty of practitioners to avoid discrimination; spirituality is not explicitly mentioned at all in either document (Canadian Association of Social Workers, 2005a, 2005b). Whether there is a relationship between the lack of official endorsement of spirituality from the CASW and opposition to incorporating spirituality in the field is worth exploring, though beyond the scope of this article.

In this piece, I want to argue in favour of a universal adoption of spirituality in social work practice. To do so, I will explain the difference between spirituality and religion. Then, I will describe my social location, aware of the influence my own spirituality as a Catholic has on my worldview. We will then consider together how an Anti-Colonialism framework can assist us in seeing the value of incorporating spirituality into social work practice. A brief history of social work practice in North America, including its colonial history and present, will follow, before we finally delve into the pressing questions: why should we, as social workers, incorporate spirituality in our social work practice, and how do we do that?

However, at this point, I feel a need to emphasize that I am not attempting to give a detailed plan on how individual social workers can incorporate their own and their client's spirituality into their practice. As we will discuss below, spirituality encompasses more than the tenets of an organized religion (Larsen, 2011) and each person experiences and expresses their spirituality in unique ways. Incorporating one's spirituality – as well as the spirituality of the client – is not a straightforward task. Indeed, it should not surprise us that there are few detailed instructions on how practitioners are to learn to incorporate their spirituality into their practice, and those instructions that that do exist are not well-tested (Gilham, 2012). I would contend, moreover, that practical, evidence-based instructions for incorporating spirituality into practice are not realistic. The specifics of how to incorporate our spirituality, whether we ascribe to an institutional religion or not, are left to us, as individuals, to determine. My apologies if you came seeking an easy solution. Life is complex; incorporating our spirituality into our practice is part of that complexity.

Nevertheless, my hope and intention with this article is to clarify the distinction between spirituality and religion and offer palatable

suggestions as to why spirituality should be incorporated into our professional practice. For the sake of encouraging us to embark on this journey in our professional practice, we will consider potential ways in which spirituality can be incorporated into the social work profession, coming at the challenging from an anti-colonialism perspective. First, however, we begin with an important clarification: spirituality is not a synonym for religion (Dei, 2002).

Spirituality and Religion

I have often heard the comment "I consider myself spiritual but not religious" from people when the topic of religious beliefs comes up. It is not unusual to hear this distinction being made by people in everyday life (Zwissler, 2007; Aune, 2015). While on the surface such a statement may seem like semantics, possibly even invoking sarcastic heckles from listeners (Zwissler, 2007), it nevertheless points to an important difference between religion and spirituality as understood both academically and in everyday parlance.

To be sure, many scholars regard spirituality as an aspect of religion (Aune, 2015); however, in more recent years, the academic understanding of spirituality has changed to be broader and more inclusive (Boyd, 2012). Indeed, spirituality is a much more encompassing concept than religion (Wane, Torres, & Nyaga, 2017). As a concept, spirituality can take on different, sometimes contested, definitions in different cultural contexts (Dei, 2002). There is a multiplicity of ways to understand spirituality, including an admission that it is a vague and hard-to-define concept (Boyd, 2012). Typically, spirituality is distinguished from religion by the personal nature of the former and the institutional nature of the latter (Zwissler, 2007; Boyd, 2012).

The dichotomy of institutional/personal is not, however, sufficient for our purposes. If we are to consider why we should incorporate spirituality into the professional practice of social work, we would do well to consider the ways in which spirituality can be linked to the pursuit of social justice, one of the core tenets of social work. Recent scholarship, in fact, has delved into the question of how spirituality and social justice are related (Boyd, 2012). In an exploration of the spirituality of the Brazilian social justice activist and pedagogue, Paolo Freire, Boyd (2012) draws a link between the awareness and use of one's spirituality and resistance to oppression and marginalization. Spirituality, seen through the lens of social justice, involves more than prayers, sacred texts, and meditation

– it involves active involvement in social justice and environmental activism (Boyd, 2012). For our definition of spirituality to be relevant to the social work profession, therefore, we can demonstrate how spirituality can assist in the pursuit of social justice.

To do so, we will borrow elements from the work of the Afro-Indigenous scholar Dei (2002) and the feminist Indigenous scholars Wane, Torres, and Nyaga (2017). Spirituality can be understood as the way we connect to ourselves (mind, body, emotions, and spirit); to those around us; to self- and collective empowerment; to nature; to liberation from colonialism; and, to a Higher Power (Dei, 2002; Wane et al., 2017). Moreover, "spirituality is reciprocal based, relational, and respectful of other belief systems" (Wane et al., 2017, p. 7). Unlike religion, which is used by the colonial project to separate rational from irrational beliefs (Wane et al., 2017), spirituality embraces the diversity of beliefs. This is not to say that organized religion – including Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Christianity, and other established religious communities that follow set traditions and distinguish between members and non-members – cannot play a part in our spirituality. Some scholars, in fact, would argue that religion and spirituality can be seen as overlapping influences in our worldview (Boyd, 2012).

However, our spirituality often stretches far beyond the confines – the rules and rituals – of any particular religion; spirituality is broader than religion (Larsen, 2011). An emphasis on spirituality as opposed to religion, indeed, can assist with overcoming the divisions between religious traditions, thus facilitating improved communication between members of different religions (Zwissler, 2007). My adherence to a religious community (in my own case, the Roman Catholic Church) can inform my daily living by the rituals I practice and the cultural norms I follow; however, when we understand spirituality the way we defined it above, we can recognize that we are essentially spiritual beings and, consequently, live lives infused with spirituality (Wane et al., 2017).

What does it mean to say that we are spiritual beings? To make this statement is to resist the materialist and universalist perspective of colonialism and to recognize the complexity and integrity of the whole human being. Under the framework of spirituality, we are resisting subjects (Dei, 2002). As part of our resistance to the dominant, colonialist framework, we can seek out a framework that has not experienced the imposition of colonialism – an Indigenous

worldview (Dei, 2002). Within an Indigenous worldview, the four basic elements of life are Spirit, Emotion, Mind, and Body (Absolon, 2010). When working within this Indigenous framework, we begin in the spiritual realm, acknowledging that we are spiritual beings by acknowledging who we are (Absolon, 2010). We begin with the spirit because it is our spirituality that connects us to our mind and body as well as to our community (Wane et al., 2017). My spirituality – how I relate to myself, to my family and friends, my community, collective empowerment and liberation, and my God – is the foundation and the driving force of my life. My spirituality is what gives my life meaning (Boyd, 2012).

My religion, on the other hand, has a narrower focus. The rules and rituals of my Catholic faith prescribe certain requirements – for example, fasting on specific days of the year or weekly attendance at mass on Sundays – that inform my daily life, including my interactions with others. Yet, my connection with my God, myself, and my community is beyond the religious institution to which I adhere: if the institutional Catholic Church were to cease to exist tomorrow, I would still maintain my faith in and connection with my God, myself, and my community. Expressing my spirituality through my religion may be meaningful for me; however, even without the institutional elements of my religion, my spirituality would still retain meaning.

A key difference between religion and spirituality can perhaps be summed up by noting that religion is a social and institutional phenomenon whereas spirituality concerns itself with human experience and the immaterial (Miller & Thoresen, 2003). However, we should be careful to avoid the false dichotomy of material/immaterial. Spirituality, free of the colonial limitations that exist in religion, connects to both the material and the immaterial (Dei, 2002). Spirituality is our way of connecting to the material (i.e., my family and friends, nature) and the immaterial (i.e., my Self, a Higher Power, self- and collective empowerment and liberation from oppression).

Distinguishing between religion and spirituality is relevant to the social work field because it helps clarify how we are to work with our clients wholistically. Using our definition of spirituality, we can begin to understand why we are considered spiritual beings in from an Indigenous perspective (Wane et al., 2017). And therein lies the necessity for us, as social workers, to incorporate spirituality in our practice: if we are to work wholistically, to attend to the whole person, we need to look at the spirit, emotions, mind, and body of our clients

(Absolon, 2010). Indeed, over the past 20 years, there has been an increasing awareness in the social work profession of the relevance of including spirituality in both the practitioner's approach and the assessment of the client (Milner, 2014). The positive benefits, both mental and physical, of spirituality have been documented (Gilham, 2012), further strengthening the case for incorporating spirituality into the profession.

Within the social work education field, there is growing interest among educators, practitioners, and students in the ways that religion and spirituality can be incorporated into the field (Hodge et al., 2006). Recovering, in a sense, from the professionalization of social work from the 1920s to the 1970s that saw a separation of spirituality from practice (Oxhandler & Pargament, 2014), we are slowly starting to realize that clients often have spiritual or religious beliefs that should be taken into consideration when conducting a biopsychosocial assessment (Brenden & Shank, 2012). Moreover, spirituality and social work share many common themes such as morality, a common humanity, and compassion (Coholic, 2002 as cited by Larsen, 2011). Spirituality and social work, it appears, are a natural pair. It would seem appropriate if not necessary, therefore, that we should learn how to incorporate spirituality into social work.

An important question at this point is, who am I to make this suggestion? I have already stated that I am Catholic, belonging to an institution that has long been involved with oppression through its connection with colonialism. Spirituality, as we will discuss below, is anti-colonialist (Wane et al., 2017); moreover, spirituality engages with questions of power, particularly with the power that dominant belief systems (such as Catholicism) have over other belief systems (Dei, 2002). For me to embody the anti-colonialist tenets of critical thinking and reflection (Wane et al., 2017), I need to take a moment to consider my social location and the influence my beliefs as a Catholic may have on spirituality and how I incorporate that spirituality into my practice. In the following section, I locate myself in order to contextualize my thinking and give the reader an understanding of how and why I have these beliefs (Dei, 2002).

My Social Location

My name is Kevin Matthew Devotta. I am a first-generation Canadian, the third of four children of Sri Lankan-born parents. I cannot claim to be Indigenous as my ancestors are not from this

land, formerly known as Turtle Island; yet, I have no other home. This land is where I was born and this land is where I will always feel at home.

My parents, coming from a land colonized by the British, are "cradle" Catholics who raised my three sisters and me as Roman Catholics. My identity as an adherent of the Roman Catholic Church is central to my self-identity. Through the ritualized practice of my religion, I have come to a deep and meaningful awareness of the love and presence of my God in my life. My spirituality developed from my upbringing as a Catholic growing up in Canada; this reflects a common connection between one's religious tradition, culture, milieu, and spirituality (Boyd, 2012). As I have matured in my faith, the connection I feel between myself, other people, nature, and my God has strengthened, providing me with a strong sense of purpose and meaning, the essence of spirituality (Canda, 1988; Boyd, 2012). Thus, though I tend to use the term "faith," what is truly central to my life is my spirituality, understood using the description from the above section.

As with some other practitioners, I am drawn to the social work profession not as a career but as a calling (Barker, 2013). When I consider the privileges and opportunities I have been given by my God, I feel a sense of moral responsibility (Canda, 1988) to align myself with the oppressed and marginalized, working for their liberation insofar as it is interwoven with my own, a connection noted by Indigenous activists from Queensland, Australia. Along with many other Christian social workers, I feel drawn to the profession because of a desire to live out the message of the Christian Gospel (Barker, 2013), to love God and to love our neighbour. Social work is, for me, much more than a job or a way to earn money: it is a way to express my spirituality in a visible and tangible way.

As I speak about the role of spirituality in my life, I must also speak about my (unwanted and unintentional) participation in the colonial project. Colonization has affected every aspect of our lives, from the spiritual, to the emotional, to the mental and the physical (Wane et al., 2017). I, too, am a product of colonization, having grown up and been educated within a colonial system. I, like all people struggling with the ongoing negative effects of colonization, need to be aware of the subconscious influence of colonialism in my thinking and being. The process of de-colonization is a lifelong journey.

In particular, as I learn to incorporate my spirituality into my practice, I need to be mindful of the harmful actions done in the name of the religion I profess, Catholicism. Though, as we shall discuss below, spirituality extends beyond religion (Larsen, 2011), I must nevertheless be aware of the cultural dominance of Catholic values and traditions in my Canadian context. Incorporating spirituality into our practice necessarily involves both respect for different religious traditions, including secular traditions, as well as a willingness to be respectfully critical of them (Butler, 2000 as cited by Dei, 2002). There is much I do not know about other faith traditions, not to mention about the unique spiritualities expressed by my clients. While I bring my own spirituality – including my Catholic faith – into my practice, I am also humbly aware of the meaning my clients' spiritualities have in their lives. There is more than one way to experience spirituality.

Anti-Colonialism as a guiding theory

One of the lingering and pervasive effects of colonization is the imbedded belief that there is one worldview, one framework within which to view all of reality: the dominant, Western model (Ermine, 2007). If we are to effectively incorporate spirituality into our social work practice, we need to challenge this legacy of colonialism. The colonial project reduced spirituality to organized religion by determining which beliefs were rational and which were irrational (Wane et al., 2017); however, as we noted above, spirituality is more than simply the rules and rituals of religion. As spiritual beings, our spirituality is interwoven with our lives (Wane et al., 2017).

Consequently, when we advocate for the incorporation of spirituality in social work practice, we are advancing an Anti-Colonialist agenda (Wane et al., 2017). To challenge the colonialist belief that spirituality is reducible to religion is to challenge the belief that there is only one worldview. The dominant, Western worldview is not the only framework but is one of many equally viable and meaningful perspectives on life. My spirituality, though it includes my Catholic beliefs, is more than the tenets and practices of the Roman Catholic Church. My spirituality includes how I relate to purpose and meaning in life (Boyd, 2012).

Anti-Colonialism as a guiding theory encourages us to maintain a critical and reflexive stance (Wane et al., 2017). This stance is important in our quest to understand how we can incorporate spirituality into our social work practice because it allows us to

see and value the spiritual diversity of practitioners and clients. Unlike the colonialist project that determines which beliefs are legitimate and which are deviant, separating (true) religious beliefs from (false) spiritual beliefs (Wane et al., 2017), an Anti-Colonialist framework embraces the whole person as they are and allows for the person to empower themselves through the use of their entire being, spiritual beliefs included. The justification for using an anti-colonialist framework in our efforts to advocate for incorporating spirituality into social work can be found by examining the nature of social work and its historical development.

A brief history of social work

A simple and direct definition of social work is that it is a practice that seeks to improve human well-being (Ruth & Marshall, 2017). Pertinent to our discussion here, Ruth and Marshall (2017) describe social workers as using ecological, clinical, and biopsychosocial approaches in their practice – spirituality and spiritual approaches, we should note, are not included in this list. Spirituality is only slowly gaining acceptance in the field of social work (Brenden & Shank, 2012), despite its early connection through Jane Addams, one of the founders of the social work field in North America.

It is generally accepted that the current form of social work found in North America developed from the work of Jane Addams in her settlement houses in Chicago and Mary Richmond at a Charity Organization Society in Baltimore (Gross, 2009; Murdach, 2011). An often-overlooked detail, however, is that Jane Addams attached religious meaning to her work (Schultz, 2015). Though she refused the pressure to convert to evangelical Christianity during her college years, she nevertheless saw her work at Hull House as being an expression of Christian humanism (Schultz, 2015). Certainly, Addams did not operate Hull House as an explicitly religious organization, yet she apparently saw her work as a form of Christian vocation (Schultz, 2015). We can see, therefore, that social work from its initial founding had a connection to spirituality insofar as the founder of community social work had an awareness of her own spirituality and its influence on her work.

However, social work also has a disheartening relationship with colonialism. It is well accepted at the highest levels of social work in Canada that colonialism has played and continues to play a perverse and deleterious role in social work practice (Canadian Association for Social Work Education, 2017). The epitome of

colonialism in Canada, the Indian Act, was established in 1876, a mere nine years after the official founding of Canada. It has undergone multiple changes throughout the years, though it retains its original purpose: to allow the federal government to control most aspects of Indigenous people's lives in Canada (Montpetit, 2011). It was thanks to the powers inherent in the Indian Act that the often abusive and clearly genocidal residential school system was put into place, a system supported by social workers, that "sought to 'kill the Indian in the child'" (Montpetit, 2017).

When the government began to reduce the number of residential schools, the forced displacement of Indigenous children continued with the Sixties Scoop. From the 1960s until the mid-1980s, social workers systematically removed Indigenous children from their homes in order to place them in non-Indigenous foster homes (McKenzie, Varcoe, Browne, & Day, 2016). Both residential schools and the Sixties Scoop, phenomena supported and promoted by the social work profession, were expressions of the ongoing project of colonization (McKenzie et al., 2016).

The insidious interconnection of social work and colonialism continues to this day, where it is estimated that as many as three times as many Indigenous children are in the care of the government than at the height of the residential school system in the 1940s (Blackstock, Trocmé, & Bennett, 2004). Social workers may be aware of the devastating effects of colonization on Indigenous communities (Blackstock et al., 2004), but that does not reduce the shamefulness of the past and present relationship between social work and colonialism. It is all-the-more relevant and urgent, therefore, to seek to incorporate spirituality, a decidedly anti-colonialist practice (Wane et al., 2017), into the social work profession.

Incorporating spirituality into social work practice

As we considered above, the social work profession in North America has had a long and tarnished history relating to colonialism. The Canadian Association for Social Work Education (CASWE) has recognized the importance of transforming our current colonial reality and expressed its commitment to ensuring social work education and practice in Canada engages in the necessary transformation (2017). For its part, the Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW) has also acknowledged the role social

workers played in implementing the colonialist agenda. In 2009, then-current CASW President Veronica Marsman stated,

> [The] colonial mindset supported a vast array of actions that continue to have a negative impact on individual Aboriginal People and their communities across the country. Today we acknowledge that social workers were participants in activities that negatively impacted our Aboriginal citizens. Today we express deep regret for those actions (Canadian Association for Social Workers, 2009).

What role can spirituality, which we defined above as a tool of anti-colonialism, play in transforming social work practice from a restrictive, oppressive, colonizing practice into a liberating and empowering anti-colonialist profession? How do we incorporate spirituality into our social work practice?

To answer these questions, we need to pose a multitude of other questions: what can social work be? Is social work, conceived of and grown within a dominant discourse that flows from colonialism, able to be transformed into an anti-colonialist practice? If so, what needs to be changed? By whom? What would the social work profession, free of all of its colonizing practices, look like at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels?

A simple yet challenging response to these questions is that social work can be transformed into an anti-colonialist practice by ending its paternalizing and pathologizing ways. Social workers often use the American Psychological Association's *Diagnostic and Statistics Manual-V* to assist with a diagnosis of a mental health disorder or an addiction. Once the appropriate medical or mental health label is determined, the social worker then has an idea of the steps to follow to provide the appropriate treatment. The appropriate label also often allows for relevant funding to be released to assist with the treatment of the client.

What if, however, instead of rushing to pathologize the person's symptoms, we viewed the person wholistically as a spiritual being with physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual dimensions (Absolon, 2010)? What if funding was not tied up with scientific and medical labels? We are complex, multi-layered beings (Dei, 2002); it is only because of the ongoing effects of colonialism that we attempt to view human behaviour and attitudes through a single lens, the dominant lens of Western scientific thought and philosophical tradition (Dei, 2002).

It is here that spirituality has a role to play in de-colonizing social work practice and in liberating people from the oppressive effects of historical and ongoing colonization. While current social work practice tends to view people one-dimensionally, that is, as subjects with scientifically distinguishable and treatable defects, social work practice informed by spirituality recognizes the integrated nature of the human being and the profound connection between people and their community (Wane et al., 2012). A social worker who incorporates spirituality – both her own and that of her client – into her practice does not pathologize the client's presenting issues. She does not rush to affix a diagnostic label to the client in order to satisfy funding requirements. She does not act paternalistically towards the client, as if she is the expert and the client is little more than an issue, a problem, to be dealt with as cost-effectively and quickly as possible.

Rather, the social worker who incorporates spirituality into her practice is aware of the whole human being in front of her. Viewed through the lens of spirituality, human beings are composed of interactions between the mind, body, and soul (Dei, 2002; Wane et al. 2017). Moreover, this same lens of spirituality encourages self- and collective empowerment and liberation (Dei, 2002). Social workers practising within the anti-colonialist framework of spirituality do not, therefore, limit themselves to a one-dimensional, paternalizing view of human beings. Human beings are viewed as the integrated, complex beings that they are, living in relationship to their communities and their physical surroundings.

A framework of spirituality is relational and respects differences in beliefs (Wane et al., 2017). Consequently, when we incorporate spirituality into our practice, we focus on the quality of the relationships we have with our clients and respect their opinions. We might be more educated than our clients in regards to certain areas such mental health and addictions issues (though this is not a given), but they are experts in their own life experiences. It is a colonial framework that pushes us to see cultures and beliefs that have not been infused by colonialism as inferior (Canadian Association of Social Workers, 2009). Indeed, even Mary Richmond, one of the acknowledged founders of social work in North America, worked from a profoundly maternalistic/paternalistic point of reference (Murdach, 2011). When we adopt the anti-colonialist framework of spirituality however (Wane et al., 2017), we reject the premise that there can be only one expert, the social worker,

and instead seek out collaboration with our clients, encouraging and supporting their own efforts at working through their issues. Regardless of whether our clients' views clash with our own, we support them with the awareness that there can be a valid plurality of views.

The beauty of incorporating spirituality into our social work practice is that we will also find ourselves drawn to work at all three levels of the profession: micro, mezzo, and macro. Perhaps because the two principal founders of social work in North America, Jane Addams and Mary Richmond, came from two different professional backgrounds, social work has often been divided into two main subdisciplines: clinical (micro) and community-based (macro) social work (Ruth & Marshall, 2017). When we incorporate spirituality into our practice, the distinctions between micro and macro social work disappear along with the pathologizing and paternalistic view of our clients.

Why does this blending of micro and macro social work take place? A framework of spirituality, as an anti-colonialist worldview, challenges us to question biases and assumptions. To do this in the wholistic manner called for by a framework that embraces the whole person, we cannot limit ourselves to either the micro or the macro levels. We will inevitably find ourselves challenging and resisting the dominant discourses at all levels of social work practice. The person, after all, lives in relationship with her surroundings, including her family, friends, and community. Working with the whole person, therefore, leads us to consider the role and impact of her family, friends, and wider community. Anything less would be to fail to recognize how spirituality connects all people (Wane et al., 2017).

The spirituality of the practitioner

As professional social workers, we need to be aware of our own spirituality if we are to incorporate it into our practice. A question that all social workers should ask themselves is, what is my understanding of my spirituality? This could be a daunting question, particularly for those who do not distinguish between spirituality and religion. Yet, if we break down the meaning of spirituality, it may be easier for us to reflect on our own spirituality. Here we can recall our working definition of spirituality as the way we connect to ourselves (mind, body, emotions, and spirit); to those around us; to self- and collective empowerment; to nature; to liberation

from colonialism; and, to a Higher Power (Dei, 2002; Wane et al., 2017). The questions we are left to ask ourselves, then, are: how do I connect my mind, body, emotions, and spirit? How do I connect or relate to those around me? How do I work towards self and collect empowerment? What is my relationship to colonialism and the mutual liberation of myself and those around me? What is my relationship to nature? And finally, if I believe in a higher power, how do I relate to it/him/her? If I do not believe in a higher power, how do I relate to those things that are greater than myself as an individual – to humanity, to the quest for a sense of brother- and sisterhood, to ultimate reality?

We need to have an understanding and an awareness of our spiritual beliefs prior to learning how to integrate them into our daily social work practice. Of course, spirituality, unlike organized religion, can be fluid and evolve to reflect changing personal expressions and possibilities (Wane et al., 2017). The fluidity of spirituality may present challenges at nailing down our respective spiritual beliefs; however, once we have at least a basic understanding of our spirituality, we can then begin to work on incorporating it in our practice. The process of incorporating our spirituality into our practice will likely be an ongoing one. There are few existing resources that detail how to incorporate spirituality into social work practice (Gilham, 2012), likely because there is no one set way to incorporate our spirituality into our practice (Deines, 2008). Learning how to incorporate our spirituality into our daily professional practice will require constant attention and effort.

This is important to note because all this talk about understanding our own spirituality and incorporating it into our practice may make it seem like a simple exercise in self-reflection. However, spirituality is anything but simple. Spirituality connects us to a higher purpose and the meaning of life (Boyd, 2012) – not things we can easily determine. Learning to incorporate our spirituality into our practice is something that must be done intentionally, with integrity and responsibility (Sherwood, 1999). The way to incorporate spirituality with practice is also, I believe, something that each individual will have to figure out in accordance with their own specific life experience and situation. Clearly, it is no easy task to incorporate spirituality with practice, but as will be seen in the next section, the benefits extend beyond ourselves as practitioners.

The spirituality of the client

We have considered why spirituality, as an anti-colonialist framework, should be incorporated into the social work profession. Further, we have looked at the spirituality of the practitioner, acknowledging the complexity of learning how to incorporate our spirituality into our practice. What about the client? What is the client's perspective on spirituality? This is a relevant and necessary question to ask. After all, if our clients do not perceive any benefits to our incorporation of spirituality in our own practice, what would be the point in doing so? Social work is directed towards improving the well-being of people (Ruth & Marshall, 2017), thus any changes to the practice – in this case, incorporating spirituality – should assist practitioners with achieving the basic goal of helping people.

What do clients think about spirituality and social work? As Oxhandler and Ellor (2017) note, there are multiple studies that show clients tend to be in favour of the incorporation of spirituality with counselling. These studies have shown both that many clients are in favour of incorporating religion and spirituality into health and mental health treatment as well as having a counsellor who has a belief system, even when it is not the same as the client's (Oxhandler & Ellor, 2017). In the United States, where the studies were conducted, a vast majority of people profess belief in some higher power (Oxhandler & Ellor, 2017). It follows that if many clients have spiritual beliefs and many would like to incorporate their spirituality into their counselling sessions, then we, as social workers, need to be aware of how to respectfully incorporate their individual spiritualities into the treatment program.

Indeed, it has been argued that client religion and spiritual beliefs should be regarded as an aspect of client diversity, which would require us, as practitioners, to be aware of them and be willing to incorporate them into the treatment program (Oxhandler & Pargament, 2014). If we (intentionally or unintentionally) overlook our clients' spiritual beliefs, we may be missing a crucial part of their assessment (Canda & Furman, 1999 as cited by Larsen, 2011). When we are intentional in incorporating spirituality into our practice, we will be more aware of the wholistic nature of our clients, which includes the spiritual, physical, mental, and emotional realms (Absolon, 2010); our clients' spiritual state is just as important – to them and us as helpers – as their physical,

mental, and emotional states. The people we are helping, after all, are spiritual beings (Wane et al., 2017).

Opposition to incorporating spirituality

At this point, it is relevant to mention the criticism that incorporating spirituality into social work could lead to proselytization by the practitioner (Canda & Furman, 1999 as cited by Larsen, 2011). As I mentioned in my social location, I am a member of a dominant religion (Catholicism) that has a tarnished history – and, some may argue, present – of oppression. Critics of spirituality and social work would argue that if I bring in my spirituality into my practice, I may either try converting my client or end up oppressing her or him by imposing the dominant values of Christianity of her or him.

This criticism, however, can be addressed by the practitioner adopting an anti-colonialist framework, which the incorporation of spirituality naturally leads to (Wane et al., 2017). An anti-colonialist framework is both critical and reflective (Wane et al., 2017). If we work from this framework, we will not fall into the trap of proselytizing our clients because we will be aware of how our spiritual views, from a position of authority, may influence the client. In fact, when we have a critical understanding of spirituality – which comes from the critical stance of an anti-colonialist framework – we will engage with questions about power (Dei, 2002), including how our power (as authority figures) can influence our clients.

Conclusion

By this point, my hope is that the distinction between religion and spirituality is clear as are reasons for incorporating spirituality into the social work field. We have seen that religion is concerned with institutional characteristics whereas spirituality is about our personal connection to our Self, others, nature; and, a Higher Power; self- and collective empowerment; and liberation from colonialism (Dei, 2002; Wane et al., 2017). Spirituality, as is hopefully clear by now, is much more than simply religion (Boyd, 2012; Larsen, 2011).

As to why we should incorporate spirituality, we considered how spirituality is part of an anti-colonialist framework (Wane et al., 2017). Given the oppressive colonialist history and ongoing practices of the social work profession, we would do well to adopt the critical and reflective stance of anti-colonialism by incorporating the anti-colonialist idea of spirituality into our practice (Wane et

al., 2017). To incorporate spirituality, we have to be aware of our own spirituality as well as that of our clients. Many clients today have a preference for drawing from their spiritual beliefs in their counselling sessions (Oxhandler & Pargament, 2014). If we adopt spirituality as a framework, we can be better equipped to resist the oppressive colonialist history of the social work profession as well as ensure we are addressing an important element of the client's identity.

The process for doing that is, as we have discussed, complex at best. There is no simple, straightforward explanation of how to incorporate our spirituality into our practice (Gilham, 2012). Nevertheless, for the sake of our clients as well as our own personal liberation from oppressive colonialist practices, we ought to engage with the struggle of learning how to incorporate spirituality into practice. Best wishes on this journey – we go forward in solidarity.

References

Absolon, K. (2010). Indigenous wholistic theory: A knowledge set for practice. *First Peoples Child & Family Review, 5*(2), 74-87.

Aune, K. (2015). Feminist spirituality as lived religion: How UK feminists forge religio-spiritual lives. *Gender & Society, 29*(1), 122-145. doi: 10.1177/0891243214545681

Barker, S. L. (2013). A qualitative examination of the experiences of Christian students in social work education programs. *Social Work & Christianity, 40*(1), 3-22.

Blackstock, C., Trocmé, N., & Bennett, M. (2004). Child maltreatment investigations among Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal families in Canada. *Domestic Violence and Child Welfare, 10*(8), 901-916. doi: 10.1177/1077801204266312

Boyd, D. (2012). The critical spirituality of Paulo Freire. *International Journal of Lifelong Education, 31*(6), 759-778. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02601370.2012.723051

Brenden, M. A., & Shank, B. (2012). Social work for social justice: Strengthening social work education through the integration of Catholic social teaching. *Social Work and Christianity, 39*(2), 128-150.

Canadian Association for Social Work Education. (2017). *Statement of complicity and commitment to change*. Retrieved from https://caswe-acfts.ca/media-release-board-of-directors-endorses-a-statement-of-complicity-and-commits-to-change/

Canadian Association for Social Workers. (2005a). *Code of ethics 2005*. Retrieved from https://www.casw-acts.ca/en/Code-of-Ethics

Canadian Association for Social Workers. (2005b). *Guidelines for ethical practice 2005*. Retrieved from https://www.casw-acts.ca/en/Code-of-Ethics

Canadian Association for Social Workers. (2009). *2009 statement of acknowledgement*. Retrieved from https://www.casw-acts.ca/en/2009-statement-acknowledgement

Canda, E. R. (1988). Conceptualizing spirituality for social work: Insights from diverse perspectives. *Social Thought, 14*(1), 30-46. doi: 10.1080/15426432.1988.10383616

Dei, G. J. S. (2002). Spiritual knowing and transformative learning. *The Research Network for New Approaches to Lifelong Learning*, 1-13.

Deines, H. (2008). The Catholic worker movement: Communities of personal hospitality and justice. *Social Work & Christianity, 33*(4), 429-448.

Ermine, W. (2007). The ethical space of engagement. *Indigenous Law Journal, 6*(1), 193-203.

Gilham, J. J. M. (2012). The ethical use of supervision to facilitate the integration of spirituality in social work practice. *Social Work & Christianity, 39*(3), 255-272.

Gross, M. (2009). Collaborative experiments: Jane Addams, Hull House and experimental social work. *Social Science Information, 48*(1), 81-95. doi: 10.1177/0539018408099638

Hathaway, W. L., Scott, S. Y., & Garver, S. A. (2004). Assessing religious/spiritual functioning: A neglected domain in clinical practice? *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice, 35*(1), 97-104. doi: 10.1037/0735-7028.35.1.97

Hodge, D. R., Baughman, L. M., & Cummings, J. A. (2006). Moving toward spiritual competency: Deconstructing religious stereotypes and spiritual prejudices in social work literature. *Journal of Social Service Research, 32*(4), 211-231. doi: 10.1300/J079v32n04_12

Larsen, K. M. (2011). How spiritual are social workers? An exploration of social work practitioners' personal spiritual beliefs, attitudes, and practices. *Journal of Religion & Spirituality in Social Work: Social Thought, 30*, 17-33. doi: 10.1080/15426432.2011.542713

McKenzie, H. A., Varcoe, C., Browne, A. J., & Day, L. (2016). Disrupting the continuities among residential schools, the Sixties Scoop, and child welfare: An analysis of colonial and neocolonial discourses. *The International Indigenous Policy Journal, 7*(2), 1-24. doi: 10.18584/iipj.2016.7.2.4

Miller, W. R., & Thoresen, C. E. (2003). Spirituality, religion, and health: An emerging research field. *American Psychologist, 58*, 24-35.

Milner, M. (2014). Adding virtue to faith: Strategies for developing character for Christian social work students. *Social Work & Christianity, 41*(2/3), 233-253.

Montpetit, I. (2011, May 30). Background: The Indian Act. *CBC News*. Retrieved from http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/background-the-indian-act-1.1056988

Murdach, A. D. (2011). Mary Richmond and the image of social work. *Social Work, 56*(1), 92-94.

Oxhandler, H. K., & Ellor, J. W. (2017). Christian social workers' views and integration of clients' religion and spirituality in practice. *Social Work & Christianity, 44*(3), 3-24.

Oxhandler, H. K., & Pargament, K. I. (2014). Social work practitioners' integration of clients' religion and spirituality in practice: A literature review. *Social Work, 59*(3), 271-279. doi: 10.1093/sw/swu018

Ruth, B. J., & Marshall, J. W. (2017). A history of social work in public health. *AJPH Supplement 3, 107*(S3), 236-242.

Schultz, R. L. (2015). Jane Addams, apotheosis of social Christianity. *Church History, 84*(1), 207-219. doi: 10.1017/S0009640715000062

Sherwood, D. A. (1999). Integrating Christian faith and social work: Reflections of a social work educator. *Social Work & Christianity, 26*(1), 1-8.

Zwissler, L. (2007). 'Spirituality' among religiously motivated feminist activists. *Culture and Religion, 8*(1), 51-69. doi: 10.1080/14755610601157120

PART II

SPIRITUALITY AS REFLEXIVE THEORY AND PRACTICE

CHAPTER FOUR

TRANSNATIONALITY, INDIGENEITY AND SPIRITUAL AWAKENING IN THE AFRICAN DIASPORA: A REFLEXIVE JOURNAL IN TWO VOICES

Martha Kuwee Kumsa and Samuel Omane Agyapong

Abstract

This article uses a reflexive approach to explore the *fish-out-of-water* experiences of two diasporic Africans and their struggles in reaching back from their transnational locations to reclaim some aspects of their ancestral spirituality. It discusses the paradoxical realities of rejecting and reclaiming, essence and contingency and being and becoming, as they struggle to weave together what is dissonant in their experiences. The context in which this paper is imagined and produced is the advisor-advisee relationship and their journey through the advisee's doctoral dissertation. It is written in their two voices, coming together and rhyming at times but drifting apart in discord at other times. The authors reflect on their respective research projects as they attempt to weave together strands of the material and the spiritual, the biographical and the historical, the personal and the political and the local and the global.

Keywords: alterity, authenticity, colonialism, indigenous spirituality, spiritual reflexivity, transcendence

I, Me and my Self

My name is Martha Kuwee Kumsa. I am an Oromo, born and raised in Ethiopia. I am the daughter and granddaughter of Protestant ministers. Currently I am a Canadian citizen teaching in a Canadian university – the academic context in which this paper is imagined and crafted. I advise Samuel's doctoral dissertation in which he explores the role of indigenous spirituality in environmental policymaking in Ghana. I agreed to advise this dissertation because of its resonance with my own research interest. However, I soon developed an acute discomfort with the research approach that left out the stories of the researcher Self, seeking only the stories of the researched Other. When the discomfort was felt on both sides of the

advisor-advisee divide, we agreed to take on a reflexive approach where the stories of the researcher are considered constitutive parts of the research. To ensure that reflexivity is practiced in the field with the researched Others, we felt the need to practice it within the advisor-advisee relationship as well. Embedded in and embodied by societal power relations, this relationship cannot be immune to reflexive objectification. Indeed, while making sense of the reflexive approach, we got drawn into the depth of our own stories and this is what we share in this paper.

My name is Samuel Omane Agyapong (a.k.a Samuel Agyapong). I was born and raised in Ghana. I am a Christian Minister of religion. Originally, I came to Canada to minister to members of the Ghanaian Methodist Church of Toronto. Currently I am a permanent resident of Canada, pursuing my doctoral studies in the role of indigenous spirituality (amamre) in environmental policymaking in Ghana. I am a product of British colonization and colonial educational system of the then Gold Coast, now Ghana. As part of my upbringing I grew up and had my education as any normal child was expected. Formal education was compulsory to a very large extent to the point that if one decided not to go to school the school sent other students to "arrest" the absentee/deviant pupil whereby the pupil is carried to school. On arrival, one was sure to receive some punishment in the form of a few lashes. Equally compulsory was the fact that every pupil was obliged to attend church service (Christian religion) every Sunday at the end of which a roll was called, names written and checked the following day at the first assembly. Those who refused to attend church the previous Sunday needed to provide a reason or be ready for some punishment. So religion formed an integral part of the education system as I was growing up, in fact they were inseparable.

At the time, I did not realize it, but later in life I realized that the educational system was segregational and individualistic. Certain portions of the town were acquired by Christian denominations for the sole occupation by members of those denominations, thus separating families into those who subscribed to traditional beliefs and those who now subscribed to new and different faith – the Christian religion, a religion that promised a better life. In some places it was known as 'salem' *and in other places it was called* 'sukuu mu' *(sukuu means education and by implication, enlightenment - people who had seen the light). So those who lived in* 'sukuu mu'

were the enlightened ones as opposed to those who did not attend church and were not only illiterate but also regarded as backward and primitive and were living in 'darkness'. Those who did not attend the Christian church practised traditional religion, which to a very large extent was integrated into the culture. Nevertheless, the traditional religion and the culture were different and separate but as we grew up we were made to understand (through the system of education that we received) that they were the same. So not only did I denounce the traditional religion of my people, I also denounced the culture of my people.

For the longest time in my politically conscious life, I considered religion to be the opiate of the oppressed. I was an ardent revolutionary, a staunch believer in progress and scientific socialism. My soul was filled to the brim with the passion of liberating the suffering masses from oppression. To me, religion seemed to soothe the wounds of oppression but in reality it was out to blind and deafen people to the workings of oppressive social structures. It was an ideology used as a tool of oppression to numb our feelers and create subjective states of mind whereby we fell easy prey to objective structures of injustice. Religion muted our spirit of resistance and made us malleable and submissive beings. For me, then, the struggle against such oppressive spell of religion was part and parcel of the struggle for liberation and social justice. And I stayed away from religion and did my best to raise awareness on its opiate role.

Now it seems ironic that I have come full circle, researching the revival of my ancestors' indigenous religion. My passionate interest in ancestral spirituality is not an accident; nor is it driven by a purely intellectual curiosity. A profound sense of spirituality has stirred in me and awoken in the deepest core of my being; and that is what drives my research. Of course this is contrary to the individuality, objectivity, and neutrality of the researcher. Just as my rejection of the subjectivity of religion happened within a specific socio-cultural and political context, my questioning of objectivity and my spiritual awakening also happened in a unique socio-cultural and political context. Therefore, at this point in my journey, I see no spiritual awakening that transcends time, space and culture. In this light, my part of this paper is a reflexive exploration of the mutual constitution and mutual transformation of the spiritual and the

contextual. It narrates how specific kinds of spiritual awakening are generated by and generate back specific contexts.

I never consciously subscribed to the Marxist idea that religion was the opium of the oppressed. Nevertheless, I felt that there was something in the traditional religion that was lacking in the Christian religion. This feeling has generated an ongoing tension in me for a long time. To the best of my knowledge the precepts of the Christian religion are good only the practitioners do not practice what the religion requires of them. In that case the problem is not with religion, although the Christian religion seems to not exert its requirements on its practitioners the way the traditional religion does on its own. This has led to a euphemism in Ghana in terms of morality and justice that holds that "Onyankopɔn fa ne boɔ a ɔnnto no ntɛm" (meaning when God takes his stone, he takes time before he strikes – inferring that the Christian God is slow to act which allows for injustice to persist over a long period of time) whereas the god of the traditional religion is fast to act in seeking justice for those who have been wronged and want instant justice.

It appears a paradox for a Christian minister to be so interested in amamre (traditional knowledge) which in the main also involves traditional/indigenous spirituality which is considered pagan, heathen and despised. As I navigate through my multiple locations in Canada as a Ghanaian, a Christian minister and a student, I realize in no uncertain terms that there is something in my culture and tradition that is not only lacking but in fact missing in my life. I had mentioned earlier the colonial environment within which I grew up. With regards to the circumstances of my education, I had little or no control over but not as an adult who made the decision to train as a Christian minister. If I was taught as a child and indeed internalized it that my tradition and culture were pagan and heathen, I owe it as a duty to myself and to my people to determine whether it is true and keep it as such or ask questions to find out what has gone wrong and initiate a change where I find it possible. If a reflexive approach provides the tools to help me achieve this, then I'm ready to engage it.

The Reflexive Approach

But what is a reflexive approach? It is hard enough to make sense of it myself but explaining it to someone else feels ever so daunting. I find it easier when I relinquish my expertise and embrace the humility of co-learning with students. Reflexivity is never a monologue,

anyway; it is conversational. But every encounter fosters a new set of puzzlement and opens up a whole new horizon. And this time it is the study of spirituality, for god's sake! Reflexivity is bound to be different in the context of spirituality. How can I teach spiritual reflexivity to Samuel? He is a Very Reverend minister! I am a used-to-be Christian who went astray! Add to the mix the fact that I am a woman and it is a double jeopardy already. I know that we are co-learners in this journey. That's my learning philosophy, anyway. There is no teaching without also learning, no giving without also receiving simultaneously. I know part of reflexive work is about baring our souls and putting our vulnerable Selves out there. But I hesitate at every twist and turn. I see the teacher expert taking over. I don't feel ready to learn from a student. I don't want him to know that I don't know. I run for cover in the books!

The literature is confusing. Scholars have muddied the water so badly that I find no clarity in defining reflexivity. Every article I read gives me a different meaning. Of course every context needs to reposition the concept in its own contours! But where do I start? I know there is no reflexivity outside relationality. What is within my own body or culture matters little on its own. I need the affirmation of Others. I do love the fluidity and generativity of contexts but I get lost in the quicksand. I need a toehold on a firmament. I desperately seek something to hold on to. I run back to the familiar in Bourdieu,[1] to my first encounter with critical reflexivity. I reflect on the complex processes of embodiment by which we internalize societal structures and discourses and become who we are as classed, gendered, ethnicized, racialized, sexualized beings. From this toehold, I can now reach out and have conversations with others who draw on and extend Bourdieu[2] and others who examine embodiment in their own ways.[3] I realize how profoundly invisible these social processes are and what profound structures of injustice they conceal in their invisibility. I am awed by how unaware we are to the discursive constitution of our own Selves, especially when it comes to our privileged subjectivities. Deep in my bones, I feel the need for critical reflexivity to make visible the invisible structures of injustice. And deep in my soul I feel the need for spiritual reflexivity the same way. I am ready to engage in conversation too, Samuel. I wonder how this process has been for you?

To talk of reflexivity is one thing but to talk of spiritual reflexivity and by extension, critical (spiritual) reflexivity, becomes another ball

game altogether. The thought of it brings to mind Audre Lorde's (1984) often quoted statement: "The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house". Am I through this reflexive mode attempting to use the master's tools to dismantle the master's house or to preserve it? And two of these tools come to mind immediately – the tools for communicating the message and the fraternity to which I belong – the pastoral fraternity. In fact as I undertake this reflexivity, I feel like someone is standing over my shoulders and watching out for every word that I put down and censoring every word I say. I find it difficult to relinquish my professional expertise because that is what I know most about and can in fact confidently articulate better as against the knowledge of my culture. To criticize (do critical reflexivity) therefore sounds to me more of a betrayal or cutting the sand from under my feet. On another front, it does not seem to be all hopeless. In fact, Blanchard (2002) in her conversation with Audre Lorde says that:

> "In our hands, the master's tools have become ammunition in the dismantling of his house, as we set about adding an extra room or two. We have taken his tools and with them made tools that fit our individual hands, as each of us sets out to do the work we have to do....[W]e'll realize that those tools didn't belong to the master, after all. Well, they didn't belong to him all by himself. And that is one way that we gain agency, by adapting the tools we have rather than by reinventing the wheel; although the wheel is reinvented along the way." (p. 256-7)

So I do see what you mean by relationality but if I am asked to talk about how the process has been for me, I want to begin with a lament. I lament the fact that among my own people I seem like a stranger especially when it comes to performing traditional rituals. I am not fully accepted as being a part of them which is usually subtly presented as "respect" and yet I am also not too sure whether I am fully accepted in my acquired status. As a Christian minister and through the system of education I received and internalized (which sometimes could also be interpreted as indoctrination), I am willing and ready to venerate people from cultures I know little about. At best these are people I know through what has been presented in the Christian religion, through what I have read about them but I people I have not personally encountered or experienced. They are called "saints" because they lived worthwhile lives and did things worth

emulating but I cannot do the same to people in my own culture who had lived similar lives and left behind important legacies for posterity. Consequently, when my people meet to perform certain cultural ceremonial rituals in honour of the departed saints in my culture I am excused or alienated, as if to say "when it comes to these things, you don't belong here". So like the proverbial amphibian, I am not very sure where I belong; whether in water or on land. Now desperately seeking back what I lost, I feel like a fish out of water.

Looking back at what I am saying, I am 'scared' at what people of my fraternity will think about me, or what has become of me. Unfortunately, what that feeling does is silence the inner authentic voice. But if this inner voice is muffled, it is only because in our privileged subjectivities, we are unaware of how our education has isolated us from our culture and our people to the point that we unwittingly perpetuate the structures of injustice put in place by the colonial masters without recognizing it. It is like forcing a square peg into a round hole; grafting a western colonial individualistic culture into a traditional community-based culture through the vehicle of education and religion. They do not match.

In terms of your confusion in defining reflexivity, there is an Akan saying that goes: Won a woda ayeya mpo se won nhu Nyame a na won a wobutu ho nso beye den *[If those who are lying face up are complaining of their inability to see God, what will become of those who are lying face down]? If indeed my advisor, a social work professor, in all humility, admits to the fact that she finds it 'confusing,' what would one expect of me the advisee? Nevertheless, in the context of this conversation, I will summarize my understanding of reflexivity in this Akan proverb:* Se wo ma wo were firi w'agya nton a woyera badwa ase *[if you forget your father's lineage you will get lost in a big gathering]. The import of this proverb is that however consumed you become with things and people around you, you must never play down your significance among the collective. In reflexivity therefore there is the need to recognize that others affect you the same way you affect others and therefore there is the need to position oneself as such.*

This raises in me the awareness that any discussion of transnationality, indigeneity and spiritual awareness that plays down the extent to which I have affected and been affected by the process would be hollow and incomplete. Is anybody out there listening? But why will people like to play the ostrich and pretend

that all is well when in fact it is not, to make me feel alone? If it has to do with ME and the way I feel, then, I do not need anybody's affirmation or approval. Even though in my culture it is not normal to provide oneself with a testimonial, a proverb goes like this: 'if nobody would say that you are, you have a duty to say to yourself that you are.' Thus, if in this case nobody would want to go with me, I know that it can be risky going it alone, but it is a risk I am willing to take if change must take place.

Samuel, we cannot hide from the many ways in which others have taken up reflexivity. We work within their constant gaze. They peer at us from valued books and prestigious journals. Some are gatekeepers opening or closing the doors of privilege. Some are walking the path with us. You and I engage in a sort of multiple reflexive conversations, here and with many others at the same time. No I, me or my Self exists in isolation. We are relational beings; we exist only through our relationality with Others. As we look at such discursive constitution of our Selves, we need to heed the slippage that Davies et al (2004) point out. They warn us against reifying and writing our discursive Selves as our real authentic Selves. Sometimes when I open my mouth and talk, I feel it is my own voice. Of course it is my own voice coming deep from within my bones and my soul! But then I realize that I had to learn the very language in which I speak. It is the internalized external coming out of me as naturally mine. Now, I may not like their linguistic reductionism, especially from a space of spiritual reflexivity, but I cannot help but recognize the partial truth that language does constitute us. For me, however, spiritual reflexivity goes far beyond social structural and linguistic constitution and I would like to repeat what Jesus once said: Give what is Caesar's to Caesar and what is God's to God. Just as social Self is constituted only within social relationships, a spiritual Self can only be constituted within spiritual relationality. We cannot lump them together.

As we join the conversation, we also find an opportunity to stretch the concept in our own ways and open up new horizons. After critically examining various notions of reflexivity, Pillow (2003) proposes a new definition: the reflexivity of discomfort. I know that making visible some privileged Selves comes with some discomfort but I do welcome such transformative disruptions. I don't know what you think, Samuel, but I want us to challenge ourselves and make visible our oppressive Selves as located in multiple centers

of privilege. However, I also want to challenge Pillow's reduction of reflexivity to just one sort. Reflexivity needs to resonate with the context in which it is employed. It is not productive to use one notion of reflexivity in all contexts. Transformation does not always need discomfort or disruption. I believe it can happen in comfortable spaces some call enabling reflexivity (Chawla and Rawlins 2004). I welcome your definition, Samuel, but I would like to propose the notion of spiritual reflexivity that is both uncomfortable and enabling.

Well said, Martha, but I hope that your challenge to Pillow's (2004) reduction of reflexivity does not lead to a disagreement. You indicated earlier that reflexivity has been taken up in many ways, a fact that adds to what Alvesson & Skoldberg (2000) making reference to Bordieu & Wacquant (1992) point out that there are different varieties of reflexivity. Common to all the different varieties is the fact that reflexivity draws attention to the complex relationship between processes and contexts. In that context, Pillow's reflexivity of "discomfort" could well be considered as another variety just as your "enabling" reflexivity could also be another variety. I consider the different interpretations, therefore, as providing spaces for engagement where we can also present our voices. What I agree with you on, however, and which of course raises a huge concern is the fact, as you rightly said, that we work under their constant gaze. Does it not tie in with the feeling I expressed earlier of someone standing over my shoulder as if to make sure that I use "politically correct" language, a situation that can be both intimidating and 'disabling'?

Now that I have bought into the 'enabling' reflexivity, which not only enables but also empowers (Chawla and Rawlins, 2004), I would want to suggest that this variety could provide a partial answer to the question posed by the Asantehene Otumfuo Osei Tutu at the 4th African Development Forum held in Addis Ababa regarding the recent phenomenon where academics now seem to be invading the institution of chieftaincy. The Asantehene named the paradoxical coexistence of opposites in expressing how the traditional institution was being intellectualized and hoped that 'it would be illuminating to find out why the situation is changing so fast' (ECA 2007, p. 34). *I would add that, by means of enabling reflexivity, Ghanaian intellectuals and academics are now reclaiming their cultural rights and indigenous spirituality through the institution of chieftaincy from which they were displaced through Western missionary education.*

There appears to be a new realization that after all the institution is not as bad and as evil as they were made to think as they were growing up. What is different here is the fact that these academics who are now chiefs have the 'tools' provided by the master, knowledge and critical minds to stand toe-to-toe and defend what decisions they make and why they make those decisions.

Oh how I identify with your lamentations! I relate to your assertion of the intimate relationality of Self and Other in the Akan proverb but I'm taken aback when, in the same breath, you assert that you don't need anybody's affirmation or approval. There is a dissonance for me when you sound so sure of your solid Self but then I feel instant resonance when you betray the precariousness of that very sure-footed Self and admit to how 'scared' you are of the gaze of your fraternity. I distance my Self from the dualism you create between the Christian God and the traditional god but I deeply relate to your fish-out-of-water experience of profound longing for that very traditional god. I wonder if paradoxes are indeed deeply ingrained in our everyday living. I disconnect from you when I see your class- ethnic- and gender-blind privileged Self hiding beneath how 'every normal child' was expected to go to school when you were growing up in Ghana. I wonder if this 'normal child' was also true for poorer girls who were not Ashanti. But then I reconnect with you when you so eloquently express the invisibility of our privileged subjectivities. I wonder how this invisibility might play out in your encounters with research participants in the field and how you might deal with such opacity of Self and the ensuing ethical accountability to the Other (Butler, 2005). I do see that you and I come from different trajectories of life with different perspectives. Rather than flattening out the contours of our differences, however, I wonder if we could implicate them in the different forms of spiritual awakening that inform our respective research projects.

Transnationality and Indigeneity

Unlike most migrants from Ghana, I was neither a political nor economic migrant. I was sent to Canada in an official capacity to provide pastoral care to Ghanaian migrants of the Christian religion of my denomination. I came with my family, a situation that most migrants in both categories would consider a luxury, but it did not take me long to understand and appreciate why after so many years in their adopted home most Ghanaians still maintained transnational ties back at home and behaved like they were still living in Ghana

by the way they exhibited indigenous characteristics. The individual becomes the bread winner for the family in the original home as well as in the adopted home. Such people can best be described as citizens of two worlds. Indeed this is what I call transnationality. I share in that experience because I am also required to regularly remit family members back home, a duty that I perform faithfully. It is not optional; it is an obligation that the culture imposes on its members. There is a proverb in Akan that says: Se obi hwe wo ma wo se fifiri a, won so hwe no ma ne nse ntutu *[if someone takes care of you for you to grow teeth, you have a responsibility to take care of them when they lose their teeth]. I call this aspect of transnationality the pull factor (Faist, 2000; Levitt, 2001; Mensah, 2008)*

Then there is also what I call the push factor. (Itzigsohn, et al., 1999; Kisovo, 2001). One day my daughter came home from school and told of a story about what she experienced in school that day. While in a group with friends (most of them Caucasians) chatting, the question of citizenship came up in the conversation and when one Ghanaian who was born in Canada said she was Canadian, someone retorted: "Where do you originally come from?" or sometimes it could be where do your parents originally come from? Then my daughter added: 'These people always make you feel that you don't belong here.' An Akan proverb has it that: Se yeyi wo maabi a ko maabi *[when you are rejected in one place look for another]. Being displaced from the original country and yet not being welcomed in their adopted one, encourages transnationality in many in the diaspora (Faist, 2000; Porte, 1997; Glick-Schiller, et. al., 1995; Itzigsohn, et, al., 1999; Kistovo, 2001). This sense of not being accepted and not belonging makes you long back for your indigenous folks where you fully belong, look back for your indigenous roots.*

Shahjahan (2005) has pointed out that the definition of indigenous has been a site of contestation. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) corroborates Shahjahan's position when it says that there does not exist any single definition of indigenous peoples that captures their diversity as peoples (UNDP, retrieved 03/06/07). The UNDP nevertheless attempts a description of who constitute indigenous people by saying that: "The term "indigenous peoples," indigenous ethnic minorities," and "tribal groups" are used to describe minority groups that share similar characteristics, namely a social and cultural identity that is distinct from dominant groups in society." One falls into the colonial paradigm by trying to enclose it

into a neat category. The Covenant of the League of Nations referred to non-self-governing or colonized peoples as "indigenous" peoples. In the 1950s, the ILO began referring to the problems of "indigenous populations in independent countries," which is to say culturally and geographically distinct communities that were non-self-governing, marginalized, and colonized inside the borders of independent states (UNDP, retrieved 03/06/07)

Indigenous to me, however, does not refer to some primitive uncivilized life of some group of people somewhere living in the jungle. Neither is it the life associated with aboriginal people. Even if it were to be associated with a certain group of people, indigenous to me means a native, it means original; it means local. Indigenous to me is how I would describe myself if I was woken up in the middle of a dream and asked who are you? It is the essence and core of my humanity; what I know myself to be and not what I have been told about myself. It is what I have learnt about myself through what I have seen people around me doing without necessarily being told what to do (Owusu, 2003). It is telling someone "we don't do things this way here" without being able to provide any meaningful basis to support why things are not done that way. The only support is that it is the way I have seen things done. It is a way of life. My indigeneity influences the way I behave when I meet other people. It is who I am when no one is looking (Hibels, 1994). This includes what I would like to eat and what I would like to wear and how I would want to carry myself without feeling judged by anybody. So to live an authentic, original home-grown life of ones native people and fore-fathers is to be indigenous. Indigeneity so described has nothing to do with primitiveness. Rather every group has something original and authentic and unadulterated (if indeed there is any unadulterated culture around) to them. This description of indigeneity is indeed the opposite of foreign – something transported from elsewhere that for all intents and purposes is not original to the recipient community (Owusu, 2003).

Your notion of indigeneity is so contagiously powerful that it resonates with me so deeply. For me too, indigeneity means a deeply felt sense of belonging, attachment and identification with a group and locality. I disconnect from you, however, on notions of purity and authenticity, and here I continue your scepticism of the existence of 'unadulterated' cultures. Indigeneity, for me, is profoundly relational and bound up with relational processes of Self

and Other, and as such, it is extremely sensitive to context. In this light, the very sense of being originary or native is evoked only in relation to Others who come later or those who are born elsewhere. Likewise, purity and authenticity are evoked only in a similar context of relationality, ironically nullifying the very possibility of purity and authenticity. I recently came across an interesting conversation in the literature on the origin and practice of indigeneity.[4] Some of the voices argue that indigeneity is the product of the paradoxical tension between inspiring and constraining features of liberal democratic nations [5] and others squarely place indigeneity within the postcolonial project and the agency of indigenous peoples' internationalist movements.[6] To me, however; both sides fail to notice a crucial element – the relationality of indigeneity. In my view, indigeneity is deeply relational whether this is in relation to extract and settler colonialisms, the postcolonial project or migration and transnationality.

Indeed, the mere fact that you and I claim spiritual awakening and reclaim African indigeneity in Canada in the context of transnationality speaks volumes about relationality and context. For me, spiritual awakening or research into African indigenous spirituality does not just drop from the sky. Nor does it spring from a contextual vacuum stripped off its socio-economic, material cultural and politico-historical relations. In my view, the paradox of transnaitonality and indigeneity reflects the paradox of Self and Other. Indeed it also reflects the fact that back in the homeland where our indigeneity was taken-for-granted, we longed for and embraced the transnational (enter Christianity for you and Marxism for me). Now, fish-out-of-water in our new homes, we both long back for the very indigeneity we feel we left back in the homeland. To me, this movement of desires calls into play the instability in the broader relations of mobility and settlement and I see our research projects as transgressive spatial practices that disrupt both national and continental boundaries. But Africans are no strangers to transnationalism. After all, they were globalized long before the birth of nation-states and the very notion of transnationalism. As Page and colleagues poignantly put it, 'the Black Atlantic is 500 years old, more than 200 years older in its disruption of nation-state boundaries than the epoch now described as "transnationalism" (Lorand Matory 2005: 2). Not only is Africa

at home with transnationalism today, but maybe it is the home of transnationalism' (2009, 138).

Martha, your notion of African transnationalism, mobility, settlement, and desire reminds me of another crucial issue that is missing in your narrative. There is an Ashanti saying that goes: Dua baako ntumi nnye kwae; and again, dua koro gye mframa a ebu *[One tree cannot constitute a forest; and again, a single tree cannot stand the onslaught of a strong wind. It will be broken]. The way I see it, traditions and cultures of most migrant communities in Canada, including Ghanaians, is built on community. That is the message the above saying conveys. I am not an individual but rather a member of a larger community, part of which is in Ghana. As a Christian minister in Canada, I am aware that in our everyday worship services we do not only pray for ourselves and people in Canada but also our families back at home. Prayers are said for certain specific issues that make you realize that we know what happens in the daily lives of our families at home because we are a community that cares. That explains why Ghanaians in Canada continue to celebrate their indigeneity and culture in a society that does not have that culture and the transnational linkages of families in Canada and Ghana.*

I had an interesting conversation with a prominent paramount chief, a participant in my research. This person is a mechanical engineer by profession and worked for an electrical company before he was enstooled as a chief. He is one of the educated chiefs and I expected that he would question why he is required to do certain things. For me an academic does not follow rules blindly. However, this was what he had to say: 'at the time of swearing, there are certain things that you recite to the public, you know. You say that… it is the good rules that my ancestors developed that I am going to follow. Even if after the first day, if you are found to have gone off tangent or you are not behaving as you said in your oath, you can suffer destoolment'. It is these customs which seem to have endured over a very long time that I describe in terms of originality, transcendence and authenticity. And this is the authenticity and transcendence I am looking for in my research when I explore the practice of amamre and how it is integrated into environmental policy in various historical periods of precolonial, colonial and postcolonial Ghana. This paramount chief also asserted that there is no single universal notion of amamre that binds all peoples of Ghana. Community expectations are reflected in the customs of the area. My understanding is that for every

community, there is a certain original and authentic amamre that transcends time and space.

