In Relationship:
Expressive Writing as a Decolonizing Adult Learning Praxis

By

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts
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Abstract

The central argument is that the traditional academic essay format, coerced into cognitivist conventions by the fear of appearing uncritical, preserves the hegemonic colonial mindset when it suppresses the clear, direct, and relatable voice of the student or scholar. Inspired by Dr. Marie Battiste's use of four directions in *First Nations Education in Canada: The Circle Unfolds* (1995), the thesis is organized into 4 sections, East, South, West, North, representing research directions into the expressive potential of a decolonizing adult learning praxis and offering possible approaches to writing that can be allied with Indigenous scholars. I focus on praxis, the reflexive prompts of non-verbal image communication, historical origins of the cognitivist essay, and existing Indigenous viewpoints on the changing dimension of words used in academic contexts. Decolonized writing forms critical pathways by acknowledging the dialectics of colonialism and honouring the community surrounding the scholar that informs and buoys the research process.
Acknowledgments

I’ve come to appreciate the solitude of post-secondary studies. Scholarship, like leadership, is an independent and, at times, lonely journey. Instructors inspire and inform, while students deepen their knowledge in a particular area. The particular area is a space in which the instructor moves and works, and ideally invites discussion and debate. Based on the discussion and debate, students develop their own research impulses and their own voices. In some cases, students pursue their own research impulses to the point of being able to produce a thesis or dissertation.

I am fortunate to arrive at this advanced stage of scholarship with the support of Dr. Jean-Paul Restoule. It’s his belief in me as a student to which I am indebted for this accomplishment. Contrary to solitude, Dr. Restoule sustains a strong community around him, Indigenous and non-Indigenous alike, within the department of Adult Education and Community Development at OISE/UT and beyond, of which I have had the privilege to take part, to grow and to learn.

I am also indebted to Dr. Restoule for acting as a teacher to my mother, who was one of 23,000 students to register for his Aboriginal Worldviews and Education course, offered in the winter of 2013 for free online through the Massive Open Online Course and the Open UToronto initiative. As a resident of Thunder Bay, and having always dreamed of pursuing graduate studies, she experienced a transformation through Dr. Restoule’s teachings that she continues to share with those around her.

Thanks to Dr. Guy Allen for helping with my writing and for supporting this thesis project.
Much of my ability and motivation to write can be traced back to Dr. Allen's course "Expressive Writing: Pedagogy and Practice" which I had the great fortune of experiencing in the winter term of 2010.

Since beginning my studies as a teacher candidate at OISE/UT in 2005 until now, the summer of 2014, I have witnessed the growth and grounding of a heartbeat provided by Indigenous scholars and community members. The voice of anti-oppression and social justice, undergoing institutional shifts through OISE/UT’s re-organized departmental structure, is powerfully present in the drum, the song and the smudge that one hears, feels, and senses in the OISE classroom of the 21st century.

My experience in Toronto since moving here in 2005 has been sustained by the parks, the food vendors, and the water of Lake Ontario. I am grateful to the original caretakers of this land, the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation, who negotiated a settlement in 2010 as a result of the Government of Canada’s fraudulent and ill-gotten original claim of this territory. I am grateful to the Onkwehonwe, Huron-Wendat and Haudenausanee nations who were once caretakers of this land that is now called the Greater Toronto Area.

My teachers, friends, loved ones, and those in my family who came before me have shaped the person I am now confident presenting my voice through writing and research. My great-grandparents arrived in Canada and took up residence in the regions of North-Eastern/Western Ontario and North-Eastern Manitoba. Thank you to them, for whom Sweden, Ireland, England and Scotland represent their respective ‘Indigenous’ lands.
I write this thesis in the context of bereavement. Dr. Roxana Ng, who taught myself and 5 other students “Decolonization and Transformative Learning” in the fall of 2012, continued to guide us in our learning even through advanced stages of her illness. She passed away January 13, 2013 before the conclusion of our course. As a professor, and Program Head for the Centre for Women’s Studies in Education at OISE/UT, Dr. Ng fought to immerse academic discussion in the realm of identity, lived experience, and spirituality. I am grateful to Dr. Ng for demonstrating to me how to plumb the depths of myself and share it for the sake of teaching others. Thank you Roxana.

I am deeply indebted to my life partner, Kyla Brown, an artistically talented individual and creative light whom I met the same year I began my graduate degree. I am grateful for her constant support, patience and presence in my life. She is my editor in all things. Thank you Kyla.