At the core of indigenous people's life is community and community expectations. This community spans from ones immediate (nuclear) family to cover the extended family, which can indeed be extensive, to ones neighbours and the entire community with which the individual is identified. This community does not cover only the living members of the community but it includes the departed who are the custodians and protectors of the community of the living. On important occasions and on festive days this ancestral community together with the living members who are absent for whatever reason, including those who have travelled and are overseas are invited to partake in the communal meal that is shared among members through prayers and incantations. It is indeed a sacred, reverent and spiritual relationship, a relationship that is eternal and all inclusive, not only of humans but also of the land (environment) who is recognized as a female, "asaase Yaa" (Thursday-born ancestor). Since the land is everywhere and the departed ancestors are spirit, they are everywhere supervising and protecting their own. An understanding of indigeneity from this perspective is critical to an understanding of the relationship between indigeneity and the transnational ties that exist between diasporic Ghanaians (Africans).

I can't agree more, Samuel. This relationship between indigeneity and transnational ties is crucial for understanding the deep meaning of spirituality. I am amazed by how eloquently you articulate the inseparable interconnection of humans with animate and inanimate nature and our intimate interrelations from across the boundaries of time and space and life and death. I also profoundly relate to your signification of these inseparable interconnections as sacred and reverent spiritual relationships. Here you really take the transgressive spatial practices of our research far beyond the disruption of national and continental boundaries and stretch its horizon into the cosmos. Here is where the notion of spiritual reflexivity comes in very handy. For me, no amount of reading and practicing critical reflexivity can open up such a sacred space. Where I part ways with you, here again, is on your recurring themes of originality, transcendence and authenticity. For me, there is no original or eternal spirit that endures time and space and nature and transcends independent of its relational contexts.

This chief's notion of universality and particularity in the practice of amamre resonates with me very much. To me this speaks to the mutual constitution of the local context and the kind of amamre practiced within that locality. The way you map out the historicity of *amamre* spirituality into the precolonial, colonial and postcolonial contours also resonates with me. Unlike you, however, I would not be looking for an authentic amamre that transcends all these contexts and come out unscathed, not even an authentic amamre that is distorted by the weight of these varying contexts. I would look for the fascinating processes of how amamre is intimately intertwined with the political and historical context. I would look for how the shift in context from pre-colonial to colonial and postcolonial accords with the shift in the political engagement of *amamre*. Now, that is a relational process! To me, this signifies not only the mutual constitution of *amamre* spirituality and the historico-political context but also their mutual transformation of each other. But I must also admit my own ignorance and the hard-to-swallow fact that my truth, leaves out all Other ways of making sense, including yours. So, I promise myself to be reflexive in my assertions and look forward to the learning you bring to us from your spiritual awakening in exploring the authenticity and transcendence of amamre.

Spiritual Awakening

I would like to differentiate between religion and spirituality not only in what they mean to me but also in how they relate to me and indeed in how they have shaped my life and in thinking through the questions of my research. Until recent centuries, the history of spirituality remained bound up within the history of religion. It has been described as 'the divine essence of the individual' (Carroll, 1997), 'an innate quality' (Faiver, Ingersoll, O'Brien & McNally, 2001). From this standpoint, the spiritual, perceived as involving eternal verities with regards to humankind's ultimate nature, often contrasts with the temporal, with the material, or with the worldly This provides a sense of connection which forms a central defining characteristic of spirituality — connection to something 'greater' than oneself, which includes an emotional experience of religious awe and reverence and hence the opposite of secularization (answer.com/ Spirituality, 2007). I should add that this description of spirituality is prevalent in the Christian religion (which though uncomfortable to me I would admit I know more about than I know about the religion

of my ancestors, traditional religion) of which I am a minister.

This way of looking at spirituality has not only been myopic, but it has also been individualistic, other-worldly and it dichotomizes the individual and places emphasis on individual responsibility. When it comes to matters related to (inanimate things like) land, trees, rivers, and forest groves, (i.e. the environment) the situation is worse. Any attempt to protect nature, which in both (Christian and traditional) religious persuasions are regarded as God's creation and preserving it for future generations[7] *is regarded as animism and nature worship and hence heathen. In fact, this is the way I had perceived spirituality for so many years as a Christian minister, but since embarking on this research study that worldview has been seriously challenged. Indigenous spirituality is born out of the traditional people's sense of community. Community in the traditional sense is not made up only of the living members of the community but also the dead and the yet unborn. It is the community's spiritual duty to respect and honour the unborn and the dead. Since the dead members of the family are the ancestors, our relationship with them are spiritual without necessarily worshipping them which is what takes place in performing a religious duty. For me that is the fundamental difference between religion and spirituality.*

Unlike in the Christian religion, in the traditional system and among traditional people, emphasis is placed on corporate and collective responsibility of community members. An individual is only as important as the community he or she belongs to and identifies with. In this system it is difficult if not almost impossible to separate the sacred from the secular, and at the core of this unity is spirituality, which as noted by Millar, et al (2005), is the bedrock of the traditional knowledge system. I want to point out that the view of the traditional system and where they place their emphasis resonates with my inner being – the real me. It has more appeal and provides me a comfort zone compared to my position in the Christian view. I am very much aware of the consequences that await me from members of my fraternity considering the direction of the discussion. Nevertheless I feel a strong sense of spiritual awakening, an awakening that to me seems like scales falling off my traditional and indigenous eyes to provide me a brand new panorama of the richness of my traditional and indigenous roots from which I had for a very long time been uprooted.

Your spiritual awakening in the metaphor of scales falling off your eyes resonates with me powerfully. Indeed this awakening is what inspired me to research the revival of ancestral spirituality in the Oromo diaspora. However, much as I concur with your distinction between religion and spirituality, I do not share the dualisms you create between them. I wonder how this dualism might play out in your research encounters. My own findings suggest that the spiritual/religious dualism and indeed the individual/collective and sacred/secular binaries are blurred in participants' everyday practices.[8] But this is a matter of debate in the literature. For some, religion is organized, institutional, unitary and communal and spirituality is individual, non institutional, pluralistic and secular.[9] For others this spells a false dichotomy but they do observe a shift from religion to spirituality following the paradigmatic shift from modern to postmodern.[10] Some in the African context observe intimate interconnection not only between religion and spirituality but also between the spiritual and the material, the individual and the collective, the sacred and the secular, the gods and animate and inanimate nature.[11] Still others underscore the mutual influence of context and religion[12] and signify spirituality of dissent as bound up with issues of identity and alterity in the context of injustice.[13]

In my search for the spiritual, scales continue to fall off my eyes through new challenges and new findings. But my epiphanies seem to happen in little ebbs and flows rather than a single once-and-for-all earth-shattering, life-changing miracle. So, I don't see a sharp turning point in my research but the journey has been so full of surprises that small scales fall of my eyes at all the small twists and turns. There were times when I experienced the intense presence of *Akko* [Grandma], guiding me through the interpretation of the ancestral rituals I have never experienced in my 'real' life. Mind you, I have never met this *Akko* in 'real' life. But I knew from the many stories I was told that, in my ancestors' *gadaa* spirituality, *Akko* was *Haadha Caaccuu* [mother of rituals, keeper of spiritual objects]. *Akko* and *Akaakaa* [Grandpa] were referred to as *Warra Ayyaantuu* [people of the spirit], a title transmitted only through genealogical lines. I often dream of *Akko* giving me *caaccuu* [the spiritual object] but these dreams are so real.[14] *Akko* reaches out and touches me from across the oceans and the rift of ages; she speaks to me from beyond the grave and from deep within my bones all at once. Her presence is so real but I keep her hidden in

the heart of my heart, for fear that I would be seen as a delusional psychotic. But *Akko* gently nudges me to ask what is real.

Like you, Samuel, I feel the awakening of my indigenous spirituality as the real authentic me. But what is real and what is reality? Is what I feel from deep within me the authentic me? Is it a hardwired inherent me? Is it an infolding of the external? This brings to mind a fascinating recently rekindled old conversation on the origin of religion and the embodiment of god.[15] These voices engage issues of proximity/distance, interiority/exteriority, indeed otherness and alterity. They shed light on my interpretation of participants' spiritual practices and on my own experience of *Akko* but they also confuse me as much as they inspire me. The sense I make of them is that god and religion are deeply bound up with the relational processes of Self and Other. We are never fully and completely our Self because there is always the 'more than' Self, the absence that makes our very presence possible. Nor are we in complete unity with Others because of our difference, the constitutive difference that makes the very sense of Self possible. The sense I make is that the basic feature of alterity is this Otherness of Self and that alterity forms the basic way of being-in-the-world. Understood this way, then, alterity is the basis of everyday communication, including our communication with god.

Such breaking down of the dualisms of Self and Other, proximity and distance, 'in here' and 'out there' helps me make sense of *Akko*'s presence. Scales fall off my materialist eyes and I see the spiritual as mutually constitutive with the material. The spiritual is not external and 'out there' but intimately intertwined with the natural. Now, even the supposedly primordial notions of Otherness make sense. Even the embodiment of God in the Christian theology I rejected in my youth makes sense and the Christian teachings of my childhood that I rejected as utterly colonial feel so authentic as they speak from deep within my soul. 'In the beginning was the Word.... and the Word was God (John 1:1).... And the word became flesh and dwelt among us... (John 1:14)'. Nelson (1979) asserts that the embodiment of God in Jesus Christ is His self-disclosure to us. Is *Akko*'s presence her self-disclosure to me, then? Perhaps that is why people refer to Africans as ancestor worshippers? Or perhaps *Akko* is more of a relational encounter than a presence. Indeed my findings suggest an embodied, everyday relational deity (Kumsa 2009). Scales fall off my atheist eyes and I see god(dess), not as an abstract disembodied being 'out there' but as embodied

in and constitutive of our mundane relational processes with all beings, animate and inanimate. And, for me, the fact that such spiritual awakening is happening as a transnational indigeneity underscores the relevance of context and the claim that context is very much a constitutive part of the relational process.

You just said it! You just made reference to and in fact expressed your curiosity about what I have already described as authentic spirituality. Unlike you, however, I don't question the authenticity of the voice that comes from deep within me. For me, that voice is authentic already. It is the real me, unadulterated. And that is the notion I take to my research. Indeed, when I asked another prominent paramount chief to define amamre, he replied that amamre encapsulates the history, culture beliefs values and virtues of society that have evolved from ancient times. It is this resilience of authentic amamre that, despite evolution comes powerfully through the centuries. It is eternal and it comes from times before time, as Simons (2006) asserts. Indeed when we talk of traditional belief systems, we are venturing into the area of such timeless indigenous spirituality. Therefore, what I mean by authentic and purity is the enduring nature of the amamre which encapsulates indigenous spirituality. In spite of colonial discourses denigrating amamre during the colonial period and in spite of Kwame Nkrumah's machinations to exterminate chieftaincy (Rathbone, 2000) during the CPP's administration, the institution of chieftaincy has survived and virtually transcended both the colonial and post-colonial administrations of governance. For me, the chiefs embody amamre and the survival of the institution of chieftaincy reflects the survival of amamre spirituality.

I remain curious about your passionate search for 'unadulterated' authentic indigeneity in *amamre* spirituality. It seems that purity is what you're looking for when you sit down with research participants. But what does pure and authentic *amamre* look like? How do you identify it when you see it? Where do you look for it? Is *amamre* embodied in chiefs, as you assert? Is it embodied in their practices? Or does the location matter at all? Is there *amamre* spirituality that transcends time, space and context? I'm asking these questions again not because I have figured it all out but because I am also wrestling with these issues. I noticed your notion f times before time in Simmons (2006). I too find this a gripping and passionately storied testament of the originality, essentiality and superiority of uniquely African black gods. The argument is that god is encoded in our DNA, forming an intimate and authentic esoteric knowledge

inaccessible to sense of perception. This argument truly grips my imagination even as I argue against essence, authenticity and transcendence. I wonder if this is where you are coming from in your passionate search for originality. One of the profound truths I learned from researching *gadaa* spirituality is the humbling realization of the many things that will remain unknown to us – despite all the passion that fires up our pursuit, all our refined instruments, and all the science and technology at our disposal. I also realize our tendency to dismiss what we cannot know as superstition or ignorance of the Other rather than admit the limits of our own horizons and accept it as another source of knowing.

Therefore, I am also asking you Samuel, because I am aware of the reflexive twists in which how we see our Self is easily transposed with how we see the researched Other and how we end up practicing spiritual arrogance towards participants. I know this because I've been there and done that. But I am also acutely aware that your reality is different from mine and that our practices will, therefore, be different. Indeed that is why I stress the relevance of context time and again. In my own context, then, there were times when I jumped with joy. Eureka! I found the truest *gadaa* spirituality of my ancestors! The danger was my subsequent, if unintentional, arrogance towards Christian and Muslim Oromos. I found the authentic faith; theirs was bogus. Mine was pure original; theirs was tainted. They were less Oromos as Christianity and Islam were grafted on the original faith of their Oromo ancestors and stunted it, very much like your metaphor of forcing a square peg into a circle. I believed that these people needed to shed alien skins and reclaim their authentic roots, just as I did. Unconsciously, I was enacting this in my practice as well. It was manifest in my subtle exclusion of Christians and Muslims from Oromo rituals. It showed in my disregard for their holidays when I organized gatherings. It was manifest in my suspicion of their narratives in my interpretation of data. Whatever they meant, for me, it was less than the truth. This is what comes to mind when I hear your passion for purity and authenticity, Samuel. I wonder if these might creep into your research and how you might view your ethical responsibility to the researched Other?

I see what you mean, Martha, and indeed I strive to practice such reflexive awareness in my encounters with research participants but I do want to put the issues you raise here in the context of the age old injustices done to indigenous peoples around the world. Earlier

you mentioned how indigenous peoples are engaged in spirituality of dissent. That is what I want my practice to reflect. In fact, the paramount chiefs I interviewed lamented this injustice and proposed what I too would call spirituality of dissent. When asked how he would respond to somebody who says that amamre is primitive, anti-development and anti-modern, a paramount chief said: 'I will tell such a person that… there is no best culture in the world. Amamre has been looked at from the lens of other cultures. Now when you superimpose another culture on your culture the two don't synchronize.' *He noted that when white men saw the virtues in the amamre tradition, they initially tried to utilize it through the indirect rule system of governance. But soon they realized that Christianity could not be perpetrated when the people had their own spirituality. Then they found everything wrong with amamre and attempted to destroy it. It is that destructive discourse that has been perpetrated over the years to suggest that everything that comes from the West is good and everything that comes from traditional and indigenous communities is bad. The sad part of this saga is that, not only do we diaspora Africans not see anything wrong with such discourse; we also perpetuate it in very many subtle ways. That is where I want to practice spirituality of dissent.*

Conclusion: Peak Moments

In my reflections so far, I have tried to demonstrate that spiritual awakening and the relational context in which it is happening are inseparably related, indeed they are mutually constitutive and mutually transformative. I made the truth claim that there is no eternal spirit transcending its natural and relational contexts. But I have also embraced the unknowable in my ancestors' *gadaa* spirituality and admired your passion for the transcendence of spirit and authenticity of *amamre* spirituality. As Dewsbury and Cloke (2009) assert, we can study spirituality only within the specificities of contexts. Like you, Samuel, I set out searching for 'unadulterated' authentic *gadaa* spirituality of my ancestors. But things shifted in the process and I realized that even as we collectively looked into our Oromo past to retrieve the pure spirituality of our ancestors; we were also actively pulling together strands and weaving our unique spirituality within our own contexts in the here and now. For me, the very notion of spiritual reflexivity was an insight that emerged out of this passionate search.

When I look back from my current space of spiritual reflexivity into the winding path of my multiple spiritual awakenings, I cannot separate the awakenings from the various contexts in which they happen. To me, the intensities of the multiple interweaving contexts are very much constitutive parts of the multiple spiritual awakenings in the contours of my path. It is my firm belief that, if the intensities of those specific contexts did not crisscross at that particular moment, there could not have been that specific form of spiritual awakening. From the space of this insight, then, I see small peaks where intensities of contexts and my corresponding spiritual awakenings interweave. Do you see some peaks along your path too, Samuel? If so, what role does context play in your spiritual awakening? It will be our signature way to conclude our paper by highlighting some peak moments.

When I look back, I see some points along my path where I experienced scales falling off my eyes. Perhaps I could call them peak moments. I had learnt some years back in my science class in my training college days that nature abhors a vacuum and that when we thought that a glass was empty, it actually was not because it was full of air. I had noted earlier in this journal the fact that right from a very young age I had been literally uprooted from my culture and transplanted within another. I could not say at the time that it was a different culture but now I can. I say this because I seemed to be conflicted in my person but I could not locate where the conflict was coming from or where it was taking me. My parents would ensure that I went to church even when they would not go. If we did not attend church service on Sunday we would be called before the assembly and whipped Monday morning at school. In spite of the passion attached to church attendance, the lives of most church goers did not portray what they ought to be. On the other hand, those who did not attend church, who all my life I had been made to understand were pagan lived lives that seemed to synchronize with whatever they believed, albeit in fear that if they did other wise there could be consequences. And mind you I observed them closely because we lived together in the same vicinity and sometimes in the same home. Put in another way, they were faithful (or is it fearful?) to what they believed in. What was the difference? Hence, I had been involved in a lifetime of searching for answers 'probably' without even knowing it myself.

So, yes, Martha, your questions about authenticity and purity and where to locate them, or whether amamre spirituality is context

specific, admittedly are all legitimate and difficult. Yet the Bible says that 'The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children (Romans 8: 16). So there may not be a single or particular location. I think we can agree without any doubt that there is something about me and about you and about every individual that is unique and makes you different from any other person and which we may or may not even know about (Mbiti, 1990; Salazar, 2008). You may say probably we were born with it. I say that something I call my indigenous spirituality is both authentic and pure. What the chief or the priest or education does is help us develop it. So the chief as custodian of amamre and leader of the community and the priest as the head of the congregation through ceremonies and direction help us to develop it. So if you have an indigenous spirituality in you, no matter how much western education you acquire, which only helps you live individualistic life, you will still yearn for a sense of community which constitutes the bedrock of your indigeneity. To think and talk community is to talk about sustainability and I believe that was the spirit in which the Brundtland declaration was made (Brundtland Report, 1987, p. 43). May be that is where the issue of authenticity and purity emanates from in discussing the Akan spirituality. To me, this report was an eye-opener that issued a sort of spiritual awakening in me.

My first awakening was when I rejected my parents' Christian faith and embraced *bilisummaa* [liberation]. My discovery of Marxism as the only way to *bilisummaa* was a profoundly spiritual experience for me. The global context was the era of Marxist-oriented anti-colonial national liberation struggles. In the local context, the Oromo national liberation struggle was brewing to free the Oromo people from Abyssinian (Ethiopian) colonialism and create a new country modelled on the Oromo *gadaa* egalitarian system. Socio-political aspects of *gadaa* were being revalorised and reclaimed. In the intergenerational context, there was a generational negation as many Oromos of my generation took on Marxism in rejection of the faiths of our parents' generation, both Christianity and Islam. For us, our elders were mere victims of colonialism and imperialism; we were the agents of liberation. If their colonial gods prompted Oromo colonization, our godless god would free us from all forms of oppression. The fact that our elders were suave agents strategically playing one form of colonialism to fight against another did not dawn on me until long after my father's death when I was sifting through the documents he left behind (Kumsa 2009). Now I see how

both generations thoroughly oromized their new religions and how *gadaa* spirituality survived, ironically, through our very practices of Christianity, Islam and Marxism. We don't have to look farther than everyday relations to see the *gadaa* woven into our practices. And these are already transnational, indeed tranaslocal, practices where local agents grab, bend and indigenize the global. None of these practices were 'unadulterated' despite the powerful demands to practice purity.

My next awakening happened when I rediscovered god. Globally Marxism had brought flag independence to many but it did not deliver liberation. The Ethiopian revolution had ousted the West and joined the Eastern bloc of the Cold War divide but it did not deliver freedom from all oppression. Sister socialist countries, out for power grab, flirted with the new revolutionaries who took power but did not care much about the oppression of downtrodden masses. Nor did the Oromo liberation struggle deliver *bilisummaa,* as *bilisummaa* proved to be far more complex than first imagined. Marxism was being wrenched out of our hands and turned into an instrument for furthering the colonization of Oromos. I learned the hard way that Oromo strugglers were only pawns in others' games of power as we were used, abused and disposed. The next thing I knew was crying out from the deep holes of imprisonment and torture. *Yaa waaq! Yaa waaq!* [O god! O god!] I cried. I stunned myself by crying to the very god I believed did not exist. But the god I cried to was neither the Oromo god of my ancestors nor the Christian God of my parents, nor my own godless god of Marxism. Coming from the depth of human suffering, my cry was more like the cry of Jesus Christ: *Eloi, Eloi lama sabachthani?(*Mark15:35). Marxism, as those who claimed the appellation practiced it, was no salvation at all. It was fallible and I was looking for the infallible. I was looking for the god that does not feel pain, the one beyond all suffering, the Other just beyond the suffering me, the ineffable, the immanent. But god responded in human face, black and white, red and yellow.

It was one fine morning. I was watching a newscast on a Canadian broadcasting network (CTV). There was a conflict between the indigenous people in Sudbury, Ontario, and a mining company over the degradation of the environment as a result of mining activities. As a result, a meeting had been successfully brokered to review the environmental policy regarding mining activities in the area. That was eureka moment that removed the scales from my eyes and brought

into clear focus the situation in Obuasi, Ghana. For the government of Canada and the mining company to agree to review environmental policy on mining activities in the area meant there was a recognition of something good in the indigenous people's values. That I suppose is my moment of spiritual awakening. Although I did not know too much about the indigenous people of Sudbury, Ontario, I knew the indigenous people of Ghana very well. They are my people; I lived among them and ministered to them. I witnessed firsthand how their lives and livelihoods were destroyed by environmental degradation, particularly as a result of bad mining practices. I knew how traditional people and their knowledge systems protected and sustained the environment for thousands of years. I was a passionate advocate of environmental protection and sustainability. It was easy to make the connection between Sudbury, Ontario and Obuasi, Ghana. Indeed this is what led to my dissertation research where I explore the role of amamre in environmental policymaking in Ghana.

If the Sudbury, Ontario story caused some 'scales' to fall off my eyes and led me to embark on my doctoral study, what I witnessed during my field research did more. A taxi driver who was taking me home after a busy day in the field observed that things have become so difficult these days, especially when it comes to money matters. In our days, the olden days, it was not the money it was the satisfaction of knowing that you have provided a service to someone who appreciated it. What we cherished most was 'Onyame nhyira wo' [God bless you] after you have done some good to somebody in your community. 'It is not like that today' he said. I seemed to have woken up from a dream, a type of spiritual awakening as he recounted some of the values his and my ancestors cultivated in our community and which seems to be losing ground. As if a story was unfolding right before me, the following day, a woman recounted her experience in a public transport. She said: while on the bus I saw an elderly woman board at one of the terminals. Recognizing that none of the youth would give this woman a seat I stood up from my seat and invited the elder woman to take my seat. She looked into my face and said 'you were not born in Ghana', you were born in the Gold Coast. Immediately she said that tears came into my eyes. I began to grieve over the traditional values that the younger generation of our time – both at home and abroad in the diaspora – are losing.

As though this was not enough, another moment of truth struck when I stumbled into some information about the disastrous mining activities in Ghana.[16] Just before I arrived in Ghana, about 2000 representatives

from mining-affected communities across Ghana gathered for the second annual forum on the National Coalition on Mining (NCOM) in the fall of 2009. The letter stated that this coalition has been engaged in research and advocacy on the economic, environmental, and social implications of mining and natural resources. Ghana is one of Africa's largest producers of gold, yet mining communities are some of the country's most impoverished, often lacking basic services, including access to clean water, healthcare, and education. So far so good as this is where my deepest concerns are and indeed the coalition offers an incredible resource I could tap into. The shock and awe came when I learned that a third of Ghana's land is presently under concession to gold and bauxite mining firms, many of them Canadian, and each year more arable farmlands are diverted to mining. If I had always been conflicted between my Christian faith and my passion for indigenous spirituality, I am now immersed in yet another layer of conflict between my Ghanaian identity and my aspirations for Canadian-ness. Mining firms under the flag of my new country are causing devastation in my homeland. What am I to make of this split identification? This realization highlighted the currency of amamre in environmental protection and added import and urgency to my research. And this is another spiritual awakening for me. So yes, Martha, I understand the role of context in spiritual awakening.

I guess the context of diaspora offers us a peculiar opportunity to make the links and connections between the back home and the new home as well as the experiences and cultures of the many different people we live with. Diaspora gave me another eureka when I found *waaqa gurraacha* [black god] in the spirituality of my ancestors. It was in this spiritual awakening that I also discovered *Akko*, the grandma I never met. Intensities of contexts were crisscrossing my life. Developmentally, I was myself becoming *Akko* to my granddaughters. Intellectually I was immersed in notions of Self, Other, reflexivity and embodiment. Spiritually, I was intensely searching for my ancestors from the fish-out-of-water space of displacement where I had ridden the global tide of migration and come to Canada. Emotionally and socially I was deeply longing for the cultural resources of my homeland. Locally, the Canadian context was rampant with racialization and Native peoples' movements. Globally there was the postcolonial discourse and indigenous peoples' internationalist movement with which I

closely identified. Politically, a disturbing realization was dawning on me of the invaluable indigenous spiritual, cultural and material resources devastated by colonialisms around the world. *Akko*'s earth-based rituals suddenly picked up new meanings in the context of displacement and deterritorialization. Perhaps this is a validation of Kale (2004) that religion and spirituality are used as means of harnessing reterritorialization in the context of globalization. *Akko* did suddenly surface as the intimate alterity I had Othered.

It was in these intensities of contexts that *waaqa gurraacha* also suddenly picked up new meanings. Mind you, I had always known that Oromos worshiped *waaqa gurraacha* in the old days but that did not mean more than mere words to me when I was growing up. In fact I had taken it up when I was a journalist. I had valued it enough to interview custodians of Oromo spirituality and produce and broadcast radio programs on *waaqa gurraacha*. However, that was in the context of reclaiming the socio-cultural heritage of *gadaa* and, still, 'black' did not mean much more than a word/ color to me. It had to take the racializing context of Canada for me to valorize and reclaim the blackness of god in *waaqa gurraacha* in a deeply spiritual way. When my spiritual eyes were cut open, suddenly 'black' ceased to symbolize all things evil. Indeed, in *gadaa* spirituality, black stood for the purity and holiness of god as well as the unknown and the unknowable. For me, this signification of god brings out how people create god in their own image and as their own alterity. Ironically, I also discovered a colorless and boundless god in this very bounded and color-coded god. Now I feel at home with Christians in breaking bread in the name of God. I feel comfortably spiritual among Muslims and break bread with them in the name of Allah. I feel profoundly spiritual in my ancestors' rituals, pouring libation and celebrating the spirits of *haadha dachii* [mother earth] in the heartland of Canada. Now my god is not limited to the boundaries we create for ourselves. The unknowable god is beginning to feel comfortable but I am already beginning to feel discomfort in that very comfort. I long for another discomfort, another eureka, another awakening…

References

Armstead, Ronni. (2008). 'La Krudas, spatial practice and the performance of diaspora'. *Meridians: Feminism, Rrace, Transnationalism* 8.1, 130-143.

Asad, Talal. 1991/1993. *Geneaologies of Religion. Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam*, Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Bailey, E. 1990. 'The Implicit Religion of Contemporary Society: Some Studies and Reflections'. *Social Compass* 37.4, 483–497.

Beckford, J.A. 2003. *Social Theory and Religion.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Beckford, James A. And N. J. Demerath 2007. *A Sage Handbook of the Sociology of Religion.* London: Sage.

Blanchard, M. L. 2002. 'Poets, Lovers, and the Master's Tools: A Conversation with Audre Lorde'. from This Bridge We Call Home. Retrieved on 04/01/10 from http://userpages.umbc.edu/~korenman/wmst/masterstools.html

Lorde, Audre. 1984. *Sister outsider: Essays and speeches by Audre Lorde.* CA: The Crossing Press.

Brussat, F. & Brussat, M. 2009. Spirituality and practices: Resources for spiritual journeys. http://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/ Retrieved on 12/10/09.

Bolognani, Marta. 2007. 'The Myth of Return: Dismissal, Survival or Revival? A Bradford Example of Transnationalism as a Political Instrument'. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 33.1, 59-76.

Cimino, R. and Lattin, D. 1998. *Shopping for Faith: American Religion in the New Millennium.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Csordas, Thomas, J. 2004. 'Asymptote of the Ineffable: Embodiment, Alterity and the Theory of Religion'. *Current Anthropology* 45.2, 163-185.

De Costa, Ravindra. 2009. 'Comments'. *Current Anthropology* 45.2, 320-321.

Deleuze, G. 2003. *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation.* London: Continuum.

Derrida, Jacques. 1998. 'Faith and Knowledge: The Two Sources of "Religion" at the Limits of Reason Alone'. In Jacques Derrida and Gianni Vattimo (ed.) *Religion.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1-78.

Dupre´, Marie-Claude. 2004. 'Comments'. *Current Anthropology* 45.2, 321.

Dewsbury, J. D. And Paul Cloke. 2009. 'Spiritual Landscapes: Existence, Performance and Immanence'. *Social & Cultural Geography* 10.6, 695-617.

Faist, T. 2000. Transnationalization in international migration: Implications for the study of citizenship and culture. *Ethnic and Racial Studies,* 23(2), pp. 189–222.

Featherstone, D., R. Phillips and J. Waters. 2007. 'Introduction: Spatialities of Transnational Networks'. *Global Networks* 7.4, 383–91.

Fuller, R.C. 2001. *Spiritual but Not Religious: Understanding Unchurched Americans*, New York: Oxford University Press.

Glick Schiller, N., Basch, L., & Blanc-Szanton, E. 1995. *Towards a Transnational Perspective on Migration: Race, Class, Ethnicity, and Nationalism Reconsidered.* New York: Academy of Sciences.

Greenhouse, Carol. 2009. 'Comments'. *Current Anthropology* 45.2, 321-322

Hale, Charles. 2009. 'Comments'. *Current Anthropology* 45.2, 322-323.

Heelas, P. 1996. *The New Age Movement.* Cambridge: Blackwell.

Hibels, Ben. 1994. Who you are when no one is looking: six studies for individuals and groups. Leiscester, England: Inter Varsity Press.

Itzigsohn, J., Cabral, C. D., Medina, E. H. Vasquez, O. 1999. Mapping Dominican transnationalism, narrow and broad transnational practices. *Ethnic and Racial Studies,* 22 (2), pp. 316 - 339.

Jones, Gail. (2006). A dreaming, a sauntering: Re-imagining critical paradigms. *JASAL,* 5, 11-24.

Kale, Sudhir H. 2004. 'Spirituality, Religion, and Globalization'. *Journal of Macromarketing* 24.2, 92-107.

Kistivo, P. 2001. Theorizing transnational immigration: a critical review of current efforts. *Ethnic and Racial Studies,* 24(4), pp. 549–577.

Kymlicka, Will. 2007. *Multicultural Odysseys: Navigating the New International Politics of Diversity.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

______. 2009. 'Comments'. *Current Anthropology* 45.2, 323-325.

Levitt, P. 2001. *The Transnational Villagers*. Berkeley: Univ. California Press.

Lorand Matory, J. 2005. *Black Atlantic Religion: Tradition, Transnationalism and Matriarchy in the Afro-Brazilian Candomblé*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Mbiti, John S. 1990. African Religions and Philosophy, London: Heinemann, Second Edition,

McCaskie, T. C. 2009. 'Akwantemfi – "In mid-journey": An Asante Shrine Today and its Clients'. *Journal of Religion in Africa* 38, 57-80.

Mensah Joseph. 2008. Religious transnationalism among Ghanaian immigrants in Toronto: A binary logistic regression analysis. *The Canadian Geographer*, 52 (3), pp. 309-330

Owusu, T. Y. 2003. Transnationalism among African immigrants in North America: The case of Ghanaians in Canada. *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 4(3), pp. 397 - 412 .

Page, Ben, Claire Mercer, and Martin Evans. 2009. 'Introduction: African Transnationalisms and Diaspora Networks'. *Global Networks* 9.2, 137–140.

Portes, A. 1997. *Globalization from Below: The Rise of Transnational Communities: Latin America in the World Economy.* Miami: University of Miami.

Ramos, Alcida Rita. 2009. . 'Comments'. *Current Anthropology* 45.2, 325-326.

Rathbone, R. 2000. Kwame nkrumah and the chiefs: the fate of 'natural ruler' under nationalist governments. In *Transactions of the royal historical society, Traditional rule in ghana; past and present.* Vol. 6, Iss. 10, pp. 45-63

Salazar, Humberto Ramos (Rev.) 2008. Aymara spirituality: a challenge for Christian spirituality in http://www.wcc-coe.org/

wcc/what/jpc/echoes-16-08.html. Retrieved on 12/04/10

Sebastian, Job. 2009. 'The Rise of a Global God-Image? Spiritual Internationalists, the International Left and the Idea of Human Progress. *Third World Quarterly* 30.1, 205-225.

Simons, Paul/Nebu Ka Maa'at. 2007. *The Legacy of the Black Gods in Time before time.* London: TamaRe House Publishing Inc.

Sissons, Jeffrey. 2005. *First Peoples: Indigenous Cultures and Their Futures.* London: Reaktion Books.

_____. 2009. 'Comments'. *Current Anthropology* 45.2, 326-327.

Turner, Brian S. 2009. Reshaping the Sociology of Religion: Globalization, Spirituality and the Erosion of the Social. *The Sociological Review* 57.1, 186-200.

Warner, M. 2006. *Phantasmagoria.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

World commission on environment and development 1987. *Our common future* (the brundtland report). Oxford: Oxford university press.

Wright, R. A. 1984. *African Philosophy.* Lanham, New York: University Press of America.

CHAPTER FIVE

VERY SUPERSTITIOUS: RECLAIMING CHINESE SPIRITUALITIES TO TRANSGRESS

Coly Chau

Introduction

I grew up knowing and understanding certain things about myself, my being and the world; feeling particular connections and relations to other people, other lifeforms, spirits, the earth and the universe; as well as, being surrounded by and embodying a variety of practices, rituals or habits. I grew up believing in many things in my life, but I had no words or names for these ways of knowing, being and doing. Sometimes, certain things were ascribed to certain cultures, philosophies, and sometimes even to particular religions, but it did not mean that I, or my family, identified with them. Throughout my life, I have been deeply influenced by media, books, deeply religious peers in school, as well as classes like math, science and philosophy, deeply entrenched in Western and rational ways of knowing. These interactions made me dismiss what I knew and understood as mere “superstitions”.

In the summer of 2018, I took a Spirituality and Schooling course at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. I was not quite sure where I fit in. For most of my life, I found myself in this limbo, of not knowing where my beliefs fit in, and once again, I found myself again in this space of limbo. I reflected deeply about what I knew, what I believed in, and how I lead my life. Once again, the closest thing I had to describe my spirituality, the ways of knowing, being and doing, were things considered quite superstitious.

I researched intensely into what superstitions were and how they came to be. During my research, I came across a video recording in which Mahayanan Buddhist monk 淨空 Venerable Master Chin Kung answered two questions “what are superstitions?” and “why do they exist?”. In a matter of a few minutes, 淨空 Ven. Master Chin Kung took me through an abundant, yet convoluted, journey—question upon question, rather than answers. 淨空 Ven. Master

Chin Kung encouraged the engagement and challenging of beliefs and even disbelief; as well as, asked important questions of whether one has questioned why they believe particular things. I was not surprised. A decade ago, I had picked up one of 淨空 Ven. Master Chin Kung's books at a Buddhist temple, in it read "Buddhism is an education, not a religion" (Chin, 1998). At the end of the video, 淨空 Ven. Master Chin Kung concludes that "believing and not believing are both superstitious".[1]

I start by stating that this chapter is not on Buddhism, or any religion. Rather, it is on superstitions as spiritualities, which I frame

---

1 淨空 Venerable Master Chin Kung responded at the May 25, 2007 Hong Kong Buddhist gathering:

Question: "What are superstitions?" and "Why do they exist?"

Answer: "So called superstition, you believe in it, but you believe that you have not clearly sorted out the truth, so you believe it. For example, when speaking about believing in Buddha, what has Buddha not clearly sorted out, what is Buddhism, [what] hasn't been clearly sorted out, but you believe it, you pray, you seek refuge—this is superstition. On the other hand, you don't believe. I don't believe, what is Buddhism, what has not been sorted out clearly—not believing is also a superstition, that hasn't been sorted out clearly. It's not to say that believing is superstitious, not believing is also superstition. What you need to ask is, why does superstition exist? The first one, doesn't have wisdom, the second one, the truth has hasn't been clearly sorted out, so that's why superstitions exist. So, believing and not believing are both superstitions." (my translations)

Translated from:

問：請問什麼是迷信？為什麼會有迷信產生？

答：所謂迷信，你相信了，但是你相信你並沒有把事實搞清楚，你就相信了。譬如說信佛，佛是什麼沒搞清楚，佛教是什麼，沒搞清楚，你就相信，你就去拜，你就去受皈依，這叫迷信。另外一個是不信。我不相信，佛教是什麼，搞什麼也不清楚，那個不信也是迷信，沒搞清楚！並不是說信是迷信，不信也是迷信。那你要問，為什麼會有迷信產生？第一個沒有智慧，第二個沒有把事實真相搞清楚，就會產生迷信。所以信跟不信都是迷信。 (阿彌陀佛, 2013)

as valuable and meaningful ways of knowing, being and doing. Superstitions can be beliefs and practices shaped by religion, "folk religions", syncretization of religions and philosophies, but can also be based completely outside of these structures, and transcend them. They can reflect history—empires, colonizations, migration, wars and revolution—thus, at times, are hidden and located in the crevices and margins. But still, they exist and flourish, and fill space with life and meaning, if one allows it to. They can be fluid, influenced, but not particularly bound by space nor time, with no two experiences ever being the same.

In this chapter, I utilize spirituality, anti-colonial and decolonial works to explore the epistemological, ontological and axiological meanings of Chinese superstitions. I start by contextualizing what spirituality means to me and the need to utilize spirituality as a lens. Throughout the chapter, I also weave in the personal. I am reminded through Brunal's (2011) exploration of African Canadian spirituality and decolonization projects, that although spirituality is personal, it is not private because to be spiritual means to contest injustices from your location. Thus, I insert myself further, by writing on my social location. Then this chapter explores how superstition was constructed through coloniality/modernity. By understanding how Chinese superstitions came to be, I argue that the act of reclaiming superstitions as spirituality is anti-colonial. I end this paper by exploring the use of superstitions for transgressing towards collective material liberation and decolonization.

Contexualizing Spirituality

Spiritualities are the lived experiences, what we experience in this lifetime, and what has been experienced before us and through our ancestors and families. Thus, spiritualities, as lived experiences, are also where we learn, grow and transform. It is a classroom and is pedagogies, and through living, experiencing and embodiment, it is praxis.[2] Superstitions, as spiritualities, are personal and emotional, and at times, can or cannot be explained, put into

---

2 Praxis can be best understood as a process of critical reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it" (Freire, 2005, p.51). As Freire (2005) writes, "liberation is a praxis" (p.79)

words, or expressed in any way. They allow us to be whole, through a process of self-assertion, actualization, healing and internal liberation—but also, they are collective processes. Superstitions as spiritualities are glimmers of hope that push us to potentials for liberation and decolonization. Throughout this chapter, I attempt to piece these together.

Many scholars have remarked how spirituality as a discourse or embodied knowledge has been silenced and marginalized within academia, thus, highlighting the need to centre spirituality within academia (Shahjahan, 2005; Wane & Ritskes, 2011). My interest in exploring the superstitions as spirituality is also an attempt to explore what Pon et al. express in the introduction of the *Asian Canadian Studies Reader* (2017), the need to understand Asian migrants in Canada's relation to anti-racism, decolonization and anti-capitalism through various lenses—one of which is through spirituality. In attempting to address both these challenges and engage in these discourses in my own way, I put into writing the many thoughts I have had and the conversations I have engaged with others who have also felt this immense spiritual disconnect within different institutions, including academic and religious institutions, as well as more broadly within our everyday lives. I want to acknowledge and honour these conversations, and imagine the potentials of re-infusing spirituality into the academy, community, organizing, and beyond—spaces they were made and ensured to not belong.

Locating Myself

I am a Chinese migrant and uninvited guest on Dish with One Spoon territory, a treaty that the Haudenosaunee peoples, of Turtle Island.[3] I have been mostly educated in French and English settler colonial schooling systems, in territories of the Kanien'kehá:ka

3 Dish with One Spoon, which the Haudenosaunee extended relations to other nations and the Europeans. In this principle, there is one dish, that contains the bounties of the earth that are to be enjoyed by all; one spoon, no knives, to represent the sharing; and an acknowledgement of responsibility by all to collectively maintain dish, the land, and peace (Hill, 2017, p.43)

nation, what is presently known as Montreal, and territories of the Anishinaabe, Mississaugas and Haudenosaunee Nations, what is presently known as Toronto. My spirituality, my ways of knowing, being and doing that have been passed onto me reflect layers and layers of events and experiences. I was born in 香港 Hong Kong, then still a British colony, and migrated to Turtle Island as a young child. My family and ancestors have lived throughout multiple places in Southern China and Southeast Asia. We are mainly from 廣東 Guangdong/Canton region around the 珠江三角洲 Pearl River Delta that leads into the 南海 South China Sea, including 寶安 Bao'An, 香港 Hong Kong, a British colony from 1842 to 1941 and 1945 to 1997, 東莞 Dongguan, 佛山 Foshan, 珠海 Zhuhai, and 澳門 Macau, a former Portuguese colony from 1557 to 1999. As well as, Singapore, a former British colony and, Vietnam and Cambodia, as former French colonies. I grew up with my mother, brother, grandparents, and extended family who ensured that I retained the very essences of my being as I navigate life. My spirituality, as a queer migrant woman of colour, what it is and is not, is a reflection and culmination of many lived experiences, particularly through empires, colonization, wars, cultural revolution, and migration. It reflects what has been gathered and what has been left behind. Through my mother and grandmothers, I have been taught that sometimes it is necessary to leave behind beliefs and practice that serve to harm rather than liberate.

It is important for me to address and acknowledge the limits of my use of "Chinese" as identity, community, diaspora, and in association with superstitions and spirituality throughout this chapter. My attempts are not to reify Chinese identity in the context of empire, nationality or nationhood, though some of the works I incorporate and explore do. As Anderson (1991) has revealed, the very notion of nationalistic identities are based on "imagined communities" that seek to define who does and who does not belong, through the use of homogeneity and hierarchies. Further, Simmons & Dei (2012) explain that though "diaspora" can be a space to claim and reclaim collective identities, we must think critically of how our bodies are complicit in the settler colonial state. In settler colonial states, the logic of identity maintains and replicates racial hierarchies. Tuck & Yang (2017) stress that although identities can allow for a sense

of belonging to communities or to a place, identities do not address the underlying problems with claiming community and place; the action of "possessing" identity can easily lead to imperial and settler colonial reproductions of "property" (p.3).

In my use of "Chinese", my attempts are not to reinforce categorizations, essentialize, nor exceptionalize experiences, connections, and beliefs. Rather, I use "Chinese" as a temporary site for identification of shared and/or different experiences. As a space where perhaps connections can be formed. It is my hope that by centring superstitions as spirituality, we can also unsettle categorizations, distinctions, hierarchies, and dominations. Further, by using "Chinese", it can also create a space to address complicities within imperial and settler colonial projects, and to trouble the very notions of these claims of "Chinese", its "spiritualities", communities, places and ways of knowing, being and doing.

The Construction of "Superstition" through Coloniality/ Modernity

Chinese spiritual beliefs were uncategorized and undefined prior to the nineteenth century. The words 宗教 *zongjiao* "religion" and 迷信 *mixin* "superstition" were only brought into China by the West, through Japan, in the late nineteenth century (Yang, 2008).[4] These spiritual beliefs can be understood as rooted from a myriad of cultural and local beliefs and knowledges that, if necessary, can be broadly defined as "folk religions". These "folk religions" differed temporally and spatially, varying in traditions, rituals, and communal responsibilities (Wong, 2011; Fan & Chen, 2014). Many of these "folk religions" were and are a result of syncretizations of Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism, yet also syncretization of local cultures, beliefs and practices that do not belong to any religion or philosophy, rather pre-date them (Wong, 2011; Fan & Chen, 2014). These "folk religions" can be understood as "diffused" belief systems, where they centre around communal function and fluidity (Yang & Hu, 2012), rather than around organizations,

4 I maintained the Mandarin pronunciation of the words used by the author, as this may be helpful for those interested in further researching the words. My personal anglicization and pronunciation of these words would differ, as I use a different dialect.

institutions and/or structures. The multitude of spiritual beliefs, the "diffused" nature of "folk religions" and "superstitions" in China, became a cause of great confusion and obsession for the Western orientalist gaze.[5,6] The West became fascinated with these spiritual beliefs, and they became heavily invested in attempting to essentialize, coin, define, dichotomize and distinguish these spiritualities into categories such as "superstitions", "folk religion", "religion", etc. (Yang & Hu, 2012).

The construction of "superstition" can be understood through explorations of coloniality/modernity, rationality, and the invention of man/human others. The justifications for Western imperial and colonial conquest and domination can be explained through the production and distinguishing of the European "man" vs. the subjugated Native and Black African "human others" in the "new world" (Wynter, 2003). This began through the creation of the theocentric Christian "man" and its opposite, the spiritually inferior "human others" (Wynter, 2003). As Western imperial and colonial conquest and domination expanded throughout the world, religion became crucial in determining the criteria and categorization for "man" and the "human others" in order to determine who could be subjugated and dominated globally (Wynter, 2003). The West created hierarchies and dichotomies of spiritually perfect/imperfect, which were later replaced by rational/irrational, to distinguish between the "man" and the "human others" (Wynter, 2003). The Christian "man" was later transformed into the hybrid religio-secular "man" through the use of physical and biological sciences (particularly through race and racialization), and then notions of rationality and irrational (Wynter, 2003).

Despite events that marked emancipation, independence and post-colonialism/imperialism throughout the world, the lingering

---

5 While researching, I came across quite a lot of Western works from the nineteenth and early twentieth century that focused on Chinese superstitions and symbols. Most notably, a French Jesuit missionary managed to write 19 volumes on Chinese superstitions.

6 Orientalism through Said (1979) can be explained by how the Orient (or Far Orient or the East) were and are constructed for the West. The Orient and its people were and continue to be constructed as objects of Western desires, repressions, investments, and projections (Said, 1979).

effects of these categorizations can be understood through Quijano's (2007) coloniality of power/modernity, which describe how Western imperial and colonial conquest and domination globally exceed the very acts and events of imperialism and colonization. Colonizers repress, destroy and expropriate modes of knowing, knowledge productions, meaning and symbols, and superimpose a mystified image of their ways of producing knowledge and meaning globally that linger post-colonialism and independence (Quijano, 2007).

These multiple constructions of "man" and the "human others", through the use of religion, sciences and rationality allowed for, firstly, the justification of conquest, subjugation and domination of the non-white bodies and their lands. Next, their distinguishing as spiritually imperfect and irrational/subrational, allowed for the destruction of indigenous and local ways of knowing, knowledge productions, meanings and symbols, and the emplacement of Western ways.

The effects of emplacement of Western ways of knowing, knowledge productions, meanings and symbols can be exemplified through the creation of "superstitions", the beliefs of the spiritually imperfect and irrational/subrational "human others". Further, the coloniality of power/modernity that Quijano (2007) highlights reveal how the transformation of "folk religion" and "superstitions" persists contemporarily. Although Eastern Asia, on a whole, did not experience the territorial occupations and domination of that of the Americas and Africa, Lee & Cho (2012) articulate that Western coloniality/modernity had real symbolic, psychological and institutional effects. The nineteenth century saw major shifts in the Chinese empire, post the defeats in the Opium Wars, ceding of territories, large waves of migration and creation of Chinese diaspora globally as a result of the coolie trades, and internal turmoil (Lowe, 2006, 2015).[7] With the decay of the empire and devaluing of ways of knowing, knowledge productions, meanings and symbols, these

7 The First and Second Opium Wars, 1839 to 1842 and 1856 to 1860, were results of the British empire's trade deficits to China and the desire for the British to exert control. The resulting defeats in the First and Second Opium War, enabled legalization of opium in China, additional ceding of territories to the British, proliferation of Chinese coolies or indentured labourers into the West, among others.

major shifts in the nineteenth century, allowed for embracing, emplacement and adoption of goals of Western modernity and civilization—particularly through use of Western religions, sciences, rationality and systems, like communism, capitalism, etc. Through the cultural revolution, as well as, historical and contemporary violences enacted on ethnic and religious groups there were and continues to be goals to symbolically and materiality eradicate what was and is deemed spiritually imperfect and irrational/subrational or "superstitious", through violence, political suppression, policing, and by centring of science and modernity (Wong, 2011; Yang & Hu, 2012).

Reclaimation of Spirituality as Anti-Colonial

Redefining and reasserting humanity

Modernization has resulted in what Yang (2008) describes as spiritual disconnect, despite material overproduction. This disconnect from religious, ritual and cosmological systems within China, is taking place at the same time as radical class polarization, urbanization and poverty, uprooted communities, industrial and economic growth at the expense of society and the natural environment, expansion and centralization of state power (Yang, 2008). Coloniality of power/modernity, through the destruction of indigenous and local ways of knowing, knowledge productions, meaning and symbols and emplacement of Western ways, have created immense spiritual disconnection of the "human others", in order to sustain the distinctions and superiority of the white European "man" and its way of knowing, being and doing. Further, it has allowed those previously deemed as "human others" to claim stake to "man" and to suppress others.

This disconnect has also been intensified as a result of theft and appropriation of lands. The ceding of territories, settlement and occupation of land, mass urbanization, overdevelopment and destruction of are some of the costs of modernity. This disconnect of peoples to their lands, their communities and their responsibilities, contribute immensely to the spiritual disconnect—as life is dependent on land, and spirituality can have deeply spatial

connections and meanings.[8] Further, the forceful participation of the "human others" within global capitalism and markets has resulted in not only spiritual disconnects, but physical, social and environmental degradation. What Yang (2008) has described is impacting in varying ways and degrees "human others" globally. In this next section, I explore the potentials in reclaiming the spiritual from "superstitions" to rupture and unsettle coloniality/modernity.

Both Wynter (2003) and Silva (2015) posit that not only have Western religion, sciences, rationality and systems created the "human others", they contemporarily continue to fail to recognize the wholeness of humanity. Anti-colonial discourses speak of the dire need for redefining, reasserting and reclaiming of humanity (Wynter, 2003; Smith, 2012), as acts of disrupting coloniality/modernity. Wynter (2003) argues that there is a need to unsettle the "man" by disrupting its desire for stable description, reproduction and overrepresentation; through re-describing the human and imagining new modes of humanity. Further, Silva (2015) adds the need to address methodological questions of how we come up with the answers to our humanity. Reclamation of superstitions as spirituality, can offer multiplicity of epistemologies, ontologies and axiologies that disavows and disrupts "man" produced through coloniality/modernity. It further allows for alternate understandings and envisioning of humanity, our world, and how we relate and connect with others. The reclamation of superstitions as spirituality can offer alternative questions and answers to our humanity, and could bring us closer to recognizing the wholeness of our humanity.

Smith (2012) states that revisiting history is a crucial part of decolonization. In understanding what has taken place and the dehumanizing impacts of coloniality/modernity, we can perhaps find what can be reclaimed to redefine the human, as well as to develop an awareness to avoid the replication of the dominating and oppressive nature of coloniality/modernity. These processes engage in what Quijano (2007) describes as "epistemological decolonization", defixing and destabilizing the ways in which we understand

8 It is also important to note that this often happens simultaneously, internally and externally, through imperial and colonial domination of other nations and peoples.

things; as well as, what Mignolo (2015) describes as "epistemic disobedience", the delinking of the self from the knowledge systems that continue to profit, subjugate and dominate. In engaging in these explorations and redefinition, reassertion and reclaiming of our humanities, we defix the categories and distinguishing factors of "human others" and "man", and we reject the systems of knowledge, knowledge production, meaning and symbol that have been imposed onto us.

By reclaiming "superstitions" as spirituality, we engage with the past and the present, to redefine, reassert and reclaim our humanity which have been repressed and denigrated through the status of "human others". While the processes of coloniality/modernity invalidated spiritualities and denoted it to "superstitions", Chinese spiritualities that reflect diffused beliefs that are communal based, temporally and spatially fluid, have the potential to unsettle and disrupt the stable reproductions needed in coloniality/modernity. Rather, the fluidity and mobility of Chinese spiritualities allowed agency and autonomy for individuals and communities to meet their spiritual needs and/or spiritual development (Lee, 2014), that allow for recognizing of the wholeness of humanity. The fluidity and ability to transform within Chinese spiritualities opposes the categorizations, as they have and continue to not be definable nor distinguishable, despite labelling as "superstition".

From superstition to spirituality

Simmons & Dei (2012) posit that we must utilize anti-colonial frameworks to challenge the processes of knowledge production, as well as, by embodying of knowledge—interrogating, validating and centring our spirituality and the spiritual knowing. Reclamation of superstitions as spiritualities disrupts and challenges how knowledge is produced and how it is embodied. Here, I want to stress the need to explore and make meaning of the spiritual, that which is not involved with dogmatic beliefs and commodification; to move beyond focusing on the superstitions and spirituality that dictate and dominate lives, or that are only intelligible through wealth, consumerism, ownership or capitalism, because these reify and are complicit with coloniality/modernity. As Dei, Hall

& Rosenberg (2000) write, there is a "crisis of knowledge", which includes: the dichotomizing between "valid" and "not valid", and, the destructive commodification of knowledge which further fragments indigenous and local values and beliefs, spirituality, as well as destroys local and natural systems. As such, there is a dire need to avoid replicating such "crisis of knowledge" and the violences of coloniality/modernity while we reclaim and reassert our humanity. We must actively engage in the embodiment of knowledge that Simmons & Dei (2012) articulate, that there must be processes of interrogating, validating and centring of knowledges.

In redefining, reasserting and reclaiming understandings of myself, humanity, and the world, I centre some of my spiritual beliefs to contribute to imagining new modes of humanity. Further, I explore how these understandings shape my understandings of connecting and relating to others. In engaging in this process of centring and validating my beliefs, it requires an interrogation of epistemologies, ontologies and axiologies that extend from my personal to how I contest injustices from my location (see Brunal, 2011).

The following are some of the common beliefs within Chinese "folk religion" as written by Fan & Chen (2013)—I have only included what has also been passed onto me, and have added my own perspectives and understandings some of the definitions:[9]

- 天 *tian* "as the transcendent source of moral meaning" (Fan & Chen, 2014, p.?). 天 *tian* which translates to "sky" is what, who and where I pray to and place trust in, it is where I understand life emanates from. While I personally do not see 天 *tian* as the definer of moral meaning, I believe that 天 *tian*, as the cosmos or universe, has particular understandings and of life and the world, it provides this life and world. Rather than seeing 天 *tian* as a source of moral meaning, it is within myself that I define my morality and ethics, and it is to 天 *tian* that I am accountable to.

9 While I use Fan & Chen's (2014) work, I have switched the written text from Simplified Chinese to Traditional Chinese. I maintained the Mandarin pronunciation of the words used by the author, as this may be helpful for those interested in further researching the words. My personal anglicization and pronunciation of these words would differ, as I use a different dialect. As with translations, there will be some lost meanings.

- 氣 *qi* is "the energy that animates the universe" (Fan & Chen, 2014, p.?), 氣 *qi* which translates to energy or air, exists everywhere, it is the energy that we rely on to live, the air we breathe and it is "in the air we breathe" (Ng, 2000, p.175). It is what nourishes us, nourishes the water, plants, animals, and even nonbeings that we depend on and coexist with. It connects all. The importance of 氣 *qi* can be understood through the interlinking of Traditional Chinese Medicine and Chinese spiritualities—氣 *qi* is "an important part of the healing process is to unblock *qi* and facilitate its free flow" (Ng, 2000, p.175), not only within the body, but within the world. 氣 *qi* describes the connection within our bodies and the interconnected of all beings and nonbeings.
- 悟 *wu* is an understanding that exceeds the superficial or exteriority. It is a conscious and deep understanding. 悟 *wu* is spiritual awareness and consciousness of the interconnections of the following: 命運 *ming yun,* 緣分 *yuan fen* and 報應 *bao ying* (Fan & Chen, 2014).
- 命運 *ming yun* is one's life and destiny, the "Chinese have always believed that a person's life (*ming*) is somehow related to the influence of a transcendent force named *tian* (天). . ." (Fan & Chen, 2014, p.?). 命運 *ming yun*, for me, attaches a sacredness to life and speaks of the meaningful experiences in this lifetime, past and future lifetimes. This sacredness of life carries with it hope, that there is always hope. Destiny, for me, is not a static state. Rather, it imbues transformation and potentials.
- 緣分 *yuan fen* as fateful coincidence is "another element in the Chinese common spiritual heritage that surfaced repeatedly among the respondents was that of chance or fateful coincidence" (Fan & Chen, 2014, p.?). While I have always understood 緣分 *yuan fen* as such fate, for me, it governs the people, beings and interactions in my life, ranging from those I have met, acquaintances, to those I have been fated or destined to have as family members or ancestors in this lifetime, to the land. It means that all relations and encounters are sacred. For example, in my introduction, my re-encounter with 淨空 Ven. Master Chin Kung's work in another form and in another time,

and how this experience has affected me, would be something I consider as a 緣分 *yuan fen.*

- 報應 *bao ying* moral reciprocity "tells us that people dwell in a moral universe." (Fan & Chen, 2014, p.?). 報應 *bao ying* for me is karma, and dictates that any action or inaction this lifetime has repercussions later on or in following life times. It speaks of the need for action.
- These beliefs that Fan & Chen (2013) have written about are not exclusive, nor are they definitive. They speak of beliefs that cannot be categorized and differ significantly amongst individual and communal epistemologies, ontologies and axiologies. They represent worldviews that help in understanding our own beings, humanity, the world, and how we connect and relate to other beings and nonbeings. They may differ significantly from others, which speaks about how personal spirituality is, as well as, can be explained by saying that has been passed onto me: 「各處鄉村各處例」… *that each village or community has their own ways.*

On top of these, I also believe in reincarnation, that we can return to this earth as any lifeform—as other beings, animals, plants—and thus, we are connected to many lifeforms in past, present and future lives. Reincarnation is related to some of the above concepts, linking the sacredness of past, present and future lives. I am also connected to the past, through my sacred connections with my ancestors—there are ancestral rituals and practices to honour and remember those that have come before me. My desires to see the earth thrive and not be destroyed, and to see the liberation of all humanity and other beings, are very much rooted in these knowledges, that I am not a guest of this world for one lifetime. My understanding of my connection to other lifeforms, other beings, and plants arise in different ways. Certain practices and rituals explain the meaning of these connection with other lifeforms, such as even the sacredness, healing and cleansing nature of plants through the use of Traditional Chinese Medicine and other practices. There are stories, rituals and practices that connect us deeply to the earth, moon, sun and the universe. This life, which is sacred, is lived in relation to others, not in isolation, and to something grander.

My spiritual beliefs live and come up in different forms and ways. I continue to believe and practice certain things because they allow me to make sense of the world and allow me to redefine, reassert and reclaim my humanity, in ways that coloniality/modernity cannot. My spirituality, my ways of knowing, being and doing are extensive and interconnected in many ways. Although parts of my spirituality have been passed down to me, I am not bound by the past.

As Wane (2008) states, "Indigenous knowledges are stored in people's minds and dispersed through songs, stories, proverbs and everyday practices" (p.192), and that "Indigenous knowledge is holistic, and there is no division between different forms of knowledge, teaching or learning. All the learning and teachings are intertwined within the context of everyday interactions" (p.191). It is difficult to put into words, collapse, categorize, and define all of my spirituality, as it is imbued into my every fibre, just like the □ *qi* that is in my every breath, and in the ways I know, am and live. My spirituality can be understood as a holistic embodied practice, as intertwined and expressed in various ways. This is perhaps why Dr. Njoki Nathani Wane furthers, in one of her lectures that "the spirit cannot be colonized, but it goes into a dormant and/or inactive state whenever severely suppressed, thus the term, sinking" (as cited in Wane, Adyanga & Ilmi, 2014, p.5). In writing about my spirituality, not only is it my redefinition, reassertion and reclamation of myself and my humanity, it is a means of disrupting and unsettling modes superimposed by coloniality/modernity. It is a reawakening of that which has been dormant and hidden in these sunken places.

Beyond Western epistemologies, ontologies and axiologies

- As with 淨空 Ven. Master Chin Kung's response to the questions of "what are superstitions?" and "why do they exist?" or his mention of spirituality as a space of learning, in my introduction, there is an encouragement to engage with and challenge your spirituality, beliefs and disbeliefs. In this process of engagement, it is not to detach the sacredness of spirituality but rather, it can create space for spiritual development,

growth and transgression. I do not attempt to describe this as a "rational process", because this spiritual process that allows for spiritual transformation and transgression existed prior to coloniality/modernity and has continued to exceed it. In this section, I explore how Chinese superstitions as spirituality exceed Western ways of knowing.

- Goh's (2009) exploration of 拜神 *baishen*, embodied prayer and worship rituals, allow individuals and communities to fill the 神 *shen* "god" with discursive possible meanings—a symbol, which differs from non-syncretic religions like Christianity, in which the symbol is already determined by theological acts. The beliefs and meaning of "god" can differ significantly for individuals, families and communities. It allows for agency, through engaging in processes of defining and ascribing meaning. Such processes of interrogating, validating and centring of spiritual knowledge, exhibit "epistemological decolonization" and "epistemic disobedience"—they defix and destabilize epistemological, ontological and axiological categories inscribed by coloniality/modernity; and delink from systems that have continued to disavow one's humanity. They allow for redefining, reasserting and reclaiming of one's humanity through declaring multiplicity of what and how the human knows, as well as, how we come up with questions and answers for our humanity.

As mentioned throughout this chapter, superstitions as spiritualities vary temporally and spatially, and have the fluidity to adapt, deviate, change, shrink and/or grow. In my own personal experiences, I have understood how my mother and grandmothers have left behind patriarchal, oppressive, and unjust beliefs, as well as, how they have adopted new practices, as a result of multitudes of lived experiences, to meet their spiritual needs and spiritual development—revealing the fluidity, transformational and transgressing abilities of spirituality. As with my own lived experiences, I have also chosen to leave behind certain things, and have adopted other ways of knowing, being and doing, to ensure that my spirituality is in line with how I want to assert my humanity or how I envision the world to be. As Dei, Hall and Rosenberg (2000) mention, Indigenous and local ways of knowing are not static or fixed, but there is a need to avoid romanticizing them, and to

acknowledge and address how Indigenous knowledge systems can very well be oppressive and dominating. The acts of interrogating, validating and centring of superstitions as spirituality can help with imagining new modes of humanity that does not reproduce violence.

Goh (2009) rejects attempts to describe the engagement and challenging of spiritualities as "rationalization" or as "attempt[s] to play catch up" (p.110). Goh (2009) dismisses Western attempts to appropriate this as "rationality" and states that these changes have always been rooted in syncretization. Further, Goh (2009) attempts to decentre modernity, and asks how Chinese spirituality can in fact affect modernity. The very engagement, challenging, questioning, fluidity, the defixing of categories and allowing for self-definition and meaning making—these in fact are the roots of syncretism and Chinese spirituality—thus unsettle, disrupt, and exceed coloniality/modernity. The reclamation of superstitions as spiritualities unsettles and disrupts coloniality/modernity, for it has the potential to recognize the wholeness and reassertion of humanity. It also has the potential to imagine new modes of humanity, ask and answer questions about our humanity, as well as, act as processes of "epistemological decolonization" and "epistemic disobedience".

Transgression: Towards Maternal Liberation and Decolonization

As mentioned in the previous section, the acts of reclaiming superstitions as spiritualities disrupt, challenge and exceed coloniality/modernity. For Wane & Ritskes (2011), the spiritual quest is not only tied to one's spiritual development, but to liberation and resistance. In this section, I explore how the transformative and transgressing natures of Chinese spiritualities—the fluidity and ability to transform—allow for this meeting of not only the individual and collective, spiritual needs and spiritual development, but also has potential for contributing to collective material liberation, resistance, and decolonization.

I am reminded of the importance to constantly interrogate our social locations by Shahjahan (2005), to seek why and for whom you are writing for. I write this as an individual who has been

actively reclaiming their spirituality, to reassert myself and my humanity, whose spirituality rejects these injustices, destructions, oppressions and dominations, and who wants to imagine new modes of humanity and futures. I also write this as an individual who has the privilege of being in spaces where I can interrogate, validate and centre my spirituality, where I am encouraged to unsettle and disrupt coloniality/modernity. We must centre spirituality and different ways of knowing, being and doing collectively, within institutions, within our communities, where we organize, and where we live, so that we can all be liberated, reclaim and assert our humanity, and envision new modes of humanity that also consider our connection to other beings, the earth, ancestors and the future. We must refuse the past and present as definitive.

My spirituality reminds me of the centrality of interconnectedness, being in relation to others, as well as, the ability and option to transform and transgress as needed. McKittrick (2015), who writes on Wynter's work, states that while rethinking the world anew, it must be through relational acts of living, by those not focused on social categories, but those marked by their dysselected human status, "human others". Further, Sharma (2015), also in response to Wynter's work, adds that for migrants implicated in settler colonialism, we must reject the territorialized sense of self, and recognize that territorialization was and continues to be an instrument of coloniality/modernity. We must build relations to unsettle and disrupt coloniality/modernity and the "man," while imagining and working towards these new modes of humanity. For migrants, like myself, we must constantly interrogate our social locations, and remind ourselves of how we can be complicit within systems of domination and oppression. We must do so without clinging onto or seeking claim to these systems, lands and beliefs. We must find meaningful ways of relating to others, ways that exist outside of systems of domination.

The fluidity in my spirituality allows me to interrogate myself, in ways such as: how do I connect and relate to others, to understand and to support the stewards and defenders of this land, as well as, their spiritual connections to this land? How do I infuse this into action? Similarly, Lorde (1984) states that we must make common cause with others identified outside of the structure, to define and

seek this world. From within the margins, we can connect on common grounds to disrupt and unsettle the very colonial/modern systems that have placed Western modes of knowing, being and doing at the centre or top of the hierarchies.

At the same time, we must not aim to replace or reproduce this dominating and oppressive system. Dei, Hall & Rosenberg (2000) suggest allowing for the multiplicity of centres of knowing, being, and doing; multiple centres that prevent the prioritizing of ranks, and that will eliminate competition. As hooks (1994) states, transgression, crossing categories and borders must be validated and legitimated. hooks (1994) furthers that this does not mean that there will not be critical interrogations or that there will not be risks of perpetuating power domination and oppression, but that these risks weigh less than persisting within systems of domination. If we want to achieve and get to where our imaginations of new modes humanity exist, we must be prepared to exceed these categories, borders and structures. We must be willing to interrogate, validate and centre, not only our own spiritualities and ways of knowing, being and doing, but those of others. This is especially crucial when we interrogate how our identities and communities perpetuate violences onto others.

Further, while teaching and learning about anti-colonialism and decolonization by centring spirituality, we must move beyond deconstruction, interrogation, and challenging oppressive knowledges and systems, and also work towards unsettling cultural, symbolic and political practices and significations (Dei, 2002). We must further break away from spirituality which separates non-material and material existence, and understand that spiritual existence is in actuality central to material existence (Dei, 2002). As we centre and embody spirituality, we must also centre and embody anti-colonial ideas and decolonial praxis that impacts our material world. There are material consequences to coloniality/modernity that perpetually affect and inflict violence on human lives, other beings and the earth. Coloniality/modernity that justified the subjugation of “human others” and their land in the past—the nonwhite, Black African, Indigenous, Brown people and those who being pushed into this category—persist in the present day.

Decolonization cannot simply be used as a metaphor; it must exist in the material (Tuck & Yang, 2012). Dei & Lordan (2016) describe how settler colonialism has resulted in not only a commodification of knowledge and epistemologies, but of sacred Indigenous lands and resources. Our work within our communities, where we organize, and where we live, must also reflect the material liberation of people, as well as, decolonization and repatriation of the land to itself. As Tuck & Yang (2018) state, "Decolonization, similar to abolition, unsettles the ways that land has become alienable into property; that animals, plants, water, air and earth have become alienable into "natural resources" to be turned into profit; that occupiers and their governments can come to have sovereignty over Indigenous people and places (p.9)." In unsettling and disrupting coloniality/ modernity through reclaiming our spiritualities, we must ensure that we do not stop simply at the modes of knowing, knowledge productions, meaning and symbol making. Beyond this, there are material implications, physical lives, and the future of humanity and the earth at stake. In reclaiming our spiritualities, we must begin by interrogating our social locations, centre relations and our interconnectedness, and act in transformational transgressing ways that ensure that these materialize to real liberation of humanity and the decolonization of world.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have attempted to explore superstitions as spirituality, by first exploring the construction of the superstitious through coloniality/modernity. I then explored reclaiming of superstitions as spirituality as an anti-colonial act, particularly by redefining and reasserting humanity and the self, and by unsettling, disrupting and exceeding Western epistemologies, ontologies and axiologies. In doing so, I also utilized personal spiritual beliefs to redefine, reassert and reclaim my humanity. Lastly, I looked at spiritual transgression for material liberation and decolonization. There is a need to go deeper, perhaps to explore this topic through different lenses and frameworks.

I end this chapter with what Wong, in writing on Asian and First Nations relationality in the *Asian Canadian Studies Reader* (2017),

reminds us of: the importance of speaking to and acknowledging debts and interdependencies that we have been trained to ignore, as a practice that connects us. It is also within my spirituality, that we often acknowledge those in our presence and thank those who have provided guidance. I am indebted to the generosity of Dr. Rose Ann Torres and my classmates in the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education Spirituality and Schooling course, who all listened and created space for transgressing and transformation within and outside the classroom. To my peers, the faculty, the staff, and the works I have engaged with in and throughout this writing, particularly the Indigenous, Black, People of Colour, women/femme, queer, trans, gender non-conforming, and disabled folks who have challenged my ways of knowing, being and doing. To my family, ancestors, friends, and communities. For me, these are all truly a symbol of 緣分 yuan fen.

References

Anderson, B. (1991). Introduction. In *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London, England and New York: Verso.

Brunal, A. (2011). Spirituality: An Interconnected Path to Healing. In Wane, N., Manyimo, E.L., & Ritskes, E.J. (Eds). *Spirituality, Education & Society: An Integrated Approach.* Rotterdam, Netherlands: Sense Publishers.

Chin, K. (1998). *A Path to True Happiness, Third Edition.* Taipei, Taiwan: The Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation.

Dei, G.J.S. (2002). NALL Working Paper #9: Spiritual Knowing and Transformative Learning. Retrieved from https://nall.oise.utoronto.ca/res/59GeorgeDei.pdf

Dei, G.J.S., Hall, B.L., & Rosenberg, D.G. (2000). Introduction. In Dei, G.J.S., Hall, B.L., & Rosenberg, D.G. (Eds). *Indigenous Knowledges in Global Contexts: Multiple Readings of Our World.* Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

Dei, G.J.S. & Lordan, M. (2016). Introduction: Envisioning New Meanings, Memories and Actions for Anti-Colonial Theory and Decolonial Praxis. In Dei, G.J.S., Hall, B.L., & Rosenberg, D.G. (Eds). *Anti-Colonial Theory and Decolonial Praxis.* New York, NY: Peter Lang.

Fan, L. & Chen, Na. (2014). "Conversion" and the Resurgence of Indigenous Religions in China. In Rambo, L.R. & Farhadian, C.E. (Eds). *The Oxford Handbook of Religious Conversion.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Freire, P. (2000). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed (30th Anniversary Edition).* New York, NY: The Continuum International Publishing Group.

Goh, D.P.S. (2009). Chinese Religion and the Challenge of Modernity in Malaysia and Singapore: Syncretism, Hybridisation and Transfiguration. *Asian Journal of Social Science*, 37(1): 107-137.

Hill, S.M. (2017). *The Clay We Are Made Of: Haudenosaunee Land Tenure On the Grand River.* Winnipeg, MB (Treaty 1 Territory): University of Manitoba Press.

hooks, b. (1994). *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Lee, H. & Cho, Y. (2012). Introduction: Colonial Modernity and Beyond in East Asian Context. *Cultural Studies,* 26(5): 601-616.

Lee, M. (2014). Chinese Spirituality: Implications for Western Educators. In Wane, N.N., Adyanga, F.A., & Ilmi, A.A. (Eds). *Spiritual Discourses in the Academy: Globalized Indigenous Perspective.* New York, NY: Peter Lang.

Lorde, A. (1984). Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches. Trumansburg, NY: Crossing Press.

Lowe, L. (2006). The Intimacies of Four Continents. In Stoler, A. L. (Ed). *Haunted by Empire: Geographies of Intimacy in North American History*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Lowe, L. (2015). *The Intimacies of Four Continents.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

McKittrick, K. (2015). Yours In the Intellectual Struggle: Sylvia Wynter and the Realization of the Living. In McKittrick, K. (Ed). *Sylvia Wynter: On Being Human as Praxis*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Mignolo, W.D. (2015). Sylvia Wynters: What Does It Mean To Be Human?. In McKittrick, K. (Ed). *Sylvia Wynter: On Being Human as Praxis*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 107-123.

Ng, R. (2000). Toward an Embodied Pedagogy: Exploring Health and the Body through Chinese Medicine. In Dei, G.J.S., Hall, B.L., & Rosenberg, D.G. (Eds). *Indigenous Knowledges in Global Contexts: Multiple Readings of Our World.* Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 168-183.

Pon, G., Coloma, R.S., Kwak, L.J., & Huynh, K. (2017). Asian Canadian Studies Now: Directions and Challenges. In Coloma, R.S. & Pon, G. (Eds). *Asian Canadian Studies Reader*. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 3-28.

Quijano, A. (2007). Coloniality and Modernity/Rationality. *Cultural Studies*, 21(3): 168-178.

Said, E. (1979). *Orientalism*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.

Simmons, M. & Dei, G.J.S. (2012). Reframing Anti-Colonial Theory for the Diaspora Context. *Postcolonial Directions in Education*, 1(1), 67-99.

Shahjahan, R.A. (2005). Spirituality in the Academy: Reclaiming from the Margins and Evoking a Transformative Way of Knowing the World. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 18(6): 685-711.

Silva, D.F.d. (2015). Before Man: Sylvia Wynter's Rewriting of the Modern Episteme. In McKittrick, K. (Ed). *Sylvia Wynter: On Being Human as Praxis*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Sharma, N. (2015). Strategic Anti-Essentialism: Decolonizing Decolonization. In McKittrick, K. (Ed). *Sylvia Wynter: On Being Human as Praxis*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Smith, L.T. (2012). *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. London, England: Zed Books.

Tuck, E. & Yang, K.W. (2012). Decolonization is not a metaphor. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, 1(1), 1-40.

Tuck, E. & Yang, K.W. (2017). Editor's Introduction: Late Identity. *Journal of Critical Ethnic Studies Association,* 3:1: 1-19.

Tuck, E. & Yang, K.W. (2018). Introduction: Born Under the Rising Sign of Social Justice. In Tuck, E. & Yang, K.W. (Eds). *Toward*

What Justice?: Describing diverse dreams of justice in education. New York, NY: Routledge.

Wane, N.N. (2008). Mapping the Field of Indigenous Knowledges in Anti-Colonial Discourse. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 11(2), 183-197.

Wane, N.N. & Ritskes, E.J. (2011). Introduction. In Wane, N.N., Manyimo, E.L. & Ritskes, E.J. (Eds). *Spirituality, Education & Society: An Integrated Approach.* Rotterdam, Netherlands: Sense Publishers.

Wane, N.N., Adyanga, F.A., & Ilmi, A.A. (2014). Introduction. In Wane, N.N., Adyanga, F.A., & Ilmi, A.A. (Eds). *Spiritual Discourses in the Academy: Globalized Indigenous Perspective.* New York, NY: Peter Lang.

Wong, R. (2017). Decolonizasian: Reading Asian and First Nations Relations in Literature. In Coloma, R.S. & Pon, G. (Eds). *Asian Canadian Studies Reader.* Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

Wong, W.Y. (2011). Defining Chinese Folk Religion: A Methodological Interpretation. *Asian Philosophy,* 21(2): 153-170.

Wynter, S. (2003). Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom: Towards the Human, After Man, Its Overrepresentation—An Argument. *CR: The New Centennial Review, 3(3),* 257-337.

Yang, F. & Hu, A. (2012). Mapping Chinese Folk Religion in Mainland China and Taiwan. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 51(3): 505-521.

Yang, M.M-H. (2008). Introduction. In Yang, M.M-H. (Ed). *Chinese Religiosities: Afflictions of Modernity and State Formation.* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

阿彌陀佛. (2013, October 12). 淨空法師：什麼是迷信? 為什麼會有迷信產生? [YouTube]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q20YOOLueyo&t=98s

CHAPTER SIX

RE-THINKING MARX: NARRATIVES OF WOMEN HEALERS IN THE PHILIPPINES

Rose Ann Torres & Dionisio Nyaga

Marx's texts, including Capital, presuppose an ethical theory: alienation of labor must be undone because it undermines the agency of the subject in his work and his property. I would like to suggest that if the nature and history of alienation, labor and the production of property are reexamined in terms of women's work and childbirth, this line of inquiry can lead us to a reading of Marx beyond Marx (Spivak, 1996, p. 57).

Abstract

This article is a discussion of a philosophical re-orientation of Marx in his theory of alienation in relation to the Aeta Indigenous women's healing practices. It explores how Aeta Indigenous women disturb Marx's thought on alienation through their healing practices. In this narrative qualitative study, Aeta Indigenous women healers expressed their love, reciprocity and respect to their community through their healing practices. The study incorporated the talking circle as a methodology as well as a decolonizing tool for research. Their narratives uncover their knowledge on healing contemporary work alienation.

Introduction

Karl Marx is a formidable theoretical force behind the historizing and understanding of the modern state. From his genealogical excavation of earliest societies to his formation of the contemporary state, we come to understand the state as a socio-political and economic construct. It is with this understanding that the space is seen as not natural or innocent in regards to making people understand who they are. According to Marx, the Westphalian state was supposed to serve the needs of all within it; however, this has never been the case. According to Marx, state structure is modelled to serve the interests of the bourgeois (owners of production), while simultaneously disempowering the workers (proletariats). The wage earner is placed under constant, continuous and unverifiable control from within and without his skin and spirit. It is a state of what Foucault (1980) would call constant surveillance from the

state, fellow workers and self. This mode of triple policing is meant to put the worker in his place. As a consequence, disciplining and punishment is the end of regulating the social body, which by extension leads to alienation. The more the worker is alienated, the more profitable it is to the owner of production. This alienation is founded under the rules, regulations, codes and protocols that are laid down by the employer. To that end, the worker has to subsume himself with rules and regulations that are not of his own making. This kind of governmentality leads to what Marx calls alienation of labor. If the worker fails to follow workplace orders, the state is there to penalize, punish and discipline him. Within the work spaces, the worker is mechanized by the owner of production. He is not supposed to socialize with fellow workers and family. The wage that he earns cannot afford him the very product he is making. This keeps a check on employees' unity and consequent unionization. The process of production is authored by the owner of production. This makes the worker a physical ox while denying him his mental capacity. This deskills and silences the worker. Since to survive, he needs the job, he has to toil under these oppressive realities.

With this context in mind, this paper attempts to re-read Marx's theory of alienation using the discussions of Aeta Indigenous women healers in the Philippines on healing. Healing as labor is a major socio-cultural practice among the Indigenous communities in the Philippines. Through healing, the community is held together. Healing allows people to show their love and respect to their community while creating new relationships. Healing is a way of maintaining a healthy community. Through healing, members of the Indigenous community express their agency, resistance and resiliency. Having understood the theory of alienation, our main purpose is to identify whether it is present in Indigenous healing practices and knowledge production. Can Aeta Indigenous women healers be estranged from their labor? This paper attempts to conceptualize key aspects of the Marxist theory of alienation as well as Indigenous practices and knowledge production. Drawing from Marxist thought on the alienation of labor, the article tries to see whether healing practices among the Indigenous communities can be estranging.

According to Spivak (1996), Marx's theory of alienation fails to focus on women's work and childbirth. Knowing that Marx's argument comes up during capitalist state formation when the man is considered a breadwinner, his argument ends up

sustaining the fact that only men are supposed to be in public spots. This downplays the contributions of women in both the private and public spheres. This is because Marx's theorizing of work as a public discursive framework puts men as public figures while simultaneously denying a discussion of the work of women, who were predominantly in the private space. In addition, Marx's argument denies other public practices like Indigenous healing among the Indigenous communities in the world; it can also be claimed that such knowledge is not rational enough to be considered a public activity. For this reason, this paper places Aeta Indigenous healing practices back in public spaces. Through the narrative of Aeta Indigenous women healers, this paper recognizes their healing as a public practice.

Furthermore, this article orients its argument to Marx's failure to focus on Aeta Indigenous women's healing practices and spirituality. This paper is based on research that was done among the Aeta women healers in Cagayan Valley in the Philippines. Based on their narratives, it can be argued that their ways of life stand in contrast to Marx's thoughts on alienation. To make this point, this article plans to look back at the history of the Philippines and its Indigenous peoples' healing practices. This allows a discussion on whether Indigenous knowledge has undergone changes in time and space. Are these changes enough to warrant a discussion of Indigenous healing using Marxist thought? Can we also allow the eastern Marxist lens to define the ways of life of Aeta women healers of the Philippines? We will also include each participant's background and the research methodology. Then we will explain Marx and his theory of alienation. This will be followed by an exploration of the Aeta women's Indigenous healing practices. To show the relationship of the theory of alienation and the healing practices of Aeta Indigenous women healers, we will discuss Marx and his theory of alienation in relation to Aeta Indigenous women healer's practices. Our conclusion will engage a discussion of how healing can be used to heal alienation of workers.

Background and Methodology of the Study

In 2010 I (--------) embarked on a study about Aeta Indigenous women's healing practices and knowledge production. The location of the study was in Cagayan Valley in the Philippines. For the sake of my participants' safety, I cannot specify their names and specific location. This is in tandem with the ethics protocol confidentiality

and anonymity clause. Participants in this study identified themselves as Aeta. They have been living in this place for a long time. Their ancestors were buried in the area. To them, this place carries a lot of cultural meaning. This is attested by Rosa, one of the Aeta Indigenous woman healers, who states:

> *When the invader came to our community claiming that they owned the land, the land that our ancestor had left for us for a long time, we became sick as a whole community. This is because we could not perform our own traditions and practices. We had to abide by the rules of the outsider. So, because of mixing with the non-Aeta, some of us got sick. I realized that it was happening frequently, and I decided to do something. I started learning the use of herbal medicine or plants that I see around us because I believe that God has created this for a great purpose. Since then, I became a healer.*

We can observe that Rosa has decided to use her healing practices to heal the wounds that have been inflicted by the non-Aeta people. For her, healing is a way to represent herself not only as a capable leader in her society but also as someone who can control her destiny. She does this to help decolonize her community by underlining the need to go back to their roots. They perform spiritual and healing practices in this space. The place where they live is covered with green vegetation, which allows them to access diverse herbal plants. To that end, they believe in the sustainability of their environment. This is because the ecology provides them with the requisite flora for healing.

In the methodology, the talking circle was used. This research is a qualitative narrative study (Creswell, 2013). The talking circle entails the four Indigenous values, which are love, respect, reciprocity and relationship building. This kind of study allows people to sit in a circle. To that extent, the talking circle deconstructs Eurocentric research methodology in such a way that all people within the circle are considered equal (Fraser, 2004; Smith, 1999). Instead of considering the Aeta Indigenous women healers participants, the talking circle identifies them as members. This allows the co-creation of knowledge between the researcher and participants, as well as the ownership of the same (Chase, 2003; Chilisa, 2012; Gegeo & Gegeo, 2001). Members are supposed to allow each speaker to talk without interruption. When a member is speaking, others

are supposed to actively listen. As a member and the researcher, I asked questions and whoever was ready to answer would take the lead. The 12 Aeta women healers who participated in the study recommended that we use the talking circle because it is a part of their culture, and having a conversation in a circle was considered a much fairer way of obtaining information. Three talking circles were held. There were four Aeta women healers in each talking circle. I was able to build a strong relationship with the Aeta women healers. They taught me that talking in a circle connotes respect for everybody within it, and that respect, with regard to the material and spirit world, is part of their worldview. The 12 Aeta women Indigenous healers who took part in this study acquired their healing knowledge from their ancestors. They shared information about their understanding on healing and how it connects with identity politics. They also talked about gender as an identity and how this became a form of agency through healing.

After the discussion with the members, while in my house, I immediately wrote down what we had discussed. After the three talking circles were over, I went back to their community to validate what they had said. Later, I embarked on the analysis of the data. I used thematic coding. I used their own statements and words to create themes.

Marx on Alienation

Marx's theory on alienation (1978) identifies four diverse means of estrangement. One among them is alienation from the process. According to Marx, workers, mostly men, could not control how work was done. This is because the mapping and authorship of the process are solely in the hands of the owner of production. As such, the worker was just following the artistry of another person. This divided the workplace into mental and physical spheres. The mental sphere was mainly done by the owner of the business together with his managers. They defined how the work process would unravel. Their work was to create a process and its product. As for the workers, they were supposed to make the mental a reality. For workers, their physical labour helped actualize other people's plans. This was oppressive to the worker since he could not showcase his own talent. As a consequence, the process would deskill the worker.

As human beings, when we show our capability, this enhances our self-esteem. In this mode of production, the worker had low

self-worth. According to Abraham Maslow, esteem, love and self-actualization are fundamental to the growth and development of an individual. These aspects lacked in the workplace. Therefore, the worker could not connect with the process, which was dissatisfying. To that end, the process reduced the worker to a machine. His work was to follow the laid out production process. In the words of Foucault (1980), the process was meant to disturb the identity of the worker to take the identity of the owner of production. This can be termed as a means of colonizing the body to fit the whims of the owner of production. To that extent, the worker ended up being alienated from self. Estrangement from self meant that he could be easily manipulated and controlled. To be able to survive, he had to follow the set out rule. It means internalizing the codes and rules of the workplace.

To understand the labor process, we need to bring forward Fordist Industrial Complex. This was a company that was formed to manufacture cars in a timely and efficient manner. The end of this factory was mass production at a low cost. That meant that all workers were supposed to specialize in what they were doing. That meant that if a worker was supposed to insert nuts in the car, he had to understand the technology of bolting and be in his spot on time. The space that he was standing in was a panoptic cubicle that was meant to make the worker visible to the manager while simultaneously lacking the view of the manager. Unfinished cars would pass through and his work was bolting them. He had to be quick enough in bolting, otherwise the assembly line would come to a stop. This was a way to survey the workers. The assembly line became a technology meant to govern, watch, control, punish and discipline the workers. It was a panoptic device that allowed the efficient and effective use of power. This device did not need the presence of a manager or the owner of production. It made every worker to submit to it. It was a technology that was used to manipulate the identity of the worker to such an extent that the worker became his own police. The owner of production could police every movement of the workers from the comfort of his office (Watch tower). This is what Foucault (1980) calls economy of power. The assembly line allowed the efficiency and effectiveness of the production process. To that extent, the workers had to focus on their work, and the only communication they had was with the assembly line. To that end, the assembly line was not just a production process but also a panoptic plan to control, punish and

discipline the workers. The assembly line was a code of conduct for the workers; that is, each worker had to live under the watchful eye of the assembly line. He could not speak to other workers. He thus became like an animal (Marx, 1978).This played a major role in disconnecting the workers from each other.

In the assembly line, everyone had to stay in their station. This meant that they could not spare time to speak to their fellow worker. The workers kept watching each other to make sure that they were on time. Stoppage of the assembly line meant major consequences leading to dismissal from work. This surveillance allowed continuous production of vehicles. Once again, we see how the employer used workers to police and control fellow workers using the assembly line. Workers would survey each other with the intent of making sure that they received a raise or promotion; this was necessitated by the employer as a means of creating a rift between the workers. As such, workers looked at each other as adversaries. Moreover, they could not talk to each other both within the work space or when they were having a break. This was supposed to minimize any despondency or unity that could be used to agitate for fair work or the formation of unions. Workers were also overworked such that they did not have time to connect with their family. After working overtime, by the time they arrived in their homes the workers had little energy left to socialize with their families and became alienated from their loved ones. This led to what Marx calls alienation from species being. They could not connect with others and themselves, and as such they failed to connect to their human sense. The worker was behaving like an animal. He was anti-social. His work meant a lot than human beings. He was like an ox (Marx, 1978).

Marx (1978) says that workers were also alienated from the product. This meant that they could not afford to purchase the goods that they had made. The product had grown too big for them to connect with it. It was out of reach for the workers because of the low wages they were receiving. They could also not associate with the commodity because they were producing something that they had not conceptualized, since the process had been predetermined. As such, the commodity was alien to them. This kind of alienation is based on what Marx sees as a plan by the bourgeoisie to exploit the workers in order to make more profit. Some of the critiques of Marxist thought on alienation are that it is very masculine in its theorization. Marx seemed to focus on men to the detriment of

women. This may be understandable since during his time man was in the public sphere. He was the breadwinner. That said, he failed to focus on other kind of work considered feminine and emotional. Just like child-giving, Marx did not envision the healing practices among the Indigenous peoples. This was public labor that was important for the survival of Indigenous community. As a consequence, Spivak (1996) calls for a re-reading of Marx and for bringing a new re-representation of subjugated knowledge.

Aeta Indigenous Women Healing Practices

What is Indigenous healing? To understand Indigenous healing, one needs to also know Indigenous spirituality (Baskin, 2011). Spirituality for the Aeta Indigenous community entails giving thanks to their Creator for life and for the knowledge and wisdom that they possess. It is also a way of giving thanks to all other creations, dead or alive. Spirituality is a way of respecting and abiding by their worldview that has existed for generations and has historically been embraced by their ancestors (Baskin, 2011). From the Aeta perspective, worldview is about the values and morals to which they have to adhere in order to be in harmony with both the material and spirit worlds. These worldviews encompass respect, love, forgiveness and looking at things in a cyclical and non-linear manner. Aeta women healers accept true equality among all creations. Their credence is that each one of us is ordained with a celestial purpose.

Aeta women healers conceptualize that their purpose is to disseminate their knowledge of healing to those who need it. Healing is not seen as a means of attaining wealth but rather a way of sustaining their society. It is a way of sharing a talent and bringing about change in the Aeta community. It is a way to give back to both the Aeta and the non-Aeta community.

Goldin-Rosenberg (2002) explains the position of women healers in the community:

> …Most cultures, Indigenous knowledge in women's… hands were integral to the maintenance of health. Caring, midwifery, herbalist, and other modalities included the interplay of body; mind, spirit and the Earth…Indigenous healing practices maintained by lay women for thousands of years remain among the most important healing practices in most rural parts of the world. (pp. 139 & 147)

Aeta women healers, like other Indigenous women with special knowledge in other communities, have been playing an integral part in maintaining the well-being of their people. This is because among the Indigenous community, getting sick is seen as a punishment from the spiritual world for the wrongs done. Those wrongs could be against other human beings, ancestors or the environment. Consequently, healing is a process of bringing the alienated person into the social fabric. It is a way of bringing balance into the life of the sick person. That said, healing is not supposed to be a condemning process but rather a way of inviting the person into the society. For that to happen, many Indigenous communities have special people who are supposed to connect the society to the spiritual world. Some of these people are the shamans and traditional healer. In most instances, people who would be considered mentally disabled in today's world were considered important in connecting the physical world to the spiritual world. During their chanting moments, it was believed that they were connecting with the ancestors.

Healing as Respect and Sharing

Maya states:

> *In our community as Aeta, there is no such thing as inferior or superior. We treat everybody with equal respect. For example, when we face a situation that requires a decision, we usually consult each other; husbands consult their wives and vice versa. We also include our children in the decision-making process. There is no such thing as gender inequality.*

Maya explains that gender differences do not exist in the Aeta community. Women are respected. In fact, the Aeta women are "active and capable hunters of wild pig and deer" (Estioko-Griffin, 1985, p. 18). History tells us that hunting is the work of men. However, within the Aeta community gender division of labor is not part of their belief system. Griffin and Griffin (1999) state that:

> Gender relations profoundly exemplify Agta or Aeta egalitarianism. Men and women have equal access to decision-making functions. A couple, together, decides the major issues in their lives, and they consult older children, parents, siblings and co-residents. Neither gender is inferior. (p. 292)

This guides us to the truth that the Aeta community believes in interconnection with one another. No one has power over another.

For a community to exist healthy reciprocity is essential. They try not to compete, although some of the Aeta people are trying to engage in land owning through formal property title because of the rise of capitalism. Co-investigators in the circle acknowledge that they are facing such assimilation dilemmas and paradoxes. However, they have to continue reminding their people that their cultural confidence and construction of relations are not about "owning" property but rather about taking care of the land and sharing land and wealth with community members.

Under the Marxist theorization of alienation, men are the only individuals present in any analysis of the public workplace. Women seem not to feature in Marx's discussion of alienation. The workplace is oriented towards benefiting a few to the detriment of many. As such, the worker finds work disorienting and oppressive. This is because he is not considered intelligent. His ideas are considered less rational. Maya calls for a re-orientation of how the workplace should look. This entails bringing on board other social bodies into the discussion and practice of the work environment; and subsequently exhibiting more respect for them. Maya is informing us to respect other people's ideas. This is because among the Indigenous communities, everyone is considered an intellectual. This sits well with Gramsci's (1971) thought on intellectuals.

Healing as Love

Rang-ay inherited her healing practices from her mother. At the time of the study, she had been a healer for twenty-eight years. When her mother was alive, Rang-ay used to help her in the healing processes. Her mother taught her how to heal the sick. She started healing when she gave birth to her first child. In her healing practices, she uses herbal medicine and rituals. Rang-ay states:

> *Healing other people is a joy for me. I do not ask for money in exchange for my services. I heal because of my "ayat" or love for my people. I do not want my people to suffer. I try my best to help them. There are moments that I get very tired, but I know that if I do not carry out my responsibility to my community and to my people, I will not feel good. Healing is a gift from my Creator and therefore I have to use it for the benefit of my community.*

Rang-ay is working from the notion of "ayat" or love. For Rang-ay, "*ayat*" means strong feelings or conviction that drives her to do great things for others. "*Ayat*" governs everything. It dismantles the notion of "*gura,*" or hatred that brings people to violate others.

For Rang-ay, without "*ayat*," she could never do anything for other people because "*ayat*" possesses the qualities of responsibility, respect and compassion. Subsequently, Rang-ay always ensures that what she does conforms to the principles of "*ayat*." That is why she was able to fulfill her responsibility to her community. For her, "*ayat*" means healing and, to her, healing is a way of preserving her identity and her community through tireless service. Rang-ay advocates for this knowledge.

Talna inherited her healing practices from her brother. At the time of the study, she had been a healer for nine years. She uses herbal plants and prayer in her healing. According to Talna:

> *I heal because of my love for my people. However, if they decide to go and seek another treatment, I am happy with that. To me, when people come and ask for help, I cannot say no. I have to help and to do my best to render my service. Healing is a way for me to continue the legacy of my people.*

Talna shows one aspect of the traditions of the Aeta people: the fact that "you exist because of your people." She told me that she does not accept any payment because it is part of their practices that when you help, you do not expect anything in return. In addition, like Rang-ay, Talna also possesses the "*ayat*" that gives her the strength to fulfill her duty, a duty that will continue the legacy of her ancestors. In the community of the Aeta people, in the Philippines, they have been divided by decolonization. Some of them live in different towns in the Philippines, like Gattaran, Penablanca and Allacapan. Talna states that they have been divided by colonialists through the expropriation of their ancestral lands for mining purposes. The government of the Philippines passed the law of mining, empowering mining companies from other countries to legally mine. Some of the Aeta people are forced to relocate due to such legal tactics.

Talna uses her healing knowledge as a tool for uniting her community. She explains that the reason why she heals non-Aeta people is to share the idea of "*ayat*." She believes that when a person feels the love of others, she or he can pass the same principles that govern them in their daily life. When this happens, non-Aeta people will not work on the notion of individuality, but, instead, will bring back the idea that we are all connected and related.

Maya used to get sick when she was young and it is through this that she became a healer. At the time of the study she had been a

healer for forty-nine years. She uses herbal plants and rituals in healing. Maya recalls:

> *When I was young, I wondered why my body was always sensitive and because of this I always felt sick. My parents used to bring me to an Aeta healer. The healer was always nice to me. Every time she performed healing rituals, I made sure that I paid attention. When she was preparing medicine for me, I would always ask questions. I remember one time she asked me why I needed to know everything, and I told her that I did not want her to get tired of me, so when I got sick again, I would be the one to heal myself. The healer laughed at me. But, at that time, I was already claiming my position in this society as a healer. Since then, I became a healer. When I do not feel good I treat myself. This practice continued and people started coming to me and asking me to heal them.*

Maya is full of humor. She subscribes to the conviction that healing brings empowerment not only to the person who is performing the healing, but also to the community in which she belongs. This is because it gives them the hope and energy to live despite the challenges they experience in life.

Singli inherited her healing practices from her grandmother. At the time of the study she had been a healer for thirteen years. She uses herbal medicine and prayers in healing. Singli notes:

> *Being a healer is not easy. I do it because I want to have a reason to live. My grandmother used to tell me that we had an immense talent, and said the only way to maintain it was to use it. She told me that my gift was healing and therefore I had to use it in a good way. My grandmother taught me almost everything I know in healing. She taught me very important values in life, emphasizing that we are all connected, and that if one is sick, we are all affected. Therefore, to avoid this, we have to do our part.*

Singli remembers the days when her grandmother was alive. She said that her grandmother told her a story about how the Japanese colonized the Philippines. According to her grandmother, this occupation period was the scariest time of their lives because the Japanese soldiers were ruthless, especially to women. Her grandmother narrated how the Japanese used to take many of the women they came across and use them as sex slaves. While Singli was telling us the story her pain was evident and transparent. She told us that her grandmother cried when she talked about how the

women had suffered in the hands of the Japanese soldiers. Singli stated that, from this experience, her grandmother had started the healing process to dealing with the considerable psychological and ecological damage that had been done. The spirit needs healing as much as our physical body. Singli illuminates that as part of the Aeta healing practice, spirits can be healed by offering prayers and carrying on the traditions that have been passed on to her.

"I heal because I want to improve the health of my people-Aly"

The Aeta represented by their women healers look at life from a perspective that is more integrated and communal and less atomized and individualized than the Western model. Aly, for example, stresses that she does not focus on material things or on how much she can make in healing. She focuses on helping other people. She talks about believing in what she does and how it will help her community. She states:

> *There may be a health center in our community, but there are still so many people who come to me because they believe in my healing power. I have been healing very many people who have been bitten by snakes, among other things. Some of them were about to die when they came to me. But, through my knowledge of healing, and with the help of my Creator, I was able to help them. There are times when I feel so weak, but I still perform healing because if I refuse to heal the people who are in need of help I feel worse. My work as a healer is one that gives me strength and happiness. I believe that I possess the knowledge that can help the people who are in need. It is a power not only to change the lives of my people but also the lives of other people. I do not ask for money or any material things. I only ask the people who come to me to believe in what I do and to respect my people.*

For Aly, the well-being of her people and others is the raison d'être for her vocation. Healing may sometimes be harsh, for example when she is exhausted, but she continues working despite her own exhaustion in order to improve the health of others in the community. Improving the people's health conditions for the better is one of the reasons she continues to heal.

Although our mothers and grandmothers had always practiced Indigenous healing, we harbored some doubts about its efficacy. The conceptual origin of our skepticism lay in the cumulative effects of modernist socialization coupled with totalizing grand narratives. The influence of this invisible paradigm, "the Nazi man within,"

was enough for us to regurgitate misinformation about Indigenous healing. As Dei et al. (2002) explain:

> As a result of colonial, patriarchal, corporate, exploitative, and often ecologically destructive development models, Indigenous knowledges have been underestimated and undervalued. Knowledge production has been socially constructed so as to become a near monopoly from which most ordinary people are excluded. (p. 9)

Among the many reasons why Indigenous knowledge is still undervalued in the academy is the fact that numerous students (including many with whom we have spoken) are afraid that they may not be able to get jobs. We were told, one time, by senior scholars in the academy that if we focused our study on Indigenous knowledge, we might end up jobless. This informal knowledge implicitly speaks volumes about how the discourse related to Indigenous healing has been marginalized in academic spaces and treated as if the knowledge in itself is negatively contagious. It speaks volumes on how Indigenous knowledge continues to be marginalized in public spaces. It tells a lot about how Indigenous knowledge is seen as irrational and not worthy of being called work or labor. (We should ask, who has the superstition?). Today, the work of Indigenous peoples is too often characterized in informal settings as devoid of sense and is thus marginalized. Furthermore, its expertise is under-represented and presented as tacit informal practices within the academic circle. We may be promoters of equal justice and fairness in society, but if we do not recognize our roots and cultures in our teachings, anything we proclaim about justice will be an incomplete epistemic. We need open exchanges since they are the heart and soul of what is generally understood as "ethics," open discourse and "bias free" inquiry. Our academy is still involved in the colonial beliefs that tend to deny that the Indigenous peoples' knowledge belongs in a safe space. In fact, we have ended up imposing a death sentence on would-be scholars by claiming that choosing this area limits job prospects. This is a Eurocentric mentality in its most plain, apparent form and the prejudice has manifested a bias which has been taken to levels bordering on disgrace.

There are, and should be, levels of engagement and varying degrees of "proof" in a valid epistemological assessment. One potential methodological critique of our own claims made here, for instance,

is frequently and often correctly made towards anthropologists: the claims are single accounts (and therefore single cases) with no independent check on spurious or exogenous factors or cross-checks on inherent bias, particularly to the observer. They are therefore lacking validity and consequently are suspect in terms of fundamental methodological criteria of both reliability and validity (Campbell & Stanley, 1966). Put another way, one might ask sociologically (and logically) where are the counter interrogations of the negative space which is created by stigmatizing individuals using judgment that is offered, frequently without the possibility of counter analysis or even an open discussion of merit? The Aeta "methodology," by contrast, is empirical, but it begins with trust in a community and the belief that we are rooted there from our values to our methods.

I Share

Rang-ay outlines the role of her healing practice in educating the Aeta youth:

> *As a woman I use my healing practice to educate my grandchildren and other children in our community about our beliefs and practices, and about our people. I teach them how to heal so that when I cannot heal anymore, this future generation can continue healing.*

Rang-ay practices her healing to educate her people's future generation. It is at the local level that her practice of cultural continuity mirrors the pedagogical practice of vocational exchange and socio-cultural interactions which use humans' most dynamic processes of educational practice: language, love and healing. Her work is understanding that cultural, epistemic and spiritual unity transcend time and space. Is it not just this type of theological understanding that is the cultural and spiritual basis of all intergenerational and specific transfer of belief and values? Is the Christian belief in the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost so different as an act of faith and conceptual model for belief transmission as the theology and logic Rang-ay professes? Shall we understand and subsequently dismiss all Christians as "superstitious," "uneducated" and deficient in "scientific rigor"? It would, of course, be biased and unfounded to make such a supposition and would (rightly) lead to charges of religious bias. We are merely quarrying as a part of "open inquiry"—why does such specious and post hoc ego hoc logic pass as "rational" in our

academies when applied to remote and socio-political groups like the Aeta, which are more vulnerable? Sterling (2002) highlights the role of grandmothers as the natural teachers:

> The grandmothers are natural teachers because they care for children. In the narratives they laughed and worked and told stories to little children and rode up into the mountains, were kind, were strict, made twine out of plants, cut willow switches to make the children behave, rocked the babies to sleep. Their creation stories and narratives show the children their unique place in their nation's history and contribute to a positive self-image by validating First Nations experiences. Like the grandmothers before us we can create lessons built on experience and storytelling to transmit knowledge and skills, cultural pride, and self-confidence. (p. 5)

What Rang-ay is doing for her grandchildren fits in with Sterling's description of the grandmother's role. Rang-ay is teaching them their culture. She cares for them and she knows that they wish to persevere and embrace their culture. As a grandmother, Rang-ay knows that her grandchildren are the next generation of the Aeta. She knows that they have been the target of assimilation. She knows that in order to be able to resist assimilation, her grandchildren have to learn, live and practice their culture.

Rula inherited her healing practices from her mother. At the time of the study, she had been a healer for nine years. She uses herbal medicine in healing. Rula noted:

> *…My mother is my role model. She taught me how to be a good daughter, a good member of the community. She taught me how to perform my responsibility well. She told me that healing is very important not just for our own self, but also for other human beings." She said that "if I want to see the next generation of Aeta, I had to learn how to heal, and I had to learn the different herbal plants, how to prepare them and the different illnesses that can be healed using herbal plants.*"

She also added that she always tends to the herbal plants. From Rula's statement we learn how the oral tradition is alive and transmitted in their community. Rula learned how to heal from her mother. In addition, she learned the process of preparing the herbs before administration to the ill person. Rula is educating us on the way she heals by giving us an understanding of the process. Her sagacity ravages the idea that "women in Third World countries

need to be educated." This is an essentialist dogma meant to devalue the wisdom of the Aeta people. In fact, Rula is educated through oral tradition. In her statement, she is not asking to be educated; rather, she is saying that she already has the knowledge. Rula is requesting that our investigations and documentation demonstrate the Aeta people's agency in the midst of colonization and its subsequent imperialism.

Spivak (1996) provides examples of what Rula is talking about by centering her work on the possibility of locating the voices of marginalized subjects within imperial literature. She calls for the recovery of these voices. She wants to find out whether her expertise can be used for subversion. One of her objectives is to dislodge this notion of essentialism, because, for her, essentialism is a trap. The consequences of essentialism can be oppressive, exclusive, exploitative and dehumanizing. She is offering a way of seeing effects from the lens of the subject. If we do this, we could potentially discover the tremendous knowledge base that Rula and the other Aeta women healers possess.

Cena inherited her healing practices from her mother. She uses herbal medicine and prayer in healing practices. Cena talks about being a healer in times of struggle:

> *My healing gives me the power to make a change in my community. I remember there was one time in our community when there was hunger and people getting sick. It was indeed a difficult time. People came to me for healing. It pained me to see my people suffering. However, I always believe that we are a strong community and I know in my heart that we will survive.*

Cena learned from her mother that perseverance is the key to being a strong and knowledgeable healer. She used to see her mother healing all the people who sought her help. Her mother never got tired of helping others. Instead, Cena could see her mother's dedication to the people who were in need. Cena then realized that she wanted to follow the legacy of her mother. Cena conscious that her community is facing systemic oppression. Among the systemic oppression that they are facing is the loss of their ancestral land. Seizures and privatization of land become systemic oppression because the system allows individuals to pursue their intergroup cruelty by establishing title deeds which justify private property ownership.

Under Western property law, if a person owns a land title, it

automatically means that this person has the right to own (occupy, utilize and divest) the land. As such, it bestows ownership to some and denies it to others. Some of the non-Aeta people have been using this legal definition to expropriate Aeta land. This problem in the Aeta community is reflected in other Indigenous groups in the Philippines, such as the Igorot in Ifugao and the Isneg in Kalinga-Apayo. It is a problem also faced by other Indigenous peoples who live in other continents of the world, like the Maasai in Kenya and the First Nations in Canada, among others. The challenges that the Aeta face are mirror images of the experiences and tribulations of Indigenous peoples globally. But as this is happening, Aeta women Indigenous healers use their healing practices to subvert any colonial pedagogy of property ownership which is core to capitalist thought process.

Discussion: Rethinking Marx on Alienation in Relation to Aeta Indigenous Women Healers' Practices

To Marx (1978), only men were workers. This theorization did not look into the issues that women were facing in the private sphere. His was a focus on public masculine space as a space of analysis. We argue that Marxist thought also fails to look at other forms of economic practice that existed among Indigenous communities. For that reason, Indigenous knowledges and practices on healing can be a space for the deconstruction of Marx's theory on alienation. This is possible on the grounds that these ways of knowing still exist even in present day capitalism as shown in the research that was carried out in the Philippines among the Aeta Indigenous women healers. Our argument is that healing should be considered labor and a public engagement. This is because this kind of labor used to be done in public spaces. But as I argue for the publicizing of Indigenous healing practices, I am also careful not to fall into the dualistic discussion of public and private sphere. Healing used to exist between and beyond the public and private continuum. Aeta Indigenous healers healed their close families as well as others. But for the sake of cultural politics and representation, I argue that healing was a public space undertaking.

Marx (1978) talks about the alienation of labor, which contends that when a person works, he is alienated from self, process, others and species being. Marx argues this in relation to capitalism. Upon a closer look, the production process lacks love, respect, relationship building and reciprocity. If the work environment can accommodate

these four tenets of Indigenous knowledge on healing as espoused by the Aeta women Indigenous healers, we can see a re-orientation of labour processes in contemporary society. The organic unity of the Aeta healing practice draws a sharp contrast: alienation, as outlined by Marx, does not empirically encompass or accurately describe the work practice of the Aeta women healers who, by the countervailing intentionality of their work, resist detrimental social institutions which, of course, means not surrendering their traditional ways. They shared with me that when they heal, they develop profound human bonds as well as healing relationships. Aeta healing is about knowing the person; it is not about pecuniary gain. Ultimately, it is about having an interpersonal connection.

Healing is a journey that requires coming to a realization about the etiological causes of a given malady. The responsibility of the Aeta women healers is both to ensure that this journey is taken in the right direction and to let the sick person understand the process. Along this sojourn, the Aeta healer and the infirmed person build a relationship that makes each of them a more robust and communicative human being. Healing in this paradigm is not about being alienated from oneself but instead is a way of actualizing one's dream or calling. The more an Aeta performs healing, the more she realizes her intended existence because she is actualizing her communal and spiritual calling. She is not just performing a duty but instead she is living her assigned societal station and calling.

Healing for the Aeta is not about being alienated from the production. It is about being familiar with the culturally-nuanced healing practices and historically-based knowledge derived from both collective experiences and cumulative and ongoing interactions with the local environment. Every time she heals she knows that somebody has been rescued from the "darkness" or "bad spirit." She believes that when a person possesses a good spirit, this person becomes benign to others. Aeta Indigenous women healers healing is the anti-study of alienation. The work is not centered on a detached delivery of isolated and technical practice but, contrarily, is about an emerging collective spirituality. Through healing, the Aeta become empathetic and knowledgeable healers. Through healing, they practice and live the legacy of their ancestors. The alienation that Marx refers to in the feudalist era does not exist in

the community of the Aeta healers because there is no separation of community on the basis of property or other devices of imposed alienated labour.

However, Talna states the following:

> *I am worried because these colonized men are teaching our Aeta men to see us as inferior members of the society. For example, there was one time when colonized men came to our community. One of them said, "We want to talk to your Aeta men about your ancestral land." One of us women told them, you can talk to us too. But, they insisted on seeing our men. See, in this kind of practice, these colonized men are bringing gender inequality to our community. But we have to hold on to our culture that we are all important children of our ancestors.*

The Aeta community members keep on fighting for their beliefs. They know that the society is changing but they resist being inundated by this cultural flood which will degrade their culture. They can only agree to change that will strengthen them as a whole community.

We learn from the women's stories above that the Aeta women healers experience discrimination from the non-Aeta people on the basis of their gender. They are being disrespected, insulted and harassed, their healing practices are being questioned, they are banned from the market and they are identified as being primitive and useless. However, despite these experiences, these Aeta women healers continue to assert their position in their community. They articulate their experiences and apply their strength to carry themselves with conviction. They maintain their uniqueness as women in a society skewed against them. They acknowledge the intricacies of their position but do not succumb to attrition pressures. They consider their distinctiveness as both a space in which to speak up and one in which to practice their healing. They are women who possess the knowledge and wisdom that can be used to overcome adversity.

Conclusion: Healing Alienation

The theory of alienation has a profound impact towards understanding oppressive practices in workplaces. Spaces are not innocent. Spaces are not naturally occurring. It is a project that takes laws to produce. Spaces create identities. Spaces help in understanding how individuals come to know themselves in and

through them (Meyer, 2008). Gender, racial, disability and other forms of identity are considered as spatial categories. As such, spaces help in organizing the social bodies. Workers are a product of space. We have identified the Ford assembly line as a space that alienates the worker to themselves, process, others and the product. We have identified the technology of power in the name of the assembly line and how it helps in policing and organizing the worker. This Marxist thought on alienation allows us to understand the politics of space as alienating and oppressive to workers.

As much as this is the case, Marx fails to look at the frontier (Bloomly, 2003) and see other organizing mechanisms that allow reciprocity, respect, love and relationship building as anti-capitalist pedagogies that can heal the alienation of workers. According to Aeta Indigenous women healers, healing is an important undertaking. To them, healing is a process that helps them to showcase their talent. Healing is a community practice that is held in high esteem. Those who heal do it because they want to give back to their community. It is a way of paying respect to their community, environment and ancestors. It is a show of their love for their community and others. Through healing, the relationship between the community and the celestial world is enhanced. No one owns this talent. The healer possesses the talent. The major values present among the Aeta Indigenous women healers can be used to deconstruct the alienation of workers. Consequently, this paper calls for a re-orientation of the contemporary workplace to adopt these values. They can be a useful tool for decolonizing the work spaces.

References

Asian Development Bank. (2002, June). ADB Publications. Retrieved from http://www.adb.org/Documents/Reports/Indigenous_Peoples/PHIdefault.asp

Baskin, C. (2011). *Strong helpers' teachings; The value of Indigenous knowledges in the helping professions*. Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press Inc.

Bloomly, B.(2003). Law, property and the geography of violence: The frontier, the surveyor and the grid. *Annals of the Association of American Geographies, 93*(1), 121-141.

Campbell, D., & Stanley, J. (1966). *Experimental and quasi-experimental design in the social sciences.* Chicago, IL: Rand McNally.

Chase, S. E. (2003). Learning to listen: Narrative principles in a qualitative research methods course. In R. Josselson, A. Lieblich, & D. P. McAdams (Eds.), *Up close and personal: The teaching and learning of narrative research* (pp. 79-99). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Chilisa, B. (2012). Decolonizing the interview method. Research methods in question. In *Indigenous research methodologies* (pp. 73-96). Los Angeles: SAGE.

Coloma, R. (2004). *Empire and education: Filipino schooling under United States Rule, 1900-1910*. (Doctoral dissertation). Ohio State University, Columbus. Retrieved from http://etd.ohiolink.edu/send-pdf.cgi/Coloma%20Roland.pdf?osu1086209087

Creswell, J. (2013). Five qualitative approaches to inquiry. In *Qualitative inquiry and research design* (3rd ed.) (pp. 69-110). Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

Dei, G. (2002). African development: The relevance and implications of "Indigenousness." In G. Dei, B. Hall, & D. Rosenberg (Eds.), *Indigenous knowledges in global context*: *Multiple readings of our world* (pp. 70-86). Toronto, Ontario, Canada: University Press.

Griffin, A., & Griffin, A. (Eds.). (1985). *The Agta of northeastern Luzon: Recent studies*. Cebu City, Philippines: University of San Carlos, Humanities Series.

Etzioni, A. (1961). *A comparative analysis of complex organizations*. New York, NY: The Free Press.

Foucault, M. (1980). *Power/knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings, 1972−1977.* New York, NY: Pantheon.

Fraser, H. (2004). Doing narrative research: Analysing personal stories line by line. *Qualitative Social Work 3*(2), 179-201.

Gegeo, D., & Watson-Gegeo, K. (2001). "How we know": Kwara'ae rural villagers doing Indigenous epistemology. *The Contemporary Pacific, 13*(1), 55-88.

Gobrin, G., & Andin, A. (2008). *Development conflict: The Philippine experience.* Retrieved from http://www.minorityrights.org/download.php?id=76

Goldin-Rosenberg, D. (2002). Toward Indigenous wholeness: Feminist praxis in transformative learning on health and the environment. In G. Dei, H. Budd, & D. Goldin-Rosenberg (Eds.), *Indigenous knowledges in global contexts: Multiple readings of our world* (pp. 137-154). Toronto, Ontario, Canada: University of Toronto Press.

Gramsci, A. (1971). *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. London: Lawrence & Wishart.

Guerrero, A. (1974). *Philippine society and revolution.* Hong Kong, Hong Kong: Ta Kung Pao.

Mander, J. (2006). Introduction: Globalization and the assault on Indigenous resources. In J. Mander & V. Tauli-Corpuz (Eds.), *Paradigm wars: Indigenous People's resistance to globalization* (pp. 3-10). San Francisco, CA: Sierra Club Books.

Marx, K. (1978).Economic and philosophic manuscripts of 1844. In R. C. Tucker (Ed.), *The Marx-Engels reader* (pp. 66-125). New York, NY: Norton & Co.

Meyer, M. A. (2008). "Indigenous and authentic: Hawaiian epistemology and the triangulation of meaning." In N. K. Denzin, Y. S. Lincoln, & L. T. Smith (Eds.)., *Handbook of critical and Indigenous methodologies* (pp. 217-232). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Smith, L. (1999). *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and Indigenous peoples*. London, UK: Zed Books Ltd.

Smith, L. & Simon J. (2001). *A civilizing mission?* Aukland, NZ: Aukland University Press.

Spivak, G.C. (1996). *The Spivak reader: Selected works of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Sterling, S. (2002). Yetko and Sophie: Nlakapamux cultural professors. *Canadian Journal of Native Education, 26*(1), 4-10.

Tauli-Corpuz, V. (2006). Our rights remain separate and distinct. In V. Tauli-Corpuz & J. Mander (Eds.), *Paradigm wars* (pp. 13-21). San Francisco, CA: Sierra Club Books.

Zaide, G. F. (1957). *Philippine political and cultural history: The Philippines since pre-Spanish times.* Quezon City, Philippines: McCullough Printing Company.

PART III

SPIRITUALITY AND THEORETICAL COMPLEXITIES

CHAPTER SEVEN

EMOTIONAL CONTRADICTIONS: QUEER FILIPINOS' RELIGIOUS AND SPIRITUAL ENGAGEMENTS IN THE DIASPORA

Fritz Luther Pino

"There is something in there [the church, the mass] that is so mesmerizing. It is so peaceful, solemn, and allowed me to self-reflect. But I cried because the priest talked about trans-substantiation; that is, the transformation of God in different personas – the blood, the body, and the spirit. If God exemplified transformation, so why do they (religion) consider my sexual and gender transformation a sin?"

Introduction

The epigraph above is from my transgender relative who shared her thoughts on the religious service the she attended. She has been very connected to her religion since in the Philippines, where she grew up, and continues to be so in Canada where she has recently undergone gender transition. As she claimed, her participation in the religious service – with the church and the mass – enabled her to experience her spirituality. However, she also felt confused. She recognized the ways in which her religion disavowed her gender transformation. That is to say, her religion continues to be oppressive and violent to her non-normative gender and sexual identity despite the ways in which it facilitates her spirituality.

In this chapter, I focus on this less explored lived reality and cultural practice of queer Filipinos[1] in the diaspora: their ongoing and enduring relationship with dominant religion for spirituality. I argue that by examining such cultural situation would generate an analytic concept that attends to the complex intersection of queer sexuality[2], religion, and spirituality. Given the existing literature have yet to fully articulate such complex intersections within the context of queer diasporic Filipino experiences[3], the proposed concept would serve as starting point, especially as it emphasizes the effects of colonialism on queer Filipinos' religious and spiritual practices in the diaspora.

As my trans-identified relative has pointed out, religion and spirituality are intimately linked. Her experience then speaks to Hill and Pargament's (2003) idea of religion and spirituality. They write:

Spirituality can be understood as a search for the sacred, a process through which people seek to discover, hold on to, and, when necessary, transform whatever they hold sacred in their lives (Pargament, 1997). This search takes place in a larger religious context, one that may be traditional or non-traditional. Sacred refers to those special objects or events set apart from the ordinary and thus deserving of veneration. The sacred includes concepts of God, the divine, Ultimate Reality, and the transcendent, as well as any aspect of life that takes on extraordinary character by virtue of its association with or representation of such concepts.

My relative's experience resonates with Hill and Pargament (2003)'s, especially on the idea of the intimate link between religion and spirituality because the religion that she has been affiliated with – both in the Philippines and in Canada – has always been venerated[4]. Veneration emerges due to the ways in which it becomes the space or the pathways towards the 'Sacred'. In this context, religion is connected to her spirituality: it thus served as path to her ongoing and enduring spiritual connection with the Sacred, who is a God or Higher Being.

Juxtaposing the queer subject position of my transgender relative with Hill & Pargament's definitions of religion and spirituality, I asked the following questions: What might be revealed when queer bodies and identities are being part of the analysis in such intimate intersection of religion and spirituality? What might be the effect if religion, as that which has been necessary for spiritual consciousness and intimacies with the Higher Being, was indeed and continues to be the tool for colonization, oppression, and violence against queer sexualities?

Hence, I suggest the concept *emotional contradiction* to highlight queer Filipinos' contradictory and complicated relationship with religion and spirituality. I draw this idea from Homi Bhaba's (1994) notion of the in-between space, which means a space usually occupied by hybrid subjects: those who identify as both a colonized and colonizer. I contend that queer Filipinos are in a position of contradiction with religion and spirituality like my transgender relative: while religion brings out spirituality, it also made possible

the feelings of discomfort due to its colonial and violent treatment on their queer gender and sexualities. Queer sexuality, then, emphasizes the non-smooth and non-easy relationship between religion and spirituality (Hill & Pargament, 2003) thereby, allowing for the space of contradiction to exist.

But, this space of contradiction is loaded with multiple feelings and emotions. While Bhabha highlights the feelings of ambivalence within the space of the in-between, a range of *possible and multiple* feelings and emotions – both pleasant and unpleasant – could also exist at the same. Going back to my transgender relative, I contend that her cry was not just about sadness; but rather, the different emotions and feelings resulting from her embrace of both the benefits and problematics of her religious and spiritual engagements. *Emotional contradiction*, therefore, moves beyond Bhabha's notion of ambivalence by emphasizing the possible multiple affects, emotions, and feelings when queer sexuality, religion, and spirituality intersect.

By considering the feelings and emotions of queer subjects as multiple and diverse while being in the space of contradiction, that it delineates both their everyday struggles, sense of relief, and vigilance to the colonial legacies of religion, diffuses the rigid and dichotomous idea of religion and spirituality as monolithic and always in an easy, linear, and simple relationship (Love, Bock, Jannarone, & Richardson, 2005). As well, foregrounding the diversity of emotions that exist in the position of contradiction of queer Filipinos emphasize their greater sense of agency. That is to say, as they reveal and articulate their certain feelings and emotions from being in the position of contradiction, they resist the myopic critique that framed them as merely victims of colonial oppressions who lack political consciousness so they need to be politicized, taught, and saved. Thus, highlighting the many kinds of emotions, feelings, and affect that queer subjects would experience with religion and spirituality gesture to many diverse possible and alternative ways of living and thriving within the constraints of hegemonic institutions in the diaspora.

An Auto-ethnographic Move: Notes on Social Location and Methods

My emphasis on queer Filipinos' experiences with religion and spirituality is not isolated from my everyday reality and location;

that is, I generate my observation from my own social location as an insider and part of the Filipino queer community in Canada. I am a first-generation Filipino – one who is born and raised in the Philippines and had since lived in Canada for the past 10 years. As queer-identified in the Filipino community, I continue to witness my peers ongoing devotion and practice of their religion so as to engage with their spiritual selves. Yet, I also continue to witness how their acts are being condemned mostly by mainstream queer activists who considered their act of going to church as non-political because they subscribe to the colonial scripts of religious institutions.

To elucidate a more nuanced understanding of their experiences rather than a polarized and limited one, I offer a transnational auto-ethnography of my own experiences with religion and spirituality. This brief transnational auto-ethnography highlights my own personal stories and memories while growing up queer in the Philippines, and then my personal experiences as a racialized, first-generation, Cebuano speaking[5], queer immigrant in Canada. Consequently, my analysis is indeed limited only within the scope of my personal experiences and encounters; hence, do not represent the experiences of all queer Filipinos in the diaspora.

Auto-ethnography makes sense because it allows me to critically integrate myself into the analysis, while maintaining a self-reflective stance (Marx, Pennington, & Chang, 2017). Indeed, this work does not end here. That is to say, this work will serve as entry point to a larger research endeavour in the future on the religious and spiritual practices of queer-identified Filipinos in the diaspora.

The two major sections that follow are based on my diasporic location – (1) my experiences in the Philippines; and (2) my experiences in Canada – that tell stories of my relationship with religion and spirituality as queer-identified subject. Moreover, given that my experiences are a series of interactions and encounters, I also included my personal interactions with close friends and family members who are also queer-identified. As their stories and experiences intersect with mine, the two sections then documented my experiences and memories that I had with them, while showcasing and illustrating emotional contradictions. The conclusion section then re-iterates the significant theoretical contributions and implications of this work for future research.

Experiences in the Philippines

In my hometown in the Philippines, the structure of the church was not necessarily the same in Canada where one has to be in-door or inside the church to be able to participate the mass. There, our church was designed as open, meaning, people could participate the mass from the outside. Benches were built at the periphery of the church so everyone could sit and see the priest through the screen on the wall. I believed the tropical climate of the Philippines made this kind of set-up possible whereby the outside space could be easily utilized with convenience. When special occasions and celebrations arrived, people brought their own chair, and were able to sit outside the church with their *paypay* (fan) while participating in the mass.

Spending my life there as a queer teenager, I usually sit outside together with my friends who also identified as *bayot* (Cebuano term for queers or gays)[6]. We knew that we were more comfortable outside than inside the church. As teenagers, the outside gave us more space and freedom for *chika*, which means chit-chat and informal conversation, without being policed by other people's look and gaze if we get louder. Outside, it was easier to look around and giggle, especially when we saw our crushes – most of them were young altar boys who were serving the mass. Hence, the church was not just our space for praying; but, we transformed it into a space where we were able to express our queer sexualities through our subtle bodily performances, movements, gestures, and language that resist the normative appeal of the church.

Going to church every Sunday was also an escape from home. As queer teenagers, our families would scold us for acting and being effeminate. Since our parents wouldn't allow us to leave the house for they would thought that we would be doing 'gay' stuff with our 'gay' friends, instead, we would tell them that we would be going to church so that they would let us go out with our friends. By going to church to attend mass, we strategically re-invented ourselves since it allowed our families to think of us as religious and good despite being a *bayot*. However, despite these were one of our reasons to go to church, we, of course also wanted to express and practice our faith. That is, attending the mass allowed us to be engaged with our spirituality by being able to pray. Range of emotions and feelings were in our prayers as we jokingly talked about them after the mass. The common themes of emotions that were included in our

stories were the desires for peace and consolation amidst a punitive home, guilt and repentance for being queer, hope to met and be loved by crushes, endurance in everyday economic struggles and family hardships, becoming rich, becoming beautiful, good health, protection from harm, and success in school. Religion then was not only serving as cloak to be able to go outside our homes, but also, a tool for self-care and space for spiritual connection and reflection. In such a context, we took up the church and religion differently by creating new meanings of it. We see religion, through the church, as space for refuge, for identity re-configuration, for emotional support, to express queerness and resistance, and instrument for spiritual experience.

While attending the mass and being with the church had social and emotional utility, we were not immune from biased, moralizing, homophobic, and transphobic sermons and homily. In the mass, we continued to hear unfair ideas of the priest who promoted the privileging of heterosexual union, relationship, and family formation, as well as the subtle prejudice on sexual minorities, especially on their identities and sexual practices. Indeed, then, despite the positive benefits we get from being with the church to attend the mass, as queer teenagers, we also carry the burden of being ultimately exposed to exclusionary experiences, let alone, violent discourses embedded in our religion.

Experiences in Canada

In my first few years in Toronto, Canada, I met Piya, the cousin of my mother. She identified as lesbian. She led a religious group at the church where she served. She guided me and my family – my parents and siblings – to settle in the city. She introduced us to the Filipino group in her church. Whenever she discussed about herself and her relationship with religion, she always uttered the statement: *“being an immigrant and being far away from your family makes you feel insecure; being in church and with God, however, makes you feel very safe”.*

Piya’s immediate family – her parents and siblings – were in the Philippines. She came to Canada alone as a live-in-caregiver, and had since lived in the country for almost 10 years. As I reflected on Piya’s statements, they also resonated with mine. When we moved to Canada, we also did not know anyone since we did not have any relatives or direct families in the country aside from Piya. Feelings of insecurity and cultural alienation succumbed in

our family, especially my parents who wanted to go back to the Philippines (and who actually did) because of their experiences of de-professionalization and de-skilling in Canada (Kelly et al., 2012). Feelings of un-belonging have also circulated as we were separated from our friends and relatives in the Philippines.

However, through Piya, the church provided us social support and sense of belonging. At a personal level, the church rekindled my memory of serenity, and possibilities for queer friendship and camaraderie to exist. Like in the Philippines, I felt that I would be able to find friends who were also queer-identified. And, my hunch was right. I met not just one, but many friends who identified as queer. Some of them became my close friends up to now. The church then allowed me to be connected with them socially and spiritually. Most of our conversations were then imbued with our life experiences as queer in the Philippines, our engagement with religion there, and our common experiences of struggles in Canada. Hence, in the Canadian context, the church became a space that validated our feelings of nostalgia, longing, and need for community. We were able to continue to practice our spirituality; but this time, our prayers were integrated with scenes and situations that transcend between the Philippines and Canada. Such scenes and situations were not necessarily stories of success, but also of fears, anxieties, and hopes for a better life in the host country.

However, while the church made these possibilities for community and spirituality to exist, the discursive policing of queer sexualities continues to circulate, and in some situations, through the priest's homily or sermon. It seems to me then that this kind of policing through discourse has always been embedded within the dominant religion's doctrine across geographical contexts. The experience of my transgender relative evidenced such exclusionary discourses of religion on queer sexualities and gender. As well, while being at the church, a sense of being always watched by others continue to exist. Given that in Canada, masses are usually held indoor, doing *chika* or informal conversation with friends would be challenging. There is this demand for a consistent performance of respectability and full engagement since we were inside a church. Hence, our movement is regulated and controlled and have to be adaptable with the people inside the church; otherwise, they could easily police us with their gazes. Therefore, engaging with religion and spirituality instigate various feelings and emotions brought about by its benefits

and limits. These feelings include excitement, belonging, as well as discomfort and hypervigilance all at the same time.

Conclusion

Taken together, my religious and spiritual experiences both in the Philippines and in Canada highlight emotional contradiction not only because of the limits and possibilities that I experienced and revealed upon my engagement with religion and spirituality, but also of the various kinds of emotions that I felt while being in the position of contradiction. That is to say, the concept of emotional contradiction allowed me to delineate and showcase the complex experiences of queer Filipinos, myself included, with religion and spirituality. The complexities and contradictions are loaded with various feelings and emotions that also expand and challenge normative meanings of religion and spiritual experiences.

Emotional contradiction is the effect when historically marginalized subjects, such as queer Filipinos, work with colonial institutions of religion to experience spirituality. The existence of emotional contradiction then is indicative of the load that queer-identified subjects would always carry in their very desire to exist within the constraints of hegemonic institutions. Hence, to say that queer Filipinos have an emotionally contradictory relationship with religion and spirituality is not a dismissal of the colonial effects and trauma brought about by religion itself. Rather, such an analytic description continues to be mindful of the existing violence of religion, while also considering its utility and benefits on queer Filipinos' everyday existence in the diaspora.

Moreover, emotional contradiction also allowed me to flesh out and highlight the ways in which quotidian settings and situations, which showcase the everyday performances and behaviours of queer Filipinos (Manalansan 2003), engage in the politics of resistance to transform normative meanings of religion and spirituality. Here, the ordinary performances, actions, and behaviours of queer Filipinos in the context of their religious and spiritual engagements showcase subversive acts that elucidate how their minority subject position and location counter hegemonic institutions and discourses. Indeed, these kinds of acts are not necessarily explored, highlighted, or even named as such in existing literatures since these do not fall within the parameters of normative or mainstream queer activism and politics. Emotional contradiction then gestures antagonizing moves of queer subjects against institutions of power whose agenda is to

fix and freeze their subjectivities, practices, and performances by pointing to various and diverse possibilities of relating with religious and spiritual experiences. Hence, emotional contradiction offers a more generous understanding of their situations, lived experiences, and cultural locations.

Future research may benefit from this concept as it recognizes both the colonial legacies of religion, the productive ramifications of spirituality to one's life, and the struggles of sexual minorities. It then offers an intersectional and relational analysis by considering the emotional interaction of queer subjects towards spirituality and religion. In other words, with emotional contradiction that queer Filipinos in the diaspora have indicated, future research on religion and spirituality could be open to a more critical direction whereby individual agency, cultural community factors, historical conditions, hegemonic institutions and structures, and global migration could be mapped. In this way, not only it will provide a broader paradigm of understanding spirituality and religion, but also, will provide queer-identified subjects in the diaspora – who do religion and spirituality – more room to articulate their experiences and subjectivities, as well as, to critique the ways in which they are both implicated and oppressed by violent discourses and colonial institutions.

Notes

Queer Filipinos in this context refers to those who identify as members of the LGBTQ community within the Filipino community in Canada. I also want to emphasize that the first-generation queer Filipinos is the group that I mostly refer to in this chapter.

Here, I refer to queer sexuality as those sexual desires, practices, and relationships that are non-normative and mostly enacted by LGBTQ-identified subjects.

The experiences of queer Filipinos who practices their religion in the diaspora, especially within the Canadian context have not been fully explored yet. Most studies on religion and spirituality of queer-identified subjects have centered and relied on the lives and experiences of mainstream, dominant racial group in North America (Rodriquez & Follins, 2012; Tan, 2005).

I refer to the Roman Catholic religion as the religion of my transgender relative. Here, the discourse of veneration or sacredness includes that of the church and the mass as these are considered 'holy' or 'sacred' because these are blessed by God.

Cebuano is the language spoken by people in Cebu, a province in the Philippines. It is considered a minority language as opposed to a national, mainstream one such as the Tagalog or Filipino.

References

Hill, P., and Pargament, P. K. (2003). Advances in the conceptualization and measurement of religion and spirituality. Implications for physical and mental health research. *The*

American Psychological Association, Inc., 58(1), 64-74. DOI: 10.1037/0003-066X.58.1.64.

Homi Bhabha (1994). *The location of culture*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Kelly, P.F., Astorga-Garcia, M., Esguerra, E.F., & the Community Alliance for Social Justice, Toronto. (2012). Filipino immigrants in the Toronto labour market: Towards an understanding of deprofessionalization. In R.S. Coloma, B. McElhinny, E. Tungohan, J.P.C. Catungal, & L.M. Davidson (Eds.), *Filipinos in Canada: Disturbing invisibility* (pp. 68-88). Toronto, Ontario: University of Toronto Press.

Love, P., Bock, M., Jannarone, A., & Richardson, P. (2005). Identity interaction: Exploring the spiritual experiences of lesbian and gay college students. *Journal of College Student Development, 46*(2), 193-209.

Manalansan IV, M. F. (2003). *Global divas: Filipino gay men in the diaspora*. United States of America: Duke University Press Books.

Marx, S., Pennington, J.L., & Chang, H. (2017). Critical autoethnography in pursuit of educational equity: Introduction to the IJME Special Issue. *International Education of Multicultural Education, 19*(1), 1-6. DOI: 10.1825/ijme.v19i1.1393.

Rodriquez, E. M., & Follins, L.D. (2012). Did God make me this way? Expanding psychological research on queer religiosity and spirituality to include intersex and transgender

individuals. *Psychology & Sexuality, 3*(3), 214-225.

Tan, P. P. (2005). The importance of spirituality among gay and lesbian individuals. *Journal of Homosexuality, 49*(2), 135-144.

CHAPTER EIGHT
DILEMMAS IN DECOLONIZING SPIRITUALITY: THOUGHTS FOR EDUCATORS

Rotem Raz

Abstract

This paper is written for educators who consider the place of decolonization and spirituality as part of their work and their personal growth and development. My position in this paper is that anti-colonial and anti-racist frameworks are helpful analytical tools entering a decolonization process. However, decolonizing spiritual beliefs and selfhood involves an examination and decision making on an ontological and epistemological level, of which anti-colonial and anti-racist frameworks are not equipped to chart. In this paper, I will touch on some of the dilemmas that are part of processes of decolonizing spirituality, based on the personal experience of myself and acquaintances, and within the literature. The focus of this paper on <u>*dilemmas*</u> *highlights that decolonizing spiritually involves choice making. I suggest here that the process is ultimately a very personal one. Therefore, no single formula can be provided for the dilemmas of decolonizing spirituality: it is up to individuals to make their own choices. As such, the issue of integrating spirituality in schooling remains a challenge for educators.*

<u>Keywords</u>: *anti-colonialism, decolonization, spirituality, education.*

My discussion in this paper is intending to bring into mind the complexities that exist within the idea of *decolonizing spirituality* within educational settings. My thoughts in this paper developed as I was taking a course at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) in 2018 that focused on spirituality in schooling. Students in our classroom were studying in different departments at the school for education, yet a significant number of students were in the teacher training program. That fact compelled me to imagine how the impact of our class readings and discussions could be translated into the elementary and high-school classrooms, and to other educational spaces. An additional component of the class was the anti-colonial and anti-racist lens through which the course

was taught. These two components bring about a myriad of issues that can be discussed. I will address in this paper only a small fraction of these issues.

As we went through the reading and class discussions, I was increasingly aware that spirituality and anti-colonialism can mean different things for different people. The concerns that I had through partaking in the class have been around understanding and considering the implications of possible educational strategies aimed at *decolonizing spirituality.* One of the texts we reviewed in that course was an article written by Mambo Ama Mazama, titled *Afrocentricity and African Spirituality* (2002). While Mazama's text articulates a particular vision of Afrocentricity – a task I don't have place in, as a Jewish person of European descent – I found Mazama's article helpful in first defining a possible meaning of decolonizing spirituality, and also highlighting some of the challenging dimensions of such a reclamation process. Mazama's differentiation between spirituality and organized religion brings about questions about decolonizing spirituality that could be applicable to individuals and communities of other heritages.

> …a religion "represents the deification of a people's cultural experiences, politics and political power control intent," not to be confused with spirituality, which "represents a direct connectedness/inter-relatedness with nature, the cosmos, the universe and that spiritual God-force, Amen-Ra, 'the giver of life' [Nantambu, 1996, p. 22]. (Mazama, p.224, 2002)

Mazama continues to explain that Christianity was forced on African people as part of a colonial project, and as an imposition of white supremacy. This project has been undermining the validity of Indigenous African ontologies and epistemologies. As such, for Mazama, decolonizing spirituality for African people is a reclamation of African philosophy and the "reestablishment of the process by which Africans arrive at spirituality" (2002). That peeling off and removal of imposed organized religion and colonial ways of thinking – assumed universality of ways of knowing and being in the world – that Mazama advocates for, is how I understand the term *decolonizing spirituality*. In this respect, I think of anti-colonial and anti-racist frameworks as helpful analytical tools in scrutinizing unjust power relations. They are not the same as decolonizing spirituality as I have described here. In fact, Mazama's article, which is written to articulate a position that defines Afrocentricity as anti-coloniality,

anti-racism and decolonized spirituality as one, demonstrates to me that there is no consensus as to the place of spirituality in anti-colonial work.

Based on this notion, I suggest that anti-colonial and anti-racist frameworks can carry us through the journey of decolonizing spirituality only up to a certain point. These frameworks make us aware of the colonial features of organized religions throughout history, as well as atheist worldviews. But, as argued by Mazama, being aware of colonialism and racism is not the end goal. Once aware of those, one may find oneself on an epistemological and ontological crossroad.

This crossroad is the realization of dilemmas inherent in our current condition as spiritually colonized people, if one wishes to view contemporary mainstream society as such. As an example, for Mazama (2002), there is an inherent contradiction in being both Afrocentric and Christian. Living in such a state, I assume Mazama would agree with me, can be seen as being spiritually colonized.

My main point in this paper is that identifying such a position, with the example from Mazama of the contradiction of being a Christian-Afrocentric, is more simple to recognize and articulate than the process of actually resolving the tensions in such of state of living. One approach can be to attempt to spiritually decolonize one self. I understand the term *spiritual decolonization* as the resistance to the oppression of Indigenous epistemologies, axiologies, ontologies, and direct spiritual connection, an oppression imposed by both organized religions, specifically monotheistic, Abrahamic religions (with which I am more familiar with), and their atheistic counter-reactions in Western society. Yet, how does one go through spiritual decolonization? What are the risks, the challenges, and the ramifications of such a process? Is that even possible?

In this paper, which is an introductory and limited discussion to the rich topic, I will further explain and map out the complexities in such journeys for decolonization, and some of the dilemmas that come with it. I will look at several case studies: I will explore my own positionality in light of the anti-colonial and anti-racist ideas I discussed so far, and I will discuss an experience of an acquaintance of mine who has been dealing with the challenges around decolonizing and sexual orientation, and has given consent to share this story. To protect the privacy of people involved, I will keep identities in this story confidential. By sharing these stories, I

will clarify how a critical examination of (spiritual) beliefs introduces ontological and epistemological dilemmas. Such dilemmas may bring about grief and the need to reconcile with the loss in the process of reclaiming authentic spirituality. I will further explore that notion of reconciliation with the legacies of colonization projects, referring to literature concerned with Indigenous resurgences in Turtle Island. In conclusion, I will provide some reflections on the implications of my discussion for educators. I hope that this chapter will contribute to a conversation that is helpful and relevant for educators in considering the impact of notions of spirituality and anti-colonialism and anti-racism on their practice, whether it is in the classroom or within other educational settings.

But before I unpack these ideas, I would like to consider the nature of discourse through the act of naming:

Everyone Has A Name (Zelda Schneerson Mishkowsky, 1974)

Everyone has a name that God gives
and one's father and mother give.

Everyone has a name that stature and
the curve of one's smile give, and the
weave of one's clothing gives.

Everyone has a name that the
mountains give
and the walls of one's city give.

Everyone has a name that the stars
give
and one's neighbors give.

Everyone has a name that one's
offenses give
and one's longing gives.

Everyone has a name that enemies
give
and love for others gives.

Everyone has a name birthday
celebrations give
and one's work gives.

Everyone has a name that the seasons
of the year give
and our blindness gives.

Everyone has a name that the sea
gives
and one's death gives.

הדלז / *מש שי שיא לכל*

ויבא ול ונתנו םיהלא ול ןתנש םש שי שיא לכל
ומאו

ןתנו וכויח ןפואו ותמוק ול ונתנש םש שי שיא לכל
גיראה ול

וילתכ ול ונתנו םירהה ול ונתנש םש שי שיא לכל

וינכש ול ונתנו תולזמה ול ונתנש םש שי שיא לכל

ותהימכ ול הנתנו ויאטח ול ונתנש םש שי שיא לכל

ותבהא ול הנתנו ויאנוש ול ונתנש םש שי שיא לכל

ותכאלמ ול הנתנו ויגח ול ונתנש םש שי שיא לכל

ול ןתנו הנשה תופוקת ול ונתנש םש שי שיא לכל
ונוריע

.ותומ ול ןתנו םיה ול ןתנש םש שי שיא לכל

(1974) "קחרת לא"

This poem, translated from Hebrew (Translated by Hobbins, as it appears on the website *Ancient Hebrew Poetry*), speaks to me, as

a native Hebrew speaker, to the richness of human identity. Yet, as it is often the case of many translation projects, here too, in my view, something of the essence of the original poem is being lost. It is common knowledge that things that can be said in one language are not quite the same once translated to another. Therefore, I view language as a discourse that is revealing some things while disguising others. Discourses themselves, in a way, are languages, or languages within language - and they name us. My interpretation of the poem is that our many relations are discourses and they name us as well. We have many, many names. Most of them remain a secret. One way through which I understand that which is spiritual is through the poetic, hidden and private relationships to all that we come in contact with.

Now I am about to tell you a few stories. The first one is about myself and about my family lineage. I will tell this story to the best of my understanding and knowledge. What I ask of you is to keep in mind that it is a story. It is not objective and does not pretend to be the ultimate truth. Observe how the writer's voice shifts from the personal to the academic.

I. Positionality

I have been living in Toronto for over a decade, having moved here from Israel. Moving here has made me a newcomer as well as a settler. My upbringing, however, was in a small rural community, a kibbutz, which is a type of communal village, in the northern part of Israel. It is for this fact that I am also a *kibbutznik*. My ancestors came to the territory of Israel/Palestine from eastern Europe. My maternal ancestors arrived after WWII, surviving the Jewish Holocaust, while my ancestors on my father's side left Europe in the late 19thC and early 20thC as part of a wave of Zionist migration. It was explained to me growing up that the awakening of the desire of eastern European Jews to return to Zion (Palestine/ Israel) was the result of a failure to assimilate to the forming European nation-states in late 19thC. Jews were (and still are, in some circles) considered a different ethnic group. While in local and contemporary settings such as in Toronto, Canada, European Jews are rendered simply as White, the social conditions in eastern Europe of late 19thC rendered them not only as a religious minority but also as an ethnic and racial minority. As such, Jews in Europe were unable to prevent the recurrent violence and discrimination against them. For my paternal ancestors, the dilemma was that

despite rejecting some of their religious beliefs and replacing it with Marxist zeal and a faith in socialism, for the nations in which they resided amongst they remained Jews – the 'other'. It is as if being Jewish was a force stronger than their self-determination. They were unable to escape a fate of persecution for centuries. It is my perception that the trauma of Jewish persecution in Europe shaped secular Jews such as my ancestors who chose to partake in the Zionist project. Having been exiled for 2000 years, from the perspective of the traditional Jewish narrative, my ancestors return to Zion – the land of Palestine-Israel – and the revival of their Hebrew language, are anti-colonial acts. From the perspective of European racism, the formation of the state of Israel intended to solve the *Jewish Problem* in Europe by sending back the Jews to their place of origin, their (arguably, of course) ancestral Indigenous land. Colonial features of the Zionist movement and its ideology, the role of the larger colonial players in the formation of the state of Israel, and the current colonial and racist features of the state of Israel further problematizes the existence of the state of Israel and the Zionist movement as simultaneously colonial and anti-colonial (Penslar, 2017).

My own choice to leave Israel adds a layer to that story. For example, I am writing here not in my mother tongue, Hebrew, but in the language of a colonizer, living not on my traditional ancestral lands but rather in a far distant settler colonial state. When I reflect on my own ancestral lineage from anti-colonial and anti-racist perspectives, my own historical location is not much different than my ancestors, since that Jews have been intertwined with colonial histories and living within other nations, for generations…"in fact, the modern Jewish experience connects to the history of colonization by virtue of…mobility and exchange, diaspora, internationalism, racial discrimination, and Zionism, to name but a few…" (Katz, E. B., Leff, L. M., & Mandel, M. S., pp. 2, 2017).

What does all of this have to do with decolonizing spirituality? If I am to reclaim an original spiritual self by connecting to my ancestral lineage, I am to sort through a long history of *Judaisms* (Dagan, 2005) as the tradition evolved under many colonial conditions of migration and exile in the past two millennia. Dagan, in *Judaism: A Group Portrait* (2005), is discussing the many faces of Judaism; as a nationality, as a religion, as morality, as a culture, as longing.

Dagan also examines the question of what constitutes a Jewish identity and belonging, and which authorities have the final say. That notion that Judaism is both a religion and an ethnic group makes the anti-colonial position against religion rather complex: can I peel off my "Jewishness" or is it intrinsic to my identity and being? This type of dilemma is one such example, as the answer to the question depends on what ontology one believes in. Some views essentialize the Jewish identity, while others don't. And as Dagan (2005) suggests, even within the Jewish world the opinions on the issue vary drastically.

Sorting through all these possibilities existing within Jewish worldviews requires time: doing justice to it goes beyond the scope of this paper. Yet, I wonder, can I trace back my steps to a spirituality that existed before Jewish people were colonized, and before Judaism became a religion? The anti-colonial framework makes me aware of the part of organized religion in describing spirituality. Living in exile and periodically persecuted forced Jewish spiritual and religious practices to adjust creatively to changing conditions. Living amongst other nations and religions involved syncretism, the embracing of 'external' beliefs and practices into a religious or spiritual tradition. Maybe syncretism is part of the answer to tracing an authentic and original spirituality of my ancestors? Maybe sorting through various traditions within Judaism can help me trace my way back? The next dilemma is how you go about it.

Authors such as Ephraim Kanarfogel (2000), Yuval Harari (2010), and Amots Dafni (2010) provide some methodological options which are part of existing epistemologies within Jewish traditions. Those include seclusion and fasting, dreaming and meditation, as well as mystical and ceremonial magic of various kinds. The above are all alternative means of acquiring knowledge. More so, they introduce an alternative way to understand reality itself, an ontology, in which angels, demons, and spirit of all sorts are an integral part of. These can be petitioned, compelled and engaged through multitudes of procedures and measures. How does the world operate from that perspective? More so, as problematized by Harari (2010), the Jewish tradition has a conflicting and contradictory relations with such worldviews and methods for a very long time: Harari argues that while *magic* has been condemned by Jewish religious authorities as being external to Judaism, evidence suggests that a long history

of magical practices and cosmologies exist within Judaism from its inception (ibid).

If I am to go through the path of decolonizing the spirit, through my own ancestral lineage, how am I to sort through the truth, or a truth, in all of that? Can this be done, and if so, how can this be done safely? Can I preserve my sanity while doing so[1]? Who can guide me, and who can I trust? How am I to know that I can retrieve an authentic, original spiritual self and worldview? These are only a few examples of the types of questions that can be asked in such a situation.

From the lens of academic knowledge, the methodological and ontological framing of the above mentioned mystical and spiritual Jewish knowledge (Kanarfogel, 2000, Harari, 2010, and Dafni, 2010) are incompatible with contemporary academic pedagogy. And while authors such George J. Sefa Dei (2002) and Riyad A. Shahjahan (2005) consider the place of transformative spiritual knowledge in the academy, I personally doubt that the academy, as we know it today, is the place to pursue spiritual inquiries, as mentioned in Kanarfogel (2000), Harari (2010), and Dafni (2010). Shahjahan (2005) thoroughly explores the reasons why spirituality is marginalized in the academy, mentioning "positivist and quantitative thinking…objective distance…utilitarian knowledge" to mention a few (ibid, pp. 691-693, 2005); it is up to his reader to choose their view and belief of the nature of life and reality. What would it be? What ontology and methodology does the reader prescribe to? Muslim (Shahjahan, 2005), Jewish (Kanarfogel, 2000, Harari, 2010, and Dafni, 2010), Orisha of the Yoruba (Mazama, 2002), Cree (Iseke-Barnes, 2003), Maori (Fraser, 2004), Christian (Hindman, 2002)… and the list goes on. Shahjahan himself reiterates Dei and emphasizes that he is not intending to "create the false dichotomy of 'conventional/colonial/positivistic' as bad, and 'spiritual/marginalized/non-western knowledge' as good" (Dei *et al*, 2000b, p.4, in Shahjahan, p. 691, 2005). Yet, after the input of the anti-colonial educator, the following steps into spirituality remain an individual choice, and the possibilities are abundant.

---

1 Jewish tradition tells of the allegory of סדרפ "par-des", which means 'orchard'. It is also an acronym to the four levels of interpreting Jewish tradition. The allegory tells, as I heard it, that only some (one man out of four in the story), delved into the study of the Judaism and remain unharmed. Others either die, lose their minds, or turn non-believers.

Academic structure today, for the most part, is designed to support positivist knowledge. Both Shahjahan (2005) and Dei (2002) provide recommendations to integrate transformative ways of knowing founded in spirituality. Yet, doing so responsibly, and establishing the trust (Becker, 2009), requires facing some of the dilemmas I have mentioned so far.

The second story I am about to tell you illustrates another complexity of spirituality and decolonization that ties into that discussion. I will first contextualize the story within discourses of pedagogies of allyship and solidarity then get right to it. The story is a true story and it happened to real people that I personally know. I was given the storyteller's consent to share it with you here. In order to protect the privacy of the people involved, I will keep all names and identities confidential.

II. Decolonization of queer Identities – *The Journeys of Smith*

There is a practice informing belief among educators of social justice today that we can break free from oppression, such as the long-term impacts of colonization, by finding solidarity across differences and build alliances. The influential text *Becoming an ally: Breaking the cycle of oppression in people* (2002) by Ann Bishop provide strategies for individuals to recognize their own privileges and experiences of oppressions, across race, gender, sex, class, etc. — the intersectional identity, as commonly describe today — in order to educate for allyship and create societal justice, equity and healing. While in an essence I agree with Bishop intention to a more just society and being hopeful, I am in the view that adding the spiritual component to the mix further complicates notions of privilege, oppression, solidarity and allyship. Since that discourses of solidarity and allyship are prevalent in contemporary Canadian educational practices, I think it is important to highlight the limitations of bridging across differences: the places and moment in which worldviews and epistemologies clash. In that regard and within the context of decolonization projects, the following story intends to provoke and trouble allyship and solidarity, anti-racist and anti-colonial education. And now the story of *The Journeys of Smith*.

Once there was a person that loved people of their own gender. Let's name that person *Smith*. Today we call such people gay, lesbian or queer. In any rate, Smith couldn't find a place in the spiritual/religious tradition he/she was raised in, nevertheless

Smith had strong spiritual feelings and experiences. Feeling shunned and unsafe in their home spiritual tradition because of their sexual orientation, Smith went on a journey to find a spiritual home elsewhere. After many trials and tribulations, Smith met a spiritual Elder of an Indigenous tradition who told Smith that they can find their answers through direct interaction with the spirit. The queer, Smith, stayed with the Elder for a few years, learning about this particular spiritual path, going through the healing that was involved in it. After a few years, Smith wanted more clear answers from the Elder about the place of LGBTQ2S people in that spiritual tradition. Now, once the queer person was committed to the path, the Elder felt it was time to reveal more about that particular tradition. The Elder explained that they believe homosexual tendencies are actually not natural for humans, and they are a result of spiritual interference. This distortion can be caused by confusion, peer pressure or malefic spiritual beings. Furthermore, the Elder explained, homosexuality is also a reflection of the spiritual imbalance of colonizer society. If Smith wishes to continue with the path and pursue his/her healing, stated the Elder, Smith needed to denounce being gay/lesbian/transgender, and the source of creation will help them be balanced again: heterosexual. Smith felt confused, betrayed, scared....a part of him/her feared all along they are queer because of some spell or bad spirit.... maybe the Elder was right? What should they do? Yet, Smith also noticed the Elder was talking about queer people in stereotypes (the Elder, for example, concluded all queer-identified people to have a similar *lifestyle*), which prompted Smith to challenge the Elder and that spiritual community about their assumptions about queer people. Smith suggested to the Elder their views of LGBTQ2 people are misinformed and requested to pursue a healing process to be conducted within the spiritual methodologies and procedures of that tradition. The Elder's response was to ex-communicate Smith for disrespecting their spiritual authority. Smith was already aware at that point, that part of that Elder's worldview is that evil spirits can psychically overpower and manipulate the human mind. Therefore, the most effective way to avoid such manipulation is not to entertain further communication. The Elder's choice in ex-communicating Smith was, therefore, a matter of safety, on spiritually ontological grounds.

This story illustrates several things. First, it describes the experiences of many LGBTQ2S people with regards to spirituality

and religion and a broken trust in figures of spiritual authority. From the perspective of LGBTQ2S advocates, this story illustrates the multiple level of trauma queer individuals may experience in relation to spirituality: Smith first is rejected in their home community, find a temporary home elsewhere just to be rejected again, with no certainty at the end as to spiritual consolation. That view, of course, resonates truth if you believe homosexuality is natural. If you are of a belief that is similar to that of the Elder, your grief is most likely with the fractured societal fabric caused by the reality of homosexuality.

Second, the story illustrates the complexity of clashing ontologies: some believe in a world in which spiritual beings exist, and others do not. Within each worldview exist different terminologies and frameworks to understand the relationships between spirituality, sexuality, healing, the nature of humans and the nature of the world. In the case of this story, for example, the final goal of healing can be either acceptance of queer identity or rejecting it altogether, depending on what belief system and worldview one ascribes to. Depending on the views and position this story is understood either as a case of homophobia – both external and internalized — or as a type of spiritual possession. In both interpretations, a form of corruption is involved.

Similarly, the notion of decolonization can be understood in two ways: for the Elder, decolonization means healing gay people from their homosexuality, and thus representing a worldview in which pre-colonized society is absolutely heterosexual. For others, contemporary rejection of homosexuality within Indigenous spiritual traditions is a result of colonization itself. The last part of the story demonstrates how worldview and belief system impact the chosen method of engagement. In our story, the Elder chose to disengage, yet again, based on their particular spiritual discourse. The conundrum remains: Who is to decide which one is right and which one is wrong? In addition, the story demonstrates that while mainstream social justice discourse clumps Indigenous resurgence, anti-racism, and LGBTQ2S rights together, the realities on the grounds are complex; behind the title *decolonization,* there are multitudes of, and often contradictory, visions and agendas.

An additional reason for me to include the above-mentioned story in this chapter is in order to add to the discussion which exists in the literature about queer identities and spirituality within academia

in relation to ontological and epistemological dialogues. Works such as Love, Bock, Jannarone & Richardson's (2005) *Identity Interaction: Exploring the Spiritual Experiences of Lesbian and Gay College Students* are also written with the intention to address the paucity in research about the experiences of LGBTQ2S college and university students with regards to spirituality. Love *et.al.'s* (2005) working definition of spirituality is the "drive for meaning, authenticity, purpose, wholeness, and self-transcendence (which) involves our self-awareness and the desire to connect to others". For Love *et.al.* (2005). it was important to conduct their study as they identify that many LGBTQ2S identified individuals experience pain and loss in those areas of their lives (ibid, pp. 197). While the scope of the article is limited to interrogating anti-colonial and anti-racist dimensions, for example researching only white students (ibid), I agree that pain and loss in reclaiming spirituality, as defined by Love *et.al.* (2005) are part of the process for queer-identified, and the story I discussed here earlier demonstrates that point.

One of the categories in Love *et.al.'s* (2005) research findings regarding the identities of the LGBTQ college students, is regarding their *degrees of reconciliation* (ibid, pp.199). For Love *et.al.* (2005)

> Reconciled students are those who embraced being both gay or lesbian and being religious or spiritually ground person. These were two mutually interacting aspects of an integrated self or identity. They were aware of the beliefs and practices in their religion that oppress gay and lesbian people and it may have caused them pain; however, they experienced no conflict or dissonance between who they were as sexual beings and who they were as spiritual beings. This was due primarily due to the fact that they described having a direct and personal relationship with God (or a higher power) not mediated through a church, the bible, or other structure or dogma, though they may have (but not necessarily) belonged to a church or participated in religious or spiritual practice. (Love, Bock, Jannarone, & Richardson, pp. 199, 2005)

The above quote resonates with the story of Smith, aspiring to achieve healing and integration through an unmediated spiritual experience. Furthermore, I would like to build on Love *et.al.'s* (2005) point and suggest that once we interrogate the place of organized religion (as well as troubling histories of Western science, a topic which will remain outside the scope of this chapter) from anti-racist

and anti-colonial perspectives there are “conflicts and dissonances” which arise and issues to reconcile with. Coming to terms with the histories and living realities which are the legacies of colonialism(s) may bring about feelings of grief and of loss, regardless of one’s race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or gender identity. In the next section, I would like to express some thoughts in that regard about the notion of reconciliation.

III. Reconciliation

> Although many of us attempt to reconcile what cannot be reconciled and refer to ourselves as Afrocentric Christians, those two terms are nonetheless incompatible…Indeed, one cannot pre- tend to be relocated and defend African agency while at the same time continuing to embrace one of the pillars of Western supremacy. (Mazama, p.223, 2002)

In the article, *Claiming a Sacred Face – The Role of Spirituality and Cultural Identity in Transformative Adult Higher Education* (2003) the authors Elizabeth J. Tisdell and Derise E. Tolliver discuss aspects of spirituality and schooling, in higher education settings. The authors address forms of oppressions which students have to navigate through. These include social oppression and its internalization. The intensity and depth of emotion is easily understood once it is pointed out that colonization is not something that occurred in the past, but rather ongoing and daily. Sheila Cote-Meek discusses contemporary experiences of Indigenous students in higher education in Canada in her book, *Colonized classrooms: Racism, trauma and resistance in post-secondary education* (2014). “For most,” writes Cote-Meek about the experiences of Indigenous students, “exploring the history of colonization is a difficult task. They experience waves of emotion that range from sadness and shame and anger, both at the systems of oppression and the people who represent the oppressors”, and that “classroom discussions of colonization also prompt many Aboriginal students to begin a journey or reclaiming their ancestral traditions and culture, often referred to as a “healing journey” (ibid. pp. 9).

My own experiences in classes at the University of Toronto that included discussions about the impacts of colonization have been difficult and emotion provoking as describes Cote-Meek (2014), for myself and for other students (and faculty) who are not Indigenous

to this land. In a way, my earlier discussion here about my own positionality details some of such struggles and dilemmas, and in other words, my own process of reconciliation.

In light of the Canadian Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), there is growing literature as well as engagements on all societal level with the process of reconciliation between Canada and Indigenous nations. While the mandate of the TRC has been limited to addressing the atrocities of the Indian Residential Schools (IRS) (Chrisjohn & Wasacase, 2009), the ongoing dialogue expands beyond the legacy of the IRS to the bigger picture of colonial relations. Such is the work of Glen Coultard's (2014) *Red Skins, White Masks – Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition.*

In the book, addressing issues related to the Canadian TRC, Coultard (2014) provides three types of reconciliation in the aftermath of mass atrocities. The first one is an individual, internal process of coming to term with tragedies, it is about finding peace with oneself and personal healing. The second type is amending ruptures between groups, families, communities, and nations "to overcome the debilitating pain, anger, and resentment that frequently persist in the wake of being injured or harmed by a perceived or real injustice" (ibid). The third and last type of reconciliation is an imposed definition by the dominant powers that renders things similar and therefore undermines the first two processes. It is my observation that Coultard's three types of reconciliation are applicable lenses through which we can understand the process of spiritual decolonization: the peeling off of colonial tarnishing of original spiritualities, and reclamation of humanity.

An interview made by Earth Alliance Medicine (2012) with Ifá/ Orisha Priestess Luisah Teish, makes me think here about Coultard's (2014) first two types of reconciliation: finding inner peace and healing, and societal reparation and healing. The interview with Teish speaks to Mazama's (2002) notion of African spirituality, and Cote-Meek's (2014) notion of the healing journey, as Teish is reflecting on her own journey to reclaim her Indigenous African spiritual path. One aspect that speaks to the complexities of the colonial history is that Teish is reclaiming her African Indigenous spirituality in the diaspora. In the first segment of the interview titled *Growing up in New Orleans; Learning from Elders; Connecting with Spirit,* Teish is describing her reclamation of her African spiritual tradition. She started by reading about African spirituality in books

written by western anthropologists and soon enough figured that the literature was written from the colonizer's perspective. The desire to understand her ancestral knowledge from within led her to make relations with Elders in her community, traditional Orisha Knowledge Keepers (Earth Alliance Medicine, 2012*)*. In this case, I am wondering, if one reclaims an Indigenous spirituality in the diaspora, are they still a settler? In the case of Taish, I am not sure how to answer this question.

Nevertheless, in relation to reconciling mass atrocities and colonization, at some point in the interview, Teish is making a comment to the effect that if we look back enough into human history, we have all done that (oppression) to one another. The story of my own positionality, for example, demonstrates it is possible to be both the oppressed and the oppressor. Teish is referring in that statement to history as it is seen from her spiritual tradition, Orisha, one that does not rely on Western authority. My view is that her connection to a memory longer than that of the Western hegemony, provides her a different lens through which to understand the human condition and to step beyond the "debilitating pain, anger and resentment" (Coultard, 2014) which can keep personal and collective processes of reconciliation and healing stagnant. That very notion, of which authority we look up to when assessing history, is tied to my core discussion here about ontology and epistemology. Teish's understanding of history, representing an Indigenous African knowledge system, leads her to conclusions and reasoning that has an impact on her understanding of (anti-) racism and (anti-)colonialism, as well on her feelings towards it. At a crossroad in her life, Teish makes a choice to what ontology she is prescribing: Ifa/Orisha. While anti-colonial and anti-racial frameworks are effective in highlighting the dehumanizing nature of colonial relations, they are not committed to a particular mode of reparation. From Taish's interview, however, it is suggested that Ifá/Orisha provides a particular discourse and framework (a praxis if you may) through which a re-humanization is possible.

In discussing healing, Teish is making a comparison between the healing effectiveness of western counseling and psychotherapy, and the Orisha methodologies. She describes meeting people who go for (western) therapy for years and are still struggling with the same issues, and then stumble upon Orisha, engage in six months of ceremonial work and experience a breakthrough (ibid,

2012). My point is to highlight that engaging with decolonizing and reclamation opens the door to more and different methodologies to address reconciling with the losses inflicted by colonization. Such an approach embedded in Indigenous spiritual traditions is the Rotinoshonni (Longhouse people) condolences ceremony.

That notion of healing is the structure around which Taiaiake Alfred writes his book *Peace, power, righteousness: An indigenous manifesto* (1999). In his book, Alfred discusses Rotinoshonni (Longhouse People) concepts of peace and *the good mind*. He structures his book around the Rotinoshonni condolences ceremony, a ceremony that is carried out to console the grieving. The underlying concept is complex and I don't feel it is my place to further explain it here, out of respect to the knowledge keepers of that tradition. Alfred highlights that the ceremony itself needs to be experienced fully, and in the language, in order to affect the intended healing. Nevertheless, the existence of that ceremony demonstrates that the Rotinoshonni people have a theory and a methodology to address the damaging effects of loss and grief that colonization has had on all of us, both colonized and colonizers.

That example demonstrates that Indigenous spiritual traditions already have tools and frameworks for healing. What is the place then of theories such as anti-colonial, anti-racist, and various feminist theories? I find them helpful in naming oppression, as an analytical tool, but only up to a certain point. That is, since the theories in themselves are lacking spiritual coherency, or a commitment to a particular ontology, as I demonstrated in the discussion of Mazama's (2002) paper in the beginning of this chapter. The above-mentioned theories operate at times as a form of *tactical solidarity*, operating like "coalition politics (that) relies on contingent meeting of different interests" (Dean, 1996), and when they are applied this way – when naming in these discourses end up being only of a colonized or colonizer - they may fail to restore a sense of humanity or deliver peace and justice. Making the next step past the above-mentioned critical theories can be through an engagement with Indigenous frameworks and methods, which in my examples of Orisha and Rotinoshonni, provides complete worldviews and methodologies to amend the ruptures within selves, in communities, and between nations. Finding more about those requires one to shift gears, put the books aside and spend time with Elders, and also, the interest and willingness to engage.

Hence, even the process of reconciling with the losses inflicted by colonization on our spiritual well-being can be approached from various ontological and methodological vantage points. In the closing section, I would like to gather my thoughts and point out how the views I have shared so far can be meaningful for educators who consider anti-colonization, decolonization, and spirituality in their practice.

IV. Implications for Educators

I have discussed in this chapter notions of translation, language, and discourse, and that which is lost in translation. I have discussed my positionality, the experiences of the decolonization of sexual orientation through Indigenous spirituality and notions of spiritual resurgence and the reconciliation of losses of spirituality through colonization. Through those discussions and stories, I pointed out that: 1. The history of colonization is long and complex…a lot has been lost; 2. Positions of colonized-colonizer/ oppressed-oppressor are not dichotomous; 3. Seeking authentic or original (spiritual) identities through an anti-colonial framework can be a complicated and arguably, an impossible task; 4. The awareness to colonial impact on spirituality (the formations of organized religions) introduces a range of ontologies, epistemologies, and methodologies through which a spiritual decolonization process can be explored: an anti-colonial framework in itself does not prescribe a particular path or worldview; 5. The questions of authenticity, truth, ethics, trust, accountability, and safety are important in considering education. The meeting place of worldviews introduces the challenge for educators engaged in questions of decolonizing spirituality and navigating between the worlds (ontologies and epistemologies); 6. The question of good and bad/evil is intrinsic to notions of spirituality, and yet; 7. The process of decolonizing spiritually is highly personal therefore, it is up to each person to determine their belief system and course of action; 8. The possibility of *healing journey* can take, yet again, many forms.

In conclusion, I have discussed these points to invite educators who consider decolonizing spirituality in their work to reflect on the ways through which these issues may possibly meet them in their particular educational settings and practices, and in their personal journeys. I also felt compelled to write this chapter out of concern that as educators we potentially can risk relying solely on academic analytical frameworks, while allowing the notion of decolonizing

spirituality remain broad and uninterrogated. We may act out of grief over the current state of systemic injustices with the desire to dismantle colonial practices at once. However, not addressing the subtleties and divergences of decolonizing spirituality can leave the Pandora box open, allowing a lot of harm to be done in the classroom, yet again, in the name of spirituality - and history is full of examples. Paradoxically, this chapter does not offer a prescription to a 'right', 'wrong', or 'best practices' in addressing the dilemma of spirituality in mainstream education and schooling. Still, I do hope this discussion is inspiring and meaningful for educators.

A final thought. At the beginning of this chapter, I introduced Zelda's poem *Everyone has a name.* As an educator, it is a reminder for me how much each person is a universe, how precious life is, and how much there is in it and in the human experience that escapes my perception. That keeps me in awe and in wonder and gives me hope.

References

Alfred, T. (1999). *Peace, power, righteousness: An indigenous manifesto* (Vol. 171). Toronto: Oxford University Press.

Becker, A. L. (2009). Ethical considerations of teaching spirituality in the academy. *Nursing Ethics*, *16*(6), 697-706.

Bishop, A. (2002). *Becoming an ally: Breaking the cycle of oppression in people*. London: Zed Books.

Chrisjohn, R., & Wasacase, T. (2009). Half-truths and whole lies: Rhetoric in the 'apology'and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. *Response, responsibility, and renewal: Canada's truth and reconciliation journey*, 217-29.

Coulthard, G., & Masks, W. (2014). Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition.

Cote-Meek, S. (2014). *Colonized classrooms: Racism, trauma and resistance in post-secondary education*. Fernwood Publishing,.

Dafni, A (2010) Sacred Trees in Israel. *Jerusalem: Hakibbutz Hameuchad Publishers Ltd.*

Dagan, H. (2005). Judaism: A group portrait. *Tel Aviv: Mapa*.

David, E. J. R. (2013). Brown skin, white minds: Filipino-/American postcolonial psychology. IAP.

Dean, J. (1996). Solidarity of strangers. *Feminism After Identity Politics. Berkeley*.

Dei, G. J. S. (2002). Spiritual knowing and transformative learning. In *Expanding the boundaries of transformative learning* (pp. 121-133). Palgrave Macmillan, New York.

Earth Alliance Medicine (2012) *Growing up in New Orleans; Learning from Elders; Connecting with Spirit (Part 1/7).* Retrieved on 18, August 2016 form https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fgesG5Hs5vU

Harari, Y. (2010). Early Jewish magic: research, method, sources. *Jerusalem: Mossad Bialik*.

Hindman, D. M. (2002). From splintered lives to whole persons: Facilitating spiritual development in college students. *Religious Education*, *97*(2), 165-182.

Judaism: A Group Portrait by Dagan, H. (2005). retrieved on Aug 12 2018 from http://www.text.org.il/index.php?book=0510092

Kanarfogel, E. (2000). *" Peering Through the Lattices": Mystical, Magical, and Pietistic Dimensions in the Tosafist Period*. Wayne State University Press.

Katz, E. B., Leff, L. M., & Mandel, M. S. (Eds.). (2017). *Colonialism and the Jews*. Indiana University Press.

Love, P., Bock, M., Jannarone, A., & Richardson, P. (2005). Identity interaction: Exploring the spiritual experiences of lesbian and gay college students. *Journal of College Student Development*, *46*(2), 193-209.

Macoun, A., & Strakosch, E. (2013). The ethical demands of settler colonial theory. *Settler Colonial Studies*, *3*(3-4), 426-443.

Manyimo, E. L. (2011) A Spiritual Journey in the Academy: My Personal Experience, in Wane,

N. N., Manyimo, E. L., & Ritskes, E. J. (Eds.). *Spirituality, education & society*. (pp. 127-138). Springer Science & Business Media.

Mazama, M. A. (2002). Afrocentricity and African spirituality. *Journal of Black Studies*, *33*(2), 218-234.

Memmi, A. (2013). *The colonizer and the colonized*. Routledge.

Mishkowsky Z. S. (1974) *Everyone has a name*. retrieved 30, July 2018 from http://ancienthebrewpoetry.typepad.com/ancient_hebrew_poetry/2009/04/a-poem-by-zelda-schneersohn-mishkowsky.html

Penslar, D. J.(2017) Is Zionism a Colonial movement? In Katz, E. B., Leff, L. M., & Mandel, M. S. (Eds.). *Colonialism and the Jews*. (pp. 275-300). Indiana University Press.

Schneersohn Mishkowsky, Z.(1974). Trans. by J. F. Hobbins, retrieved from *Ancient Hebrew Poetry*, 2018 on https://ancienthebrewpoetry.typepad.com/ancient_hebrew_poetry/2009/04/a-poem-by-zelda-schneersohn-mishkowsky.html

Shahjahan, R. A. (2005). Spirituality in the academy: Reclaiming from the margins and evoking transformative way of knowing the world. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *18*(6), 685-711.

Teish, L. (2018, August 15) *Yoruba Priestess Luisah Teish explains Orisha* [video file] Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jgDsz3xDKgI

CHAPTER NINE

ANTICOLONIAL EDUCATION: CREATING SPACE FOR SPIRITUALITY IN MATHEMATICS

Zach Cochrane

Spirituality has a contentious relationship with modern education, with opinions varying widely on its place in schools. For mathematics, spirituality is a topic that is rarely given consideration for its role in developing mathematicians. The purpose of this paper is to consider the relationship between spirituality and mathematics education, particularly in the context of Ontario, Canada. It becomes a question of: how has spirituality influenced mathematics and is there space in mathematics classrooms for spirituality? My initial assumption holds that spirituality is mostly absent from current pedagogy in Ontario mathematics and that this has been influenced by the colonial legacy of schooling in this province. First, before conducting this exploration, it is important that I situate myself within the research. Then, I will discuss the theoretical frameworks, mainly anticolonialism, that guide this investigation as well as how these frameworks connect to an understanding of spirituality for this paper. Then, this framework will be used to consider the relationships between spirituality and mathematics education by looking at Ontario's history of formal education, its mathematics curriculum, and ministry supported methodologies for teaching and learning mathematics.

Situating Myself

I want to acknowledge the land on which this paper was written. For thousands of years, it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and most recently, the Mississaugas of the Credit River. I am grateful to be provided the opportunity to reflect on the relationships between spirituality and mathematics education and to consider the ways in which former and current practices in mathematics have the potential to marginalize individuals and their culture. The goal with this paper is to better understand whether spirituality has influenced mathematics education in the context of Ontario and to question if there is space for spirituality in mathematics classrooms. In investigating this, the hope is to challenge colonized practices in mathematics education and to

consider whether infusing spirituality in mathematics classrooms would create more equitable environments. I want to situate myself in this research. I am an elementary educator with a school board in Ontario, who is currently completing a Master's of Education degree with the Ontario Institute of Studies in Education. I am of White Settler identity - the son of a Newfoundlander with English and Scottish heritage (father) and a first generation Canadian with Italian heritage (mother). With a developing lens for social justice and anti-racist theory, I am striving to be an ally of those who are marginalized due to dominant discourses and the legacy of colonialism. This paper is the result of learning and inspiration from participation in a course entitled *SJE1961, Spirituality and Schooling: Sociological Implications*. As this is my first course within the department of Social Justice Education, I often feel unequipped in anti-oppressive discourses to articulate my views. It is a developing skill and this paper will serve as a reflection of that as well as contribute to my ongoing learning process.

Moving toward a Theoretical Framework

In developing a framework to interrogate the question of the relationship between spirituality and mathematics, it is important to understand the role of critical theory and the terms colonialism, postcolonialism, and anticolonialism. Understanding these constructs will help to guide the upcoming discussion of spirituality as a theoretical framework for challenging oppressive practices in mathematics education.

Critical theory is a school of thought based on critique of society and how power and knowledge is produced from its structures. Its roots come from the Frankfurt University's Institute for Social Research during the mid-1920s to the late 1960s where social theorists, philosophers, economists, sociologists, and literary theorists contributed to its development (Morrell, 2008). Shortly, we will see how postcolonialism and anticolonialism can be considered critical theories as they challenge oppressive structures produced from colonialism. In order to understand these critical theories, though, the term colonialism first requires unpacking.

When defining colonialism, Ania Loomba's book *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* identifies critical ideas around this term. Broadly, colonialism is often used interchangeably with imperialism and can be described as "the conquest and control of other people's lands and goods" (Loomba, 2005). Under this definition, colonialism

is not limited to European conquests of Asia, Africa, and North America, but refers to a recurring trend throughout human history. For example, in the 13th century, Genghis Khan's Mongolian empire ruled over the middle east and went as far as into China. During the 14th to 16th century, the Aztecs, an ethnic group in Mexico, subjugated other ethnic groups by levying tributes for goods and services to the land's indigenous people. The Ottoman empire, founded in the late 13th century in what is now Turkey, conquered most of Asia minor and the Balkans and into the early 1700s still extended from the mediterranean to the Indian Ocean. Despite this recurring theme of colonialism throughout human history, European conquests introduced "new and different kinds of colonial practices which altered the globe in a way that other colonialisms did not" (Loomba, 2005). These colonial practices were different in that they changed entire structures in place for those who were colonized:

> modern colonialism did more than extract tribute, goods, and wealth from the countries that it conquered--it restructured the economies of the latter, drawing them into a complex relationship with their own, so that there was a flow of human and natural resources between colonised and colonial countries (Loomba, 2005)

This overhaul in societal structure from European colonialism created a complex dynamic for those who were colonized as their economies were dismantled and replaced with European structures, resulting in significant and traumatics changes that attempted to erase indigenous culture. This European colonialism brought great population shifts as many of the colonized would be displaced from their land, not just as slaves but also as indentured servants, while the colonizers would settle the lands through various roles as merchants, teachers, missionaries, administrators, and soldiers. These population shifts would create imbalanced power dynamics between the colonizers and the colonized and leave a legacy of oppression. European colonialism differed from previous forms of colonialism due to the complex systems and technologies that it put in place to oppress people. For the purpose of this paper, the term colonialism will refer to modern European colonialism and its legacy of oppression for colonized subjects.

Postcolonialism is a term that is subject to debate. Some scholars use the term postcolonialism as a temporal marker. The "post"

part marks when a country has been formally decolonized. For example, India in the time after they gained independence in 1947 could be described as postcolonial. However, the “post” prefix also is suggestive of an ideological shift in that in the period after formal decolonization, there should be a noticeable return in power dynamics and political structures to the colonized. This latter understanding of postcolonialism is hotly contested and under scrutiny (Loomba, 2005). This can be seen as scholars like George Dei and Arlo Kempf raise critical questions about postcolonialism like, “what is post about/in ‘post-colonial?’” and “whose interests are advanced in speaking of neo-colonialism/post-colonialism?” (Dei and Kempf, 2006). Other scholars, like Jorge de Alva, emphasize how the term should be disconnected from formal decolonization because many people in these decolonized countries are still living within oppressive colonial structures - power dynamics have not been returned to the indigenous. For de Alva, postcoloniality should “signify not so much subjectivity ‘after’ the colonial experience as a subjectivity of oppositionality to imperializing/colonizing discourses and practices” and that scholars should “tether the term to a post-structuralist stake that marks its appearance” (de Alva, 1995). de Alva’s views here situates postcolonialism as a critical theory and one that is meant to actively challenge colonial discourses and practices. Similar to de Alva, Robert Young defines postcolonialism as a form of action against oppression:

> Unlike the words ‘colonialism,’ ‘imperialism,’ and ‘neocolonialism,’ which adopt only a critical relation to the oppressive regimes and that they delineate, postcolonialism is both contestatory and committed towards political ideals of a transnational social justice. It attacks the status quo of hegemonic economic imperialism, and the history of colonialism and imperialism, but also signals an activist engagement with positive political positions and new forms of political identity (Young, 2013)

Evidently, postcolonialism is a term that can have different interpretations. On one hand, it can be a temporal reference that marks the beginning of a time period after a country is formally decolonized. However, as demonstrated by the questions, critiques, and perspectives of Dei, Kempf, de Alva, and Young, the term postcolonialism requires careful consideration. Is postcoloniality

just about a time period? Or, is it about challenging and disrupting structures in place to form new understandings of society and identity? This latter perspective will now be considered alongside theorizing an anticolonial framework to use for guiding the rest of this paper.

While postcolonialism, as a critical theory, seeks to dismantle oppressive practices within dominant structures by studying the impact of those structures on people, anticolonialism can also be considered as a theory for challenging Eurocentric discourses. More directly, anticolonialism is the undoing of colonialism; they are constructs that are in opposition of each other, hence the "anti" prefix. Several scholars have called for the use of anticolonial frameworks for education, both for teacher preparation and for higher education (Lyiscott, Caraballo, Morrell, 2018; Dei, Kempf, 2006). Two of these scholars, Dei and Kempf, have signaled why there is a need still for theorizing an anticolonial framework within education:

> Colonialism, read as imposition and domination, did not end with the return of political sovereignty to colonized peoples or nation states. Colonialism is not dead. Indeed, colonialism and re-colonizing projects today manifest themselves in variegated ways (e.g., the different ways knowledges get produced and receive validation within schools, the particular experiences of students that get counted as [in] valid and the identities that receive recognition and response from school authorities) (Dei and Kempf, 2006)

For Dei and Kempf, it is clear that schools are highly problematic environments due to the ways in which they reproduce and reinforce colonial discourses. Despite a nation gaining its sovereignty, the implication here is that school systems have minimal influence on disrupting the colonial practices that subjugated its people and, if anything, actually encourage the reproduction of colonialism due to the knowledges and identities that become privileged in school spaces. For Dei and Kempf, there is little that is postcolonial about school systems in decolonized countries and this is why they believe that theorizing an anticolonial framework for education is necessary. Their long term goal is to theorize anticolonialism "forward into the realm of critical, pedagogical, and political practice." For this anticolonial framework, they outline how it "must raise questions about the colonial encounter and its aftermath" and how:

> anti-colonial thought is informed by a political project to ensure that current educational practice provides a central focus to address colonial and re-colonial relations in the school system… a school system, particularly the classroom, must provide the space for each learner to understand both her privileges and oppression, and to develop effective oppositional resistance to domination (Kempf and Dei, 2006)

In addition to providing opportunities to students to understand privilege and oppression, they also identify how the "Western academy cannot continue to deny the intellectual agency of colonized peoples" and cannot continue "the devaluation of rich histories and cultures." Ultimately, an anticolonial perspective is about "developing awareness/consciousness of the varied condition under which domination and oppression operate" (Dei and Kempf, 2006). In these salient points, an anticolonial framework for education becomes more apparent: education systems must be about restoring rich histories, providing intellectual agency to learners, and giving space to understand privilege and oppression. In addition to these three points is also the role of spirituality. How does it factor into this anti-colonial framework?

Spirituality as a Theoretical Framework

Anticolonialism is rooted in ideas of disrupting colonial discourses of oppression and subjugation. Since colonialism, as a process, erases indigenous culture and agency, then anticolonialism has a relationship with indigenous ways of being and knowing. Dei and Kempf stress the significance of the connection between indigenous spirituality and anticolonialism:

> The anti-colonial perspective is also deeply anchored in Indigenous ways of knowing and an understanding of the spiritual sense of self and the collective. This knowing situates the philosophy of holism as a key idiom of anti-colonial practice. Evoked in this context, spirituality is an understanding of the personhood, a synergy of the body, mind, and soul and an accompanying awareness and respect for the wholeness of being… Spirituality is the connection to all that exists. It comes from within the self, and from the world outside the self (Dei and Kempf, 2006)

Here, Dei and Kempf connect spirituality to anticolonial thought and emphasize the importance of holism in any anti-colonial

practice. Other scholars have made the connection between spirituality and action against oppression. Cindy Baskin reveals how spirituality is more than something internal as there's also an outward action component. She makes this connection stronger by highlighting how spirituality connects to anticolonial perspectives:

> I like the term "a spirituality of resistance" because, for me, it links my individual and community spirituality to social justice. It brings into focus an action-oriented take on spirituality. This is in keeping with the teachings of a holistic approach to viewing a person. The spiritual aspect of me is always present. It does not come and go depending on whatever activity I am involved in (Baskin, 2016).

Therefore, in examining the role of spirituality in relation to education, and specifically for mathematics, anticolonial perspectives must be considered. Thus, an anticolonial framework, one that can, for school systems, restore rich histories, provide intellectual agency, and give space to consider privilege and oppression, might have implications for considering the influence of spirituality on mathematics. Njoki Wane (2008) affirms this connection between indigenous knowledges and anticolonialism when she writes "the current system of education alienates many from their cultural traditions and as such, is often perceived as a dehumanizing process. Education may actually benefit from the sustainable practices inherent in Indigenous systems of knowledge." In searching for how indigenous knowledges can disrupt colonial discourses in schools, Wane looks to her own curriculum for the courses she offers. She found that most of her students would claim that they are Canadian and that they have no connections to indigenous knowledge. In asking students to go back to their families to ask about their heritage, she found that creating these spaces for self-exploration allowed students to reclaim their ancestral roots. For her, this practice confirmed to her that "Indigenous knowledges can, indeed, be incorporated in Euro–Canadian curriculums in ways which speak to individuals searching for their roots" (Wane, 2008). This process of reclaiming, and the space made to explore ancestry, holds potential for considering how spirituality, anticoloniality, and indigenous knowledges might find relevance within mathematics pedagogy and mathematics classrooms. In considering this connection among spirituality, anticolonialism, and mathematics, some important

questions emerge: what relationship does mathematics education have with colonialism? Does current mathematics pedagogy in Ontario incorporate anticolonial perspectives? Would including anticolonial perspectives in mathematics influence the role of spirituality in mathematics learning? For these questions to be investigated, it will be useful to first look at how mathematics can be considered a colonial tool and then examine the colonial legacy on formal education in Ontario.

Mathematics as a Colonizing Tool

Mathematics is a field and body of knowledge that is still widely considered objective and universal. Due to this universality, many view mathematics as decontextualized from culture and history. For some scholars, this view requires challenging because it represents a dominant narrative that undermines the various ways in which mathematics is expressed by different cultures (Luitel, 2013). Another scholar, Alan Bishop (1990), affirms this perspective when he argues that Western mathematics is a weapon of cultural imperialism. He believes that there are “three major mediating agents in the process of cultural invasion in colonised countries by Western mathematics: trade, administration, and education.” He articulates that education, in most colonized societies, mirrored that of the European colonizers and that the rationalism inherent in westernized mathematics “presents a dehumanised, objectified, ideological worldview which will emerge necessarily through mathematics teaching of the colonial kind” (Bishop, 1990). In the context of Canada, mathematics is grounded in Westernized knowledges and disseminated to teachers and taught in classrooms through each province’s curriculum. This process, it can be argued, continues to reinforce and privilege colonial ways of knowing.

Several scholars in Canada stand in opposition to this as they look for ways of decolonizing mathematics. Stavros Stavrou and Diane Miller (2017) examine the educational disparity between indigenous and non-indigenous learners for mathematics. They stress how “practitioners require a decolonizing and anti-oppressive discourse to address social justice issues in math education” and that “Indigenous students’ lower achievement is attributed to a lack of cultural relevance in the teaching of mathematics” (Stavrou and Miller, 2017). While Stavrou and Miller point to what is needed to decolonize mathematics for indigenous learners, they fail to mention how spirituality might be related to this process.

If educators are to have a decolonizing discourse and are to make learning culturally relevant, then spirituality must also be a consideration in that educational discourse and practice. This sentiment is echoed by Marie Battiste, a Mi'kmaw educator with the University of Saskatchewan, in her book *Decolonizing Education: Nourishing the Learning Spirit*. She highlights how the Eurocentric education system has taught the indigenous people in Canada "to distrust their indigenous knowledge systems, their elders' wisdom, and their own learning spirit." While she focuses on decolonizing education for the indigenous, she also recognizes that it is more than that, "the decolonization of education is not just about changing a system for indigenous people, but for everyone. We all benefit by it" (Battiste, 2015).

Other scholars tackle the issue of decolonizing mathematics by looking to ethnomathematics as a framework. D'Ambrosio (1985) defined ethnomathematics as "the mathematics which is practiced among identifiable cultural groups, such as national-tribal societies, labor groups, children of a certain age bracket, professional classes, and so on." Ethnomathematics is significant because it is not concerned solely with dominant discourses of mathematics. Judy Iseke-Barnes draws attention to this concept as a decolonizing tool as she believes that mathematics is produced in culture and, therefore, much can be learned about mathematics from cultural groups who are "traditionally excluded from mathematics" (Iseke-Barnes, 2000). She gives the example of analysis of weaving patterns from Maori weavers, indigenous people of New Zealand. She indicates how a "strand analysis which involves analysis of pattern and color changes in each strand/row of a weaving and its associations with next strands/rows... allows the weaver to analyse and identify relationships amongst multiple patterns" (Iseke-Barnes, 2000). For Iseke-Barnes, colonial mathematics is being disrupted by ethnomathematics through its recognition of multiple and diverse types of mathematics. She stresses that:

> Given that mathematics education is involved in the process of initiating children into colonial discourses it would appear to be worthy of serious attention and that ethnomathematics - as a decolonizing approach - is important to educators who are compelled to examine colonial practices, to reveal and counter them. For when we open up possibilities for multiple knowledges in our classrooms and practices we create

spaces for all students to find mathematics meaningful and connected to their/our lives

Iseke-Barnes, then, takes a similar position to Stavrou and Miller's emphasis on the importance of cultural relevance in mathematics. However, also similarly, there is a failure to mention the role of spirituality when it comes to knowledge production in mathematics. If ethnomathematics can be viewed as an anti-racist and anticolonial framework for challenging dominant discourses of mathematics knowledge production, then that disrupting process can also be seen as a holistic approach to mathematics education. Honouring the cultural significance of every learner's approach to mathematics becomes a nourishing act for the mind, body, and spirit - it allows a learner to view mathematics from a holistic view. In reviewing these decolonizing approaches to mathematics (i.e., grounding of cultural knowledge production, practitioners having an anti-oppressive mindset), it is now important to consider how those approaches can relate to mathematics education in the context of Ontario.

Brief History of Colonialism and Formal Education in Ontario

Ontario has a long history of exclusionary practices for education. Following the Seven Years War in 1763, education became a governmental priority since it was tied to religion and, in Quebec, it was meant to strengthen the Roman Catholic faith. While some scholars view the uniting of religion and education as one of Canada's historically important cultural features (Dickinson and Dolmage, 1996), other scholars believe that Canada's current education system is continually influenced by this historical context (Donaldson, 1998). For early Ontarians, education was primarily a family responsibility, but it was also an important matter for Christian churches. Titley and Miller (1982) identify how education was integral to maintaining church control over the morality of early Ontario settlers. Through this lens, the early role of religion and education was to indoctrinate settlers with a specific set of westernized values and knowledge.

In Ontario, the Education Act of 1807 was the first formal legislation for education. This act resulted in the formation of grammar schools that were Anglican in character and accessible only to the wealthy. Due to them being located in towns, boarding was required, which rendered this education inaccessible to those who could not afford the boarding costs. This act was met with

public frustration from non-anglican members of the legislature. This led to the Common Schools Act being passed in 1816 and contained the first laws for elementary education, which proposed public common schools for all children (Wilson, 1970). This act also required teachers to have Canadian citizenship or to swear allegiance to the Canadian government, a move that further reinforced Westernized perspectives and discourses in schools.

In the mid 1800s, Egerton Ryerson, a Methodist minister, was influential in giving Upper Canada its school system. He travelled across the United States and Europe to consider different educational systems before issuing a report to the Canadian government in 1846. His report focused on education that was to be Christian in nature, compulsory, and accessible to all children, regardless of social class. He also promoted a practical curriculum that would prepare students to live and work in Ontario. The Common School Acts of 1846 and 1850 resulted from his report and gave Upper Canada a provincial school system (Mackay and Firmin, 2008).

In the back half of the nineteenth century, interest in public and non-denominational schooling grew in Ontario. Many affluent members of society, such as merchants, farmers, and lawyers, called for an expansion of public education so that those without a privileged background could have access to quality learning (Oreopoulos, 2005). As industrial development continued, the development of roads and local governmental representation led to greater opportunities to introduce public schooling to new regions. The School Act of 1871 marked the renaming of common schools to public schools and provided that every public school should be a free school by law. This act also made Ontario the first province with compulsory school laws, as parents would receive a fine if their children were not in school for four months of the year.

In 1896, George Ross, the then Ontario Minister of Education and future fifth premier of Ontario from 1899-1905, documented the features of Ontario education. In his text, *The School System of Ontario*, he references the program of study in public schools. Within this, the subject of arithmetic is mentioned. Students would be expected to learn how to read and write numbers, how to perform operations, and, as they got older, would learn about fractions, percentages, as well as measuring surfaces. It is evident in this period that math was used for strictly practical means. The

expectation was also that students derived their knowledge from their teachers, having little participation in knowledge production.

In 1937, Ontario's ministry of education introduced a curriculum document entitled *Programme of Studies for Grades 1 to VI of the Public and Separate Schools.* In 1938, they published the curriculum *Programme of Studies for Grades VII to VIII of the Public and Separate Schools*. Patrice Milewski has written about the strengths of these curricula, noting how "this document defined curriculum, pedagogy and the aims of education for public and separate elementary schools in the province of Ontario for at least 30 years." She also emphasizes how they "resulted in a historic restructuring and reorganization of elementary schooling in Ontario that sought to transform elementary schooling and pedagogy along the lines of a 'stages of development' model of learning" (Milewski, 2008). She argues that these curricula had major significance in that they acknowledged the developmental differences of children, positioning children at the centre of curriculum development opposed to content or the teacher being at the centre.

During the 1960s and 1970s, elementary mathematics education was increasingly viewed as a subject to be mastered for university preparation and the focus was placed on the "basics," like number sense and computational knowledge. However, this opinion began to change as provincial committees across Canada started to view mathematics as a subject for all children and youth, not just those university bound. The discourse began to focus on how mathematics can be made meaningful and how it can be seen as relevant outside of school (Simmt, 2015). As has been demonstrated, Ontario's history of formal education, as well as its view on mathematics, is steeped in colonial structures, discourses, and practices. Policy on education was informed by the language of the colonizer and educational practices reflected inequities. It was only until more recently that educational discourse for mathematics became increasingly centred along the idea of making it meaningful and contextualized for the learner.

Current Mathematics Curriculum and Pedagogy

Now that Ontario's history of formal education and mathematics education has been documented, there is benefit to considering how spirituality factors into current discourses around mathematics. For this, there are two questions to consider: are anti-oppressive and anti-colonial discourses present in mathematics? Do discourses

in mathematics education in Ontario provide opportunities for its learners to restore their own rich histories, provide intellectual agency, and give space to consider privilege and oppression? These questions will guide the discussion on examining Ontario's mathematics curriculum and current best practices in math.

The mathematics curriculum, developed in 2005, outlines its underlying principles. These principles acknowledge that mathematics can be varied and is not restricted to one approach to thinking and conceptualizing math knowledge. It specifies how:

> this curriculum recognizes the diversity that exists among students who study mathematics. It is based on the belief that all students can learn mathematics and deserve the opportunity to do so… It recognizes that all students do not necessarily learn mathematics in the same way, using the same resources, and within the same time frames (Ministry of Education, 2005)

By acknowledging the diversity among learners and that mathematics is not learned in the same way by everyone, this approach has the potential to validate the individual in their learning. The underlying principles are also rooted in the "belief that students learn mathematics most effectively when they are given opportunities to investigate ideas and concepts through problem solving and are then guided carefully into an understanding of the mathematical principles involved" (Ministry of Education, 2005). This focus on investigation and being carefully guided also shifts power dynamics of traditional views of the teacher's role in a classroom. With this curriculum, teachers are not viewed as the keepers of knowledge, but instead as guides of knowledge. One critique, however, is in questioning the types of problems that are provided to students. The content presented to a student will have varying effects on how they perceive of the world around them. Are they being presented with problems that echo colonial discourses? Or are students being presented with problems that do not reflect a dominant narrative? How well prepared are teachers for incorporating anti-colonial discourses into mathematics classrooms?

The curriculum also has a section that seeks to ensure equity in the classroom. It is entitled "Antidiscimination Education in Mathematics." This section attempts to ensure that students learn in environments free from bias that are safe, secure, characterized

by respect, and allows them to fully participate in the educational experience. The curriculum indicates:

> Learning activities and resources used to implement the curriculum should be inclusive in nature, reflecting the range of experiences of students with varying backgrounds, abilities, interests, and learning styles. They should enable students to become more sensitive to the diverse cultures and perceptions of others, including Aboriginal peoples… By discussing aspects of the history of mathematics, teachers can help make students aware of the various cultural groups that have contributed to the evolution of mathematics over the centuries (Ministry of Education, 2005)

This section of the curriculum grounds mathematics within culture and highlights the importance of histories and cultural contributions. However, there is one troubling issue with the language of this section. The learning activities provided are meant to "enable students to become more sensitive to the diverse cultures and perceptions of others," but it does not emphasize the importance of mathematics learners grounding themselves in their own histories and cultures of mathematics. Further, this section places the onus on teachers for discussing aspects of history. The problem with this is that the power dynamic around historical knowledge production, then, resides just with the teacher. It is important for students to see their agency in producing knowledge of their histories with mathematics. The other critique with this anti-discrimination section is that while it advocates for learning activities and resources to be inclusive, it does not embed this language throughout the curriculum. When you look to the overall and specific curriculum expectations, few, if any, call for attention to be drawn to the history or cultural significance of the content that is being learned. This anti-discrimination section runs the risk of becoming what is it, a one-off section, failing to embed this language throughout every strand of mathematics for each grade.

The curriculum's emphasis on investigation and problem-solving is echoed by ministry resources around best practices in teaching mathematics. The current pedagogy of mathematics is advocated alongside principles of constructivism. Constructivism is an epistemological theory about how people learn. It posits that knowledge is actively created by the learner and passively received from the environment. In the context of mathematics, the learner

creates new knowledge by reflecting on their actions (Fosnot and Perry, 2005). In 2011, Ontario's ministry of education published *Paying Attention to Mathematics: Seven Foundation Principles for Improvement in Mathematics, K-12*. This document is a curriculum companion for teachers. This guide was created from the need to "pay focused collective attention to mathematics teaching, leading and learning." In its section called "build understanding of effective mathematics instruction," it lists some key competencies, such as "honouring multiple ways of mathematical thinking," "developing authentic tasks founded on key concepts in mathematics," and that "mathematics is grounded in the belief that all knowledge has to be constructed by each student in a learning environment in which mathematical knowledge-building and understanding is nurtured" (Ministry of Education, 2011). These competencies are in alignment with constructivist principles of teaching as they honour the different ways that individuals produce knowledge and meaning. However, there is a failure to mention the value in exploring one's own and others cultural ways of knowing mathematics as well as understanding the role of history. The absence of these, in some ways, points to the lack of an anti-colonial, anti-oppressive discourse in math. It leaves too much room for dominant discourses to be reproduced. While the emphasis is on how students construct knowledge, if time and space is not provided to consider the colonial impact on mathematics, power dynamics, privilege, and oppression, then there is a risk that students will continue to construct knowledge that is rooted in a colonial discourse.

This risk of students reproducing colonial knowledges and structures of thinking could be mitigated by the role of teachers in developing anti-oppressive and anti-colonial discourses in the classroom. However, there is a disconnect between policy and curriculum and actual classroom practice. Puk and Haines (1998) document this divide by looking at policy around inquiry modes of learning in mathematics and the application of it in Ontario classrooms. Inquiry-based learning is a component of constructivism, and as such, has importance in the curriculum. In looking to mandated policies in the Ontario Mathematics curriculum, they emphasize how "the importance of inquiry is emphatically clear for all teachers and students in Ontario, both as a teaching and as a learning strategy." However, what they conclude is a grim outlook on school effectiveness of implementing mandated policy:

> It is noteworthy that in a province in which a specific teaching - learning strategy, i.e., inquiry, has received unprecedented coverage in government documents over the past three decades and as such has been mandated to be taught in all Ontario schools in all grades, we find that during four weeks of practice teaching, only 28% of student teachers taught inquiry and over 60% responded that they did not receive encouragement by their associates to teach it nor observed their associates teaching it
>
> (Puk and Haines, 1998)

This finding becomes troublesome when considering it alongside anti-oppressive and anticolonial discourses in the classroom. If inquiry models of teaching, which has garnered a significant amount of attention in educational documents, are being implemented unsuccessfully in classrooms, then anti-discrimination education, which has one small section in the math curriculum, feels ominous for the future in the context of teaching and learning mathematics. How can anti-discrimination, and anticolonial, education garner more attention in mathematics classrooms?

Future Directions

Mathematical discourses are in desperate need of being decolonized. In 1992, Stephen Lewis wrote a report on race relations to the Ontario Premier at the time, Bob Rae. With regards to education, he concluded that:

> It's as if virtually nothing has changed for visible minority kids in the school system over the last ten years. The current 'packaging' of our educational system is especially dangerous because, while basing its claims on 'naturalness' and 'good old fashioned commonsense,' it is at the same time colonizing individuals intellectually to have the perception that dominant modes of being are not only legitimate but desirable (Lewis, 1992)

While Lewis' sentiment here was shared in the early 1990s, it reveals the chief problematic that remains with education in Ontario today, and particularly with mathematics. Despite efforts to make math more meaningful to students (e.g., through differentiated instruction, positioning them at the centre of knowledge construction, and looking to history and culture for inspiration), it remains bathed in dominant discourses and certain knowledges

remain privileged over others. These efforts become like the "packaging" Lewis references, opposed to something more holistic. Instructional strategies have little impact when those strategies are created from colonial ways of thinking and being.

The question becomes then, what needs to happen from here? The intent of this paper was to explore spirituality in relationship to mathematics. Admittedly, it has been a challenging task. Few journal articles and books have been published on this topic. While literature can be found on decolonizing mathematics and ethnomathematics, trying to find research on spirituality or holistic approaches to mathematics yields much less. This, in itself, speaks to an absence of the consideration of the role and influence of spirituality on/in mathematics. However, from conducting this investigation, a few (hopefully) useful thoughts come to the forefront.

For there to be a spiritual connection made with the practice of teaching and learning mathematics, an anti-colonial, anti-oppressive, anti-racist, anti-discriminatory, social justice lens needs to be taken up by all stakeholders in the education system. One area where an anti-colonial framework could prove useful is in teacher education. At least one team of scholars has explored the benefits of operationalizing such a framework for teacher preparation. Lyiscott, Caraballo, and Morrell (2008) looked at how three components (i.e., dynamic pedagogy, dialogic intersubjectivity, and democratic practice pedagogy) could be used to prepare urban teachers with an anticolonial perspective for teaching. They believe that these components can lead to teachers resisting "the reproduction of colonial practices that sustain inequity and marginalization for millions of students" and can arm them with "tangible experiential knowledge for their classrooms." While this framework was explored for American educators, there is merit for its use for Canadian teacher preparation programs. From a personal standpoint, my teacher education was housed in an urban diversity program, situated in a low SES neighbourhood of Toronto, where all of our theory and practice was learned through participating in the community. Our classes were in the local community centre, we volunteered in local programs, and each teacher candidates worked in an inner city school. While this program offered me a lens for social justice, diversity, and equity, there was little discussion on the legacy of colonialism in schools and anticolonial perspectives toward education. An anticolonial framework might have yielded greater impact on my future instruction - it may have helped to root

it in anticolonial approaches.

Curriculum and educational policy needs to change as well since policy drives change in classrooms. However, recent statements by Ontario's current premier, Doug Ford, cause concern for the future of mathematics curriculum. During his election campaign, he made his agenda clear, "kids used to learn math by doing things like memorizing a multiplication table and it worked. Instead, our kids are left with experimental discovery math. That hardly teaches math at all. Instead, everyone gets a participation ribbon and our kids are left to fend for themselves" (CBC News, 2017). After winning his campaign, Ford has continued his pursuit of removing discovery math (read constructivist approaches to mathematics) from the curriculum. While the current math curriculum has its own issues with anti-discrimination education, going "back to the basics" of mathematics will further divorce it from history and culture and will further remove students as active participants in their knowledge construction. It is a political move that will continue to reinforce dominant discourses in mathematics and further ostracize already marginalized students from seeing themselves reflected in their mathematics education. Reverting to old approaches to mathematics will continue to position math as a colonial tool.

Disruptive discourses and strategies need to be imbedded throughout curriculum in order to challenge dominant ways of understanding and reproducing mathematics. Professional development and anticolonial resources need to be provided to both policymakers and teachers. Administrators need to be exposed to the value of multiple representations of mathematical approaches and how values related to indigenous ways of knowing and ethnomathematics can be brought into the classroom. And, students need to be given an environment to work in that fosters dialogues around rich mathematical histories, returns intellectual agency to students so they can think critically about how mathematical knowledge is produced, and allows space for them to consider privilege and oppression in the context of mathematics education. Once these ideas are considered and consistently permitted—hopefully even cherished one day—in math classrooms, the space required for infusing spirituality in mathematics might just emerge.

References

Baskin, Cindy. (2016). Spirituality: The core of healing and social justice from an indigenous perspective. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, 2016* (152), 51-60.

Battiste, M. (2015). *Decolonizing education: Nourishing the learning spirit*. Saskatoon: Purich Publishing Limited.

Bishop, A. (1990). Western Mathematics: the Secret Weapon of Imperialism. *Race & Class,* 32 (2), 51-65.

D'Ambrosio, U. (1985). Ethnomathematics and its Place in the History of Pedagogy of Mathematics. *For the Learning of Mathematics*, 5 (1), 44-48.

de Alva, J. (1995). The Postcolonization of the (Latin) American Experience: A Reconsideration of "Colonialism", "Postcolonialism" and "Mestizaje", in G. Prakash (ed.), *After Colonialism, Imperial Histories and Postcolonial Displacements*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 241–275.

Dei, G. J., Kempf, A. (2006). *Anti-colonialism and education: The politics of resistance*. Rotterdam: Sense.

Dickinson, G. M., & Dolmage, W. R. (1996) Education, religion, and the courts in Ontario. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 21, 363-383.

Donaldson, E. (1998) Book review: The promise of schooling, *Canadian Journal of Education*. 23, 464-466.

Fosnot, C. T., & Perry, R. S. (2005). Constructivism: A psychological theory of learning. In C. Fosnot (Ed.), Constructivism. Theory, perspectives, and practice (2nd ed., pp. 8–38). New York, NY: Teachers College Press

Iseke-Barnes, J. (2000). Ethnomathematics and Language in Decolonizing Mathematics. *Race, Gender, & Class*, 7 (3), 133-149.

Jones, A., Casey, L. (2018, May 8). Doug Ford Vows to Scrap Sex-Ed Curriculum, Replace 'Discovery Math,' Tie University funding to Free Speech. *National Post.* Retrieved from https://nationalpost.com/news/politics/ford-vows-to-replace-sex-ed-math-curricula-tie-university-funds-to-free-speech

Lewis, Stephen. (1992). Report of the Advisor on Race Relations to the Premier of Ontario, Bob Rae.

Loomba, A. (2015). *Colonialism/postcolonialism*. London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

Luitel, B. (2013). Mathematics as an Im/pure Knowledge System: Symbiosis, (W)holism and Synergy in Mathematics Education. *International Journal of Science and Mathematics Education, 11*(1), 65-87.

Lyiscott, J., Caraballo, L., Morrell, E. (2018). An Anticolonial Framework for Urban Teacher Preparation. *The New Educator*, 14 (3), 231-251.

Mackay, B., Firmin, W. (2008). This Historical Development of Private Education in Canada. *Education Research and Perspectives*, 35 (2) 57-72.

Milewski, P. (2008). 'The Little Gray Book': Pedagogy, Discourse, and Rupture in 1937. *History of Education*, 37 (1), 91-111.

Ministry of Education (2011). *Paying Attention to Mathematics Education: Seven Foundational Principles for Improvement in Mathematics, K-12*. Toronto, Ontario.

Ministry of Education (2005). *The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1-8: Mathematics*. Toronto, Ontario.

Morrell, E. (2008). Critical literacy and urban youth: Pedagogies of access, dissent, and liberation. New York, NY: Routledge.

Ontario Department of Education. (1937). *Programme of studies for grades 1-6 of the public and separate schools*. Toronto, Ontario.

Ontario Department of Education. (1938). *Programme of studies for grades 7-8 of the public and separate schools*. Toronto, Ontario.

Oreopoulos, P. (2005). Canadian Compulsory School Laws and their Impact on Educational Attainment and Future Earnings. Analytical Studies Branch Research Paper Series, Statistics Canada, 251, 1-41.

Puk, T., Haines, J. (1998). Curriculum Implementation in Ontario: Espoused and De Facto Aspirations for Inquiry. *McGill Journal of Education*, 33 (2), 189-206.

Ross, G. (1896). The School System of Ontario: its History and Distinctive Features. New York: Appleton Press.

Simmt, E. (2015). What Is a Canadian Mathematics Education? A National Discourse Community. *Canadian Journal of Science, Mathematics, and Technology Education*, 15 (4), 407-417.

Stavrou, S., Miller, D. (2017). Miscalculations: Decolonizing and Anti-Oppressive Discourses in Indigenous Mathematics Education. *Canadian Journal of Education,* 40 (3), 92-122.

Titley, E., & Miller, P. (1982). *Education in Canada: an interpretation*. Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Limited.

Wane, N. (2008). Mapping the field of Indigenous knowledges in anti-colonial discourse: a transformative journey in education. *Race, Ethnicity, and Education,* 11 (2), 183-197.

Wilson, D. (1970). The Ryerson years in Canada west, in D. Wilson, R. Stamp, & L. Audet (Eds.), *Canadian education: A history*, Scarborough, ON: Prentice-Hall of Canada, 214-240.

Young, R. J. (2013). *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction.* S.l.: Wiley-Blackwell (an imprint of John Wiley & Sons Ltd).

CHAPTER TEN

SPIRITUALITY AS A MEANS OF DECOLONIZING MYSELF

Zakaria Habi

Introduction

Post-colonialism is a term that is multi-faced when being discussed broadly. For some, it is a means of reconciling; while for others it is a mythical term used to cover up the ongoing colonial acts of nations and of individuals whom previously were colonizers. Personally, I do not believe that post colonialism can occur. An example I use here is when a beautiful coloured shirt gets tainted with bleach, no matter how much dye is used, that stain will still be there and evident. The effects of colonialism are both ongoing and intergenerational. Even when the unwholesome colonial acts are no longer amongst the colonizer and the colonized, they remain reinforced within nations by groups of people who react to the colonial acts of those they were once colonized by. This is largely evident in Africa in nations such as Libya, where a slave trade is going on, yet kept silenced in the media today.

In my opinion, spirituality is lacking in the world today. In our first lecture, the professor of the course, Spirituality and Schooling, told the class that she would not be providing a rigid definition of spirituality as it differs per person. I agree with and support the Professor's statement. Due to everyone's worldly experiences and upbringings, that creates and defines what spirituality is to them and it would be a colonial act of myself to enforce my understanding of what spirituality means onto others.

In the class of Schooling and Spirituality, the Professor has introduced her students into a form of thinking that I personally have not experienced before in the classroom. There were lectures where we as a whole broke down pre-colonial and "post-colonial" societies. "We cannot define spirituality if we do not know where we are" (Torres, Lecture 2). It is important to analyze pre-colonial societies in order to understand why spirituality is missing from our academia. The pre-colonial societies shared many characteristics

that I would claim to be heaven. Such characteristics include community life, sharing of knowledge, recognition of the between visible and invisible, as well as the practice of spirituality. These characteristics are difficult to achieve and maintain in today's Capitalistic and individualistic societies. Indeed there was religion, culture and values at the time, but spirituality played an important role in the cohesion of what is spirituality along with what is religious or cultural. For many individuals today it is difficult to associate spirituality with religion or culture as both have been used negatively in a way to push forth agendas. Dogmatic views in religion have covered the beauty of religion and practice with a negative veil unfortunately. Personally, the way I have been taught about my religion, i.e., Islam, and the way I continue to learn, as it is a forever-ongoing process, I believe that it is beautiful and goes hand in hand with spirituality. I have been taught that by following my religion and doing that good it preaches that feeds the soul and grows it. The simplest way I see it is that when religion came down to humans from God it was singular in the form that there was not different sects. For humans to advance what is on their agendas has resulted in in the formations of sects. This paper will focus on how spirituality is involved in my life and in the process of decolonizing myself first and foremost. I will begin with my social location so that the reader may know more about myself, along with addressing the use of spirituality as a framework to criticize the idea of post-colonialism and, finally, concluding this paper.

Social Location and background

To begin this paper, I would like to identify myself to the reader as Zakaria Habi, Muslim, Algerian, and African, and importantly as a global citizen. My own experience is important to me as I have first hand experience of the effects of living in a post-colonial nation as well as being a settler here on Turtle Island. As an Algerian I sometimes find it difficult when trying to discuss my place amongst others due to my ethnicity/skin colour, which is the case due to the colonial teachings of France that were placed imposed onto our grandparents and parents. The French and the education they provided and influenced from 1830-present day discredited our history as Africans, Berbers, etc as well as eradicated our spiritual and proper religious practices. I am sharing this information as

today I am trying to locate myself. We were taught in classrooms growing up that the main issue Africans faced was slavery, and that slaves were brought over by force to the Americas. What I have learnt from my family is that Algerians (of all skin colours) were also taken to work by force in France in fields or factories, and the ones considered lucky were allowed to stay in Algeria, but they were still slaves to the French in their own country and on their own fields. Algerians were forced to enlist in the French army and die in both World Wars and other wars that the French engaged in. The Algerians were never recognized for what they did, despite the number of Algerian casualties. To this day France denies the economic slavery it inflicted on Algerians, and continue to do through the Evian Accord and modern day politics. This is similar to the lack of recognition for Indigenous and First Nation members who fought for their land and during the civil war against the United States of America. My grandfather died in the Independence War (there is a hospital in his name, a monument – this has led me to this topic and develop the need to learn more about him, my myself, Algeria and who Algerians truly are) – my family is split into those who I would say are obsessed with France, wanting to live in France, and speak only French even in Algeria and at home, basically become French (although the French will never accept them). On the other hand there is me, a 23-year-old man looking to learn more about my past, why my grandfather was so patriotic, why he decided to partake in the war, which resulted in widowing my grandmother and being a single mother at the age of 30 with 5 children on her charge in misery.

It is absolutely necessary to locate myself so the reader may understand my point of view in discussion of the subjects within this paper. I have been educated in Canada from Kindergarten until my Masters Degree that I am currently completing. The school system never discussed Canada as a colonial nation, or one of a colonial past. It was not until I began my Masters Degree at OISE where I became exposed to the truth of the nation’s past in which land grabbing, along with other horrors have occurred. In this day and age, it is sad to know that many students are growing up learning about the great nation of Canada, which it truly is, however not learning the history. It is vital to learn about the complete history,

as a way to make sure that settlers such as myself do not repeat the ideologies and actions of the colonial settlers of the past. I hold this in the highest regards as I sometimes I try to put myself in the places of my indigenous brothers and sisters and ask, “What if Algeria was still physically colonized today, and France was opening up the nation to other settlers, while not caring about the Indigenous people of Algeria at all? Quite honestly, I would be outraged.

France began its attempts to invade Algerian territory in 1827, but it was not until 1830, where they have successfully invaded the Algerian territory. By 1848, Algeria was declared as an extension of France itself and not only a colony by the French government (Sharkey, 2012). Upon successfully settling on Algerian territory, the French began to seize land from the Algerians, move them out of the fertile countryside lands and into cities (D. Davis 2007). To add to the pain of being stripped of their land, anyone (including pied noir and the Indigenous Jewish minority) but Algerian Muslims were given French citizenship along with full French rights as those back in the motherland (Shepard 2006). This was due to the French acts of assimilation, practiced not only in Algeria, but also in other African countries colonized by the French. Theoretically speaking, the policy of assimilation was to adopt French customs, such as the language, modes of dressing, etc. in order to gain full French citizenship. However, “Algerian Muslims were forced to denounce their Muslim status, which would affect their way of life in regards to inheritance, marriage, and other family affairs” (Sharkey, 2012, p.432). Now, the next step for the assimilation of Muslim Algerians by the French was to erase their identity, religion and spirituality. This was done by having the “colonial authorities shut down rural and urban Qur’an schools, where Muslim children had traditionally learned the rudiments of reading and writing in Arabic along with basic principles of their religion” (Sharkey, 2012, p.432). The result of this horrendous act was a drastic increase in the illiterate rates of Muslim Algerians. In 1830, the rates of basic education in comparison between Algeria and France may have been even (Holt 1994:27), but by 1870, “less than 5 percent of Algerian children were attending any kind of school” (Ruedy 2005:104). The French colonizers realized that Algeria was simply not a single identity state, in the notion that Algeria was made up of Kabyle, Berbers, Arab

background, Turkish background and even Andalusia background, grouped by their spiritual and religious beliefs and values.

However, a main commonality of the different cultural groups was the knowledge of the Arabic language as the Holy Qur'an was revealed and is written in Arabic. The French colonizers knew that it was important to firstly divide the Muslim Algerian population by their cultural backgrounds, using the language of Arabic as the dividing tool which would make it easier to conquer as they would incite issues amongst them and leave the different cultures to fight one another making it easier for the French to then later come in and overrule the divided society. The French colonizers created the Kabyle Myth about Berber people of northeast Algeria, claiming that they "were less fanatical, more authentic and more civilizable than Arabs" (Lorcin 1995; Silverstein 2002). To this day, the myth creates many issues such as how to properly label and identify the Algerian identity, as language is a key pillar of identity. Within the last two centuries of colonial rule by France in Algeria, the French attempted to please the Muslim Algerian population by recognizing the Arabic language. Nonetheless, Arabic could not be taught in practice, "as late as 1960 there was only one Arabic instructor on average for every 1,200 primary-school children (Heggoy 1973:190-91). Upon the Independence of Algeria in 1962, Arabic was to be made the national language of Algeria, although the Muslim Algerian leaders were far more literate in the French language. "Delivering a radio and television broadcast in 1962, Ahmed Ben Bella (1918–2012), the first president of independent Algeria, spoke in French to promise, 'Our national language, Arabic, is going to recover its place' ('Notre langue nationale, l'arabe, va retrouver sa place')" (Abu-Haidar 2000:154). To understand the damage the French colonizers had done onto the Muslim Algerian population can simply be seen through analyzing the literacy rate of the Muslim Algerian population at the time of Independence, in which "an estimated 90% of the Algerian population was illiterate" (Holt 1994:29, 31).

Being exposed to ideologies such as in a colonized space of a classroom has allowed me to rethink my own experiences as well as those of others. The classroom is supposed to be a space where learning takes places, and the present generation is being

well equipped with skills and knowledge to take on the challenges of the real world. While so, however, how may students acquire the skills and knowledge they need to face the world when their biggest present challenge is being in the classroom, a colonized environment? Conversably, I found myself equally reflecting upon my own experiences in the classroom, asking questions and wondering, how can students go to a classroom, where they know that they will be picked upon, as they are "different"? How may students learn, when educators shut down their experiences and deem the students methods of learning as outlandish and unacceptable because they do not conform to Eurocentric educational methods or simply because they are not part of the curriculum? How come the experiences and history taught to me by my ancestors is false because it was not written by a white man who spent only a limited amount of time in Algeria (or any colonized state)? Why did my grandfather, other Algerians and others endure the torture such as the Indigenous people being constantly denied by the white colonizers? What does it mean when one of my a high school teachers of mine said that the winner will always write history and that is the winner is always the white man? Why are visible majority individuals, specifically Muslims, constantly labelled as terrorists by the media, whereas when white individuals commit the same or even worse crimes, if also not at a larger scale the media fails to use their skin color and religion as connection to their crimes? These classrooms are lacking spirituality and without it, creating a safe space for respectful and engaging dialogue would just not be possible.

Being in SJE classrooms has enabled me to seek comparisons between the experiences of my forefathers in Algeria to the Indigenous and First Nations communities here. I understand that the both share a common value, which is Spirituality. It was our high level of spirituality that allowed us to survive and seek a better future for the generations to come. Algeria was colonized for a brutal and horrific 132 years by France. For more than a century and a quarter of French colonial rule and of forced French colonial teachings upon my grandparents and ancestors, the French applied various techniques in order to assimilate the diverse Algerian population. In order for the French colonists to successfully attain this aim, they began by targeting local traditions, culture and arguable the

most importantly, the local languages. This was mainly exercised through means of education and the classroom as a colonized space.

It may be argued that Algeria is still a colonial state of France, despite its costly independence. This is where I do not agree with the idea of post-colonialism. I have heard the argument that France is no longer in Algeria, however physical land grabbing is not the only tool of Colonialism. Colonialism is driven by Capitalism, guided by the Western Capitalistic goals of European nations, and used as a tool to achieve outcomes. Such a tool has enabled France to influence African nations, such as Algeria, into ways of decision and deal making that greatly benefits France. It still surprises me that there are at least a dozen African states still paying colonial taxes (or what one may say putting their foreign reserves in French banks). Looking at Algeria for instance, it has the ability to provide clean and renewable energy to all of France and the Eu. France does not have comparable solar power capabilities compared to Algeria and its Saharan desert. France is looking to invest in Algeria's Saharan desert to supply their electricity and energy demand needs. The energy crisis of France is more of a crisis to find alternative (renewable) energies. France's energy crisis solutions for combating climate change due to its energy use of fossil fuels (coal, oil, and gas) results in the exploitation of Algeria's natural resources and landscape. France's renewable energy solutions conflict with the economic and environmental interests of the citizens of Algeria, especially those in the Sahara Desert region. Such engagements, however, if not done properly and with care will be an open example of green-grabbing through ex-colonial ties. Long-standing policies based on energy security have forced France to derive 75% of its electricity from nuclear energy (World Nuclear Association, 2018). The environment is explicitly tied to capitalism, specifically where today's economies in of the Western world will seek to temper into Raw Capitalism. However, Raw Capitalism has its issues, especially in regards to the environment. According to Gilbert Van Kerckhove in Toxic Capitalism (2012), "the dark side of raw capitalism is its disregard for the quality, durability, respect for the environment and human beings as well as a lack of morality, hiding behind a

mask of hypocrisy." This can be exemplified in today's free trade agreements.

Now in the era of neoliberal markets, access to exploiting natural resources in exchange for money has become a recurring event. For the benefit of their own sake, the EU, influenced by corporate interests, is capable of turning a blind eye to the issues and needs of Algerian citizens in order to move forward and secure energy trade deals. The EU's biggest priority in North Africa is Algeria, due to the fact of its openness to pen deals. Algeria is heavily reliant on the EU, especially France. "Dependency is a situation in which the economy of certain countries is conditioned by the development and expansion of another economy to which the former is subjected"(Dos Santos, 231). In other words, the dependency of one side is much greater than that of the other side, which results in domination. Since the Crimea issue in 2014, the EU has made energy security a top priority.

"The EU's aggressive attempts to obtain more Algerian gas while ignoring the peoples' will, and in the case of shale gas, grievances and preoccupation with their water and the environment, could be qualified as energy colonialism, especially in a context where the EU is pushing for further liberalization in the energy sector" (Hamouchene, 2016).

Spirituality as a Framework

The course SJE1961, Spirituality and Schooling, firstly attracted my attention, as it seemed out of the ordinary. I have yet to hear of Spirituality and Schooling cohesively lectured. To be completely honest I was not sure what to expect when I signed up for this course. I assumed it was going to be similar to other courses at the graduate level, where too many pages were read to even be discussed in class. However, Dr. Rose Ann Torres has done a fantastic job in compiling course materials, as well making sure that the readings coincide with the objectives of the course. During the first lecture it was interesting to hear the professor telling the class that she will not be giving us a precise definition of spirituality as that varies person to person. It was refreshing to be given the opportunity to bring in our experiences and values in giving definition to spirituality, which in reality does differ per individual. In addition, I was not sure what to expect of this class as going through the education system in

Ontario, students (including myself) have separated education from spirituality and religion. I started off in the public school system from Kindergarten to Grade 8, and then began and completed my high school education in the Catholic school system. The choice to enrol in a Catholic school system was due to the belief that having faith mixed with education would lead to better results both academically and socially. However, as a student, I personally have encountered more issues in school in the Catholic system as my spirituality and faith was often questioned, which made it difficult to remain motivated in a space I did not feel welcome in. I find it boundless as to how we are encouraged to "disturb" spaces to make an impact, through our teachings at the Social Justice Program, whereas in high school I was often in trouble for "questioning" and "disturbing" these educational spaces. However, what left me frustrated and unmotivated to do more was seeing my peers who matched the "faith" and "spirituality" of the Catholic schooling system undisturbed when they seeked to disturb the educational spaces in which I seeked to do the same.

In the lecture of July 5th we started the class with an activity I have never done in the classroom before. Our professor allowed us to take the time and to discuss how we were feeling. It was a unique experience as usually professors are in a rush to get out there lectures, whereas the professor put the focus on her students, which made the lecture and learning to come later very much enjoyable. I found the activity of comparing pre-colonial and post-colonial civilizations mind opening. Though, I personally do not agree with the term "post-colonial" as the mind and spirit of the once colonized is still colonized through using the customs, values, languages, etc. of the colonizer. Although some once colonized lands are no longer physically colonized, their inhabitants are still colonized mentally and spiritually by teachings that have erased the teachings of their pre-colonial ancestors. The professor made an entertaining comment when she reminded the class that she is not "romanticizing" pre-colonial times, but the lists of differences are there. Many of the distinct characteristics of pre-colonial societies such as the importance of community, practice of spirituality, sharing of knowledge and recognition between the visible and invisible are not present in post-colonial societies today.

Furthermore, this class has lived up to the expectations I have had going into the course. In every class section, I'm exposed to new ideas, different thinking, and questions beyond belief, whether it is from the professors' lectures or from group presentations of my peers. I felt privileged to be able to access such a safe space where I may learn from others and share my own experiences and knowledge in a safe space, with intellectual and respectful dialogue. My group's presentation was religion and dogmatism. Religion is a term that I am familiar with. In contrast, however, dogmatism was a term I was unfamiliar with. More the issues I raised stemmed from personal experiences when attempting to discuss religion amongst a religiously diverse group. I fundamentally understand and respect that everyone has different opinions due to each individual's experiences and background and which I would never seek to invalidate but rather to comprehend better and gain adequate insight. A part of our presentation dealt with course readings. We had two course readings to present, and they were Religion & Spirituality: History, Discourse, Measurement by Courtney Bender and Is the term spirituality a word that everyone uses, but nobody knows what anyone means by it? By Stuart Rose.

The first reading by Courtney Bender was of more interest to me as it also discussed the term spirituality, amongst university-aged students, which made it more relatable to my current interest. Like the course professor, the author similarly started the article by stating that there is not a rigid definition of spirituality as it varies per individual. For some it may be intertwined with Religion, while for others it may be a completely separate entity. There was a point about how spirituality is private, emergent, emotional, and individual, while religion is corporate, public, and stable. Personally, I did not agree with this point, because for me Religion is as private as individual.

In addition, previously to this class discussion, the last time where Religion was being critiqued from an anti-colonial perspective I also had the same viewpoint. My religion, Islam, from my understanding, allows us and encourages us to ask questions and think critically about how did we come to be, the purpose of life, how racism and gender inequalities can and would be erased, who is God, how faith can reigns over arrogance, etc. However, I do understand

that due to the inappropriate use of religion by extremist groups, these points are overshadowed by how Religion is used to oppress certain members of society. As a consequence, I have come to ask if Religion is supposed to preach love, tolerance and equality, why is it not seen as so? I have come to realize that the answers I was seeking were directly in the books of God and not in the experiences and destinies of humans or religious clerics and groups. Whether be it monarchies, governments, or else, they have changed religion in ways to benefit themselves and push forward their agendas. Nevertheless, when religion was sent down to society by God there was no divide in Judaism, Christianity or Islam. Surely there were no Sunni Muslim, Shia Muslim, Sufi Muslim, etc. As long as one did commit to what God commanded us to do we were all equal.

Even though it may seem unrealistic to some, I do keep optimism, as our discussions in this class have been respectful and open. I hope that we each will be able to bring these experiences and dialogues into our own social spaces such as our homes, work places, classrooms, etc. We will never agree as one, but as long as we respect each other there is hope that we may be able to achieve a greater level of peace, equality and love.

Almut Beringer, in his article, In Search of the Sacred, begins by discussing the need for conceptual inquiry. Today, we live in a world where our knowledge is required to be backed by qualitative research, despite the nature of such research is highly random in time. There is a growth in wanting to know more about the phenomena and experiences of the spirit and spirituality. Inevitably, educators are looking into how to incorporate spirituality in and out of today's classroom as well as in the knowledge being produced in classrooms. Beringer states that, "experiential education, spirituality has captured the attention of researchers and practitioners particularly as it transpires on extended journeys in wilderness settings and in its implications for programming." There is a genuine interest in seeking to fully understand spirituality and its benefits such as the healing of oneself. There is such interest because of the possibility of presenting this advantage to students. Here again, there is a greater perception that students may generate more awareness of learning and ultimately benefiting themselves. However, Beringer states a limitation, which insists that research must be done

empirically. The limitation stipulates how may spirituality be measured empirically and analyzed? Beringer continues by stating that spirituality itself is "conceptually challenging and difficult to define". Furthermore, resolving the difficulties in defining spirituality does not make the task of empirically measuring spirituality any easier. As Professor Torres (Lecture 1) discussed in her lecture that she will not be giving us a specific definition of spirituality as it may differ from person to person, where there are different means of defining something through our own ways of acquiring knowledge as well as our own experiences. Beringer makes an interesting point in saying that "reputable framework of spirituality would help experiential educators distinguish between behavioural, mental, affective, and spiritual dimensions of human experience and functioning." Although, it should be noted that this would be problematic as we would be articulating one's framework as reputable and another as not. We would raise issues of whether to use Eurocentric, Indigenous or African frameworks for instance. If we were to use a Eurocentric framework as "reputable" would that mean that other frameworks are not reputable?

Another salient feature of this article is the distinction between broad and specific spirituality, which refers to how the sacred is defined and/or where the sacred or holy is located. The author discusses that ultimate value can be located in the physical material realm. This physical material realm includes the sociocultural worlds. The author gives the example of how something as ordinary as sports can become sacred. For my father and I, Saturday mornings are sacred. Every single Saturday, we get up early to watch our favourite soccer teams. The author continues explaining how one may "religiously" be committed to a team by following each update and each game. The author's main point of this article was that the "current renewal in integrative education is a movement in higher education that is restoring spirituality to academic life." The author further points out that surveys launched by the Astins show that at universities there is a "sharp divide between students' interests and what happens in the classroom." Aurobindo coined four pedagogical objectives that seek to address the sharp divide that the Astin's survey displayed. These four objectives are:

1. The teacher should not teach the student, but rather help the student teach themselves
2. The teacher should not be concerned with what the student remembers, but rather what they learn
3. The teacher should find out if the student is interested in the subject, and if not create interest
4. The teacher should bring the proper environment of learning

These objectives were not possible during Aurobindo's time (1900) as the British had strict syllabuses in place. However, in my opinion, one may still say that this is happening today when teachers often stick with the syllabus even if students find little or no interest, or the students struggle to learn and understand the material.

Conclusion

In my belief spirituality needs to become involved in everything we do, especially as a means of decolonizing. As students, engaging with spirituality in the classroom allows us to do more while broadening our spectrum of learning and appreciation. The French sought to assimilate Algerians by destroying their traditional classrooms and learning settings where both spirituality and religion cohesively worked along together in defining the destiny of the Algerian society. The articles discussed in class focus heavily on the students' experience in the classroom. Beringer's article heavily focuses on spirituality, however connections can be made and applied to the classroom. Subbiondo's article discusses how visions of bettering student's learning and engagement came out of the work of Sri Aurobindo's. Aurobindo's four - pedagogical approaches, in my opinion, are revolutionary; his arguments came during the 1900s and can be implemented to enhance modern education. Many students including myself often make the argument that learning is too heavily focused on memorization and not on acquiring actual understanding. Students are often found themselves cramming and taking drugs (such as Adderall) as ways to enhance their abilities to memorize information, not learning it, but rather to simply achieve a high score. Western education and its competitive nature have taken away from the learning experience students should be seeking in the classroom. Instead the classroom has

become a place of competition amongst students, or even more so as a capitalistic work place environment, where everyone seeks to achieve the most sales (highest grade) in every possible way, even unethically if necessary to achieve the goal.

The necessity for spirituality in the classroom is due to the focuses on seeking how to incorporate the benefits of spirituality, such as healing, in learning. Students at the colleges and universities experience so much distress due to the competitive nature of the learning environment. Students, today, struggle to seek out enjoyment in learning and find themselves geared more towards memorizing than digesting the material to achieve a high mark, which they take as their prime intent. I have had classmates who frequently discussed the need to take Adderall to help them "memorize" course material for exams. The students were more concerned with achieving a higher grade than thinking of the possible effects Adderall can have on their brains and health when they do not even have the medical conditions requiring such medication. This goes to show how little students neglect caring for their health in regards to achieving higher marks, whereas spirituality is the way to think about and remedy such excesses.

References

Abu-Haidar, F. 2000. Arabisation in Algeria. *International Journal of Francophone Studies 3 (3)*:151-63

Bender, C. 2007. "Religion and Spirituality: History, Discourse, Measurement." Social Science Research Council Forum: The Religious Engagements of American Undergraduates. http://religion.ssrc.org/reform/

Beringer, Almut. (2000). In Search of the Sacred: A Conceptual Analysis of Spirituality. Journal of Experiential Education. 23. 10.1177/105382590002300307.

Davis, D. 2007. Resurrecting the Granary of Rome: Environmental History and French Colonial Expansion in North Africa. Athens: Ohio University Press.

Dos Santos, T. (1970, May 01). The Structure of Dependence. Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/stable/1815811?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents *page 31

Hamouchene, H. (2016, June). The Struggle for Energy Democracy in the Maghreb. Retrieved from https://ejnorthafrica.files.wordpress.com/2017/11/hamza-study-book-eng-web.pdf

Heggoy, A. 1973. Education in French Algeria: An Essay on Cultural Conflict. *Comparative Education Review 17(2)*: 180-97

Holt, M. 1994. Algeria: Language, Nation and State. In *Arabic Sociolinguistics: Issues & Perspectives,* ed. Yasir Suleiman. Richmond: Curzon.

Kerckhove, G. V. (2012). *Toxic capitalism: The orgy of consumerism and waste: Are we the last generation on earth?: A view from China*. Retrieved from https://books.google.ca/books?id=POefWmtaZcgC&pg=PA17&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false *Page 17

Lorcin, P. 1995. Imperial Identities: Stereotyping, Prejudice and Race in Colonial Algeria. London: I.B. Tauris.

Nuclear Power in France. (2018, March). Retrieved from http://www.world-nuclear.org/information-library/country-profiles/countries-a-f/france.aspx

Ruedy, J. 2005. Modern Algeria: The Origins and Development of a Nation. 2nd ed. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Sharkey, H.J. (2012). Language and Conflict: The Political History

of Arabisation in Sudan and Algeria. *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism, 12(3),* p.427-449. Doi.10.1111/sena.12009

Shepard, T. 2006. The Invention of Decolonization: The Algerian War and Remaking of France. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Torres, Rose Ann (2018, July 03) SJE1961 Course Lecture 1

Torres, Rose Ann (2018, July 05) SJE1961 Course Lecture 2

PART IV:
SPIRITUALITY AS PEDAGOGY AND PRACTICE

CHAPTER ELEVEN

TEACHING SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS TO BECOME RESPONSIVE TO CLIENT'S SPIRITUAL TRANSLOCATION

Abdelfettah Elkchirid

Current trend of globalization in cultural and religious terms is changing national landscapes by integrating varying ethnic Diasporas in its urban geographic composition. This is especially relevant in North America, where masses of migrants from different religious and ethnic backgrounds are continuously finding new homes. Complex outcomes of religious and spiritual translocation are a reality for many migrants. While the field of social work commonly uses evidence-based practice, experience shows that integrating religious translocation is not only effective in work with ethnic clients, but rather imperative in social work education and practice. In this chapter, we will identify how religious translocation effects many social work users, how it aligns with professional ethics of social work, and how it can be integrated in current social work educational curriculum. Further, we will look at necessary research required in order to successfully integrate religious translocation into social work curriculum.

What is Translocation?

In a relatively new study of urban anthropology geographic representations, especially in North America, show that urban social formations are largely comprised from different ethnic communities (Anthias, 2001). Migration, especially across large territories by large communities has taken place throughout history on different scales. Migratory patterns throughout history have been reshaping cultural, religious and even ethnic landscapes (Rettig et al., 2014). Colonization and post-colonization period had (and still have) a vast impact on reshaping these landscapes. By the end of the mass scale colonization period and inquiry emerged on the impact of colonization on the colonized parties. That's how post-colonial studies emerged. Further, they developed into analytical framework

of looking at the authentic content of cultures prior to colonization period, cultures responding to the colonization period, and cultures post colonization period. The studies aim to understand the impact of colonizing cultures on the populations that were colonized, and the authenticity of ethnic populations prior to colonization period. Mass migration caused by colonization also gave rise to masses of misplaced and dislocated populations. Migration process has been an ongoing one. Research within subjects relating to migration and ethnicity delved into understanding both, diaspora communities, and identity formation within this process of migration. Thus, the process of translocation can be paralleled with the process of post-colonialism. Because of the scale of migration during colonization and post-colonization period, post-colonial studies inevitably touched upon shifting paradigms of ethnic communities. Translocation has an analogous purpose. It aims to deconstruct the local impact on the culture of the populations who have migrated there from a location with different cultural context.

The concept of translocation is just as dynamic as human history. Large scope of migration creates new hybrid social forms as a result of interculturality and diasporic relations (Anthias, 2001). As a result of this hybridization, Anthias (2001) proposes the term of 'translocational positionally' in order to address the issues relating to belonging. Among other connotations this term implies belonging to multiple localities, thus dismantling the notion of unitary identity (2001). As famous scholar Edward Said said "most people are principally aware of one culture, one setting, one home; exiles are aware of at least two, and their plurality of vision gives rise to an awareness of simultaneous dimensions" (Edward Said in Munkelt et al., 2013, preface). These 'simultaneous dimensions' apply to religious principles as well as cultural.

The concept of translocation, similar to the concept of post-colonization, seeks to homogenize the understanding of identity, family and community, their development, which experienced multiple dimensions of culture, religion, environment, etc. The difference of translocational approach from post-colonial one is that it seeks to deconstruct these dimensions based on the locale. As Lucia Kramer, who draws no distinction between translocality as a process and as a condition, defines translocality as "being

in several places at the same time" (qtd. in Munkelt et al., 2013, preface). Literal translation of translocation means 'across or beyond the local'. But similar to the word translation, which literally means "removal or conveyance from one person, place or condition to another" the goal is to maintain the essence of the original context within the frames of a new language (in this case) (Munkelt et al., 2013, preface). In summary, translocation can be defined as a condition of populations whose cultural and religious content was altered by a changed locale. However, the currently expanding scale of attention of the subject of translocation aims to understand how the cultural heritage of one locale changes within the new one. These considerations may be applied to an identity, a family unit, a community, and/or a diaspora.

Translocation and Postcolonialism

Since its inception nearly five decades ago postcolonial studies have been carrying out human ethical responsibility to reconcile unjust and cruel actions during the colonization period (Byrdon, 2013). Thus, postcolonial studies have been carrying out human ethical attempts for global social justice. Brydon (2013) in his work on postcolonial responsibility quotes Boaventura de Sousa Santos et al., "there is no global social justice without global cognitive justice." (Brydon, 2013, pg. 5). Postcolonial inquiry into deconstruction of colonial impact on colonized societies is, in fact, moving global societies towards a more homogenized world. This process of deconstruction and homogenization directly applies to the process and condition of translocation.

Change, mobility, adaptation, transfer and resistance are all elements under scrutiny of postcolonial studies in terms of impact on the development of an identity and culture within postcolonial world. All of these elements are attributed to the concept of diaspora which is inherent in large population transfers during colonization period and ongoing large migration scale into North America, Western Europe, and Australia (Gabriel, 2011). Cultural and religious translocations have been necessary components in understanding how exactly individuals within different diaspora groups relate themselves to their histories and homelands, and

how they perceive themselves in their new environments (Gabriel, 2011).

Translocation and Diaspora

Hybridity is an important element in identifying what translocation is. Anthias (2001) argues that hybridity is a sister concept of diaspora: "Despite the different genealogies of the concepts of hybridity and diaspora (see Young 1996), both denote an important reconfiguration of 'ethnic' boundaries and bonds and posit the growth of transnationalism" (Anthias, 2001, pg. 631). Thus, in order to better understand translocation in terms of religion and its potential hybrid form among ethnic groups of people in North America it is important to look at the concept of diaspora and its religious connotations.

Sociologists, such as Robin Cohen, are identifying the concept of diaspora as being currently in a stage of consolidation (Munkelt et al., 2013). Having gone through phases of expansion, "metaphoric designation", and "social constructionist critiques of diaspora", it currently is being consolidated by the academics. Diaspora within the framework of homeland, and ethnic and religious communities were widely critiqued due to their notion of 'other-ness' (Gabriel, 2011) which expanded its fundamental conceptualization. Munkelt et al. (2013) quote Brubaker in defining 3 core elements that guide the consolidation stage of defining diaspora: "the first is [voluntary or forced] dispersion in space; the second, orientation to a 'homeland'; and third, boundary-maintenance." (Munkelt et al., 2013, preface). Scholars are pointing to the difference between the concept of space during colonial and post-colonial periods (Munkelt et al., 2013). While colonial period focused on space as land in geographical and territorial terms, Post-colonial framework changed. Space, in post-colonial framework, doesn't necessarily mean place. Similarly, the concept of diaspora has shifted along with this idea. Translocation is closely tied to the notion of diaspora within spacial and cultural boundaries due to the changed locale of the diaspora. Postcolonial locations can be seen as "places of continuing translocation" (Munkelt et al., 2013, preface). Additional dimensions arise in defining 'home' and 'homeland' due to dynamic histories of post-colonial mass migrations. Salman Rushdie offers the word 'scattered' in his definition of home. He does this

"in order to reject the nationalist mythology of an originary and unitary identity band, choosing instead to align himself with the idea of the "disseminated" nation and its fissured histories" (Gabriel, 2013, pg. 20). Salmon Rushdie sides with a complex self-identification in terms of post-colonialism and translocation. An identity within new complex terms of multiple changed locations is, in fact, representative of many immigrants. Nonetheless, it does not mean that self-identification in these terms are easy, especially for individuals who identify with a certain religion.

Translocation as a Religious Concept

Religious translocation has been a major driving component throughout history for religious expansion. Ancient Greek polytheism was subject to translocation in Ancient Rome. Romans adapted the religion of Greeks due to Greek presence in Lower Peninsula. However, Romans changed the names of the gods. For example, the main god Zeus in Ancient Greek Religion was the same god Jupiter in Ancient Roman. Zeus and Jupiter had the same myth, same qualities, same powers, etc. Zeus became Jupiter due to translocation of the religion. Comparably, other world religions were subject to translocation. During the process of translocations religions were altered in one way or another, branching off in different groups that existed in different locales. Sometimes these groups formed voluntarily, and sometimes they were forced due to power dynamics. Such is also the case with Tibetan Buddhism. Once originating in India, Indian Buddhism acquired new forms of practices in Tibet. Chinese Communist Party attempted to eradicate Tibetan Buddhism. Adherents of it fled to India in order to maintain the religion. In India, Buddhism did not merge with its origins of Indian Buddhism, but rather gained its authenticity and attracted global interest as Tibetan Buddhism (a phenomenon affirmed by its translocation). Thus, currently, same religion within different nations and communities, inherent or not, has very different connotations, beliefs and practices. These beliefs and practices are further being altered when a representative from a certain religion changes their residence to a new location.

Salman Rushdie as an Example and a Voice of Religious Translocation

Having a look at prominent voices that stem from the position of translocation members can help identify their imperatives as representative of Diasporas. At the same time, individuals that had their voices heard by masses deserve to be considered in the identification of translocational perspectives. Anthias (2001) says that “the stories we tell ourselves that we are all becoming global, hybrid and diasporic can only be told by those who occupy, as Robert Young (1996, p. 4) so persuasively argues, a space of ‘new stability and self- assurance’; such stories are, therefore, also political interventions and can serve as constructions of social reality.” (Anthias, 2001, pg. 619).

In fact, world renowned author Salman Rushdie is a great example of post-colonial translocated identity as well as a prominent voice on behalf of a Indian diaspora in England. His work of fiction both deconstructs colonial impact on Indian society and highlights religious aspect within the framework of translocation. His work and his views (despite their secularism) carry out perceptions of translocated Indian and Pakistani people, particularly Hindu and Muslim. These are communities that have undergone colonization and further moved across Commonwealth. On his own stance on translocational self-identification of Indian people in Britain, Salmon Rushdie writes:

> It may be that writers in my position, exiles or emigrants or expatriates, are haunted by some sense of loss, some urge to reclaim, to look back, even at the risk of being mutated into pillars of salt. But if we do look back, we must also do so in the knowledge—which gives rise to profound uncertainties—that our physical alienation from India almost inevitably means that we will not be capable of reclaiming precisely the thing that was lost; that we will, in short, create fictions, not actual cities or villages, but invisible ones, imaginary homelands, Indias of the mind. (qtd. in Mishra, 1995, pg. 5)

Despite his prompts to embrace the new forms of Islam in a world after colonization, Rushdie provides a narrative of translocation in religious terms. His newness in ideas on migrancy, cultural hybridity

and the absence of Diasporas centres caused his exile. However new the ideas were, Rushdie had a thorough understanding of this newness and its distinction between existing epistemologies. His presentation of Indian Islam points to the translocation of the religion of Islam in India. This hybrid religion as a translocated one is shown as "always contaminated by autochthonous gods, dervishes, the figure of the ascetic, and other borrowings from Hinduism" (Mishra, 1995, pg. 12). In Rushdie's narrative polytheism in Islam (which is a monotheistic religion) is the results of translocation. Rushdie's personal views, as quoted above, signify his scepticism towards religion in itself. This is also present as a pinch of irony in his texts describing polytheism in Islam. In this way, Rushdie calls for Indian population, in self-analysis, to diverge from identifying their old religious notions within the new localities (such as Britain). The masses of post-colonial migration across Commonwealth encompass this religious translocation on a mass scale. Rushdie is an individual who is in the position to call for its deconstruction being a representative of multiple realms and locations himself. In fact, translocation of Islam in Britain is being acknowledged and implement. As Werbner (2005) notes "although Islam remains for almost all Pakistanis their most valued identity, the marking of a singular, *Islamic*, identity disguises, in reality, a continuing valorization of *different* dimensions of a complex *cluster* of personal identities."(Werbner, 2005, pg. 762). This approach to religious and spiritual identity needs to be further embraced and fostered.

Integrating Religious Translocation in Social Work Education

As a result of the dynamic nature of translocational process, scholars suggest application of this dynamic approach to the concept of diaspora as well (since diaspora is an entity subject to translocation). Gabriel (2011) suggests to view diaspora as a "process of identity reconfiguration" (Gabriel, 2011, pg. 21). And, in turn, postcolonial studies are being often viewed as an 'analytical paradigm' (Cronin, 2015, pg. 240). Condition, process and approach of religious translocation is not a static framework. It is rather a process of development or change of individual's religious and/or spiritual perceptions based on the individual's country

of origin and their current locality; it is also an inquiry into this development process and acknowledgment of the dynamics of its development. Indeed, translocation of a religion can be a complex and multi-layered phenomenon and should be approached as such by professional social workers in their education and practice.

Teaching translocation in religious aspect to social workers is integral for a number of reasons. Firstly, studies on social service provisions in Canada outline the growing need of social services and the lack of appropriate resources for the users of the social services (Trocme, 2016). By addressing religion through a translocational framework social workers are able to integrate adequate religious affiliations, organizations and communities into a resource network for clients who hold religious beliefs and values as a priority. Additionally, religious and spiritual practices can be used as healing techniques. Secondly, cultural dissonance and adaptation to new locales from a religious standpoint can be a cause for conflict (Rettig et al., 2014). Often, as a result of this conflict, new practices in social work as well as social policy are sought after (2014). Teaching translocational approach to social workers creates an opportunity for clients' better adaptation in a new environment and understanding of how their worldview may be different from their new neighbors based on religious or spiritual perceptions. By offering a cognitive awareness of the complexity of religious and spiritual translocation, a social worker is able to present a client with more complex terms of self-identification. In this way, social workers will be able to minimize clients' inner conflicts, and their potential conflicts with their new environment. In providing social work services to clients who adhere to a certain religion translocation means an attempt to deconstruct dimensions of clients' religious or spiritual systems of beliefs and practices.

Religious and Spiritual Translocation in Utilization of Social Services

Anthias (2002) in her essay *Where do I belong? Narrating Collective Identity and Translocational Positionality* suggests that narration from a position of location and positionality serves as useful analytical device in understanding identity, rather than trying to

understand it from the perspective with a certain notion of identity (Anthias, 2002, pg. 493). While religious translocation may be a condition of 'mixture of realms' (Arif Dirlik qtd. in Munkelt et al., 2013, preface) for a social worker working from the standpoint of translocation it means to deconstruct these realms for a given client or group of clients based on the local influences in the religion of the client and his/her heritage. Scholars point to the fact that religious and spiritual practices contribute to well-being and positive mental health outcomes among religious and spiritual clients in social work (Oxhandler & Pargament, 2014). Thus, being culturally and religiously competent will facilitate effective social work services and positive outcomes. Additionally, studies show that clients prefer that their social workers make inquiries into their religious and/or spiritual backgrounds and frameworks and utilize them in their intervention; they have stated that "such integration supports their healing process" (Oxhandler & Pargament, 2014, pg. 271). Translocation and changing religious concepts may in themselves be the cause or part of the cause of individual's challenges and struggles. Individuals may be faced with inner conflicts of values, opinions and interests. However, integrating religious and/or spiritual practices where appropriate shows to be an effective coping mechanism. As Segal and Mayadas (2005) point out people from varying religious backgrounds in attempts to adapt to new localities are "frequently faced with a duality of cultures and must function with norms and expectations that often conflict" (Segal & Mayadas, 2005, pg. 564). Thus, it is crucial for practitioners to show religious competence in being able to apply translocation concepts to the religious realms of their clientele. Family, community and diaspora may or may not play an important part in clients' self-identification and choices.

Unfortunately, studies show that social workers are either undereducated or lack skills in implementing religious and spiritual inquiry and knowledge into their practice (Oxhandler & Pargament, 2014). Basic knowledge of religious principles is often included in social work educational curriculum. However, as an example, two clients from Catholic background may have different or even opposing views, depending on theirs and their families' religious translocation. Thus, a religious Catholic client cannot be

approached by a social worker from the standpoint of set principles at the basis of this religion. An inquiry must first be made in client's adherence to certain principles. Having translocational concepts in approaching religion in practice of social work is extremely important in North America where large scale of migrants experience religion and spirituality in translocational terms. Religion is often defined as "an institutionalized, systemic pattern of values, beliefs, symbols, behaviors, and experiences shared by a community that relies on a set of scriptures, teachings, moral code of conduct, and rituals" (Koenig, 2008 qtd. in (Oxhandler & Pargament, 2014, pg. 272). Migrants from varying religious backgrounds, whether they are newcomers, belong to certain diasporas, or are assimilated second and third generation ethnic residents, may have to adapt to or may have already adapted translocational religious alterations to the original set of their religious practices and beliefs; same applies for spiritual clients.

Spirituality, unlike religion, as a rule, has more of a dynamic nature and less of an institutionalized practices. Oxhandler & Pargament (2014) define spirituality as "a fundamental human quality (Canda & Furman, 2010) that involves a personal search for the sacred (Pargament, 2007) and "moves the individual toward knowledge, love, meaning, peace, hope, transcendence, connectedness, compassion, wellness, and wholeness" (pg. 272). Oxhandler & Pargament (2014) further outline 'positive spirituality' , which integrates both religion and spirituality as "a developing and internalized personal relation with the sacred or transcendent that is not bound by race, ethnicity, economics, or class and promotes the wellness and welfare of self and others" (Oxhandler & Pargament, 2014, pg. 272).

Translocation of religion, spirituality and positive spirituality often have multi-layered and dynamic nature. What adds to the dimensions of this process is that religion and spirituality can simultaneously be individual, communal and institutionalized. Change and development of individual's religious or spiritual perceptions may be simultaneously tied in with the local institution, local community and individual cognitive analysis. Deconstructing how the client perceives their own translocational religion or spirituality is imperative for positive outcomes in social work.

Translocation Among Arabic Religions

Middle Eastern and African worlds are currently undergoing national and international conflicts on a large scale. These conflicts are effecting masses of civilians who are seeking refuge in Western countries. Large migration groups are currently fleeing Syria, Iraq, Iran, Ethiopia, Afghanistan and other Middle Eastern and African countries. Arabic populations in North America and Europe are in vulnerable positions in seeking social services such as resources, mental health services, counselling and support groups. Understanding the diversity and translocational influences among Arabs of varying religious background is very important in providing effective social work services to these populations. Unfortunately, it is currently uncommon to approach the provision of these services from the standpoint of translocation. Arab populations have varying religions that are subject to translocation, such as Christianity, Islam and Druze (among the most common ones) (Al-Krenawi, 2000). The process of acculturation, assimilation or segragation can often be influenced by translocation of religious practices and belief systems. Penetration of Western cultural norms into varying religious norms and practices is also a part of the process of translocation that needs to be taken into consideration by social workers in order to provide adequate and effective services.

Translocation Among Adherents of Islam

Muslim clients of social workers express preference of their workers' knowledge of basic Islamic principles (Hodge, 2005). Basic principles of Islam that may affect clients' approach in working with a social worker are as follows. The word Islam in literal translation means submission. This is an implied submission to Allah, supreme and only God, which is practiced by Muslims. Islam is often considered a way of life rather than a religion by Muslims; it provides a narrative through which Muslims interpret reality (Hodge, 2005). Two other important aspects of Islam religion are Quran (the word of God) and Muhammad (God's prophet). Sunnis and Shiite are the two main streams of Islam, with Sunnis being largely predominant. Sufism is practiced among most Shiites (Hodge, 2005).

Sufism is especially important within the framework of translocation because of Roman-Catholic influence on the religion; North American converts to Islam are also commonly met within Sufism (Hodge, 2005). Thus, it is important for social workers to have a glimpse of basic principles of Sufism in particular. Hodge (2005) points to a disadvantaged class of newly migrated Muslims into North America where translocation of religion plays an important role. The economically disadvantaged Muslims who commonly immigrate because of political unrest in their home countries often face societal and economic pressures (such as having to work more than one job) and, as a result, abandon some dimensions of their faith (Hodge, 2005, pg. 164). This population may have a hybridized translocational religious concepts due to American locale that impacted their belief and practice system. These populations especially should be subject to translocational inquiry in religious terms. Having to compromise or alter parts of their religious beliefs and practices can potentially prompt an emotional or psychological response to this alteration by an individual or their family. Additionally, North American Muslims come from 60 different countries all of which have translocational impact on Islam itself. Thus, self-identified Muslims may exhibit varying beliefs and practices depending on the locality of their country of origin (Hodge, 2005). Diasporas of Muslim adherents across North America are made up of small communities that vary greatly from one another. Deconstructing Islam adherents' translocational religious and spiritual framework often involves looking at the settings of their old and new localities. These settings can involve politics, culture, and issues of interpretation (Hodge, 2005).

Another reason that translocation framework is important in working with Muslim clients is Western depiction of Muslims in the media from negative and unjust perspective (Hodge, 2005). Western media, especially which in the United States, often portrays violence as a norm for Muslims (2005). What hodge calls "Western secular liberal meta-narrative" is in fact a component of translocation of Muslim religion, which may be exhibited either by clients or social workers themselves.

A great example within Western meta-narrative of Muslims is a perception of hijab as being an oppressive tool and a manifestation

of enslavement (2005). Using translocation in social work with Muslim women would mean identifying their own perception on their religious wear. For many Muslim women hijab is a component of practice "that engenders inner peace and tranquility, is a political statement" (Hodge, 2005, pg. 168). For some Muslim women, it serves as a statement against treating women as sexual objects, using women's bodies to sell alcohol, pornography, and other merchandise (2005). Translocational condition among Muslims in the Western world often involves a belief that it is the Western liberalism that disrespects women, while Islam, on the contrary, respects and liberates them.

Translocation Among Hindus

India, similarly to Pakistan, has undergone British colonization period. And just like Islam, Hinduism was subject to translocation. Additionally, post-colonial Indians have migrated to Western Commonwealth countries on a large scale. Hinduism, consequently, was subject to translocation again. Studies show that Indian immigrants in North America are usually successfully acclimatized (Hodge, 2004). However, it is important to look at clients with Hindu background through the lens of translocation.

There is a lot of variation within the Hindu religion itself. Depending on the locale of the origins and the layers of its translocation, terminology and practices vary. Many Indians see Hinduism and Indian culture as functionally equivalent (2004). Branches of Hinduism, due to translocation, diverted out into Hare Krishna and transcendental meditation (originally founded by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi as International Society of Krishna Consciousness) (Hodge, 2004). Translocation of Hinduism effects North American converts to Hinduism (or one of its branches) as well as second and third generation Hindus who may adapt basic principles of Hinduism but abandon strict religious practices. It is important to not only be familiar with viewing Hinduism from its basic principles, but have an insight into its translocational effects. Hinduism, much like Islam, is often a lifestyle, rather than a separate religious practice. While working with a client as a social worker, approaching Hindu clients from a framework of translocation will give the social worker insight on the client's life choices and beliefs. These in turn can be

utilized as counselling strategies, guidance in resource search, and client's healing techniques.

Because of the lack of doctrinal institution, but rather common in-home practice, Hinduism is prone to more flexible assimilation in adapting to translocation (Hodge, 2004, pg. 33). Among youth born into Hindu families in North America many maintain basic principles of Hinduism such as arranged marriage, modesty, and respect for others (2004). There is another side of the coin for immigrants with Hindu background. Due to easy assimilation, often their stress points are their children's easily adapted cultural and secular principles of a new host country (2004). However, there are resources created by Hindu communities for these matters. Such institutions as summer camps for children are intended to preserve Hindu values and principles (2004). Roles of men and women in Hindu religion can also have varying prescriptions depending on the structure of their translocation. What may seem to a Westerner as unjust or oppressive may be rooted in the religious principles and not perceived as such by its adherents. Hindu clients often tend to value family dynamics above individual interests; social worker must work in congruency with these priorities. The meta-narratives that Western social workers often misleadingly impose on their Hindu clients (and their effects) are described by Hodger (2004) as follows:

> From the perspective of the Enlightenment- based meta-narrative, the desires of Hindu women cannot be trusted, because only Western discourse perceives reality accurately and is universally true. Such academic literature does little to equip social workers to further the goals of Hindu clients who desire to retain their construction of family, and it does not demonstrate respect for personal autonomy. As Reddy and Hanna (1998) stated, "it cannot be overemphasized that enforcing or applying Western cultural values on these clients or stressing the typical view of Western individuality may result in confusion and further negative affect... [and] is also likely to have a negative impact on the integrity of the family system" (p. 393). Therefore, Hindus may be reluctant to receive services from social workers because of concerns that they will attempt to impose their Western Enlightenment-

derived values (Goodwin & Cramer, 1998). (Hodge, 2004, pg. 33).

As shown above, in order to provide effective services to Hindu clients and adherents of other religions from the standpoint of translocation, it is extremely important to be aware of existing Western meta-narratives that can often be false and misleading. These meta-narratives can be an element of translocation or an element of the social worker's own system of beliefs.

Translocation within the Western Meta-Narratives and Social Worker's Need for Self-Awareness Within These Terms

In translocation framework towards religious clients social workers must always maintain analysis of their own systems of beliefs that may have been influenced by Western meta-narratives. In order to avoid imposing their own views, social workers must carefully inquire about clients' personal views that may be imbedded in their religion or spirituality. Cases such as drawn upon above with Muslim women wearing hijab are a great example of these Western meta-narratives. Other sensitive subjects that may or may not be influenced by religious translocation are homosexuality, abortion, and gender roles. By imposing stereotypes, Western meta-narratives and prejudices a social worker may not only put a detriment to the services being provided, but also cause confusion, person's self-identification issues, segregation and feelings of discrimination (Athians, 2002). Werbner (2005) points out that children are especially prone to these reactions (pg. 760). In order to avoid these negative outcomes a social worker has to be aware of their own cultural presumptions and understand religious translocation in order to appropriately approach work with clients.

Importance of Cultural and Religious Awareness

Rettig et al. (2014) point out that many cultural norms and practices are embedded in its history's religious roots (pg. 3). In order to maintain the quality and effectiveness of social work services, a social worker must be skilled in cultural, religious and spiritual competence. As mentioned above, having an understanding of basic principles of dominant world religions is often not enough to approach work with clients of varying religious and spiritual

backgrounds in the utmost effective way. Aside from understanding the basic set of beliefs of a given religion, social worker must inquire whether the client adheres to those believes and how translocation of their religion has impacted or is impacting these basic principles. Imposing Western values onto clients from varying religious backgrounds may be confusing to them and harm the process of working together. Studies show that assessment and analysis of a client's system of beliefs activates and reaffirms clients' values (Hodge, 2005). It makes them feel like their personal beliefs and those imbedded in their religious background are being respected (2005). In his/her work with a religious client, a social worker often deals with many aspects that are effected by religious translocation. Furness & Gilligan (2010) list these aspects as follows:

> modesty and privacy; clothing, jewelry and make-up; washing and hygiene; hair care; prayer; holy days and festivals; physical examination; birth; contraception; abortion; attitudes to death, dying and mourning; medication; healing practices; transfusions, organ donation and transplant; last offices; post-mortem and funeral services. (Furness & Gilligan, 2010, pg. 2188)

In having an understanding of religious and spiritual perceptions due to clients' translocational experience can give insight into many aspects of clients' life and their choices, that social worker may or may not have to deal with. In order to provide adequate resources and adequate interventions, social workers must familiarize themselves with clients' views on these subjects. Opinions of clients from different religious backgrounds may be effected by their cultural heritage even when the client himself/herself is not religious.

Integration of Religious and Spiritual Aspects and Practices in Social Work Services

Religious competence gives a social worker an ability to integrate religious or spiritual strategies into planning and intervention process. This integration process shows to be highly effective in varying practices of social work. For example, psychotherapy can often be replaced by cognitive therapy based on the foundation of clients' religious or spiritual system of beliefs (Hodge, 2005). Studies show that integrating religion or spirituality in congruence

with clients' belief system can be effective in social work practice: "spiritually oriented psychotherapies found an overall moderately high effect size (.56) across a variety of clinical issues (for example, depression, anxiety, stress)" (Oxhandler & Pargament, 2014, pg. 272). Clients' religious or spiritual involvement can effectively reduce job stress and reduce feelings of being discriminated against (Hodge, 2005, pg. 171). Meditation, fasting, praying, and ritual practice can all be effective in coping with distress (Hodge, 2005). Additionally, considerations of clients' religious or spiritual beliefs and practices while helping in their resource seeking, healing, and counselling processes facilitates clients' sense of belonging. Inquiry into clients' religious or spiritual perceptions and translocational influences can also facilitate the establishment or reaffirmation of their religious or spiritual adherence. Hodge (2004) points out that "spiritual pursuit can foster motivation and enhanced purpose in life while diminishing the scope of current problems" (Hodge, 2004, pg. 35). Motivation from a standpoint of religious or spiritual consideration is very effective, studies show (Hodge, 2005, pg. 170). Thus, encouraging motivation that stems from client's individual religious or spiritual beliefs can be a helpful tool in the planning and intervention stages of working with the client.

Empowerment, respecting clients' choices, and fostering diversity are among core values in the discipline of social work. By practicing religious translocation approach, a social worker aligns to and adheres with these values.

Translocation as a basis for Empowerment in Social Work Practice

Social work education curriculum incorporates empowerment as a professional skill and tactic required for practitioners in order to provide effective services. Approaching empowerment through religious and spiritual translocation means assessing and responding to clients' religious and spiritual needs. Studies show that assessment and analysis of a client's system of beliefs activates and reaffirms clients' values (Hodge, 2005). It makes them feel like their personal beliefs are being respected (2005). Positive appreciation of difference is another tactic that can facilitate the

empowerment of a social worker's client (Furness and Gilligan, 2010). Social work clients often turn to religion or spirituality in cases of trauma or illness; religion and spirituality support and comfort people in these instances (Furnell & Gilligen, 2010). Encouraging and further facilitating this approach for healing serves as an empowerment tactic in such cases. Additionally, by tapping into clients translocational religious and spiritual perceptions a social worker can empower clients to better deal with their social and health issues. Responding to client's anxieties and fears through a religious framework can be a powerful tool in empowering them in that regard. Many religious and spiritual adherents turn to religion or spirituality particularly often in cases of trauma. Thus, empowerment as one of the core values of social work aligns with religious translocation in many aspects. Not only it reassures and respects clients' beliefs, and practices, but also stimulates intervention and encourages more effective healing processes.

Translocation as a basis for Respecting Client Choices in Social Work Practice

A social worker can equip themselves to better understand and respect clients' choices by applying a translocational approach to interpret, ackonwlegde and accept their clients' religious or spiritual beliefs and practices. Often, in assessing individual's needs, a social worker may not be aware that clients' religious beliefs and traditions value family and community above individuality. Thus, while the client's individual needs may conflict with the needs of their family, a social worker must respect clients' choice to follow the needs of their family instead of their individual ones. Imposing Western values of individuality, for example, may conflict with clients' religious and cultural values. In order to be able to embrace and support their choices, a social worker must understand that the clients' priorities to maintain family oriented values are the ultimately right choice for the client. From the examples shown above, clients born into Hindu families, while not being adversely religious themselves, may maintain such priorities as family's interest as the result of their translocational religious experience.

While respecting choices of clients is a professional obligation of a social worker, it does not mean that a social worker has to

support clients' choices that are damaging to self of others (Furness & Gilligan, 2010). Universal human rights can sometimes be in conflict with beliefs and practices by religious adherents. Furness & Gilligan (2014) list examples of these as "blood transfusions, termination of pregnancies, forced marriages, female genital mutilation, non-medical circumcision of infant boys and 'exorcism' of children believed to be possessed by spirits" (pg. 766). Perceptions that may conflict with liberal Western views based on human rights can often contradict those that are based on religious persuasions. While maintaining professional and ethical obligations to clients, social workers must be equipped with professional problem-solving when personal and institutional conflicts arise do to religious or spiritual persuasions.

Fostering Diversity by addressing Translocational Framework in Social Work Practice

Taking interest in clients' lifestyle, customs, traditions and practices based on their translocational experiences in religious or spiritual aspects facilitates diversity. It acknowledges their complex and often unique differences. A social worker who is problem solving with the clients by facilitating religious resources such as institutions, community networks, and national and international organizations based on client's needs will reduce feelings of segregation and discrimination that the client may have due to their religious or spiritual differences. Imams, mosques, churches, non-profit organizations, and international networks can all be useful resources for a client for whom religion or spirituality play an important role in their life. This directly aligns with social work's principle of fostering diversity.

In addition to fostering diversity among religious adherents in regards to their faith, it is important to foster diversity among religious or spiritual adherents in other aspects. Translocation in religious or spiritual aspect may impact the clients' presumptions about the norm of their new location. Such presumptions may include patriarchy, heterosexuality, ethnocentrism, etc. It is important to foster diversity in these aspects among religious or spiritual clients who have inner conflicts because of deviations from these presumed norms. In order to foster diversity through

a framework of translocation, a social worker may visit clients' religious institutions, organizations or community meetings. These activities can help a social worker understand clients' translocational influences in more depth. Sinacore and Ginsberg (2015) describe the necessity of looking at a conglomerate of translocational influences and being responsive to cultural diversity while counselling a client from a different cultural background "is only truly possible when the broader community, organizational, and social systems are taken into account in both understanding and addressing client concerns" (Sinacore & Ginsberg, 2015, pg. 43). In order to implement this basic principle of social work - fostering diversity - a social worker must be prepared to take translocation of religious aspect of the client into consideration. This principle, in particular, is not only imperative in social work, but stands as a national value in Canada (Sinacore & Ginsberg, 2015).

Integrating Translocation in Social Work Curriculum

In order to be able to approach a clients through a lens of religious translocation a social worker must have an evaluation of his/her personal values of and beliefs in religion and spirituality (Furness & Gilligan, 2010). Systematic approach to self-evaluation in religious translocation has to be included in pedagogical strategies of educating social workers. Self-awareness is especially relevant to social workers who belong to different religious and spiritual affiliations. However, it is just as important as Canadians, who are colonizers of Aboriginal lands. Many social workers need to integrate both post-colonial and translocational aspects in their practice. This aspect is currently being poorly addressed among social work educating facilities (2010). As it stands today, "Regarding the inclusion of religion/spirituality in the curriculum, participants from South Africa and Canada noted that, although spirituality currently had a presence in the classroom, this was most often at a superficial level or was often invisible or marginalized." (Kvarford et al., 2017, pg. 5). Studies show that, as a result of this incompetence, students in social work who are being placed in situations that deal with clients from different religious backgrounds lack confidence and avoid these situations altogether (Furness & Gilligan, 2010). Because they feel incompetence and lack of confidence to approach

these situations, they are unlikely to develop religious and cultural competence skills (2010). The incompetence in translocational religious and spiritual approach is incongruent with the basic ethic and value in social work, which is empathy. Only by understanding and appreciating of client's stance on religion and spirituality can a social worker adequately maintain their professional obligation for empathetic and appropriate provision of services (2010). There is an urgent imperative to integrate religious and spiritual translocation into social work curricula.

Teaching the Practice of Empathy and its Analogies to Translocation

Anthias (2002) in her essay *Where do I belong? Narrating Collective Identity and Translocational Positionality* suggests that narration from a position of location and positionally serves as useful analytical device in understanding identity, rather than trying to understand it from the perspective with a certain notion of identity (Anthias, 2002, pg. 493). However, the skill to adapt and utilize this narrative must be integrated into the educational curriculum of social workers (Furness & Gilligan, 2010). Since the pedagogical approaches in training social workers the practice of empathy are already in place, teaching translocation in religious terms can follow either analogical patterns of educating in this sphere or be integrated into educational curriculum for approaching assessment, planning, intervention and evaluation processes.

Empathy is defined by scholars as "innate identification or affective response and reaction to another's emotional state" (Greeno et al., 2017, pg. 795). This identification applies to translocation in ability to identify and affectively respond to identification of clients' religious or spiritual feelings, perceptions and practices. Additionally, Greeno et al. (2017) state that accurate empathy "is defined as the clinician's ability to sense a client's inner world by taking an active interest in the client's perspective and understanding the client's point of view" (Pg.796). Pedagogical approach to developing these skills among social workers to be is practicing simulated motivational interviewing scenarios (Gray, 2016). This can be directly applicable to translocational approach in simulating

interviews with people from varying ethnic backgrounds. Social Work educational curriculum in training students for motivational interviewing can train students to ask clients questions about their religious affiliation, history and practices in their country of origin; inquire if and how these beliefs and practices have changed in their new locales; and find out how this change if any is being perceived by the client. Practicing these questions in simulated interviews under live supervision can offer students feedback in how they can better improve translocation approach in practice.

Several theories on empathy are being put in practice in social work education. Aside from simulating interviews while taking genuine interest, students are simulating 'as if' scenarios by placing themselves in the position of a client. Some theorists suggest that empathy is an intellectual understanding of clients' reasoning; while others suggest it's an emotional understand of one's mind state. In simulated environments, students can practice both by taking genuine interest in clients' religious and/or spiritual beliefs and practices, as an inquiry into their psychological and emotional states, and rationalize their potential responses and choices through this framework. While the analogies exist within analogies of teaching empathy and translocation, studies show that "experimental research on brain mirror neurons by Gutsell and Inzlicht (2010) found that empathy was constrained by prejudice felt by white people towards people outside their cultural circle." (Gair, 2016, pg. 172). Therefore, engagement of pedagogy in empathy and religious translocation will significantly reduce prejudice and racism among social work students.

Translocational Inquiry Through Communication

Social work curricula focuses much of its attention on communicating with clients. Social workers are educated in considering clients' verbal and non-verbal communication. Cues such as tone, behaviour, body language and facial expressions can serve translocational religious and spiritual analysis. A social worker is able to understand values and rules in religious context by carefully structuring an interview around clients' religious and spiritual unique system of beliefs. Initial rapport building strategies in working with clients from different religious backgrounds have to

include traditional empathetic expressions such as support, care, warmth, respect and genuineness (Hodge, 2005). Studies show that these attitudes and qualities have a tendency of overcoming clients' reluctance of working with a social worker from a different religious or ethnic background other than themselves (Hodge, 2005). Identifying religious or spiritual adherence, practices and beliefs should always take place during and after the assessment/evaluation process of working with a client (Rattig et al., 2014). Sincere inquiries into clients' religion and spirituality show respect to their system of beliefs and facilitates rapport building and counselling (Hodge, 2005). Oxhandler & Pargament (2014) suggest speaking with the client on subjects such as "forgiveness, gratitude, mindfulness, presence, hope, meaning, connection, spiritual transformation, ultimate reality, and positive and negative spiritual coping mechanisms with clients" (Oxhandler & Pargament, 2014, pg. 272). All of these subject will directly or indirectly signify their religious or spiritual adherence. Additionally, even if the client is not religious or spiritual, it can give a social worker an understanding of translocational influences within clients' cultural and religious context. Teaching social workers a holistic inquiry to their clients' interpretation of reality is one of the approaches to teaching religious translocational approach.

Translocational Approach Through Motivational Interviewing

Motivational interviewing is one of the practice-based tactics that is often included in the curricular for social work education. One of the basic principles in teaching motivational interviewing to social workers is empathy. The strategies used in motivational interviewing can be used for translocational approach to client's religious and/or spiritual assessment and intervention. These strategies include open-ended questions, affirmations, reflections and summaries (Greeno et al., 2017, pg. 795). To practice empathy during motivational interview, social worker students"show genuine interest in their client's situation and encourage the client to elaborate" (Pg. 795). Education in these practices can be directly applied in determining translocation of clients' religious or spiritual views. Just like practicing empathy, practicing translocation will help build and strengthen therapeutic relationship between social

worker and the client; it can also support client's determination and autonomy (2017). Greeno et al., (2017) point out that "social workers who learned to be more empathic are better able to engage, collaborate, and develop working relationships with clients" (p.795). Similar outcomes can be achieved by introducing translocational approach into a social work curriculum.

Current Challenges of Religious Inquiry in Social Work Practice

Education in Social Work in Canada is largely founded on evidence-based approached used in the field. Unfortunately, religious and spiritual education is currently very limited. Students in Social Work report that if they do have courses on religious and spirituality in their programs, they mostly only touch upon the basics and are merely not enough to serve as a base to approach religious or spiritual subjects with clients in their post-educational practice (Kvarford et al., 2017). Currently only one third of MSW and BSW Social Work programs include content on religion and spirituality at all; majority of the materials included on the subjects are educators' own initiatives (Kvarford et al., 2017). Concerns about the inclusion of religious material into social work education arises from all parties involved, educators, policy makers, academics, pressure groups, etc. Furness & Gilligan (2014) summarize these concerns as follows:

> Their concerns range from the idea that vulnerable people will be exposed to proselytizing by particular religious groups and that non-rational approaches to problem solving may be privileged (BHA, 2007) to fears that service users will be offended by ill-informed discussion of their beliefs and may see interest in them as over-intrusive or even oppressive. (Furness & Gilligan, 2014, pg. 764)

Despite these concerns, a wide variety of literature assuringly points to the necessity of social workers to be culturally and religiously competent. This competence aids work with clients, increases the effectiveness, fosters diversity, speeds up healing process, and stimulates feelings of belonging among clients from different ethnic and religious backgrounds. Additionally, there is already much evidence that social work users prefer religiously

competent social workers, and benefit from work with professionals who practice this competence (2014), (Hodge, 2004).

Engaging students in discussing religious and spiritual subjects shows to be an effective tool in opening doors to understanding and embracing difference in religious beliefs and practices. Students subject to these experiences reflect: "individual perspectives on and experiences of religion together with the informal views of colleagues remain the most powerful determinants of relevant behaviour, unless or until these are challenged by the relevant evidence and critical reflection." (Furness & Gilligan, 2014, pg. 765). Once a student is presented with relevant evidence, analysis, and reflection, their views are altered and they feel more competent to approach the subject. Nonetheless, studies show that in the current state of affairs, discussing these subjects "remains daunting and difficult for many practitioners, an anathema to some, and may be accompanied by intrusive bias and prejudice for others" (Furness & Gilligan, 2014, pg. 765). Knowledge and awareness has a potential to dilute fears among practitioners, educators and students in approach the subject of religion, which stands as a crucial component for many service users.

Post-colonization as a Part of Translocational Framework and Aboriginal Studies

Post-colonial studies are not only analogical to translocational framework, as outlined in the first section of this chapter, but the two often intersect with one another. Canadian social work, for example, was founded on the governmental colonial provisions during Aboriginal colonization period (Sinclair, 2004). Oppression, humiliation, rape, destruction of Aboriginal culture, torture of children, and other atrocities are often being dismissed even by Canadian social workers themselves. Recently emerging Native Studies are teaching social workers how to address post-colonization and how to work with Aboriginal populations from this perspective. Unfortunately, as a result of this colonizing oppressive period, currently many of social service users are Aboriginal. This work in particular goes hand in hand with religious competence and translocation. Delving in more depth within the framework of

post-colonial studies Aboriginal history presents religious values, beliefs and practices that were influenced by the Catholic colonizers. The indigenous approaches found to be helpful in working with Aboriginal populations are framed around sacred ancient knowledge and Aboriginal mysticism (Sinclair, 2004). Culturally sensitive and anti-oppressive social work practice isn't enough in cases where healing tactics are rooted in religious and ethnic mysticism. Firstly, scholars outline that "culturally relevant pedagogy incorporates perspectives and practices respectful to the group in question" (Sinclair, 2004, pg. 53). But further example shown by Sinclair (2004), points out that Aboriginal epistemology is inseparable from healing methodology (pg. 55). Only through the approach of translocation and decolonization, a social worker in Canada can have an appropriate and adequate intervention techniques for Indigenous populations, since their healing knowledge lays in their authentic and religious worldview (2004).

Deconstructing cultural influences post hundreds of years of Native Canadian colonization can activate social worker's self-awareness, and the awareness of cultural and religious or spiritual complexities existent around them. Studies conducted on understanding the role of religion and spirituality in social work education in Canada show that the fairly recent implementation of Aboriginal Studies are helpful to both educators and students in pointing to their potential clients' religious and spiritual backgrounds (Kvarford et al., 2017). In learning about religion and spirituality "both students and educators highlighted the importance of Aboriginal perspectives, citing courses in Native studies as having a great impact on their learning about spirituality" (Kvarford et al., 2017, pg. 6). Thus, post-colonization is an appropriate subject in deconstructing national and international dynamics within cultures. White colonizers have a moral obligation to Indigenous people to understand their own oppressive history and work together to deconstruct and heal Indigenous populations who are seeking out social services. Steps towards this healing process have already been taken: "Duran, Duran and Yellow Horse Braveheart discuss emerging therapies and practices based on post-colonial thought which involves critical analysis of history and the revaluing of Aboriginal healing knowledge" (Sinclair, 2004, pg. 55). Aboriginal wisdom, relevant in

this particular and many other cases states that only by healing yourself one is able to health others. Sinclair (2004) states that the pedagogy itself in Canada needs to be decolonized (Sinclair, 2004, pg. 55.), and only then social work practice can be approached in effective way to ethnic minorities.

How Transnational Social Work Can Aid Translocational Social Work?

Transnational social work is a fairly new practice that emerged and expanded in the last decade. It has branched off of international work practices in order to address migrational movements across the globe more adequately (Furman et al., 2010). Transnational social work can be defined as "an emerging field of practice that (a) is designed to serve transnational populations; (b) operates across nation-state boundaries, whether physically or through new technologies; and (c) is informed by and addresses complex transnational problems and dilemmas" (Furman, Negi, & Salvador, 2010, p. 8). Rettig et al. (2014) address the necessity for transnational social work to integrate religious and spiritual aspect into its structure. The reasons for these necessary integrations are the large migratory movements that result in religious and spiritual community formations. As a result, local social work from transnational perspective has to address local and biographical effects of migratory movements among people from different parts of the world (2014). Translocational connotations are resounded in this suggestion to incorporate religion and spirituality into transnational social work structure. Transnational migration studies have successfully entered education, theory and practice of social work (Boccagni et al., 2015). Transnational social work is now being aligned with organizations and faith-based international networks (Rettig, et al. 2014). All of these can serve as great sources of knowledge, understanding, and approach to translocational social work education and practice.

Globalization

Globalization is a complex phenomenon that can be defined as "accelerated societal interdependence on a global scale" (Boccagni,

et al., 2015, pg. 313). Globalization has many different connotations, such as political, economic, cultural, etc. Nonetheless, globalization process is effecting each and every one of us every single day. The compositions of our societies, culture, trade, information flow, movement of money, resources, and ideas are all part of this vast globalization process. Translocation is an important part of this accelerating interconnectedness. While masses of migrants are finding new homes outside of their country of origin, their religious, spiritual, and cultural composition changes. Translocation aims to deconstruct, acknowledge and support this dynamic and complex process. Munkelt et al. (2013) offer a following inverted perspective on the process of globalization as an "integration of globalization processes into localized systems" (Munkelt et al., 2013, preface). This means that localized communities must all benefit from globalization process. Exchange of ideas and knowledge has to be implemented in order to form just and equal societies where everyone has the right and freedom for their own expression and choice. In this regard, religion offers a supra-national notion of solidarity (Rettig et al., 2014). Transnational social work has already started aligning religious communities and networks internationally in order to support one another. By fostering diversity among different Diasporas and encouraging multiculturalism through translocational religious approach, social workers can play an active role within this globalizing process.

References

Al-Krenawi, A., & Graham, J. R. (2000). Culturally sensitive social work practice with Arab clients in mental health settings. *Health & Social Work*, *25*(1), 9-22.

Anthias, F. (2001). New hybridites, old concepts: The limits of 'culture'. *Ethnic and Racial Studies, 24*(4), 619-638.

Anthias, F. (2002). Where do I belong? narrating collective identity and translocational positionality. *Ethnicities, 2*(4), 491-514.

Anthias, F. (2011). Intersections and translocations: New paradigms for thinking about cultural diversity and social identities. *European Educational Research Journal, 10*(2), 204-217.

Boccagni, P., Righard, E., Bolzman, C., Malmö (2015). Mapping transnationalism: Transnational social work with migrants: Introduction. *Transnational Social Review, 5*(3), 312-319.

Brydon, D. (2013). Relations of Postcolonial Responsibility. *Postcolonial Translocations: Cultural Representation and Critical Spatial Thinking*, 156, 3.

Comas-Díaz, L. (2012). Colored spirituality: The centrality of spirit among ethnic minorities. *The Oxford handbook of psychology and spirituality*, 197-206.

Cronin, M. G. (2015). Postcolonial translocations: Cultural representation and critical spatial thinking; the contemporary novel and the city: Reconceiving national and narrative form. *Journal of Postcolonial Writing, 51*(2), 240-242.

Furman, R., Negi, N., & Salvador, R. (2010). An introduction to transnational social work. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

Furness, S., & Gilligan, P. (2010). Social work, religion and belief: Developing a framework for practice. *British Journal of Social Work*, *40*(7), 2185-2202.

Furness, S., & Gilligan, P. (2014). 'It never came up': Encouragements and discouragements to addressing religion and belief in professional Practice—What do social work students have to say? *British Journal of Social Work, 44*(3), 763-781.

Gabriel, S. P. (2011). Diasporic Translocation and" The Multicultural Question" in Malaysia. *Mosaic: a journal for the interdisciplinary study of literature*, 19-34.

Gilligan, P., & Furness, S. (2006). The role of religion and spirituality in social work practice: Views and experiences of social workers and students. *British Journal of Social Work*, *36*(4), 617-637.

Gray, M., & Fook, J. (2004). The quest for a universal social work: Some issues and implications. *Social work education*, *23*(5), 625-644.

Greeno, E. J., Ting, L., Pecukonis, E., Hodorowicz, M., & Wade, K. (2017). The role of empathy in training social work students in motivational interviewing. *Social Work Education, 36*(7), 794-808.

Hodge, D. R. (2004). Working with Hindu clients in a spiritually sensitive manner. *Social work*, *49*(1), 27-38.

Hodge, D. R. (2005). Social work and the house of Islam: Orienting practitioners to the beliefs and values of Muslims in the United States. *Social work*, *50*(2), 162-173.

Kvarfordt, C. L., Sheridan, M. J., & Taylor, O. (2017). Religion and spirituality in social work curriculum: A survey of Canadian educators. *The British Journal of Social Work*, *47*, 1-19.

Munkelt, M., Schmitz, M., Stein, M., & Stroh, S. (Eds.). (2013). *Postcolonial translocations: cultural representation and critical spatial thinking* (Vol. 156). New York, NY: Rodopi.

Oxhandler, H. K., & Pargament, K. I. (2014). Social work practitioners' integration of clients' religion and spirituality in practice: A literature review. *Social Work*, *59*(3), 271-279.

Pedersen, P., Crethar, H. C., & Carlson, J. (2008). *I*nclusive cultural empathy: Making relationships central in counseling and psychotherapy (1st ed.) *American Psychological Association*.

Rettig, H., Good Gingrich, L., & Schröer, W. (2014). Religion and social work - transnational perspectives. *Transnational Social Review, 4*(1), 3-5.

Segal, U. A., & Mayadas, N. S. (2005). Assessment of issues facing immigrant and refugee families. *Child welfare*, *84*(5).

Sinacore, A. L., & Ginsberg, F. (2015). *Canadian counselling and counselling psychology in the 21st century,* Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press. E-book

Sinclair, R. (2004). Aboriginal social work education in Canada: Decolonizing pedagogy for the seventh generation. *First Peoples Child & Family Review*, *1*(1), 49-62.

Trocmé, N. (2016). still in critical demand? *Canadian Social Work Review / Revue Canadienne De Service Social, 33*(1), 141-146.

Viswanathan, G. Edited by Döring, T., & Stein, M. (2012). *Edward Said's Translocations: Essays in Secular Criticism,* Routledge. (Vol. 39). Ch. 2, 44-55.

Werbner, P. (2002). The place which is diaspora: citizenship, religion and gender in the making of chaordic transnationalism. *Journal of ethnic and migration studies*, *28*(1), 119-133.

Werbner, P. (2005). The translocation of culture: 'community cohesion' and the force of multiculturalism in history. *The Sociological Review, 53*(4), 745-768.

Wiebe, M. (2014). Social work, religion, and palliative care. *Journal of Religion & Spirituality in Social Work: Social Thought, 33*(3-4), 339-352.

CHAPTER TWELVE

COMMUNITY CARE AS A PRAXIS

Njoki Wane, Dionisio Nyaga, Rose Ann Torres

This paper attempts to understand how Indigenous praxis inform contemporary colonial social work practice in Kenya. Social work practice in Kenyan is colonial in terms of its spirit and plan and is informed and controlled by the colonial and imperial practice of punishment and penalizing ((Mungai, Wairire, , & Rush, 2014; Wairire, Mungai, & Mungai, 2015). In discipline and punish, Foucault (1979) speaks of how social work is implicated in the mapping of bodies as templates of knowledge production. Social work in Kenya should be seen as a social production of undesirable others through the process of labelling. We read this as the colonial marking of geographies (bodies), ways that allow reproduction of social bodies as colonial territories which creates colonial enclosures and internments for easy control of the broken other. We read this as creation of multiple movable prisons or asylums all build within individual bodies which allow easy and economic policing of undesirable. In short, client's bodies come to be spaces where prison logic is inscribed and made possible in ways that economizes the art of surveillance. This process of producing multiple forms of self surveillance and governance is in itself gendered in that it allows the emotional social worker to enter the scope of the rationality. The production of social prisons and the disappearance of the client becomes the platform under which the social worker is elevated from the state of degeneracy to human community. This make social work a melancholic art of becoming that exults some at the disappearance of the other.

The process of melancholy is testified by the way social work profession as a profession tries to be scientific and rational. This coupled with a move towards rationalisation of human service has led to a re-orientation of social work as a policing profession (Moffatt, 1999) which translate social work to the market rationalities that work within the neoliberal register (Smith, 2017) of accountability, efficiency, effectiveness and transparency at the detriment of client

led service provision. Social work has become robotic rather than humanistic process of care. It has joined the highway of accelerated human production through application of measures that mark bodies in efficient and effective ways. There is no more the human touch that once used to be the defining factor of social work profession in Kenya. Social worker has are machines expected to meet certain guidelines and measures in these industrial complex of processing the deplorable other from their broken past into modernity. It is not anymore, a process of appreciating the human other but more as a process of producing human subject through labelling. Narration as an art expected to drive the social work process has taken a back seat and instead social service users as seen as object revolving in Conveyor belt of production. This has material and symbolic meaning in terms of how who gain and who losses; which is a major issue of this paper. The system has turned social work as a profession of marking client welfare cheats (Moffatt, 1999) and the more cheats a social worker traps the more recognition they gain.

Neoliberalism has converted social work into a process of accumulation where social workers are oriented into services that bring self-gratification, rationality and competition. We argue that social work under the neoliberal field of power is oriented towards producing workers whose agenda is tied to capital accumulation and profit maximisation. In the process, social work profession has become estranged from itself, others and the process in ways that social workers have to negotiate the dissonance of being human and being a robot; which we argue is the cause of high-level burnouts. This has a negative outcome in terms of practice as more social worker crash with clients. Interestingly the system harvests on the same burnout to produce more clients and manipulate social worker in ways that sustain social profitability and accumulation. The fact that they are tired and confused, social workers have no time to focus on advocacy and connecting with the service users which translates to unchecked social production of deplorable bodies through technologies of labelling clients. This technologies of social production of clients becomes the ground of suspicion which in the end works well for the corporations.

There is a dire need to identify other ways that inject a humanistic aspect into social work practice. Indeed, Indigenous ways of practices and knowledge production has role in decolonizing the social work profession. This allows social workers to look at service users as human beings rather than templates of knowledge production for the market. This alternative social work practice is led by an understanding that social work spaces are invested with power in ways that allow accessibility for some while expunging others as irrational. As such spaces of practice needs to be dirtied in ways that 'accommodate' local knowledges. We argue that that the process of accommodating such knowledge is equally complex and complicated and needs to ask; how are the spaces created? Whose voice is accepted and whose is expunged? For whose advantage is the accommodation of the other?

The paper looks at Indigenous peoples and their place in neo-liberal world. Later, the paper identifies the divergences between mainstream social work treatment and traditional healing. The paper identifies the different ways of practices among the Embu community in Kenya in terms of healing, spirituality, education and governance and how they can invoke conversation for change.

A look at Indigenous peoples and ways of life

Neoliberalism as a concept works within the framework of rationalisation of services; a means through which the emotional/ life aspects of service provision is squeezed out. Efficiency, effectiveness, transparency and accountability become the canonical grounds under which service provision operate. In such a rationalized environment, the social worker is guided by the ethical principles that spell out the process of service provision. The social worker is expected to treat the service user as a human being who has rights in ways that the client self determines. While such assertion of humanizing service provision is well enshrined in the ethical principles, it is the operation of the guideline that needs more focus.

Neoliberalism provides the social worker with tool of work that simplify practice for the social worker. Smith (2017) identifies the PHQ-9 as one of the practice tool expected to rationalize service provision. According to Smith, the tool makes it easy for social

worker to introspect the service user in ways that bring the true picture of their mental health condition. The social worker asks questions and the client answer them in ways that save time and money. Thought differently, the tool maps the body for ways that are efficient and effective. It is also seeking to make public (transparency read as shaming and punishment) in way that the client becomes the object of introspection in ways that Foucault call the art of punishment and disciplining. The client is reduced to an object or a template from where the social worker looses and find themselves; a process that affirms their rational/ masculine self as experts.

The body is a space of adventure through which the social worker is affirmed as having entered the human community of scientist. In the process of this rational becoming, the client ceases to exist. The client disappears at the appearance of the social worker. But it is in that appearance of the social worker that they simultaneously disappear. According to Smith (2017), the tool mechanizes the social worker in ways that they become dependant on it and cease to engage their cognition. To Aristotle, such a disengaged power of cognition renders one to the state of animalism or what is called robots. Social work become a process of replication of the self on others in ways that are violent and inhuman. The social worker looks for ways to reproduce themselves on others; a self that is informed by the neoliberal register (Smith, 2017) of governmentality and managerialism. Suffice to say, social works is an industrial complex where production of social bodies is facilitated by the social worker.

This aspect of practice conflict entirely to Indigenous perspectives to care giving that is pegged on relationship building, reciprocity, respect and reliability. According to Lacan, we are speaking being and language allow us to present our repressed self. This conflict of presentation of the suppressed self is a question of power relations between neoliberalism as a colonial practice vis a vis Indigenous way of living caring for the less fortunate. In the rationalization of social work processes, comes the expulsion of the local knowledges to care. Among the marginalised knowledges are the Indigenous ways of knowing and practice as quintessential to social work practice and ways of knowing. Foucault (1980) say that power

defines knowledges and vice versa. By denying other knowledges to take central role in knowledge production translate to erasure of social, economic and political existence of such knowledge. It is a stripping away of the speakability of such knowledge so that they remain defined as anachronistically situated in the past. It is a denial of the expressive grammar to such knowledge in ways that helps to affirm the Western knowledge as rational and true way of practice. While we argue that such a suppressed denies the coming out of alternative desires, it also speaks of strength of the repressed knowledge as not confined within the canonical rational process of practice. We argue that denial to be included in the standard is a strength of the emotional forms of practice. We also argue that for social work to decolonize, it needs to return to its unregulated spaces of desire which is its space of enunciation. This point also helps us assert that rationalization of service and the erasure of other knowledge is in itself complex and cannot be seen only as erasure of others but also a violent and complex negotiation of the other in presentation of desires.

Foucault (1980) says that subjugated knowledges (read indigenous perspectives to practice) are counteracting the totalising knowledges and narrations. Even though Indigenous Peoples face every day oppression and marginalisation from the mainstream social work profession, their resistance is noticeable. This paper identifies ways through which Indigenous Peoples have used their ways of knowing as a form of subverting ongoing colonial process within the social work academy and profession. Using the works of Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Gayatri Spivak, Michel Foucault as well as other anti-colonial and anti-racist theorists, we argue that Indigenous Peoples ways of knowing and practices can inform social work practices and research in Kenya though creating new ways of practice and knowledge production. This possibility is imminent if self-reflection and reflexivity will define social work practice. We call upon the inclusion of Indigenous ways of knowing and practices within the social work vocation in Kenya. While Mungai, Wairire and Rush (2014) call for an Afrocentric focused practice, we expand such a discussion by including Indigenous perspective as the ground under which Afrocentricity can unmap the current discourse within social work.

Divergences between Mainstream Social Work treatment and Traditional healing

Today, social workers and educators in Kenya apply the mainstream practice to treat service users (Mungai, Wairire & Rush, 2014). Within this framework, the social worker is the expert who fixes the client. This is problematic in that Indigenous ways of knowing identify the 'client' as the expert' of their life who should be given a space to express themselves. Indigenous ways of care is 'service user' directed and seeks to include the community as part of the process of healing. While the dominant form of care is towards fixing the problem (client), the Indigenous form of care is based and grounded on healing and including love as part of the process of care. The community rather than an expert become part of the healing process. That said, healing works simultaneously with spirituality. The healing process is defined by multiple spiritualities that are culturally based. To make sense of this circle of care, we present diverse way of Embu traditions.

The Embu Traditions: Healing and spirituality

In the Embu community, the healing process for the sick is holistic in nature. It encompassed all aspects of a human being in terms of their emotions, social, historical, physical and psychological. Different traditional specialists are invited in the healing process. This specialist ranges from medicine-man, healers and shaman. The role of the community is vital in healing process; that being the reason why it comes to be defined as community healing and care. It is argued that the individual is an extension of the community and that by including the community in the healing process, it was a returning of the sick person into the community folds. Sickness is associated with the sliding disc that had to be returned to the hip for the community to function well. Sacrifices are undertaken as a way of reaching out to the spirit in order to cleanse the sick person and the community pouring libations for the ancestors. This libation was in form of food and traditional liquor.

These sacrifices are undertaken under the Mugumo (fig) tree. This tree is socio-culturally and politically significant among the Embu and Kikuyu Communities, in that it is considered holy and sacred. The fall of this tree depicts a catastrophe befalling the community.

'Mugumo' tree is surrounded by medicinal plants. The trees surrounding the 'Mugumo' tree symbolize a closely-knit community which comes to define the healing process of Embu peoples. In fact, the people living with mental illness would be recognised as shamans. Those who hallucinated would be identified as having supernatural power. Through them, the community would communicate with the spiritual realm.

Spirituality as a form of subversiveness

Baskin (2011) quoting Carolyn Jacobs (1997) defines spirituality as "heart knowledge where wholeness, meaning and inner peace occur. Spirituality is a sense of being at one with the inner and outer worlds" (pg.134). This depicts the very peacefulness of knowing that there is a balance in the way one lives. Spirituality explains the making of cosmos in ways that explain social happenings in ways that beyond human explanation. In other works (Wane, Torres & Nyaga, 2017) we pluralize spirituality to spiritualities to accommodate the difference. It is within this difference of spiritualities that we de-commodify and decolonize ways of life and explanation of our lived experiences. Spiritualities, grounds us within a community of purpose. We may have differences in our belief systems but its is within this multiplicity of belief systems that we come to appreciate ourselves through others. We argue and invoke Lacan by claiming that spiritualities is our language or social grammar through which we express our desires and fantasies. To that end, spirituality can be the language through which social workers can imagine themselves through the eyes of the client in ways that heals not only the client but the social worker. To that end, spirituality becomes a reflexive process of decolonizing geographies in ways that allow other ways of knowing to speak. Through spiritualities and their presentation, subjugated knowledges come to occupy the space of speaking subject who has power to un-map hegemonic ways of care and practice (Dei, 2002; Baird-Olson & Ward, 2000). It is through spirituality that we disengage the profit based care in ways that come to appreciate diversity of belief systems as fundamental to care.

In so doing, spiritual reflexivity invites practitioners to be comfortable in discomforts even in those moments that we receive

challenging questions from those that we work with. In this sense, we become co-creator, co-subject within and without the practice process.

Care should be seen within the standpoint of relationship building and reciprocity (Dei, 2000; Dei, Hall. & Rosenberg (2000); Baskin, 2005, 2003, Smith, 1999, Levallee, 2009). As a social worker, we fall prey of recolonizing those that we work with (Smith, 1999) if we continue to deny service user speak. The language of speaking is an essential process of uncovering the interned self. It is though speaking that the self breaks the wall of desire. To Lacan, the desire is postponed by language; and yet such a postponement does not preclude the power of language as the stream though which presentations of suppressed self come into the public. We argue that spiritual grammar can be the tool through which we come to present our fantasies and needs in ways that are not regulated by the policing systems of canonical practice of care and ethics. This is the art of care that problematizes the dominant forms of care in ways that slides other ways of knowing as necessary in practice and care.

The role of the social worker and educators is to be open to such languages while being careful of the implications brought about by cultural/spiritual competency and sensitivity. Pon (2009) warns of racial trajectories that one may be implicated in unproblematized cultural competence form of care. There is a pitfall of recolonizing the Indigenous Peoples through the universalistic cultural competence literatures. Anti-Oppressive framework is implicated in the use of cultural competency care (McLaughlin, 2005; Yee & Wagner 2013) since it commodifies communities in ways that subdues their spiritualities. This quick fix to issues facing marginalized communities implicates Social workers and educators in colonialism.

As a social workers and educators trained in the anti-oppressive lens, we need to uncover the hidden socially constructed practices of neo liberalism to which we are implicated. We need to constantly invoke mourning and grief in our practice, through identifying ways that we comply to the neoliberal text; and how we can revolt (Durrant, 2004). We need to invoke the practice of post-colonialism in that we decolonise ourselves from the socially constructed discourse

if ever we are going to become monster social workers (Hardt & Negri, 2009).Villanueva (2013), invites us to the Indigenisation of practice as one form of problematizing the neoliberal agenda. As social workers and educators, we are implicated in the colonisation of Indigenous African people. Our own education continues to connect us to the very colonial text of the yesteryears. This is because we see Indigenous ways of ways of knowing though the lens of commodification and profit making. In so doing, we want to understand rather than acknowledge the cultures and spirituality of the people we work with in ways that end up collapsing them. Collapsing in this sense has both material and symbolic meaning in that we are implicated in genocidal project of decimating marginalized communities.

As social workers and educators we are not expert of other people experiences. Human being has the power to speak. It is a right to which they express their desires and fantasies. To deny them of the role of speaking subject is to occlude their right as human being. Spirituality as a form of decolonizing the speakability of experiences enhances reflexivity in ways that present desires. We argue that such presentations come to be determine which live is livable and which is not. It is through spiritual presentation of the self that we remain alert to colonial processes engrained within neoliberal regime.

Conclusion

As social workers and educators, we need to re-invest ourselves on the new form of practicing which is more informed by Indigenous practice in order to work with them subversively against dominating colonial processes. If we are informed by the neoliberal thought of commodification within our practice and research, then we become complicit to colonialism (Dei, 2000; Dei, G. J. S., Hall, B.L. & Rosenberg, D.G. (2000); Smith 1999). We need to realise that care is not in a vacuum and that relationship creation is important between us and the service users. We also need to recognise the fact that knowledge is created to be shared. We are not supposed to see knowledge as one way of profiting but a way of Lacanian reimagination of ourselves through others. We should always be ready to share that which we have with other. Through this, we

can be able to form a cohesive community that can overcome the colonising discourse.

References:

Bhabba .H.K (1994).Location of Culture. New York. Routledge.

Baskin C. (2003). Structural social work as seen from an Aboriginal Perspective. In W. Shera (Ed.), Emerging Perspectives on Anti-oppressive Practice, pp. 65- 78. Toronto: Canadian Scholar's Press.

Baskin, C, (2005). Gathering stories: Aboriginal research methodologies. Canadian Social Work Review, 22 (2), 171-189.

Baskin .C. (2011). Strong Helper Teachings; The Value of Indigenous Knowledges in the Helping Professions. Toronto. Canadian Scholars' Press Inc.

Baird-Olson, K., & Ward, C. (2000). Recovery and resistance: The renewal of traditional spirituality among American Indian women. American Indian Culture and Research Journal, 24(4), 1-35.

Dei, G. J. S. (2000). Rethinking the role of Indigenous knowledges in the academy.

International Journal of Inclusive Education, *4*(2), 111-132.

Dei, G. J. S. (2002). The resistance to amputation: Spiritual knowing, transformative learning and anti-racism. Toronto: OISE/University of Toronto.

Dei, G. J. S., Hall, B.L. & Rosenberg, D.G. (2000). *Indigenous knowledges in global contexts*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Durrant, S. (2004). Postcolonial Narrative and the Work of Mourning. J.M. Coetzee, Wilson Harris and Toni Morrison. New York: State University of New York Press.

Fook, J. (2002). Social work: Critical theory and practice. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: SAGE.

Foucault, M. (1979). *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison* Vintage Books.

Foucault. M. (1980) Power and Knowledge: New York: Pantheon Books

Fraser, H. (2005). Four different approaches to community participation. Community Development Journal, 40 (3), 286-300.

Geddes. J. (2003). Banal Evil and useless knowledge: Hanna Arerdt and Charlotte Delbs on Evil after Holocaust,Hystia, 18(1),P. 104-115.

Gegeo, D. & Watson-Gegeo, K. 2001. "How we know": Kwara'ae rural villagers doing Indigenous epistemology. The Contemporary Pacific, 13 (1), 55-88.

Gramsci, A. (1971). Selections from the Prison Notebooks. London: Lawrence and Wishart.

Hardt, M., & Negri, A. (2009). Revolutionary Parallelism. In M. Hardt, & A. Negir, Commonwealth (pp. 325-344). Cambridge , Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Harrington, C. (2005). Liberating' critical ethnography: reflections from Fiji garment industry research. Anthropology Forum, 15 (3), 287-296.

Heron B. (2005). Self-reflection in critical social work practice: subjectivity and the possibilities of resistance. Reflective Practice 6: 341-351.

Moffatt, K. (1999). Surveillance and government of the the welfare recipient. In A. Chambon, A. Irving, & L. Epstein, Reading Foucault for Social Work (pp. 219-242). New York: Columbia University Press.

McLaughlin, K. (2005). From ridicule to institutionalization: Anti-oppression, the state and

Social work [Electronic resource]. Critical Social Policy, 25(3), 283-30.

Mungai, N. W., Wairire, G. G., & Rush, E. (2014). The challenges of maintaining social work ethics in kenya. *Ethics & Social Welfare, 8*(2), 170-186.

Yee, J. Y., & Wagner, A. E. (2013). Is anti-oppression teaching in Canadian social work

Classrooms a form of neo-liberalism? [Electronic resource]. Social Work Education, 32(3): 331- 348.

Pon, G. (2009). Cultural competency as new racism: An ontology of forgetting. Journal of Progressive Human Services, 20(1): 59-71.

Smith, L. T. (1999). Colonizing knowledges. In decolonizing methodologies: Research and Indigenous peoples (pp. 58-77). London & New York: Zed Books Ltd.

Smith, K. (2017). Occupied spaces: Unmapping standardized assessments. In doing anti-oppressive practice; social justice social work 3rd (ed) Donna Baines. P.272-283

Landry .D.& Maclean .G.(1996).The Spivak Reader, New York. Routledge

Lavallée, L. (2009). Practical application of an Indigenous research framework and two qualitative Indigenous research methods: Sharing circles and Anishnaabe symbol-based reflection. International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 8(1), 21-40.

LeCompte, M. (2002). The transformation of ethnographic practice: past and current challenges. Qualitative Research, 2 (3), 283-299.

Jupp .K. V. (2012). Participant or protagonist? A critical analysis of children and young people's participation in São Paulo, Brazil. International Social Work, 55(3), 320-336.

Pon, G. (2009). Cultural competency as new racism: An ontology of forgetting. Journal of Progressive Human Services, 20(1): 59-71.

Razack, S. (2007). Stealing the Pain of Others: Reflections on Canadian Humanitarian Responses. The Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies 29: 375-394.

Yeo, R. & Moore, K. (2003). Including disabled people in poverty reduction work: "Nothing about us, without us". World Development, 31(3), 571-590.

Reyes Cruz, M. (2008). What if I just cite Grasiela: Working toward decolonizing knowledge through a critical ethnography. Qualitative Inquiry, 14(4), 651-658.

Villanueva, S. T. (2013). Teaching as a healing craft: Decolonizing the classroom and creating spaces of hopeful resistance through chicano-indigenous pedagogical praxis.

Wairire, G. G., Mungai, N. w., & Mungai, K. (2015). Gifted and talented education: Some social work implications in emerging approaches for children's rights in kenya. *International Social Work, 58*(2), 297-308.

Wa Thiong'o .N. (1986). Decolonising the Mind; The politics of Language in African literature:

Walcott. R. (2006). Black men in frocks; sexing race in gay Ghetto (Toronto); Claiming Space, (121-133) Portsmouth: Heinemann.

Wane, N., Torres, R. & Nyaga, D. (2017). *African Indigenous Governance from Spiritual Lens*. In Mc Kinley, E. & Tuhiwai Smith, L. Handbook of Indigenous Education. New York: Springer Publishing.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN
IN SEARCH OF UNITY: A SPIRITUAL PRAXIS

Danny McGee

"They live in wisdom who see themselves in all and all in them"
(Bhagavad Gita, 2:55)

We have made great strides in the past fifty years in regards to social justice; for example, people of color, the LGTBQ community, women, and the colonized have experienced liberation and freedom that our ancestors would never have imagined, and values of inclusivity, tolerance and acceptance have become more prevalent in many parts of the world. As acclaimed spiritual author Eckhart Tolle (2015, p. xv) elaborates, "There is a growing awareness of the intrinsic oneness of everything that exists, so that more and more we are seeing an awareness of and deep concern for our fellow humans, the countless animals…and the planet itself." These changes give us hope and seem to point to an awakening in consciousness that is taking place, which is birthed from empathy and compassion. However, these changes are occurring within a dialectical context. For all the positivity that does indeed exist, our propensity towards all forms of violence be they social, economic, emotional or physical towards the beings we co-inhabit the planet or nature itself leads us to conclude that we have a long way to go until this new consciousness is concretely set in place. Tolle (2015, p. xvi) warns, "Until the new consciousness, which is awareness-based grows and becomes firmly established in the human psyche, temporary regression to the egoic state of consciousness (or rather unconsciousness) can easily occur."

This egoic state of consciousness that Tolle describes refers to the part of ourselves which is essentially our animal nature. It is fed by five-sense pleasures, and its inherent selfishness shows little regard for others or the planet. Fundamentally, this egoic consciousness will destroy all that we have and all that we are, and its impacts are clearly visible. Imperialism, colonialism, and racism

are just a few examples of how a collective egoic consciousness has run rampant, and its harmful results and inequalities such as poverty are evident in our socio-political climate. In the presence of governments that are too often either unwilling, corrupted or in the pockets of corporations, the responsibility for making change depends on grassroots movements and social activism. Famed social activist Aziz Choudry (2015) describes the challenges we currently face: “Today, the so-called War on Terror continues apace, social and economic inequalities are deepening and growing within and among societies, and the planet faces a climate/ecological crisis the magnitude of which seems like the sum of all environmental fears” (p. 23).

The hegemonic power structures seek to maintain their position of dominance in a variety of forms such as through dividing and ruling. Freire (1970) defines this: “It is in the interest of the oppressor to weaken the oppressed still further, to isolate them, to create and deepen rifts among them.” (p. 122). The notion of dividing and ruling systems is none more evident than in the ideology of Neo-liberalism in the guise of capitalist social relations as McNally (2011, as cited in Choudry, 2015, pp. 23-24) illustrates that Neo-liberalism “… also involved molecular transformations at the most basic levels of everyday life. Senses of self, ways of relating to others, and the organization of communities were all restructured.” Society has become atomized, and this ideology has inflicted great pain on the masses. Environmental and political activist Naomi Klein (2016) depicts,

…a hell of a lot of people are in pain. Under neoliberal policies of deregulation, privatisation, austerity and corporate trade, their living standards have declined precipitously. Donald Trump speaks directly to that pain. The Brexit campaign spoke to that pain. So do all of the rising far-right parties in Europe. They answer it with nostalgic nationalism and anger at remote economic bureaucracies – whether Washington, the North American free trade agreement the World Trade Organisation or the EU. And of course, they answer it by bashing immigrants and people of colour, vilifying Muslims, and degrading women. Elite neoliberalism has nothing to offer that pain.

The issues raised by Klein and Choudry emphasize that there is a disconnect between humanity, governments, corporate interests and protection of the planet. Neo-liberalism has left large sectors of the population fighting for survival and more predisposed to be manipulated by media, charismatic politicians and social networks. We have allowed our consciousness to be manipulated and dominated unknowingly. The atomization of ourselves and our consciousness is not sustainable, which is why we need an awakening. Choudry (2015, p. 38) points to this compartmentalization:

> How have we come to see "issues" such as climate change, colonialism, human rights violations, capitalism, violence against women, or labour justice as "dots" that are separate from each other? Where does this compartmentalizing lens take us, both analytically and strategically?

Clearly, there is a need to evolve from this materialistic framework that favours the few and exploits the many. Spira (2017, pp. 2-3) explains how the "collective intelligence of humanity could no longer be contained within the parameters that had evolved over the previous centuries for the purposes of advancing it." He cites the flat earth theory and heliocentrism as examples in which paradigms are so deeply entrenched in the fabric of society that they end up constricting the growth and evolution of humanity. Spira (2017, p. 3) contends that the materialist context no longer allows to evolve and that "A new paradigm is required to definitively address the despair and sorrow felt by individuals, the conflicts between communities and nations, and humanity's relationship with nature."

Furthermore, the notion of the 'other' popularly used as a narrative for the Trump, far-right and Brexit campaigns has driven a wedge between populations across Europe and in the U.S. The 'other' delineates that we are different from each other, and that some of us are more deserving than others. Hence, the duality that there are those that are equally less deserving and should be excluded based on economic, social or political reasons. This 'othering' is directly related to our egoic identity both individually and collectively. Tolle (2015) describes the link between the collective ego and 'othering': "The ego, and particularly the collective ego, strengthens itself through emphasizing the "otherness" of others. In other words,

the ego needs an "enemy" for its continued survival" (p. xvi). This certainly begs the question that the populist movements are not occurring in a vacuum but have been carefully orchestrated to prey on human feelings of discontent and suffering. In fact, this discontent seemingly is self perpetuating and can only lead to further suffering and division.

To compound these crises in our external environment, our internal harmony is being further bombarded and manipulated by consumer culture, and the media. Ellwood (2014, p. 139) refers to this as the "Colonization of consciousness" as our worldview is distorted by this assault on our inner being. Moreover, our obsession with material things exceeds our needs for more interpersonal and meaningful connections as illustrated by the psychological phenomena known as 'retail therapy', in which shopping becomes the means to feel better.

It seems clear that before we can change the external aspects of our society and structures for the better, we need to examine ourselves internally and alter our perspective to one that is more compassionate, loving and more in harmony with ourselves, each other and the planet. We need to liberate ourselves in order to objectify reality to see both how the totality of reality affects our worldview and to see the way we have been conditioned to view the world. Hence, an evolution in consciousness is necessary. Spirituality is the key for us to evolve. We need to create a spiritual lens to facilitate the birth of a society that is both transformational and in loving balance at its core. Moreover, it is essential that as we strive for change, our social movements are grounded in a spiritual context; otherwise, we risk perpetuating the oppression.

This paper will examine what this spiritual lens looks like by first establishing what spirituality is, what a spiritual lens/theory is, and how a spiritual lens fits into the wider context of anti-oppression praxis and social justice movements with particular reference to and building on the work of Paulo Freire.

My location

I am a mixed-race, European, male, spiritual not religious, able-bodied, heterosexual, British- Canadian, middle-class, English as a Second Language (ESL) professor. Within these intersections

of identity and growing up in 1980's Thatcherite England where racism and nationalism often overlap, the sense of being an 'other' was something that was part of my lived experience. At times I was racially abused for being non-white and also for being non-brown; it depended on which social group I was with at that particular moment. The notion of being different was definitely not lost on me. Moreover, being raised in a household with a white father from a Catholic background and a brown mother from a Hindu background certainly provided me with perspectives on how religion fits into our daily lives through attending various church/temple traditions and rituals.

Due to the diverse nature of the ESL student body, as a holistic educator it is important to blend spirituality into my pedagogy while maintaining a space that is anti-oppressive and inclusive. It must be an open and comfortable environment that fosters transformative learning while under the banner of ESL. I include activities that engage students interests and stimulate critical thinking and awareness. It is also necessary to use materials that reflect the wider context in which they live centring on social justice.

What is spirituality?

"This sense of our spirituality is where it all begins; is our starting point, knowingly or unknowingly, it is the life force that informs our experience, our actions, our thoughts, and our very being" (Wane, 2007, pp. 48-49).

It should also be noted that it may appear that the notion of spirituality is being generalized. It may be argued that spirituality is a diverse spectrum of ontologies and epistemologies, and that it is wrong to group, for example, African spirituality with North American spirituality. However, the essence of spirituality is its intersectionality across cultures regardless of time and space. The notion of interconnectivity of all that exists is situated in love, empathy and compassion and a fundamental tenet of spirituality in general.

As contextualized, I posit that we have become separated from our sense of spirituality and we need to reconnect with each other and the planet. Spirituality can be defined as connecting with our inner

being through spiritual practices such as prayer or, in particular, meditation. Rupert Sheldrake (2017) in his book "Science and Spiritual Practices" details seven ways of spiritual practice if further reading is required on the different ways spirituality can be practised. At this stage, I would like to make a distinction between our illusory self and being.

First of all, the illusory self or ego can be viewed as a social construct. It is how one projects oneself externally and is purely an egoic concept. The illusory self is a vehicle in which we operate. It includes our thoughts, perceptions, identity, nationality, experiences, beliefs and opinions about the world among other things. Tolle (2005, p. 28) elaborates, "That illusory self then becomes the basis for all further interpretations, or misinterpretations of reality, all thought processes, interactions, and relationships. Your reality becomes a reflection of the original illusion." Obviously, living without an awareness of this illusory self can lead to many of the issues raised in the introduction to this paper. Carl Jung refers to this illusory self as the shadow. The shadow self contains our selfish and materialistic desires. Through our conditioning, circumstances or just personal weakness, we all have the potential to commit immoral acts. It is essential that we embrace it in ourselves and be able to recognize it in others so that we can look at others with empathy and compassion. Jung (1970, p. 87) states "To confront a person with his own shadow is to show him his own light." In fact, through spiritual practices we can transcend this duality of being and ego to a point of non-duality. At that moment, our ego disappears. Robinson (2004, p. 113) refers to this:

> Being an observer of the constructed self is a leap in consciousness…seeing the self as constructed and experiencing reality freed of the illusion of self also allows for the experience of the integral, of unity, of oneness. The challenge is in consistently acting from this place of no-self.

Naturally, this is a challenge in a culture that is founded on individualistic materialism. Materialism is a result of our egoic attachment to things to enhance a short-lived sense of self. "Ego-identification with things creates attachment to things, obsession with things, which in turn creates our consumer society and

economic structures where the only measure of progress is always more." (Tolle, 2005, p. 37). We live to consume because we are conditioned to believe that is how the world works properly. In fact, George W. Bush's post 9/11 declaration for everyone to go shopping speaks volumes about prevailing ideologies (Bacevich, 2008).

On the other hand, being is what we are when all labels, thoughts, feelings, emotions, memories, and concepts are stripped away. It is our unconditioned infinite self that is one with all there is. Spira (2017) "Being aware or awareness itself is the knowing in all that is known, the experiencing in all experience." It is the awareness of those aforementioned egoic concepts, and it is this awareness that allows us to be liberated and liberate others. (p. 11). It is the non-attachment with form which occurs when the form or sense of self collapses be it through a spiritual awakening or through sickness or closeness to death, for example. Tolle (2005, p. 57) states, "You realize your essential identity as formless, as an all-pervasive Presence, of Being prior to all forms, all identifications. You realize your true identity as consciousness itself, rather than what consciousness had identified with." Furthermore, it this being that allows us to connect with others and the planet. "Being is a holistic concept that emerges when the whole body is working in harmony with all the interconnected links with the Earth and with other people" (Ehrenfeld, 2008, p. 3). When we are at one with our being, we realize that we are one and the same with everything on the planet. Hence, we see beyond othering labels of 'us' and 'them'. In fact, there are no labels at this stage as everything is just pure consciousness. Tolle describes consciousness as, "the intelligence, the organizing principle behind the arising of form." (2005, p. 291). Further, Spira (2017, p. 6) defines consciousness as follows: "consciousness is the fundamental, underlying reality of the apparent duality of mind and matter." This is a state of non-duality whereby the mind and body dissolve into one, and where we no longer feel the separation between each other.

Spirituality cultivates a deepening of our understanding of what it is to be human and of resources we can draw on to connect with and serve others. It creates compassion and a desire to liberate others from suffering. It encourages us to feel comfortable in the world and to be more likely to respond to the challenges that we

face from a position of love and respect, rather than fear or our ego. When we see others as separate from ourselves such as when we think or express our thoughts as, 'You are different from me, I am on my own here', the language of our higher consciousness says: 'We are the same, we are of one common creation, and there is no 'other'.'

In addition, spirituality allows us to transcend our five senses, connect with our inner divinity and the source of all that is. Sheldrake (2017, p. 47) states, "Through meditation and mystical experiences, our conscious minds connect with more than human conscious minds and ultimately with the source of all consciousness." Consequently, we are able to see the world and everything in it with greater compassion, as a web of interconnection and importantly realize that our life has meaning and purpose. The concept of divinity is reinforced by Fernandes (2003, p. 117) who intersects divinity, the world and the timelessness of our being:

> What spirituality means to me is a direct, unmediated, ongoing and always changing relationship with the divine. It is a process in which all dichotomies and distinctions begin to break down so that there is no separation between self and world, between the majestic, unknowable transcendence of the divine beyond and the silent, powerful immanence of the divine within, between a moment and eternity.

Furthermore, a key component of spirituality is authenticity. Through spiritual practices such as meditation and prayer we can raise our levels of consciousness and access this authentic state of being. It is fundamental that one surrenders to one's being; otherwise, one will live a life that is essentially an egoic projection which will result in greater suffering to oneself and others as a result of one's egoic self being hurt. Being aware of our ego allows us to objectify it and detach ourselves from these negative thought patterns. Andy James renowned teacher, Qigong healer, and author notes the importance of spirituality: "The less balance, contentment, and stability we have internally, the more likely we are to look outside of ourselves for satisfaction and validation, and therefore the more likely we are to be swayed by outside influences" (2003, p. 72). Hence, spirituality builds inner strength and fortitude

which can be used to build resilience and resistance to oppressive forces. This aspect will be further explored in the next section.

What is a spiritual lens/theory?

Dei (2001) describes criteria for evaluating the relevance of a theory asserting,

> More significantly, the relevance of a theory should be seen in how it allows us to understand the complexity of human society and to offer a social and political corrective - that is, the power of theories and ideas to bring about change and transformation in social life. (p. 298)

Fundamentally, spirituality as a theory is deeply transformational. It entails a transformation of consciousness and one's outlook on life. Hence, spirituality is a praxis that involves both a change in one's ontology and daily actions. A spiritual lens can be used in the same way as a decolonizing lens by creating a space for fresh epistemologies and ontologies that have been marginalized by Eurocentrism and that can counter oppression. Dei (2001, p. 299) describes a decolonizing lens as, "…the academic project of decolonization requires breaking with the ways in which the human condition is defined and shaped by dominant European-American cultures."

The purpose of a spiritual lens is to bring about change through compassion, love and unity. This perspective is reflected in Indigenous ontologies and epistemologies. Indigenous knowledges are deeply spiritual and have been marginalized by the hegemonic power structures. As Dei (2001) indicates, Indigenous knowledge can also be anti-colonial: "The knowledge so produced can then be used to challenge, rupture, and resist colonial and imperial relations of domination. It can also help to resuscitate oneself and one's community from mental bondage" (p. 302). Thus, a spiritual lens is also a source of knowledge which acts to empower people through the validation of their own lived experiences and knowledge gained through spiritual praxis.

Moreover, while the Western scientific model values objectivity and quantitative methods, Indigenous epistemologies value the experiential and subjective. Ermine (1995, as cited in Iseke-Barnes, 2003, p. 216) explains,

> Those people who seek knowledge on the physical plane objectively find their answers through exploration of the outer space, solely on the corporeal level. Those who seek to understand the reality of existence and harmony with the environment by turning inward have a different, incorporeal knowledge paradigm that might be termed Indigenous epistemology.

The validation of internal or subjective knowledge creates a space which can foster spiritual development. Hence, a spiritual lens recognizes the spiritual knowledge that we all have within and the fluidity of it. This is transformational as based on our current state of evolution and failure of political systems to solve world problems, we need new ways of relating. We cannot change the world with old constructs; it is necessary to embody newness and let go of the outdated ways of thinking we are invested in. Relying solely on objective knowledge limits our capacity for our sorely needed evolution. According to Chickering (2003, as cited in Speck, 2005, p. 6), “Our overwhelming valuation of rational empiricism-a conception of truth as objective and external-and of knowledge as a commodity de-legitimizes active public discussions of purpose and meaning, authenticity and identity, or spirituality and spiritual growth”. Hence, rational empiricism is just one way of knowing. It is essential that in academic institutions students are made aware that there are multiple ways of knowing. The absence of a spiritual aspect to education marginalizes, for example, Indigenous belief systems and further separates us from our deeper being, each other, and our environment.

A further facet of Indigenous knowledge is the intrinsic oneness with all that is. For example, Baskin (2002, as cited in Butot, 2005, p. 3) states, “Aboriginal spirituality as “an interconnectedness and interrelationship with all life. All (both ‘animate’ and ‘inanimate’) are seen as being equal and interdependent, part of the great whole and as having spirit … a sacred expression of the Great Mystery”. As a result, if we see ourselves as part of nature rather than the masters of it, we would have a vastly different perspective on climate change and environmental destruction. A key aspect of Indigenous worldviews are relational worldviews (Graham, 2002, as cited in Hart, 2010, p. 3). Essentially, everything is relations of relations. Hart (2010, p. 3) explains, “Key within a relational worldview is

the emphasis on spirit and spirituality and, in turn, a sense of communitism and respectful individualism." Individuals have great freedom in self-expression as long as the needs of the community are paramount. This is in contrast to our ideology of individualism in the west which centres around a Darwinian notion of survival of the fittest. Our society can only benefit from incorporating a relational worldview as foundational.

In addition, global adoption of the Indigenous value of seeing humanity holistically would help diminish inequities. Furthermore, the intersectionality of the spiritual lens is evidenced among African Americans and reflected by Zulu-Latifa an African American spiritual and ethno-medicine healer:

> When we are able to recognize this, we experience a higher level of understanding and acceptance. It is when we accept the interconnectedness of all life on this planet, that we as human beings become more tolerant and respectful of other people, cultures, and lifestyles, physical differences and different dress codes (as cited in Wane, 2007)

Thus, tolerance and respect are key components of a spiritual lens. Our differences are acknowledged and accepted, as intrinsically we know, we are the same within.

Furthermore, it is fundamental that the notion of interconnection is taught at a young age. If a child is educated that everything is in unity, they would be less likely to manifest attitudes and behaviours that are expressions of division such as 'othering' as they get older. However, Shahjahan (2006, pp. 1-23) notes that the view of the world as interconnected is made invisible and illegitimate in our current education system which leaves children with a feeling of emptiness and a fragmented life that lacks purpose and meaning. Consequently, the child will be less likely to develop the importance of community and compassion. Moreover, do we not want to instill values of world-centrism as opposed to egocentrism and ethnocentrism in our children?

The internal nature of the child needs to be nurtured in order for the child to develop the strength and fortitude to deal with the inevitable suffering and hardships that he or she will face, but this is also neglected: Western curriculum has become consumed with

external variables and objective solutions because these elements are easily quantified; whereas the internal realm is often ignored or discredited (Palmer, 2003, pp. 376-385; Hart, 2003).

Furthermore, Bridges (2001, p. 166) illustrates how spirituality can be used to unite and emancipate communities to be resilient in the face of oppression:

> It [African American spirituality] was the underlying and guiding force that enabled the people to be resilient, to "spring back into shape" with courage and dignity in the face of intense cultural oppression …African-American spirituality, in this sense guided the people towards survival and the freedom of self-determination.

Moreover, once we reach a deeper sense of connection to our being, we realize that our personal journey becomes a collective one as spiritually minded people start to gravitate towards us, and the space opens to challenge the oppressive contexts in which we live.

A spiritual lens within the wider context of anti-oppressive praxis and social justice movements

Ideologies in whatever form they may manifest be they social, economic or political are what determine how society is structured and de-structured. We need only look back historically to see how ideologies have contributed to oppressive political systems, genocides and colonization. Monbiot (2016, p. 1) points out, "Ideas, not armies or even banks, run the world. Ideas determine whether human creativity works for society or against it." Hence, we need anti-oppressive lenses and social movements to create a space to challenge epistemologies, ontologies, and structures that marginalize specific sectors within society.

Social movements can be defined as "organizational structures and strategies that may empower oppressed populations to mount effective challenges and resist the more powerful and advantaged elites." (Deric, 2011). Though generally understood to be liberatory acts, when channeled from the egoic state of consciousness, they can also be hateful. Choudry (2015, p. 11) makes this distinction clear: "…building movements are key to creating counterpower to resist and transform capitalist exploitation and oppression, colonial relations, racism, and patriarchy. Yet the term social movement

equally includes explicitly xenophobic, homophobic, racist, sexist, and fascist movements." I intend to explore how spirituality is a necessary component for anti-oppressive social movements to be sustainable.

For this section, I draw and build on the work of Paulo Freire, in particular *Pedagogy of the Oppressed.* Although the focus of this work was on the liberation of the oppressed through education and ultimately a revolution, many of the concepts are appropriate for this discussion.

Liberation of the oppressed

Social movements come about through the oppressed rising up to create a counter narrative and challenge the systems of oppression directly, or allies of the oppressed acting on their behalf out of compassion for their struggle. Naturally, there could also be a combination of both of these.

First of all, it is important to understand the psyche of the oppressed; otherwise, there may be a danger of both not truly liberating them and further perpetuating the cycle of oppression. Freire (1970) points out that, "One of the gravest obstacles to the achievement of liberation is that oppressive reality absorbs those within it and thereby acts to submerge human beings' consciousness." (p. 33). Freire argues that the oppressed have "internalized the oppressor". Even though Freire emphasizes the role of love in liberation, I feel that spirituality is necessary for the oppressed to expand their awareness to transcend the oppressor consciousness which exists as part of a duality "in their innermost being" (p. 30). As presented earlier, spirituality is a means of expanding awareness and presence while allowing us to objectify our reality. This awareness permits us to see ourselves as both the subject and object in our existence. Robinson (2004, p. 113) notes "Being an observer of the constructed self is a leap in consciousness…seeing the self as constructed and experiencing reality freed of the illusion of self also allows for the experience of the integral, of unity, of oneness." Hence, spirituality offers the potential to be the witness of the illusory self. Robinson (2004, p. 115) in discussing internalized oppression also warns of the dangers of associating too closely with our own thought

patterns and forming a hardened identity: "…the constructed nature of the identity, made seemingly solid through outer forms of criticism and institutionalized systems of power and control but actually cemented into our being by the habitual thought patterns themselves." Robinson's notion of a "constructed nature of identity" illustrate the egoism that causes us to believe in this illusion of self. Consequently, we cannot be truly liberated or liberate others without awakening to this reality. We will run the risk of oppressing others who threaten our newly obtained freedoms. Therefore, it is clear that we need to be aware of our ego and its individualistic tendencies. Hence, there is undoubtedly a need to have a spiritual lens while working in the context of anti-oppressive forces lest we sustain that which we are trying to eradicate.

The other potential effect of this divided being conflict within the oppressed is the perpetuation of the oppression once the oppressed are liberated. "A particular problem is the duality of the oppressed: they are contradictory, divided beings, shaped by and existing in a concrete situation of oppression and violence." (Freire, 1970, p. 37). This internalization of the oppressor actually results in the marginalized engaging in the same practices that they were subjected to. Freire (1970, p. 26) perfectly sums this up with, "…the oppressed must not, in seeking to regain their humanity, become in turn oppressors of the oppressors, but rather restorers of the humanity of both." This is clearly evidenced in the treatment of the Palestinians by the Israelis, the genocide of Bengalis in Pakistan, Eritreans being freed from Ethiopian oppression only to become the oppressors of their "own people" and Aung San Suu Kyi and the Rohingya. All of these examples show how the oppressed continue to house the oppressor consciousness. Without an awareness of the shadow self or ability to transcend the individual and collective egoic identity, the oppressed end up 'othering' the oppressors or even their own people and perpetuating the cycle of oppression. Robinson (2004, pp. 109-110) argues that without awareness of the illusory nature of the self, emancipation will only be a "surface-level experience" and consequently "there would be a tendency to turn around and impose those same structures on others who might threaten these newfound freedoms contributing to the cycles of human cruelty and suffering." Clearly, this points to the need for

a spiritual lens and awareness of the ego. Once we are aware of the ego, these thought patterns will dissolve as they are seen for what they are: thoughts in our awareness but not out true being at its core.

Allies of the oppressed

Though Freire (1970) does not recommend a spiritual awakening, he emphasizes that the fight against the oppressors is in fact an "act of love" in the liberation of both the oppressed and the oppressors (p. 32). Furthermore, by using a spiritual lens, it is imperative that there is an absence of an egoic identity to ensure that these movements are authentic and that they are grounded in love, compassion and unity. Social activist bell hooks (2002) also stresses the importance of love in her work:

> When I write provocative and social criticism that causes readers to stretch their minds, to think beyond set paradigms, I think of that work as love in action. While it may challenge, disturb and at times frighten or enrage readers, love is always the place where I begin and end. (as cited in Reynolds, 2002, p. 5)

Hence, although hooks is critiquing aspects of society, she is careful not to lower herself to fighting the oppressors with the same weapons that they use. A similar stance is echoed by Butot (2005, p. 2):

> I have come to question whether radical, societal and individual transformation can be realized if it is not grounded in a loving stance toward others, especially those considered "other" from ourselves. I wonder if deep and sustainable change towards social justice and individual well-being can arise, or even be fully conceived, if the context for the change process does not include a recognition of unity and diversity as coexistent

The need to maintain a spiritual lens is evident in the context of love and absence of 'othering'. Chodron (1996, as cited in Butot, 2005) a prominent Buddhist author when discussing spirituality and interconnection states, "…spiritual self-work is seen to precede and proceed with work with others, allowing us to act for justice without dehumanizing the other, even when the other is an oppressor or perpetrator" (p. 4). Thich Nhat Hanh, a world-renowned Buddhist

monk and peace activist, asserts, "…mindfulness, insight, and altruistic love [are] the only sustainable bases for political action" (as cited in Butot, 2005, p.4). Clearly, in order for social movements to be truly sustainable and transformational, they must be grounded in spiritual values of unity and compassion. Otherwise, the change itself can only be transient and will, in fact, result in further perpetuation of division as opposed to unification.

Within social movements, there is the potential for one's ego to conflict with the goals of social justice. Fernandes (2003, p. 116) points to the need for a spiritual liberation and that without it social movements would not be successful:

> What is needed then, for transformation, is simply a radical form of
>
> liberation of the divine—within ourselves, our communities, our world.
>
> Without this spiritual liberation, enduring social transformation is not
>
> possible and movements for social justice will continue to be trapped in
>
> cycles of hope and decline, as they have been throughout history.

What does it mean to have "enduring social transformation?" That within social movements there must be a spiritual lens that tempers the fight of those that are marginalized in order to create sustainable change, while not creating a cycle of oppression.

Choudry (2015, p. 12) speaks of "activist bubbles or cocoons" that actually generate the very same dynamic that is being fought. He elaborates:

Ego and personality politics as well as other forms of power relations can be as embedded in these networks as they are in the world we supposedly want to transform. We live, learn, and organize in a web of contradictions.

Finally, it is clear that unless the ego is removed from within ourselves and these movements, the perpetuation of dominance and the dominated will continue. As a result, sustainable change cannot be created.

Conclusion

I do not feel that a spiritual lens is a new theory. It already exists within African American spirituality and indigenous spirituality. It is used by social activists such as bell hooks and Thich Nhat Hanh. I think because at its core are human values such as love, compassion, unity and authenticity. Spirituality is within our essence; thus, it is conspicuous within those that campaign for social justice and who believe in the goodness of humanity. It is a lens. This lens needs to be cleaned regularly as it becomes cloudy with the soot of our own ego. Becoming more in tune with ourselves through spiritual practices such as meditation develops our abilities to truly understand who we are and our position in society. By raising our levels of consciousness and becoming more in union with our bodies and minds, we will be better able at understanding the systems and structures we live in. Spirituality will give us the patience and tranquility to make sense of the world around us. We need to be cautious that in our work for social justice that we temper our stance with a spiritual lens lest we risk projecting our ego rather than operating from our true being. Balance is key even within a spiritual lens. We must not neglect the other aspects of ourselves: mental, emotional and physical as symbolized by the Indigenous medicine wheel.

In addition, the essential role of education in the struggle for equality must not be excluded. A critical consciousness can only result through a combination of spirituality and education. However, it is equally important that the education be a decolonized one, and one that is founded on liberation, intersectionality and inclusivity. The scope of this paper did not permit an in-depth discussion of the importance of education.

Finally, we are in this together. This evolution in consciousness must be collective. I feel it is our duty to support each other on this journey especially those that are misguided. In the immortal words of iconic civil rights activist Angela Davis,

"We lift as we climb"

Acknowledgments

I'd like to acknowledge the help of two dear friends: Deep and Villy. I cherish your wisdom and am blessed and honoured to be able to share it.

References

Bacevich, Andrew J. "He Told Us to Go Shopping. Now the Bill Is Due." *The Washington Post*, WP Company, 5 Oct. 2008, www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/10/03/AR2008100301977.html.

Bridges, F. W. 2001. Resurrection Song: African American Spirituality. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.

Butot, M., & Hospice, R. V. (2007). Reframing spirituality, reconceptualizing change: Possibilities for critical social work. *J. Coates, J. R, Graham, B, Swartzentruber, & B. Ouellette (Eds.). Spirituality and social work: Selected Canadian readings*, 143-159.

Choudry, A. A. (2015). *Learning activism: The intellectual life of contemporary social movements*.

Dei, G., & Asgharzadeh, A. (2001). The power of social theory: The anti-colonial discursive framework. *Journal of Educational Thought*, *35*(3), 297−323.

Deric., Shannon, *(2011*). Political sociology : oppression, resistance, and the state*. Pine Forge Press.*

Ehrenfeld, J. (2008). Sustainability Needs to be Attained, Not Managed. Sustainability: Science, Practice, & Policy, Volume 4, Issue 2, pp.1-3.

Ellwood, W. (2014). The No-Nonsense Guide to Degrowth and Sustainability. Toronto, ON: New International/Between the Lines

Fernandes, Leela. (2003). Spirituality. In Transforming Feminist Practice. Non-Violence, Social Justice and the Possibilities of a Spiritualized Feminism

Freire, P., Ramos, M. B., & Macedo, D. P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Bloomsbury, [2012].

Hart, T. (2003). The secret spiritual world of chitdren. Maui, HI: Inner Ocean

Hart, M. A. (2010). Indigenous worldviews, knowledge and research: The development of an indigenous research paradigm. *Journal of Indigenous Voices in Social Work, 1*(1), 1-16.

Hull, R. F., & Jung, C. G. (2014). *Collected Works of C.G. Jung, Volume 10: Civilization in Transition*. Princeton University Press.

Iseke-Barnes, J. (2003). Living and writing indigenous spiritual resistance. *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, *24*(3), 211-238.

Klein, Naomi. (2016, November 9th) *It was the Democrats embrace of Neoliberalism that won it for Trump*. Retrieved from: https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/nov/09/rise-of-the-davos-class-sealed-americas-fate

Mascaró, J. (1962). *The Bhagavad gita*. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin.

Palmer, P. (2003). Teaching with heart and soul: Reflections on spirituality in teacher education. Journal of Teacher Education, 376-385.

Reynolds, J. (2002). Thich Nhat Hanh As Adult Educator.

Robinson, P. (2004). Meditation: Its role in transformative learning and in the fostering of an integrative vision for higher education. *Journal of Transformative Education*, 2(2), 107-119.

Shahjahan, R, (2006). Spirituality in the academy: Reclaiming from the margins and evoking a transformative way of knowing in the world, international Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education. 18(6), 1-23.

Speck, Bruce. (2005). What is Spirituality. *In the Journal of New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, no. 104, pp. 3 - 13.

Spira, Rupert (2017). The Nature of Consciousness: Essays on the Unity of Mind and Matter . New Harbinger Publications. Kindle Edition.

Tolle, E. (2005). *A new earth: Awakening to your life's purpose*. Penguin Books.

Wane, Njoki. (2007). Practicing African Spirituality: Insights from Zulu-Latifa, an African Woman Healer. *In Theorizing Empowerment: Canadian Perspective on Black Feminist Thought.* Toronto: Inanna Publications and Education Inc., pp. 47-54.

Wane, N.N. Manyimo, L.E. & Ritskes, J.E. (2011). Spirituality, Education & Society: An Integrated Approach. Rotterdam, Boston, Sense Publishers.

Wane, N.N. , Adyanga, F.A. & Ilmi, A.I. (2014). Spiritual Discourse in the Academy: A Globalized Indigenous Perspective. New York: Peter Lang Publishers.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

TOWARDS WHOLENESS: REDEFINING EDUCATIONAL AIMS IN A POST-SECULAR AGE

Joshua Jones

Introduction

Many scholars have problematized the current state of our education system due to its unbalanced educational approach (Noddings, in Miller, Irwin & Nigh, 2014), fragmentation and lack of connection (J. P. Miller, 1996; Yampolskaya, 2015), superficiality (Peterson, 1999), mechanistic operation (Neves, 2009, p.133; Nava, 2001, p. 27) positivist epistemological grounding (Thomas & Kincheloe, 2006), and focus on accountability and high-stakes testing (R. Miller, 1990; J. P. Miller, 2000; Adarkar & Keiser, 2007). In response to these issues, there is work being done in the areas of holistic, spiritual and transformative education that aims to refocus, resacralize, decolonize, reconnect, and re-center education (J.P. Miller, 2000; R. Miller, 1990; Wexler, 2008; Shajahan, Wagner & Wane, 2009; Wane, Manyimo & Ritskes, 2011; Wane, Adyanga & Ilmi, 2014; Palmer, 1993; Glazer, 1999; Zajonc, 2006).

Despite the assumptions by secularists, modernity has not prompted the diminishing of religious/spiritual beliefs (Habermas, 2008). Although the role of spirituality in Ontario's post-secular educational climate is in question, I argue that embracing spirituality at all levels of schooling will not only remedy the fragmentation caused by the scientific-empirical, atomistic, reductionist, positivist epistemological stance embraced in Ontario's education system, it will lead to greater well-being for students throughout their development.

This paper presents several over-arching ideas related to spirituality and the many forms in which it may be connected to, and employed in, education. It is intended to invite others to join in the discourse of spirituality and expand on, critique or reject the notions I discuss. I attempt to synthesize and connect different

ideas put forth by prominent theorists in a way that harmonizes them, and situate them within a framework that conceptualizes student development and growth as belonging to one of five areas: body, mind, heart, soul and spirit.

After discussing my location and spiritual identity, theoretical grounding, and issues surrounding the definition and discussion of spirituality, I contrast the current areas of focus and initiatives presented by Ontario's Ministry of Education with my vision of 'what could be' in Ontario's education system. Though the documents and initiatives discussed are specific to Ontario, the educational aims presented are similar for most educational policies in North America given the current climate of data-driven accountability, mechanical/industrial models of schooling, lack of teacher autonomy, and conceptions of teaching as a technical exercise (Kincheloe, 1991). These characteristics are by no means universal in all educational spheres, but they do characterize many of the issues with education in our current post-secular, information age.

Holistic education that seeks to integrate students and usher them towards wholeness cannot shy away from issues of oppression, marginalization or inequity. Indeed, the primary ways of knowing (spiritual, transpersonal, intuitive) that characterize holistic education are marginalized within the academy (Wuthnow, 2008) as well as elementary and secondary schooling. Therefore, in my discussion of spirituality I aim to include many perspectives of where spirituality may be recognized or employed in life and in education and I urge readers to resist marginalization by embracing and living one's spirituality openly.

In putting forth the following ideas, I recognize that much of the spiritual discourse is subjective and potentially controversial depending on one's metaphysical beliefs. My epistemological views align with Ken Wilber, who explains, "I have one major rule: *Everybody* is right. More specifically, everybody—including me—has some important pieces of truth, and all of those pieces need to be honored, cherished, and included into a more gracious, spacious and compassionate embrace…But every approach, I honestly believe is true, but partial…" (as cited in Visser, 2003, p. 224).

My Location

I am a white, Catholic, European, middle-class, heterosexual, Canadian, vegan, spiritual, able-bodied, male, elementary school teacher. As someone located in these intersections of identity, it has been confusing attempting to situate myself within the discourse of critical pedagogy. As a body that fits within the dominant cultural narrative, I have experienced 'white guilt.' I know this feeling, though valid, must be transcended in order to recognize my privilege and act to counter systematized inequity in education. Ideas presented in this paper are put forth as a part of the effort to center the oft-marginalized subject of spirituality in the academy and within public school classrooms.

In locating myself as an anti-oppressive holistic educator whose intersections of identity are marked by unearned privilege, I believe it is essential for me to work towards integrating 'alternative' or non-normative (indigenous, transpersonal, spiritual, intuitive) knowledges into my worldview and pedagogy. The inclusion of these perspectives is imperative if we are to work towards a balanced education system that does not marginalize interior, less 'objective,' or non-Eurocentric ways of knowing. I posit that critical pedagogues must transgress and resist current educational norms in many forms in order to forward the integration of these knowledges into the academy and school system in a meaningful way.

In this paper, I aim to advance the discourse of holistic education and spirituality in education. By discussing spirituality in the academy, we validate and legitimize it as a necessary and relevant discourse. I contest the notion that New Age spiritualities are inauthentic or illegitimate due to the frequent commodification of these spiritualties, as others have suggested (Aupers & Houtman, 2006; York, 2001; Rindfleish, 2005; Caplan 2004). By engaging in this discussion, I aim to resist and disrupt the curriculum hierarchy and the marginalization of spirituality that is inherent in the academy and public-school system.

Theoretical Foundation

I am grounding my paper in two closely related theories, Holistic Learning Theory and Integral theory, and what I am calling the pre-theory of Spirituality. Both theories reflect an inclusive,

developmental worldview that reflects a spiritual awareness. It is through these theoretical lenses that I will investigate and redefine current educational aims.

In discussing holistic education, it is important to acknowledge that the ideas that Holistic Learning Theory draws upon come from the spiritual wisdom and philosophies of early societies and indigenous peoples across space and time. John P. Miller describes the connection of the perennial philosophy, which informs holistic education, to ancient Greek and South Asian philosophies and spiritual practices (J. P. Miller, 2006). African, Asian and North American Indigenous groups, for the most part, exhibit holistic worldviews (Cajete, 1994; Shroff, 2011), which Holistic Learning Theory embraces. Hart describes the medicine wheel as reflecting concepts like wholeness, balance, relationships (interconnections), harmony, growth and healing (M. Hart, 1991); these are common themes in holistic education.

Holistic Learning Theory is based on the worldview of Holism, which posits, "…the whole (any phenomenon-in-context) is always greater (more complex, more integrated, more meaningful) than the sum of its parts. Wholeness is inherent in all phenomena," (R. Miller, 1995, p. 57). It is 'explicitly spiritual.' Based on the perennial philosophy, it is ultimately concerned with the development of human consciousness (R. Miller, 1995, p. 58; J. P. Miller, 1996, p. 12). John P. Miller describes connection, inclusion and balance as three main aspects of holistic education, the central aims of which are to transcend fragmented worldviews and embrace wholeness (J. P. Miller, 1996, pp. 3-10). To create balance to education, teachers must teach the whole student, body, mind, heart, soul and spirit. The reductionist, scientific-empirical, positivist, objectivist and atomist worldviews that characterize modern education must be transcended and included into a wider embrace that seeks to nurture all areas of development in learners, especially those that utilize knowledges traditionally marginalized by the education system.

Ken Wilber's Integral Theory (2000) is a framework that seeks to integrate all areas of human knowing and consciousness. The AQAL model describes four quadrants (upper left: interior-individual, upper right: exterior-individual, lower left: interior-

collective, lower right: exterior collective). It also describes lines or streams of development that are similar to Gardner's intelligences, levels or waves of development based on prominent developmental psychological models that include higher integral (and essentially spiritual) levels or development, states of consciousness (waking, dreaming, altered, meditative etc.), and types of consciousness like personality types, gender identities and other orientations to consciousness (Wilber, 2000, pp. 42-48).

Integral theory can be seen as universalizing, which is problematic for proponents of critical pedagogy. I am grounding my paper in this theory because I believe that there are components of human experience that are universal; many of those experiences are those that most would consider to be spiritual. Despite its developmental focus, Wilber's map of human experience is holarchical, not hierarchical, in that each stage of development overlaps and is simultaneously included and transcended as one progresses through each stage (Wilber, 2000, p. 44). As well, 'higher stages' are not better; though they are usually more inclusive, more whole. Integral theory is a way to organize one's thinking about the world and an attempt to reconcile and make sense of competing worldviews. It is however, just a theory. Wilber reminds us that confusing the map for the territory is erroneous (Wilber, 2006, p. 2).

This paper is also grounded in what can be called the 'pre-theory of spirituality'. Spirituality, as a theory, is still pre-theoretical, in that it "gives broad directions for investigation," (Flynn, 2014); however, its often-disparate tenets have yet to be harmonized into a cohesive theory. Because of spirituality's pre-theoretical status, much work needs to be done in expanding and extrapolating ideas that are a part of the discourse of spirituality. This paper presents several terms, coined by the author or by other spiritual scholars, which require further unpacking. However, it is beyond the scope of this paper to explore them fully here.

Spiritual Identity and Spiritual Authenticity

Spiritual identity can be seen as a paradox. Spirit is both a level of existence that permeates everything (the ground of being) and the highest level of development (unity consciousness). It is

inextricably tied to all areas of being and transcends the boundaries that we create through our conceptions of difference due to time, space, appearance and behavior. Spirituality transcends and includes identity on its way to ultimate identity (spirit or non-dual consciousness).

Therefore, theorists who engage in the discourse of spirituality without mention of culture or identity politics are not committing a devastating omission. They may be subscribing to the transcendent view of spirituality by attempting to discuss the spirituality that goes beyond how spirituality is 'put to work' culturally and sociologically (immanent spirituality). Closely related to the concept of immanent spirituality is the concept of material spirituality, which is how spirituality manifests itself in the forms of religion, psychology, art, philosophy, culture, identity, politics, society, and all other areas of life. It can be thought of as spirituality that permeates all areas of existence, all of the quadrants in Wilber's AQAL model (Wilber, 2000, p. 71).

An essential part of my identity is my spiritual identity. Everyone is a manifestation of spirit, what is sometimes referred to as the Absolute and as such, we all hold the same divine, spiritual identity. In material terms, I describe my socio-spiritual identity as follows. I am a practicing Catholic and spiritual seeker. As a spiritual practitioner, I look to practices from my Christian faith (especially those from mystical or esoteric Christian traditions) as well as those from other faith traditions for spiritual growth. This is similar to Houston Smith's practice as described by William Spohn (2001). Due to the syncretic nature of my spirituality, some may consider me to be a 'New Age practitioner'. I do not identify with the term New Age, I prefer the term inner-life spiritual practitioner as coined by Palmisano (2010), which describes people who feel it is "fundamental to break away from mainstream society and culture to experience owning one's 'authentic', natural' or 'real' self.... comprised of a variety of spirituality that concerns the force, energy or vitality that sustains life itself," (2010).

Scholars condemn New Age spiritualities for being incoherent and idiosyncratic (Aupers & Houtman, 2006), eclectic, syncretistic, gnostic, anti-authoritarian and subjectivist (Collins, 1998), a spiritual commodity (York, 2001), or a social product (Rindfleish,

2005). I argue that these criticisms contribute to the marginalization of spirituality in the academy and public schooling and fail to recognize the validity of authentic spiritual seeking. By using the terms above and others like pseudo-science, occult, ill-defined, religious shoppers, and consumption, critics paint New Age practitioners, and spiritual seekers in general, with a broad brush. Genuine spiritual seekers who engage in an inclusive bricolage of spiritual practice and exhibit openness to spiritual phenomena are reduced to superficial consumers, deviant spiritual rebels, or irreverent and ill-defined do-it-yourself religious practitioners. In typical rationalist-positivist fashion, inner-spirituality is written-off as unscientific and ungrounded.

This condemnation of New Age spirituality is damaging for holistic education, as the two are often associated. The single story of New Age described by the above authors needs to be balanced with an authentic picture of New Age or inner-life spirituality. New Agers stress the "importance of such things as personal experience, holism, respect for nature, meditation, healing etc.," (Collins, 1998, p. 95). As well, the spiritual seeking exhibited by New Agers is not a new phenomenon. Bender explains, "[spiritual] seeking is a longstanding and valued religious tradition in the United States which places the highest value on individual self-reliance and perfection, and on the ability to seek wisdom from diverse religious sources," (Griffith, Satter & Taylor, as cited in Bender, 2007, p. 4).

In discussing the issue of spiritual authenticity, the idea that people interact with their spiritual milieu to create a unique and personal spirituality must be taken as the starting point. Spirituality based on multiple wisdom traditions is just as authentic as spirituality that is based on a single wisdom tradition if the person is committed to spiritual practices (Spohn, 2001) and seeks to utilize and understand spiritual knowledges. Wilber extends this claim saying:

Authentic spirituality, then, can no longer be mythic, imaginal, mythological, or mythopoetic; it must be based on falsifiable evidence. In other words, it must be, at its core, a series of direct mystical, transcendental, meditative, contemplative or yogic experiences – not sensory and not mental, but transsensual, transmental, transpersonal, transcendental consciousness-data

seen not merely with the eye of flesh or eye of mind but with the eye of contemplation. (1994, p. 166).

Critics of New Age use the term bricolage to describe a grab bag of spiritual incoherence (Aupers & Houtman, 2006; York, 2001). I call for a conception of spirituality-as-bricolage based on Kincheloe's use of the term (Kincheloe, 2005) – a critical, reverent and integral bricolage that acknowledges the connections between spiritualities and their cultural, social, historical, geographical and philosophical roots or underpinnings. This bricolage is employed and enacted by committed practitioners who acknowledge spirituality as complex and interconnected with all of existence. It is socio-historically situated and can be viewed through many lenses. Spirituality-as-bricolage is a rigorous and critical spirituality that is multilogical and multimethodological in that it uses different ways of knowing (spiritual, intuitive, transpersonal, meditative) and uses various means of collecting the 'data' Wilber refers to in the previous paragraph.

Defining Spirituality

Spirituality is difficult to define. It is marked by its ineffable, paradoxical, transcendent, and in some ways, unknowable nature. As such, definitions of spirituality vary. Some acknowledge a higher power or the Absolute, while others describe it purely in terms of spiritual values or characteristics.

Spirituality can be defined as, "…a relationship with a Transcendent Being (or whatever is considered Ultimate), informed by a certain spiritual tradition, which fosters a sense of meaning, purpose, and mission in life," (Hodge, 2000). It is "…that which touches the core of human existence, namely, 'our relation to the Absolute'… [Spirituality] is 'the capacity of person to transcend themselves through knowledge and love'," (Waaijman, as cited in Kourie, 2009). Spirituality can be described as:

An awareness that our lives have purpose, a direction, a meaning, a goal that transcends our particular physical and cultural conditioning. It is the recognition that human beings are indeed connected, in profound ways, to the continuing evolution of life and the universe. (R. Miller, 1991, p. 58).

Wilber provides four definitions of spirituality, which reflect the spiritual development described in Integral Theory.

(1) Spirituality involves peak experiences or altered states that can occur at almost any stage and any age; (2) spirituality involves the highest levels of any of the lines; (3) spirituality is a separate developmental line itself; (4) spirituality is an attitude (such as openness, trust, or love) that the self may or may not have at any stage. (Wilber, 1997, p. 271).

I think all of the above-mentioned definitions are valuable. I offer the following definition that differs from what has been put forth by other scholars. Spirituality is the experiencing of and experience of soul and/or spirit. Spirituality is both our subjective experiencing of our highest Self or soul, and the universal, unbounded experience of spirit – the connecting fabric of the cosmos. It is simultaneously our experience of the universe on a metaphysical level, and spirit—the ground of being—experiencing itself. What follows is that this definition hinges on metaphysical assumptions as well as how soul and spirit are conceptualized and defined.

Soul and spirit are often used interchangeably; however, authors like Ken Wilber and Thomas Moore distinguish between the two. Wilber describes spirit as timeless, spaceless, and ever-present; it is both transcendent, surpassing worldly things, and immanent, totally and wholly present in all things (Wilber, 1997, p. 39). Conflicting definitions of spirituality often stem from not recognizing this paradox. Soul, on the other hand, is defined as the transcendental witness, a 'higher or subtler mind and cognition,' (Wilber, 1997, p. 42). The soul is also the 'infinite depth of a person or society' (Moore, 1994, p. 267); drawn inward, it seeks contemplation (p. 233) but is impossible to define (p. xi).

In theorizing spirituality, scholars need to attempt to describe the essence of spirituality as well as what it is and how it can be applied. Instead of positing the meaning of spirituality, many authors have described how it can function or how it can be put to work. Spirituality can be used to cope, resist, (Watt, 2003), self-identify (Love, Bock & Richardson, 2005), and disrupt (Graveline, 1998) but more work needs to be done to discuss what spirituality is at its source.

The Current Climate of Education in Ontario

Before discussing the specific initiatives and mandates that characterize Ontario's educational climate, it is useful to discuss the general worldview that informs contemporary education. Current educational ideas are based on a modernist worldview that is: scientific-empirical, driven by empirical evidence and usually ignores the intangible; atomistic, based on the premise that concepts are better taught when broken down into separate components; positivistic, rooted in the belief that only what can be verified scientifically is real knowledge; and materialist, with a focus almost solely on issues of the material world. It's based on a worldview that, for the most part, reduces the interior, subjective experiences of existence to objective, what Wilber calls 'flatland reductionism' (2000, p. 160).

Some of the current aims and objectives of education in Ontario are described in the Ontario Ministry of Education's *Achieving Excellence: A Renewed Vision for Education in Ontario* (2014), *Ontario's Well-being Strategy for Education Discussion Document* (2016) as well as the front matters of each of the curriculum documents. *Achieving Excellence* describes four renewed goals for Ontario education: achieving excellence, ensuring equity, promoting well-being, and enhancing public confidence (2014, p. 3). The document explains the importance of supporting the whole child in his or her cognitive, emotional, social and physical well-being but fails to mention the spiritual. In Ontario's Well-Being strategy, this description is expanded, "Well-being is that positive sense of self, spirit and belonging that we feel when our cognitive, emotional, social and physical needs are being met. As our Indigenous partners have long affirmed, healthy development of the mind, body and spirit is contingent on balance and interconnectedness," (2016, p. 1); however, spiritual is still not acknowledged as a domain of well-being in the document.

Neves (2009) describes the limits of the Ontario curriculum when analyzed through a holistic education lens. The Ontario curriculum is representative of a limited view of education presented in the outcomes-based, standardized test-assessed curriculum (pp. 122-123). "The Ontario curriculum focuses too heavily on the product of learning, e.g., the learning outcomes, to the detriment of the

process of learning, e.g., deep learning activities," (p. 126). Aside from making it difficult for the type of integrative, trans-disciplinary teaching that holistic educators typically employ, the curriculum and Ontario education system as a whole (outside of maybe religious education programs) also fails to recognize the legitimacy of spiritual learning.

Ontario's Education Act fails to mention spirituality, although Quebec's Education Act does, describing that, "A school shall, in particular, facilitate the spiritual development of students so as to promote self-fulfilment [sic]," (2016, p. 17). In fact, the Committee for Religious Affaires created a brief discussing the importance of spiritual development of pupils (2007). As previously mentioned, the Ontario government has acknowledged that students are whole persons: mind, body and spirit; however, as I am proposing, much is needed to be done in order to center spirituality in Ontario's education system.

Most curriculum is inherently hierarchical in a way that 'equates knowledge with certainty," (Bleazby, 2015, p. 672). Subjects that are disciplinary (and not interdisciplinary), more established or older, more abstract and relying on theory, or focused on cognition have a higher status compared to those that are concrete, subjective, practical or embodied (Bleazby, 2015). The west often evaluates what knowledge is valid or 'scientific', and what is unscientific, viewing itself as the center of legitimate knowledge (Holmes, 2010). This may explain why spirituality is marginalized within the public school system. Wuthnow (2008) describes the marginalization of religion or faith in the academy. It follows that because spirituality is a newer discipline and is often considered analogous to religion and even equated with New Age beliefs, that it is also marginalized in the academy and within the public school system.

Within the context of 'knowledge management', Zeleny (2006) describes a 'taxonomy of knowledge,' which includes a continuum of data, information, knowledge, wisdom and enlightenment. I want to re-contextualize and apply that taxonomy to education; I believe that education should move from data-driven, an oft-heard buzzword in the age of accountability, to wisdom-seeking. This shift in focus would correct many of the issues caused by the

current fragmentary, mechanical, modernist framework employed in education, and would allow for the centering of spirituality.

Centering Heart, Soul and Spirit; Refocusing Mind and Body

Given the characterization of contemporary education in Ontario that was presented in the previous section, it seems to me that at this moment in history, holistic education is an educational imperative. To employ holistic education in Ontario schools requires a balancing and refocusing of teaching. In the next section I re-imagine what education can be when it centers the heart, soul and spirit and re-contextualizes the mind and body.

A Spiritual Concept of Mind

The mind and the development of its cognitive faculties is the prime focus of contemporary education. The lack of balance between cognitive development and the development of body, heart, soul and spirit contributes in many ways to the fragmented, alienated world most people experience (J. P. Miller, 1996). The mind, though capable of amazing feats, causes several problems, most of which stem from what is known is spiritual terms as the ego.

When one studies the mind through a spiritual practice such as meditation or contemplation it becomes revealed that the mind operates impersonally (Hawkins, 2014, 138). Thoughts, ideas, meanings, interpretations, worries, fears, annoyances, fantasies, speculation and many other types of mentation spring forth without one's conscious control (p. 136, 137). Additionally, the mind is naturally self-centered. The self is the focal point, deserving of prime importance, while everything outside the boundary of self is 'the other.' Wilber calls this the primary boundary (1981, p. 74). Education should aim to help students transcend the egoic mind and widen one's circle of care and concern. This is discussed further later in this paper.

The ego/mind is capable of great accomplishments. Indeed, the current focal point of education is the development of cognitive capacity at the expense of many other capacities. The ego/mind, however, is the source of mentation and therefore grasping, clinging, attachment, aversion, suffering and dissatisfaction. Much of the negative emotions that students (and teachers) feel are the

by-products of natural tendencies of the mind. Educators can improve the well-being of students by helping them love, appreciate and nurture the abilities of their minds, without attachment. Additionally, by focusing more on the other areas described below, students can learn to engage their bodies, hearts, souls, and spirits in new and transformative ways.

There exists an indivisible connection between one's mind and body. In spiritual literature, it is sometimes referred to as the body-mind, although in contemporary society the mind and body are viewed in a dualistic manner. Wilber describes the need to heal the split between mind and body and in doing so, re-own the body, and he explains that in the average person, the split between ego and flesh is so prominent that most believe it is 'un-alterably real' (1981, p. 105). Tobin Hart (2004) explains that the mind is not centralized in the brain but is actually a body-wide mind. He describes endorphins and receptor sites all over the body, feeling mechanisms in the gut, knowing and memory associated with the heart; all of which is backed by modern science (p. 40). Ancient wisdom traditions often situate knowing and wisdom within the heart (Hart, 2004). Just as modern science has dethroned the brain as the location of the mind, so too should contemporary education decenter the cognitive as the primary (and sometimes sole) focus of education.

Embodied Learning

Embodied learning is a means by which to heal the mind-body split and increase body awareness in students. Stolz explains Merleau-Ponty's view that because we use our bodies (our 'whole organism') to interact with world around us in order to learn through perception and experience, experiences cannot be just physical or just mental but must necessarily be both (2014, pp. 6-7). In embodied learning, "the body becomes a place of engagement with the world such that experiences and meaning flow, transform and evolve, (McNamara & Mardon, 2017, p. 36). Implicit in embodied learning is both bodily awareness and 'existential being in the world' (McNamara & Mardon, 2017, p. 36; Stolz, 2014, p. 6). Embodied awareness is about "listening closely to what our body and being need and want to be nourished, balanced and flourishing," (Dea, 2011, p. 74).

Many spiritual practices like mindfulness and Raja Yoga are embodied, requiring the practitioner to focus on the breath, bodily sensations or sounds. This relates to spiritual embodiment where spiritual energies are embodied, and spirit is invited to matter and into the world (McNamara & Mardon, 2017, p. 36).

Learning that centers the heart, soul and spirit is inevitably transformative. It contributes to the evolving consciousness of students in ways that cognitive-focused curricula cannot. Our current model of education is producing competent, productive, but ultimately, broken human beings. Through the transformative potential of holistic education, this process can be corrected, ushering forth a 'new age' of education: an education that listens to the heart, speaks to the soul, and fully embraces spirit.

Listening to the Heart

As David R. Hawkins describes, "Love is a way of being," and it can be characterized as "…protective, collaborative, uplifting, holistic and gracious," (2012, p. 172). Bell Hooks defines love "as a combination of care, commitment, knowledge, responsibility, respect and trust," (Hooks, 2010, p. 159). It is interesting to note that three of these qualities overlap with the Ontario College of Teacher's Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession. Arthur Zajonc (2006) points out that the 'systematic cultivation of our hearts,' learning to love, is of equal or greater importance to our intellectual educational pursuits in an age filled with internal and external conflict. He continues, "…knowing itself remains partial and deformed if we do not develop and practice an epistemology of love instead of an epistemology of separation," as this "way of knowing does, indeed, turn into a way of living," (2006, p. 2). Palmer also speaks to the relationship between knowledge and love,

The goal of knowledge arising from love is the reunification and reconstruction of broken selves and worlds… Here the act of knowing is an act of love, the act of entering and embracing the reality of the other, of the other to enter and embrace our own… Our spiritual tradition makes a deeper and more substantial claim: the origin of knowledge is love. (1993, p. 8)

Knowing as an act of love is firmly rooted in sacred traditions (Hart, 2004) and is an essential component of holistic education.

John P. Miller describes the thinking heart as "teaching with wisdom and compassion," (J. P. Miller, Irwin & Nigh, 2014, p. 1). We must "…allow love to inform the relations that our knowledge creates," (Palmer, 1993, pp . 8-9) or risk the fragmentation, alienation and often destruction that loveless knowledge can cause.

In the Buddhist loving-kindness meditation (J. P. Miller, 1994, p. 83), one sends his or her 'loving attention' to a gradually wider circle of existence (Zajonc, 2006), starting with the self and ending with all beings, everywhere. An important aim for education should be helping students expand each of their circles of love and compassion. Love is an essential component of holistic education; as Dallaire reminds us, both soulful and spiritual ways of knowing, the final two topics of this paper, are "…closely aligned with the heart," (Dallaire, 2011, p. 41).

Speaking to the Soul

In seeking to engage students as whole beings, it is important to consider what speaks to the soul. The soul is a mysterious, contemplative aspect of ourselves (Moore, 1994, p. 233) that 'unites our human and divine nature'; the spiritual energy that shapes our character; and the source of creativity and intuition (Kates & Harvey, 2010, p. 3). It is an animating and loving energy that yearns for connection, harbors deepest our feelings and desires, seeks love, and "…does not approach life in a linear manner," (Miller, 1994, p. 24-27). The soul can be felt and engaged. When we invite soul into the learning environment we are aware of all of the soul attributes described above, as well as the darker, shadow aspects of our being (Miller, 1994, p. 27), the deeper emotions that need to be confronted and integrated into our being to be whole people. Moore also describes the imaginative, deep and at times shadowy nature that characterizes soul (Moore, 1994, pp. 233-234).

Wilber asserts that soul is equivalent to the witnessing awareness present in all of us—what some authors refer to as the "I" (1997, p. 42). He also describes a connection between identity and what he calls 'boundaries of the soul,' which I believe can be an important aspect of whole person development. Wilber asserts that we can 're-map' our soul boundaries to embrace more than just our physical, material being. Eventually the boundary line can be expanded

so far that it disappears altogether resulting in the experience of unity consciousness or the identification with all that is, the "one harmonious whole," (1981, p. 5). This can result from meditation (J. P. Miller, 2000, p. 127). Holistic education aims for students to experience connection and union with the rest of the cosmos. The further students are able to expand their boundary of self, the more love and compassion they will bring into the world.

John P. Miller has done much work related to soulful education. He discusses the topic in his book, *Education and the Soul* (2000), in great depth. Miller describes several ways that we can nurture our students' souls. Meditation, visualization or guided imagery, dreamwork, autobiography and journal writing, the arts, and nature or earth education are all ways that we can engage students on a soulful level. The recognition of soul is an essential aspect of holistic education and can help 'restore balance to our educational vision,' (Miller, 2000, p. 140).

Fully Embracing Spirit

Due to the earlier mentioned paradox of spirituality, spiritual education can be a nebulous discourse. I want to begin by acknowledging the immanent nature of spirit, which permeates all of existence—pervading and connecting all things (Glazer, 1999, p. 250); therefore, it can be argued that all education is essentially spiritual. However, this section will discuss explicitly spiritual education that comes in the form of teaching and modeling spiritual values or qualities and providing spiritual experiences that recognize the transcendent nature of spirituality.

Butot (2005) coins the term 'spiritual stance.' I have conceptualized a similar term, spirituality-as-stance, which has broad applications and may encapsulate many attitudes and qualities worth discussing in the context of spiritual education. I see spirituality-as-stance as being similar to John P. Miller's description of a 'meditative stance'. A meditative stance is characterized by openness, release or letting go, being (not doing), acceptance, employing or embracing big mind and long-enduring mind (letting go of insignificant thought and feelings, and focusing on the long-term with a patient mind), and grace (J. P. Miller, 1994, pp. 54-57). These meditative qualities are also included in a wider spiritual stance that may not necessarily

be meditative. Clive Beck's description of characteristics of spiritual people fits into spirituality-as-stance. These characteristics include awareness, breadth of outlook, a holistic outlook, integration, wonder, gratitude, hope, courage, energy, detachment (non-attachment), acceptance, love and gentleness (Beck as cited in Rodger, 1996, pp. 48-49). Donald Evans describes a series of stances that fit within the spirituality-as-stance framework: basic trust, humility, self-acceptance, responsibility, self-commitment, friendliness, concern, and contemplation (Evans as cited in Rodger, 1996, pp. 49-50). Glazer describes qualities of spirituality in education: openness, awareness, presence, wholeness, and transformation that is available in each moment, which are embraced in a spiritual stance (1999, pp. 247-250). As we begin to conceptualize what attitudes, values, qualities and dispositions make up spirituality-as-stance, we can begin to reflect on how they apply to the process of education.

Esbjorn Hargens, a proponent of Integral Education (which is based on Wilber's Integral Theory), describes ten integral awareness practices, which I consider to be excellent ways of applying a spiritual stance to teaching and learning. These are: embodied reading—reading with the whole body, engaged reading—reading with the whole mind, presence—being fully attentive during learning experiences, reflective dialogue—being aware of one's contributions, shadow work, being aware of psychological defence mechanisms, inquiry, perspective taking, self-authorship—developing self-autonomy, witnessing—being aware of the ever-present witness of experience in ourselves, and daily meditation or spiritual practice (Esbjorn-Hargens, 2007, pp. 94-95).

In *the Holistic Curriculum* (1996), John P. Miller discusses the importance of connections in holistic education. Indeed, developing spiritual connections to self, others, community, culture, world, and the whole cosmos is a fundamental element of spiritual (and by extension) holistic education. It is interesting to note that this expansion from self to the whole cosmos mirrors the direction of well-wishes in the loving-kindness meditation as well as the evolution of conscious described by Wilber when he discusses boundaries of the soul.

We develop from an egocentric stage to ethnocentric, worldcentric and hopefully cosmocentric (Wilber, 2000, p. 127). At each stage, we identify less and less with the ego until finally we experience unity consciousness or oneness with all existence. Through the development of spiritual connections, we begin to see others and ultimately all of existence as part of who we are. This is arguably the ultimate goal of spiritual (holistic) education.

Spiritual education is characterized by an openness to and embrace of spiritual ways of knowing or intelligences. Amram (2007) describes seven spiritual intelligences based on a thematic analysis of interviews that were conducted. He designates consciousness, grace, meaning, transcendence, truth, peaceful surrender to Self (spirit, God, the Absolute) and inner-directedness as spiritual intelligences. Gatmon (2015) describes four ways of spiritual knowing. Expansive knowing is an experience of expansiveness accompanied by “transcendence, elation, inspiration, love, joy, bliss, compassion, gratitude or wholeness,” (p. 6). Guided knowing follows this expansion of consciousness and allows one to be guided by intuition, flashes of insight; this can lead to active knowing, which is a conviction inspired by intuition that seems to be ‘aligned and supported by the universe’ (pp. 12-13). Lastly, faith-filled knowledge is “an inner knowing that there are laws that govern the spiritual [metaphysical] realm,” (p. 13).

A common way of knowing discussed and applied in holistic/ spiritual education is contemplation. Hawkins explains that contemplation is “more relaxed, open, spacious and intuitive than goal directed activities,” (2008, p. 291). He also describes ‘effortless unfolding’ and letting go of attraction and aversion as main characteristics of contemplation (p. 292). Dallaire describes an ‘epistemology of contemplation’ that integrates spiritual and rational ways of knowing (Dalliare, 2011, p. 79). He coins the term ‘engaged spirituality’ and uses it to describe contemplation-in-action that contains seven insights: (a) interconnectivity, (b) progressive transformation, (c) small actions create change, (d) unity and diversity co-exist, (e) realism, (f) a communal path, and (g) acceptance of finitude (p. 83-89). Dallaire believes that this framework can be easily adapted within Canadian educational practice because it is not explicitly religious or secular (p. 80).

A valuable spiritual practice that has gotten lots of attention in the context of contemporary education is mindfulness. Thich Nhat Hanh has written many books on mindfulness and how to apply it to different areas of life. Mindfulness is being present in this moment, not being distracted by other thoughts (Hanh, 1987, pp. 11-12). When we do things, we must focus on only what we are doing as if it is the most important thing in the world (Hanh, 1987, p. 24). Not only is mindfulness a helpful tool to remain aware of our thoughts and actions as educators, it permits us to engage our spiritual stance throughout the day.

Spirit is consciousness as such (Hegel, p. 394). Because of the nature of K-12 and post-secondary education, discussing spiritual practices and spiritual qualities that educators can endeavor to embody and model to their students is likely sufficient; however, a discussion of spirituality in education would be incomplete without discussing what is commonly referred to as awakening, liberation, enlightenment, wholeness or non-dual, unity consciousness. Kornfield describes a consciousness that is vast, timeless, open and pure of which one can become aware (2009, pp. 39-40); Wilber refers to this as unity consciousness (1981, p. 141). This awakening is the realization that all is one. It is not a conceptual knowing but an intuitive, non-verbal knowing and for scholars like Wilber and Hawkins who have developed maps of consciousness, the levels of realization or enlightenment constitute the highest levels. At this level, one drops egoic identity and has expanded one's circle of care and compassion to include the whole cosmos. Whether it is acknowledged or not, we are all spiritual beings who are able to raise our consciousness by making positive choices and following the teachings of the world's wisdom traditions. As educators, we are helping students grow, develop and raise their consciousness and this is especially effective when we employ a balanced, holistic pedagogical approach.

Spiritual learning can be characterized in many ways but to put it simply, like spirit itself, spirituality in education is ever-present, waiting to be acknowledged. As an educator, engaging in spirituality by taking a spiritual stance or by making the effort to direct your awareness as is done during mindfulness practice is inviting spirit into the classroom. Each person will have a different sense of what

spirituality means to them and how it looks in practice. The above ideas are by no means exhaustive, but they do provide a good starting point for teachers interested in considering spirituality-as-stance and embracing spirituality in their teaching practice.

Conclusion

Many scholars are contributing to the educational discourses that focus on spirituality, transformation, soul, wholeness (holism) and contemplation. They subscribe to a vision of education that recognizes the student as a whole being in all of its depth, complexity, potential and divinity; that implicates a pedagogy of balance, inclusion, connection and spirit.

In this paper, I have discussed issues central to spirituality in education, described some of my own stances and ideas, and proposed a vision of what education in the 21st century can be. I urge scholars to contribute to the discourse of spirituality in education in an effort to legitimize its status and move it from periphery to center in the academy. In our current educational climate, making an effort to travel the transformative path towards wholeness is a means by which to resist the marginalization of spirituality in schooling and improve education for every learner.

We must redefine our educational aims. By producing graduates who have sufficiently developed cognitive and kinesthetic capacities but insufficiently developed capacities of the heart, soul and spirit, we are failing our students. If we hold the nurturing of the spiritual to be an ultimate concern of education, education may become an unlearning of an illusory reality—an act of remembering all of which we are apart, an expanding of our individual boundaries of self to embrace everything in the cosmos; spirit recognizing itself as spirit.

References

Adarkar, A., & Keiser, D. L. (2007). The Buddha in the classroom: Toward a critical spiritual pedagogy. *Journal of Transformative Education, 5*(3), 246-261.

Amram, Y. (2007). Seven dimensions of spiritual intelligence: An ecumenical, grounded theory. Paper Presented at the 115th Annual Conference of the American Psychological Association. San Francisco. Ca. Retrieved November 22, 2016. From http://www.yosiamram.net/papers

Aupers, S., & Houtman, D. (2006). Beyond the spiritual supermarket: The social and public significance of new age spirituality. *Journal of Contemporary Religion, 21*(2), 201-222.

Bender, C. (2007). Religion and spirituality: History, discourse, measurement. *Social Science Research Council Forum: The Religious Engagements of American Undergraduates.* Retrieved December 5, 2016, from http://religion.ssrc.org/reforum/

Bleazby, J. (2015). Why some school subjects have a higher status than others: The epistemology of the traditional curriculum hierarchy. *Oxford Review of Education, 41*(5), 671-689. doi:10.1080/03054985.2015.1090966

Butot, M. (2005). Reframing spirituality, reconceptualizing change: Possibilities for critical social work. *Critical Social Work, 6*(2).

Cajete, G. (1994). *Look to the mountain: An ecology of indigenous education*. Durango, CO: Kivakí Press.

Caplan, M. (2004). Where are we going? The fate and failings of contemporary spirituality. *Spirituality and Health International, 5*(1), 26-33. doi:10.1002/shi.208

Collins, P. (1998). New age spirituality. *The Furrow, 49*(2), 91-97.

Dallaire, M. (2011). *Teaching with the wind: Spirituality in Canadian education*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.

Dea, W. (2011). *Igniting brilliance: integral education for the 21st century*. Tucson, AZ: Integral .

Education Act. Government of Quebec. (2016, c. I-13.3). Retrieved December 12, 2016, from http://legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca/en/ShowDoc/cs/I-13.3

Esbjorn-Hargens, S. (2007). Integral teacher, integral students, integral classroom: Applying integral theory to education. *AQAL: Journal of Integral Theory and Practice, 2*(2), 72-103.

Ethical Standards | Ontario College of Teachers. (n.d.). Retrieved December 19, 2016, from http://www.oct.ca/public/professional-standards/ethical-standards

Gatmon, A. (2015). Four ways of spiritual knowing: An epistemology for a diverse world. *Journal for the Study of Spirituality, 5*(1), 7-19.

Graveline, J. F. (1998). Resistance theorized: The native perspective. In *Circle works: Transforming eurocentric consciousness*. Halifax, N. S.: Fernwood.

Glazer, S. (1999). *The heart of learning: Spirituality in education.* New York: J.P. Tarcher/Putnam

Habermas, J. (2008). Notes on post-secular society. *New Perspectives Quarterly, 25*(4),

Hart, M. (1999). Seeking mino-pimatasiwin (the good life): An aboriginal approach to social work practice. Native Social Work Journal 2(1), 91-112.

Hart, T. (2004). Opening the contemplative mind in the classroom. *Journal of Transformative Education, 2*(1), 28-46.

Hawkins, D. R. (2012). *Letting go: the pathway of surrender.* Hay House Inc.

Hawkins, D. R. (2008). *Reality, spirituality and modern man.* Australia: Hay House.

Hawkins, D. R. (2014). *The eye of the I: from which nothing is hidden.* Carlsbad, CA: Hay House.

Hegel, G. W. (2008). *The Phenomenology of Spirit* [PDF]. Terry Pinkard.

Hodge, D. R. (2000). Spirituality: Towards a theoretical framework. *Social Thought, 19*(4), 1-20. doi:10.1080/15426432.2000.9960271

Holmes, T. R. (2010). The hierarchy of epistemological beliefs: All ways of knowing are not created equal (Part 4: Theories Revisited). *Studies In Meaning, 4*. Retrieved December 2, 2016, from https://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-281112138.html.

Hooks, B. (2010). *Teaching critical thinking: practical wisdom*. New York: Routledge.

Kates, I. C., & Harvey, C. L. (2010). *The wheels of soul in education: an inspiring international dynamic*. Rotterdam: Sense.

Kincheloe, J. L. (2005). On to the next Level: Continuing the Conceptualization of the bricolage. *Qualitative Inquiry, 11*(3), 323-350. doi:10.1177/1077800405275056

Kincheloe, J. L. (1991). *Teachers as researchers: Qualitative inquiry as a path to empowerment*. London: Routledge.

Kornfield, J. (2009). *The wise heart: a guide to the universal teachings of Buddhist psychology*. New York: Bantam Books.

Kourie, C. (2009). Spirituality and the university. *Verbum Et Ecclesia, 30*(1). doi:10.4102/ve.v30i1.67

Love, P., Bock, M., Jannarone, A., & Richardson, P. (2005). Identity interaction: Exploring the spiritual experiences of lesbian and gay college students. *Journal of College Student Development, 46*(2), 193-209. doi:10.1353/csd.2005.0019

McNamara, J., & Mardon, C. (2017). Transformational growth into wholeness. In J. P. Miller & K. Nigh (Eds.), *Holistic education and embodied learning* (pp. 29-53). Information Age Publishing Inc.

Miller, J. P. (2000). *Education and the soul: Toward a spiritual curriculum*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Miller, J. P. (2006). Review essay: Ancient roots of holistic education. Encounter: Education for Meaning and Social Justice, 19, 55-59.

Miller, J. P. (1994). *The contemplative practitioner: Meditation in education and the professions*. Toronto, ON: OISE Press.

Miller, J. P. (1983). *The educational spectrum: Orientations to curriculum*. New York: Longman.

Miller, J. P. (1996). *The holistic curriculum*. Toronto: OISE Press, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.

Miller, J. P., Irwin, M., & Nigh, K. (2014). *Teaching from the thinking heart: The practice of holistic education*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.

Miller, R. (1990). *What are schools for: Holistic education in American culture*. Brandon, VT.: Holistic Education Press.

Moore, T. (1994). *Care of the soul: A guide for cultivating depth and sacredness in everyday life*. NY: HarperPerennial.

Nava, R. G. (2001). *Holistic education: pedagogy of universal love*. Brandon, VT: Foundation for Educational Renewal.

Neves, A. C. (2009). A holistic approach to the Ontario curriculum: moving to a more coherent curriculum. (Master's Thesis). Retrieved from TSpace http://hdl.handle.net/1807/18107

Ontario Ministry of Education. (2014). *Achieving excellence: A renewed vision for education in Ontario*. ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario.

Ontario Ministry of Education. (2016).*Ontario's well-being strategy for education: Discussion document*. ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario.

Palmisano, S. (2010). Spirituality and catholicism: The italian experience. *Journal of Contemporary Religion, 25*(2), 221-241.

Palmer, P. J. (1993). *To know as we are known: A spirituality of education*. San Francisco: Harper & Row.

Peterson, T. (1999, Winter). Examining loss of soul in education. *Education and Culture, 15*(1/2), 9-15.

Picard, R. W., Papert, S., Bender, W., Blumberg, B., Breazeal, C., Cavallo, D., Strohecker, C. (2004). Affective learning — A manifesto. *BT Technology Journal, 22*(4), 253-269.

Rindfleish, J. (2005). Consuming the self: New age spirituality as "social product" in consumer society. *Consumption Markets & Culture, 8*(4), 343-360.

Rodger, A. (1996). Human spirituality: Toward an educational rationale. In R. Best (Ed.), *Education, Spirituality and the Whole Child* (pp. 45-63). London: Cassell.

Shahjahan, R. A., Wagner, A., & Wane, N. N. (2009). Rekindling the Sacred: Toward a decolonizing pedagogy in higher education. *Journal of Thought, 44*(1-2), 59.

Shroff, F. (2011). CHAPTER THREE: We are all one: Holistic thought-forms within indigenous societies, indigeneity and holism. In *Counterpoints, Indigenous Philosophies and Critical Education: A READER* (Vol. 379, pp. 53-67). Peter Lang AG.Stable Url: http://www.jstor.org/stable/42980884

Spohn, W. C. (2001). Spiritual practices: The true test of ppirituality. *Dialog: A Journal of Theology, 40*(4), 277-283. doi:10.1111/1540-6385.00087

Stolz, S. A. (2014). Embodied Learning. *Educational Philosophy and Theory,47*(5), 474-487. doi:10.1080/00131857.2013.879694

The spiritual development of students. A challenge for secular schools. Brief to the minister of education. Québec: Government of Québec, 2007.

Thomas, P. L., & Kincheloe, J. L. (2006). *Reading, writing, and thinking: The postformal basics*. Rotterdam: Sense.

Visser, F. (2003). *Ken Wilber: Thought as passion.* Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Wane, N. N., Manyimo, E. L., & Ritskes, E. J. (2011). *Spirituality, education & society: An integrated approach.* Rotterdam: Sense.

Wane, N. N., Adyanga, A. F., & Ilmi, A. A. (2014). *Spiritual discourse in the academy: A globalized indigenous perspective*. New York: Peter Lang.

Watt, S. K. (2003). Come to the river: Using spirituality to cope, resist, and develop identity. *New Directions for Student Services, 2003*(104), 29-40.

Wexler, P. (2008). *Symbolic movement: Critique and spirituality in sociology of education.* Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Sense.

Wilber, K. (2000). *A theory of everything: An integral vision for business, politics, science, and spirituality*. Boston: Shambhala.

Wilber, K. (1981). *No boundary: Eastern and Western approaches to personal growth.* Boulder, CO: Shambhala.

Wilber, K. (1997). *The eye of spirit: An integral vision for a world gone slightly mad.* Boston: Shambhala.

Wilber, K. (2006). *Integral spirituality: A startling new role for religion in the modern and postmodern world.* Boston: Integral Books.

Wuthnow, R. (2007). Can faith be more than a sideshow in the contemporary academy? *The American University in a Postsecular Age,* 31-44.

York, M. (2001). New age commodification and appropriation of spirituality. *Journal of Contemporary Religion, 16*(3), 361-372.

Yampolskaya, L. I. (2015). The principles of holistic education and the ideal of a single integrated culture: Towards the formation of an approach. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences, 166*, 488-496.

Zajonc, A. (2006). Love and knowledge: Recovering the heart of learning through contemplation. *Teachers College Record, 108*(9), 1742-1759.

Zeleny, M. (2006). From knowledge to wisdom: On being informed and knowledgeable, becoming wise and ethical. *International Journal of Information Technology & Decision Making, 05*(04), 751-762.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

INFUSING AND/OR INTEGRATING SPIRITUALITY IN THE CLASSROOM

Nana A. Bediako-Amoah

Focus: Nana Adusei Sefa Tweneboah I -George Dei's "Spiritual Knowing and Transformative Learning" & the Futurity of African/Black Student Achievement & Success

Introduction

The notion of spirituality being a part of our current schooling system is intriguing to say the least. Spirituality in its own right is a very simple, yet complex way of coming to know. When one thinks of spirituality, one must question if we really have a true understanding of what is spirituality and what it means to be a spiritual being? What I have come to learn and understand is that spirituality is often confused or used interchangeably with religion; which in of itself is questionable. "Although religion can be part of spirituality, religion and spirituality are not interchangeable" (Baskin 2016, pg. 51). Spirituality is difficult to define and cannot be "boxed in" using terms acceptable to western academy. The idea of defining spirituality becomes more complex when the academy continues to try and explain using western ideologies (Dei, 2012; Shahjahan, 2005). It is becoming increasingly apparent that spirituality is often absent or separated from the individual and their surroundings (Baskin, 2016). As a result, some researchers are calling for the introduction of spirituality in the education system as another way of addressing the idea of wholeness (Dei, 2002; Baskin, 2016; Wane, Manyimo & Ristkes, 2011). Similarly, there is a growing body of evidence that suggests that higher education and K-12 schools need to reform their approach and infuse it with content that creates space for student experiences, spirituality, culture, traditions and ways of knowing (Dei 2012; Shajahan 2005; Shahjahan, 2009; Wane,Adayanga & Ilmi, 2014). The idea of spirituality in the classroom is supposed to provide a more holistic approach to student success and achievement. It

should provide opportunities and a more progressive way forward in addressing some of the achievement gaps[1] in our current system of education. We simply cannot embrace a system of education that often streams, marginalizes, misidentifies and effectively works for 60 percent of the population and fails 40 percent of African/Black students (Dei, Mazucca, McIsaac & Zine 1995; Toronto District School Board, 2010; Clandfield, Curtis, Gaiabuzl, Gaymes San Vicente, Livingtone, & Smaller, 2014; Gray, Bailey, Brady & Tecle, 2016). The notion of "infusing and /or integrating" spirituality in the classroom raises more questions than answers. 1.) What is spirituality? 2.) Who will oversee the implementation of spirituality in the classroom? 3.) How does the current Ontario curriculum view spirituality in schools? 4.) How do educators view spirituality and religion in their classrooms? 5) Are we to "infuse or integrate"[2] spirituality in the classroom? 6.) And with the diversity of student bodies amongst us, how does one address the needs of those who most often find themselves marginalized within our institutions?

In this paper I will attempt to address and analyze the complexities students of African/Black heritage face if we, without any thought, infuse and/or integrate spirituality in the classroom. Using an anti-colonial framework and George Dei's article "Spiritual Knowing and Transformative Learning" as the foreground, I assert that a superficial approach to the "infusion and/or integration" of spirituality in the classroom would further jeopardize the achievements of African/Black[3] students, it minimizes the possibilities of where we (African/Black students/parents/community) see ourselves within education and continues the onslaught of subtle forms of

1 Achievement gaps in Ontario system of Education- Discriminatory practices, systemic barriers, bias and obstacles in the areas of literacy, numeracy, graduation rates, decreasing the drop out rates, amongst students who identify as Indigenous, African/Black, LGBTQ, low-income. Ontario Ministry of Education.

2 This is a question of do we **infuse** (permeate, introduce, inspire) or **integrate** (blend, unify, incorporate) spirituality in the curriculum. Our choice of word matters, especially where implementation is concerned.

3 Black – Used interchangeably to identify population of African ancestry, African diaspora, Caribbean region, South America, African-American, African-Canadian

the “push- out[4].” This paper first explores what is spirituality and the complexities of trying to explain something that is so unique and personal to one’s being. I also address the importance of distinguishing between religion and spirituality and its context within an anticolonial framework. I also provide a summary and analysis of Dei’s article which gives further insight into the idea of spiritual knowing via transformative teaching and learning. Lastly, I will conclude with some recommendations and the possibilities of what spirituality looks like as a knowledge base when combined with Dei’s Spiritual Knowing through Transformative teaching and learning methodologies in the classroom. How do we as educators move towards “infusing and/or integrating” spirituality as a teaching and learning methodology?

Anti-colonial Framework

I use an anti-colonial framework to discuss the complexities with integrating and infusing spirituality in the classroom. The anti-colonial framework allows one to challenge the status quo, give clarity to historical and institutionalized structures of domination in our society (Dei & Asgharzadeh, 2001). The anti-colonial framework offers an alternative narrative to the colonial project. Colonialism not only exploits, but dehumanizes and objectifies the colonial subject…” (Cesaire, 1972, as cited in Shahjahan, 2005,pg. 694). Many colonized nations[5] have messy histories marred by theft, violence and intergenerational trauma. Anti-colonialism recognizes and counters the displacement of spirituality and other non-dominant ways of knowing the world by western knowledge systems (Smith, 1999, as cited in Shahjahan, 2009, pg123). The colonial project is on-going and there is currently nothing, which suggests that the project has ended in any way shape or form. Anti-colonial framework is about addressing past and present

---

4 Dei et al., (1995) Drop Out or Push Out? The dynamics of Black students’ disengagement from school. Report submitted to the Ontario Ministry of Education and Training. African/Black students are- Social labelled by teachers/administrators who have low expectations, stream African/Blacks into applied level classes, missing contributions of their ancestors, boredom, Teacher behaviours, irrelevant curriculum etc..

5 Turtle Island’s – Indigenous Nations, continent of Africa, Asia, Australia and South America etc..

structures of power, privilege, and oppression. This framework is not about shying away from the truth, but rather confronting and addressing the shameful tools (capitalism, politics, religion, education, law etc…) of colonialism. The Anti-colonial discourse provides an opportunity to reclaim identity, culture, spirituality and allows the voices of the oppressed an opportunity to resists what has been often dictated to them. Anti-colonial thought is about the ability to question and challenge our current systems of government, economies, politics, education, religion and socialization. "The anti-colonial approach accentuates the role of the dominant and how Indigenous knowledge foundations are restricted, disrespected, and disregarded as the "other" (Bediako-Amoah, 2016). It offers an opportunity to acknowledge and validate that there are different ways of knowing and knowledge systems. It puts the ideas and concepts of eurocentricity on the defence. It demands answers for centuries of violent methods of oppression. This framework is about an honest and authentic approach to understanding the ways in which Eurocentricity destroyed and erased histories, lands, people and deemed our spirituality a form of sorcery (Dei, 2012; Mazama, 2002). The anti-colonial framework is about creating space within western knowledge and "…equally sharing our experiences, our worldviews, thoughts, spirituality and understandings rather than being forced through a Eurocentric lens (Dei, 2012, pg. 6; Shahjahan, 2005). The anti-colonial framework allows for an awareness of being, an awareness of self-direction and an awareness of the possibilities of what could be if we continue to disrupt the colonial legacy.

Situating Myself

"Decolonizing oneself is the most difficult process. Most Indigenous people who have been subjected to western education become a commodity of western ideology"[6]. Truer words were never spoken. First, allow me to situate myself in the context of this paper. I am an African woman, a wife, a mother, and an educator. I am a descendant of Ghanaian parents who settled on the territories of

---

6 Wane, N.N (2006) Is Decolonization Possible? In G. J. S. Dei & A. Kempf (Eds.), Anti-colonialism and Education: The Politics of Resistance (pp. 87–107). Rotterdam, the Netherlands: Sense Publishers. Pg. 98.

the Wendat, Anishinabek Nation, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nations, and the Métis Nation on what is known as Turtle Island. I was born in Germany, and came to Canada at the age of three and a half. I was raised in the Ontario system of education and now as an educator, I am attempting to decolonize my mind from what I believe was the indoctrination of a very Eurocentric curriculum, narrative and way of thinking. I continue to interrogate my own practice and question what role I have played over the years in continuing the colonial narrative.

I was raised Christian (Roman Catholicism), baptized as a baby, and attended many denominational churches. I do not consider myself a very religious person, I do believe in a higher being, and was raised to believe that my religion was absolutely part of my spirituality. Once my daughter was born, my husband and I did all the necessary religious expectations (baptism, holy communion-sacraments of Roman Catholicism) but at something point I became very purposeful in my intent not to enrol my daughter in the separate school system[7] in Ontario. I am not sure if that decision was based on issues of equity or disdain for the continued questions of oppression that plague my mind. Through a series of very reflective practices I have come to see myself as a more spiritual being and have a somewhat better understanding of how religion has been used a colonial tool in order to oppress racialized bodies.

As an educator in the classroom, I realize that not all teachers, support staff, administrators, supervisory officers and directors understand the social constructs of race, power, and privilege in our system of education. Doing any kind of anti-oppressive work that interrogates and disrupts our practice deems you an agitator. My ongoing interactions with students on a regular basis have

---

7 Ontario's Separate School system –In order to appease the French minority during the 1800s, the British government agreed to partial funding. Currently, under Canadian Constitution denominational schools (Catholic schools in Ontario) enjoy the "same rights and privileges," including full funding, as public schools. **Source:** Toronto Star March 12, 2018- Time to eliminate publicly funded Catholic schooling in Ontario Author- Prof. Kelley Gallagher-McKay

made me question my purpose and how young African/Black (marginalized students) are viewed within the school environment. So when I hear about calls to "infuse and/or integrate" spirituality into the classroom I wonder what that entails; how is this "initiative" going to help and not hinder African/Black students further?

What is Spirituality?

Spirituality as a separate entity is relatively new to me. As previously mentioned in my location, my connection to Christianity has never really encouraged me to separate the two. I never thought of separating the idea of spirituality from religion because in my mind they were the same thing. Through a lot of reflection and questioning of what I have come to know, it has not been an easy task trying to separate spirituality from religion. It seems over time, through religious practices, cultural understandings and traditions, the two have somehow become entangled. Overtime, a series of questions arise: how can one come to a common understanding of what is spirituality? Can something such as one's spirit be understood through the context of a definition? Is it possible to separate spirituality from religion? The dilemma I see here is, is it possible to "box" the spirit into a western way of thinking in order for it to be more palatable to the academy?

According to various scholars, spirituality is transformative, individualistic and very much a journey (Dei, 2012, Shahjahan, 2009, Wane 2002). Spirituality is so unique that it allows each one of us to define it according our experiences, our culture, traditions, identity, emotions and physical well-being. At best, we could probably conclude that many of us would share similar characteristics and feelings about spirituality; but what we experience as spiritual beings would be defined at different points and vary degrees of our lives. In other words, spirituality has similar characteristics but cannot be confined to a set definition. Similarly, spirituality is very much like love; our expressions of it vary from person to person as do our experiences (Tucker, 2008). To put it another way, love is one of this things that we at times have trouble putting into words because like spirituality, love is something that is driven by inner emotions, feelings and varying degrees of intensity; which can be

very difficult to explain. According to Hindman (2011), "Spirituality is defined as a dynamic expression of who we are, truly." If western knowledge needs an explanation of spirituality, then Hindman's definition resonates with me because it allows me to define myself within my own parameters.

However, in the context of this paper, it is important to note that spirituality is very different from religion. Baskin (2012) acknowledges that spirituality and religion are two separate entities and most importantly religion is structured and revolves around institutions and teachings. When it comes to spirituality, there is no separation between the land and its people (Baskin 2012). According to Brodd et al. (2013, pg. 9) religion is "… a cultural system integrating teachings, practices, modes of experience, institutions, and artistic expressions that relates people to what they perceive to be transcendent." As innocent as the definition may seem, for those of us from colonized lands (ex: in Africa, the Americas, Asia, Australia, & Oceania); religion (specifically Christianity) was used as a tool to pacify, control and inflict violence on indigenous peoples (Dei, 2012, Mazama, 2009, Wane, 2002). With this in mind, the idea of integrating and/or infusing spirituality in the classroom is complex and traumatic because historically, "wherever the Christian cross went, death, destruction, and devastation occurred… alongside the annihilation of African spirituality beliefs and practices" (Mazama, 2001, pg231). So for this reason, I state to leave the teaching of spirituality to an educator who does not understand the impact of colonization (via religion) on African peoples would be absolutely detrimental. This is just one example of the negative implications (as a result of ignorance and complicity) when religion is interchangeably used with spirituality.

Background to Dei's Initial Research

There is a growing body of evidence that suggests that schools need to reform their curriculum and infuse it with content that uses a spiritual approach in addressing the needs of students. The idea of spirituality in the classroom is supposed to provide a more holistic approach to student success and achievement. In the article written by George Dei, entitled *Spiritual Knowing and Transformative Learning,* Dei asserts that spirituality is a legitimate aspect of any

student's learning. Dei proposes that using spirituality as a theory, allows one to explain and explore one's spiritual evolution and well-being. It stresses the importance of "wholeness of the individual self or being" (Dei, 2002). From a perspective of an anti-colonial discursive framework, Dei points out that if our intentions in education are truly authentic, then transformative learning through education should be implemented throughout the curriculum (Dei, 2002). There is space for spirituality in the classroom, but in order for space to be created, we all have to shift our way of thinking with regards to how one grows, learns and develops their own ideas as individuals. In other words, it is time we "acknowledge spirituality as a legitimate aspect of students' learning; it fosters a sense of connectedness, belongingness, identification, well-being, love, compassion and peaceful co-existence with our environments" (Dei, 2002, pg.6). Western education needs to respect spirituality as a valid way of knowing and understand that spirituality is about encompassing all aspects of a student's experience and surroundings. If we are to embrace equity in all its glory, than one must accept that the current system of education does not serve all students but rather continues to preserve and indoctrinate one knowledge production. Spirituality and spiritual knowledge is a valid body of knowledge that can enhance the outcome of students' well-being (Dei 2002, pg.10).

According to Dei (2002), spiritual education is about humility, respect, compassion and gentleness. It is about fostering a long lasting relationship with one's self-identity, one's community and an awareness of self. It is about promoting balance of the individual rather than following a prescribed Eurocentric way of knowing. Dei' position is about understanding the complexities of self and how a holistic approach is the missing puzzle in our education. The article stresses the importance of developing the student's "emotional intelligence" in order to meet the needs of a balanced existence (Dei 2002). In my 19 years in the classroom, I have encountered more students than ever who are trying to balance their everyday existence. No matter how much we try to alleviate the external stressors, some of my students still have trouble balancing their physical, emotional, and mental well-being. Dei (2002) proposes bold ideas in the spiritual and emotional engagement of the learner

in his/her education. Rather than a system bent on forcing the separation of the intellectual from body and skill from reason (Dei 2012). I suspect many students simply do not have the tools to deal with the imbalance they are experiencing. The current system does not value spirituality as it has been silenced and marginalized as a discourse (Wane & Ritskes, 2001). One of the objectives of the article is to address the approaches of teaching methods/strategies educators can use to promote spirituality in the curriculum as well as the classroom. Dei's ideologies around transforming the student experience are forward thinking and are positive steps towards addressing student experiences within the school system. Dei's transformative learning allows educators to model lessons that are more inclusive and culturally relevant. For example, Dei (2002) suggests that teachers integrate a sense of history, culture and identity in their lessons because it helps to cultivate a sense of purpose and meaning in life. When students sees themselves reflected in the curriculum it closes the gap between their shared experienced and validates their contributions (Ladson-Billings, 1995). I believe those in academia who support spirituality in the academy may be on to something; the question is- Are the colonial structures ready for real change?

Critique

Without a doubt, Professor George Dei is at the forefront and one of the most respected researchers in studies in anti-racism and anti-colonial thought in education. Bear in mind, a lot has transpired with regards to the content of education in Ontario's since Dei's article was written[8]. The ideas brought forward by Dei are positive and progressive concepts in the quest in creating space within our education system. With all due respect, herein lies are few concerns with Dei's position; it is oversimplified at best. To introduce the idea of spirituality to educators is assuming they have the know-how, understanding and the ability to facilitate transformative

8 Listed Alphabetically: Following programs and/or initiatives since 2002: Africentric School- Toronto District School Board, Enhanced Pathways to Education, Growing Success Assessment & Evaluation in Ontario, Indigenous Education Initiatives, Specialist High School Majors, Student Engagement Initiatives/Voice & Truth and Reconciliation Report to name a few.

learning in order to become spiritually grounded. The intricacies of introducing spirituality into the curriculum are just the beginning of overhauling a system of education deeply rooted in colonialism. Spirituality in the classroom does not translate well from theory into practice in North American (Canada & United States) schools. The complexities start from the implementation of spirituality to preparing educators to teach and integrate it within the curriculum. The education system is an extension of the colonial project, so integrating spirituality in the curriculum is problematic at best. How could one think for a moment that we could possibly combine spirituality in conjunction with our very oppressive form of education? Are we not running the risk of subjecting the purity of spirituality with a contaminated system of education? Make no mistake; this oppressive system of education is not in the business of sharing any knowledge. It is in the business of commodification and ownership (Shahjahan, 2005). Who will determine how spirituality is addressed in the schools? How can one ensure the teacher as facilitator is ready to help students in their spiritual journey? I'm not sure how the two would work together or if that is even feasible. If any school system is to accept spirituality as part of a holistic approach then I assert that it cannot be a prescribed curriculum nor can it be one that operates within the boundaries of western concepts and ideologies. Teachers in Ontario have been taught that with every method of teaching and learning there must be a way to assess and evaluate student progress (Ont. Min. Of Edu.Growing Success 2010). So how are we going to assess or evaluate student progress within spirituality? Whose criteria are these assessment rubrics based on? I assert that our system of education will at some point embrace spirituality as long as it is malleable with western thought and standards. Institutions have a way of trying to minimize spirituality and fit it into a neat, yet confined definition (Baskin, 2016; Dei, 2002, Shahjahan, 2005, Wane et al. 2011). Something has to give, if such a relationship between education and spirituality is to take place. This leads me to question if our political structures in our democracy are truly ready for this change? Allow me to refer back to the Ontario provincial elections in 2007. Then Conservative leader John Tory promised to publicly fund private religious schools. Ontario voters

overwhelmingly rejected the campaign policy which also cost John Tory his riding of Don Valley West (Howlett, 2007). Since that last election, the issue of funding religious private schools has never been brought up again. There are obviously many issues at hand with regards to this case. First and foremost, I am in no way using or suggesting that spirituality and religion interchangeable. What I am trying to convey, is that Ontario is not ready for any kind change that is spiritual or religious in nature (Hart 2012). It seems that any kind of movement towards spirituality and/or religion seems to conjure up fear and mistrust of government officials. Dei presents some great teaching and learning methodologies that are best suited for a target audience of educators, administrators, supervisory officers, curriculum developers, researchers and the policy makers within Ontario's Ministry of Education. One thing is true; critiquing spirituality comes way too easy. I have to ask myself why that is?? One thing is for sure, as long as spirituality remains outside of the curriculum, it ensures the longevity of the colonial project.

The Possibilities of Spirituality in the Classroom

The possibilities of spirituality in the classroom are endless. The teaching and learning strategies presented by Dei (see Table 1a) are important and useful to every educator inside and outside of the classroom. What I am proposing is that the teaching and learning methodologies suggested by Dei are (some are similar in nature see Table 1b) necessary and should work in conjunction with the following principles:

Table 1a. **Dei's Transformative Learning: Teaching & Learning Spiritually Grounded**	**Table 1b.** **Bediako's Principles of Integrating Spirituality in the Classroom**
1. History, Place & Culture	1. Understanding the African/Black Identity
2. Acknowledging Difference	2. Building Positive Relationship
3. Beyond Peculiarities	3.High Expectations
4. Creating Relevant Knowledge	4.Reflexivity as Practice
5. Collaborative Teaching	5.Understanding Spirituality
6. Telling Success Stories	6. Accept Student as the "Lead" in their Journey
7. The Dangers, Perils & Seduction of Romanticism, Overmythicization & the Claim to Authenticity	

Before we can move forward in our quest in narrowing the achievement gap and increasing the successes of African/Black students, educators need to understand that we as members of the African diaspora are not monolithic, nor do we share the same journeys. Unfortunately, well intentioned educators come in with the mindset that African/Black students share the same stories, backgrounds and lack of achievement (Dei, 2008). It is important to address the issue of one's identity because it speaks to the idea that in order to understand the student before you, one has to see each one as an individual.

If we are to" integrate and/or infuse" spirituality in the classroom, then educators need to build positive relationships with our youth. This means seeing each African/Black student as individuals and investing time in getting to know who your students are and what they bring to the table. It is about building authentic and genuine relationships with students and their families. Sharing in their everyday existence and successes promotes positive relationships. It means respecting students and letting your students get to know who you are. Studies have shown that when educators build rapport

and relationships with their students, there is a less likely chance African/Black student would feel excluded (Dei, 1997; Ladson-Billings, 2009).

As educators, it is our responsibility to have high expectations of African/Black students. In other words, we need to "challenge deficit thinking." If we are to invoke Dei's teaching and learning strategies on spirituality in the classroom, then one has to expect more from ourselves as well as our students. This means, educators need to stop blaming African/Black students' achievement gaps on their internal deficits or deficiencies, such as intellectual, linguistic, lack of motivation and behaviour (Valencia, 2010). Spirituality in the classroom cannot survive one lesson if we as educators do not have the genuine belief that our students are more than capable of rising to any occasion if we check our biases at the door. It is only then can a student thrive in a learning environment that is free of any mental or emotional obstacles imposed on them by teachers.

The idea of Reflexivity as practice, allows educators to interrogate their own practice (emotions, feelings and experiences) in the moment. Reflexivity is an internal dialogue that leads to action for transformative practices in the classroom (Feucht, Lunn Brownlee & Schraw, 2017). Reflexivity of learning works well with spirituality in the classroom because it allows students and educators to participate in transformative learning. There is room for growth and this allows us to "question our attitudes, values, assumptions and our complex roles in relations to others and social constructs" (Bolton, 2009, pg 25).

Educators need to have an understanding of their own spirituality and what it means to be a spiritual being. As complex as spirituality is, one must have some knowledge that using the terms spirituality and religion interchangeably can be problematic. In fact problems arise when, "the institution of religion becomes oppressive in nature, due to its strict adherence to codes of conduct and claims to hold a monopoly on the truth (Fernandes, 2003; Hart, 2003 as cited in Wane, Manyimo, & Ritskes, 2011). Educators need to understand that spirituality is a valid body of knowledge that encourages sharing of personal and collective experiences (Dei, 2002). In other words, one has to be willing and able to journey through a process

of decolonizing one's mind. It is not enough to assume that teachers with the curriculum in hand will comprehend what it takes to engage in anti-colonial, anti-racist and anti-oppressive learning environments.

The acceptance of student at the "Lead" in the spiritual journey has to be at the forefront of any curriculum where being spiritually grounded is of importance as a teaching and learning strategy in the classroom. With this in mind, educators have to trust the process and allow students, their families, mentors and/or communities to participate and engage in their spiritual learning. I am not calling for the abdication of the teacher's duties in the classroom, what I am asking, is that the teacher involves the student and their family in their lifelong learning. What a family, community or member brings to the classroom (whether it be inside or outside the classroom) is just as valuable as the curriculum being taught by the teacher. The teacher is not the sole provider of knowledge or ways of coming to know. Student as the "Lead" in their spiritual journey is integral to making their learning relevant and engaging. The educator does not take the lead, but rather learns alongside the student and their support systems.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the idea of transformative learning in order to be spiritually grounded is a methodology with a lot of potential. I am not a skeptic of spirituality in education but I am cautious of any strategy that promotes spirituality so freely without thinking about how the strategies will be used in a system that continues to promote the colonial project. In addition, I acknowledge the fact that I am a product of the colonial project and understand the ease in which I critiqued Dei's previous work only ensured that 1) The colonial project is still at work and 2) Another reason why "nay sayers" will never fully accept spirituality into the classroom. I embrace the idea of spirituality in the classroom, but it has to be a hands-off approach. I am concerned with teaching and learning strategies that seem oversimplified in its approach and do not account for educators' responsibility to the student. On paper, Dei's suggestions are a welcomed methodology to the issues of student well-being and issues of equity. I'm not sure that it is a question of "how" can educators collaborate when it comes to spirituality in the

classroom, but equally important is the “who” when implementing spirituality in education. We need to be more concerned with who is facilitating the spiritual health of African/Black students because not everybody is truly vested in spiritual education, nor do they have a true understanding of what it takes to be spiritually centred. There are issues of accountability, administrative policies, politics and the inevitable management of spirituality seems like a very dangerous road to venture on to. There are way too many questions in the infusion and/or integration of spirituality in the curriculum. Spirituality is of absolute value and is part of student well-being but I often wonder if spirituality in the hands of the Ministry of Education is something best left alone. After all, spirituality cannot be claimed, explained or confined within the borders of Western knowledge keeping. Spirituality cannot be measured. If we are to implement spirituality in the classroom, the spirit has to take the lead and not the government. In other words, it has to be in the hands of individual students with the assistance of family, mentors and community, and then can we truly say without a doubt that our education system is “student centred.

References

Baskin, C. (2016). Spirituality: The core of healing and social justice from an indigenous perspective. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, (152), 51-60.

Bediako-Amoah, N.A. (2016). Erasing "Educational Gentrification" and Embracing the Possibilities of Indigeneity in the Classroom. Manuscript submitted for publication.

Bolton, G. (2010). Reflective Practice. Sage Publications Inc. London, England.

Brodd, J., Little, L., Nystrom, B., Platzner, R., Shek, R., & Stiles, E. (2013). Invitation to world religions. New York: Oxford University Press.

Clandfield, D., Curtis, B., Gaiabuzl, G.E., Gaymes San Vicente, A., Livingtone, D.W., & Smaller, H. (2014). Restacking the Deck: Streaming by Class, Race, and Gender in Ontario Schools. Our Schools/Our Selves Special Issue in Association with Everybody's Schools: an Education Policy Institute.

Dei, G.J.S., Holmes, L., Mazzuca, J., McIsaac, E., & Campbell R. (1995). Drop Out or Push Out? The Dynamics of Black students' Disengagement from School. Report submitted to the Ontario Ministry of Education and Training

Dei, G. J. S. (1997). Reconstructing "dropout." University of Toronto Press.

Dei, G. & Asgharzadeh, A. (2001). The Power of Social Theory: The Anti-Colonial Discursive Framework. *Journal of Educational Thought* Vol. 35, No. 3, 297-323

Dei, G. (2002).Spiritual Knowing and Transformative Learning. (3-16). In: O'Sullivan E., Morrell A., O'Connor M.A. (eds) Expanding the Boundaries of Transformative Learning. Palgrave Macmillan, New York.

Dei, G. (2008). Schooling as Community: Race, Schooling and the Education of African Youth. *Journal of Black Studies*. Vol. 38, No. 3, 346- 366

Dei, G.S. (2012). "Suahunu," the Trialectic Space. Journal of Black Studies. Volume: 43 issue: 8, page(s): 823-846

Feucht, F. C., Lunn Brownlee, J., & Schraw, G. (2017). Moving beyond reflection: Reflexivity and epistemic cognition in teaching and teacher education. *Educational Psychologist*, 52(4), 234-241.

Gray, E., Bailey, R., Brady, J., Tecle, S. (2016). Perspectives of Black Male Students in Secondary School: Understanding the Successes and Challenges – Student Focus Group Results. Mississauga, ON: Peel District School Board

Hindman, D. (2002). From Splintered Lives to Whole Persons: Facilitating Spiritual Development in College Students. *Religious Education*, 97 (2), pp. 165-182.

Howlett, K. (2007). Tory admits faith-based school funding a mistake. The Globe and Mail. Retrieved 25 October from

Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). Toward a theory of culturally relevant pedagogy. American Educational Research Journal, 32(3), 465–491.

Ladson-Billings, G. (2009). DreamKeepers: Successful Teachers of African American Children 2nd Ed. John Wiley & Sons Inc.

Mazama, M. A. (2002). Afrocentricity and African Spirituality. *Journal of Black Studies*, Vol. 33 No. 2, November 218-234

Ontario Ministry of Education (2010). Grades 1- 12 Growing Success: Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting in Ontario Schools 1st Ed. (Government of Ontario) Retrieved from http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/growSuccess.pdf

Shahjahan, R. (2005). Spirituality in the academy: reclaiming from the margins and evoking a transformative way of knowing the world. International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education Vol. 18, No. 6, November-December, pp. 685–711

Shahjahan, R. (2009). The role of spirituality in the anti-oppressive higher-education classroom. *Teaching in Higher Education.* Vol. 14, No. 2, April 2009, 121-131.

Tucker, L.M. (2008). Quest for Wholeness: Spirituality in Teacher Education (Masters Thesis). University of Manitoba.

Valencia, R. (2010). Valencia, R. R. (2010). Dismantling contemporary deficit thinking. Routledge.

Wane N.N. (2002) African Women and Spirituality. In: O'Sullivan E., Morrell A., O'Connor M.A. (eds) Expanding the Boundaries of Transformative Learning. Palgrave Macmillan, New York

Wane, N. N., Manyimo, L.E. & Ritskes, J.E. (2011). Spirituality, Education & Society: An Integrated Approach. Rotterdam, Boston, Sense Publishers.

Wane, N.N., Adyanga, F.A., & Ilmi, A.A. (2014). Student's Spiritual Selves: Implications for Classroom Practices. In Spiritual discourse in the Academy: A Globalised Indigenous Perspective. New York. 127-141.

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

Samuel Omane Agyapong is a Ghanaian scholar and Reverend Minister. He earned his PhD in social work. His area of research interest is the role of *amamre* (indigenous knowledge) in environmental policymaking in Ghana. He combines a life of community service in both social work and the Christian Ministry. As a Reverend Minister, he served the Ghanaian Methodist Church of Toronto, Canada, for many years. Currently, he is a Senior Minister in one of the big cathedrals in Ghana, the St. Paul Methodist Cathedral in Tema. He continues to nurture his interest in the intersection of indigenous spiritualities and his Christian faith.

Nana A. Bediako-Amoah is an educator in the public-school system with twenty years experience at the secondary level. She received her Master's degree in Social Justice Education at Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto. As a senior teacher, she has spent a lot of time engaging students in the areas of social justice, equity studies and integrating indigeneity in cross-curricular content in the classroom. Nana has seen her role evolve from one of delivering classroom content to encouraging students to share their ideas, experiences and personal growth in order to see themselves in the curriculum. As part of Nana's life-long journey, she continues to engage in progressive conversations with those willing to effect change in the classroom and beyond. She offers special thanks to family, friends and colleagues who have supported and nurtured her growth along the way.

Coly Chau has a Master of Education in Social Justice Education from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), University of Toronto. Her research interests include race, gender, sexuality, migration and spirituality. She is often working, organizing and learning from her communities.

Zach Cochrane is an educator with the Halton District School Board. He holds a Master's of Education degree in Developmental Psychology and Education from the University of Toronto. His research interests are in the areas of mental health, mindfulness, and their implications in elementary classrooms.

Abdelfettah Elkchirid joined Wilfrid Laurier University in 2015. He holds a PhD in social work from the Université de Montréal. His doctoral research focuses on child rearing practices and the transmission of cultural and religious values to children of Moroccan families in Quebec. Abdelfettah joined Ottawa University in 2010 as a part-time professor and Carleton University in 2011 as a term instructor. His teaching experience and interests include structural approach to social work in direct practice and international social work; social work practice with individuals, groups and families; social work with involuntarily-assisted individuals; social work with groups; and cultural diversity. As a clinical social worker in private practice for the last six years, Abdelfettah worked with immigrants, refugees and families, providing psychosocial evaluations in access and custody cases. He was also recognized as an expert witness in child access and custody matters by Hudson Vicinage Family Division in New Jersey and by Youth Courts in Montreal and Longueil. As a clinical social worker with the Cultural Adjustment and Trauma Services (CATS) at the International Institute of New Jersey, Abdelfettah was trained in and applied trauma focused cognitive behavioral therapy with trauma victims. He was often solicited as a guest lecturer by numerous universities such as Saint Peter's College, Princeton Theological Seminary and Monmouth University in New Jersey, as well as New York University where he offered presentations on the topics of social work and trauma work with ethnic minorities.

Kevin Devotta obtained a Master's degree in Social Work and a diploma in International Social Work from Wilfrid Laurier University in 2019. His thesis was an exploration of the experience of service users of Christian NGOs in Ghana. He previously earned a graduate-level Certificate of Catholic Pastoral Studies from Catholic Theological Union in Chicago in 2014. Kevin is interested in finding ways to live out one's faith and/or spirituality in everyday life.

Zakaria Habi recently graduated with a Master's degree in Education in the area of Social Justice and Education at the University of Toronto. Of Algerian background, Zakaria's interest evolved throughout his graduate studies in researching and writing about the Algerian experience during French colonials, an era that extended over more than a century, putting Algeria under oppressive domination of France and becoming the backbone of the post-colonial era in all aspects of life of the Algerian society. Zakaria currently works as

Undergraduate and Department Assistant at the University of Toronto Mississauga. Zakaria is looking to pursue doctoral-level studies in the near future investigating how and why colonial French practices, in the context of Algeria, have resulted in the perpetuating cycles of social disadvantages amongst the Algerian people.

Martha Kuwee Kumsa earned her PhD in social work from the University of Toronto. Currently, she is a Professor at Wilfried Laurier University where she teaches and researches in social work. Her research interests include exploring indigenous knowledge systems and their potential use for the current context of decolonization. As an act of self-decolonization, she reclaims and revalues her Oromo ancestors' Indigenous epistemology, methodology and ethical practice.

Joshua Jones is an Elementary school teacher from Mississauga, Ontario and a Master's student at Ontario Institute of Studies in Education (OISE), University of Toronto. His research interests include holistic education, spirituality in schooling, and contemporary Math pedagogy. Through his research, writing and enacted pedagogy he aims at infusing spirituality into the learning process and making student and teacher well-being a more central focus of education.

Danny Krishna McGee is an Academic English professor at George Brown College in Toronto, Ontario and earned his Master's in Adult Education and Community Development at Ontario Institute of Studies in Education (OISE), University of Toronto. His research interests include holistic education, the role of spirituality in education, and in activism. Be it within alliances with the marginalized or within his teaching pedagogy, he sees the incorporation of a spiritual lens as fundamental for sustainable positive change on both the individual and societal level.

Dionisio Nyaga earned his PhD at Social Justice Education-OISE/ University of Toronto. He has master's and bachelor's degrees from Ryerson University's School of Social Work. He is currently a Contract Lecturer at Ryerson University, School of Social Work, teaching both undergraduate and graduate courses. His Doctoral research is focused on uncoupling Black masculinity through the narratives of Kenyan men in Toronto. His teaching, research and practice interests are in the areas of critical anti-oppression, community development and engagement, anti-Blackness, masculinity studies, diaspora and transnational studies, cultural studies, men and masculinities, social

justice, Indigenous and spirituality studies.

Dr. Fritz Luther Pino is an Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Regina. Fritz completed a PhD in Social Justice Education and a Masters of Social Work from the University of Toronto. Before migrating to Canada, Fritz earned a Bachelor and a Master's degree in Psychology in Cebu, Philippines, where Fritz' was born and raised. Dr. Pino's research focuses on the lived experiences of racialized LGBTQ immigrants in order to examine intimacies, desires, affect and emotions, aging and spirituality, transnationalism, and neo-colonialisms.

Raz Rotem is an artist and educator based in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. He was raised on Kibbutz Yiftah, Galilee (Israel) and recently completed a Masters of Education (Social Justice Education) at Ontario Institute of Studies in Education (OISE), University of Toronto. He is currently pursuing his doctorate studies at OISE at the program for Language and Literacies Education (LLE) in the department of Curriculum Teaching and Learning.

Hibah Sidat has a Master of Arts in Social Justice Education from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), University of Toronto. She graduated Summa Cum Laude with an undergraduate degree in Public Policy and Administration from York University. Her interests include class, race, gender, religion, sexuality, and spirituality. She is passionate about serving her communities and continues to work to advocate on their behalf.

Rose Ann Torres has a PhD in Sociology and Equity Studies in Education and Women and Gender Studies from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), University of Toronto. Rose is a Lecturer at the Social Justice Education Department of OISE. Her teaching and research interests are in the areas of: Critical Race and Gender Studies, Transnational Feminisms, Queer Studies; Global Health, Indigenous Epistemologies, and Asian/ African/studies.

Njoki Wane is currently the Chair and Professor in the Social Justice Education Department at Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), University of Toronto**.** Prof. Wane has a long and successful history of academic leadership and service in her department at OISE and across the University of Toronto. She has

served as Associate Chair of Social Justice Education (SJE) and headed OISE's Office of Teaching Support over a four-year term. She has also served as the University's Special Advisor on Status of Women Issues, and as Director, Center of Integrative Anti-Racism Studies (CIARS) at OISE. Prof. Wane's commitment to students, graduate education and community service is evident from her many teaching awards and honours. Among many others other awards, Prof. Wane is a recipient of the President's Teaching Award. Prof. Wane has published dozens of scholarly works, her most recent being the book *African Women's Voices on Indigenous Knowledge of Food Production: A Kenyan Perspective.* She was named Diaspora Scholar at the University of Embu, Kenya and Diaspora CODSERIA Fellow at Egerton University, Kenya.

Shane Young is a Mi'kmaq social worker, educator and researcher whose family originates from the Qalipu Mi'kmaq First Nation on southwest coast of Newfoundland. He is an Assistant Professor with the Faculty of Community Service, School of Social Work of Ryerson University. In the Fall of 2019, he continues graduate studies, Doctor of Philosophy - PhD, Indigenous Studies at Trent University. His academic and research interests encompass the exploration of the colonial interference imposed onto indigenous identity through forced removal and assimilation, and unearthing ways in which healing can create personal and cultural sovereignty, Indigenous research and knowledge methodologies, indigenous cultural identity, social justice, colonial and decolonization theories, mental health and wellness, and Whiteness, as an Ideology.