Lastly, I’d like to thank the earth. Every summer since 2005, I have tended to a small garden on the north shore of Lake Superior, and more recently, a community garden as part of the Garrison Creek Community Garden in Toronto. Every season, I learn something different about the soil. It is always teaching me about what, when, and how to help seeds grow. During the summer of 2014, I worked on properly tending to and harvesting sorrel, an abundantly healthy and bountiful green. It’s not until I got my hands dirty, literally, that I learned that the earth is the greatest teacher and provider.
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Introduction

In this thesis, I will essentially argue for effective writing practices in the social sciences and humanities. Effective writing practices in the social sciences and humanities often mean evidence of research, well defined parameters, and convincing argument (Giltrow et al., 2009). I contend that effective writing practices also include: 1) explanation of the author’s own personal connection to the subject matter, 2) explicit acknowledgment that academic writing practices and research cannot exist in a vacuum outside of colonialism and outside the community of people supporting the author.

Criticality, as it developed in the humanities disciplines in the 20th century, has brought increasingly complex concepts into academic spaces- actor network theory, post-modernism, structuralism, the subaltern, to name a few. The discussion surrounding complex concepts has become, at times, opaque and unrelatable to a non-academic audience. This has created palpable tension in some disciplines due to the theoretical and practical impulse for that discipline to be accountable and relatable to the communities it speaks about and for which it advocates. If an academic debate is about the betterment of a group of people, perhaps increased access to health care, jobs, political participation, for example, access to that academic debate itself has become an issue of equity and accountability. It is important to explore the uncritical use of jargon in the humanities and social sciences to open the space for discussion of the intention, significance, and purpose of the scholarly discipline in question (Grace, 2013).

Academic disciplines ignore this ethical dilemma to their detriment. Humanities disciplines, in particular, risk irrelevance in the 21st century if they cannot build meaningful relationships to
their most widely used and distributed form of discourse and information—the academic essay. Consequently, this thesis will explore the essay format itself, its underlying impulses, its history as a form of academic output, and conclude by proposing some imminent shifts it might undergo in light of Indigenous scholarship and deeper investigation of the writing processes made possible by efforts toward decolonization. Contemporary uses of ethnography, narrative inquiry, arts-based scholarship, and Indigenous epistemologies provide clues of how the essay is being harnessed, re-imagined, and subjected to increased self-reflexivity.

In this thesis, I will provide some of the major guide-posts of the university essay: 1) dispossessio of the authorial voice, 2) history of orality and writing in academia, 3) hopeful examples of decolonizing education models and uses of writing in the post-secondary classroom, 4) the Indigenist imperative and the role of decolonization in developing a more meaningful and honest use of language in academic writing. The crux of my argument is that the traditional academic essay format, coerced into cognitivist conventions by the fear of appearing uncritical, preserves the hegemonic colonial mindset when it suppresses the clear, direct, and relatable voice of the student or scholar.

The title of this thesis begins with ‘In Relationship’. I use these words because I acknowledge my Indigenous teachers who have shown me that we are all in relationship all the time. Relationship features prominently in Dr. Gregory Cajete’s conception of Native Science, and Dr. Marie Battiste’s landmark work on Indigenous education and scholarship in Canada (Cajete, 2000) (Battiste, 2000). Words have the power to elaborate, build up, and strengthen the broadly interpreted realm of relationship. Words also have the power to chip away at relationship.
Decolonized writing practices arise from a consideration of these relationships that shape who we are and how we relate as people, element and animal alike (Lawrence & Dua, 2011).

I use a ‘:’ after ‘In Relationship’, because I want to emphasize the rest of the title, ‘Expressive Writing as a Decolonizing Adult Learning Praxis’. By ‘Expressive Writing’, I mean writing that is presented as meaningful to the author, their lived experiences, physical and social location in the world. The primary quality of ‘Expressive Writing’ conventions reminds us that the words come from a person who has bias and emotion (Allen, 2000). Decolonized writing reminds us that the words come from a person who has been a part of a colonized land, a community mediated by class, and a university responding to the dialectics of capitalism (Allman, 2010).

I use the preposition ‘as’ because expressive writing has several forms and interpretations. For my purposes, I am proposing expressive writing as a ‘Decolonizing Adult Learning Praxis’. This is a fundamental component of the argument I am making- if we approach expressive writing as a ‘Decolonizing Adult Learning Praxis’, writing practices in the social sciences and humanities will become less convenient to the residual and still present structures of colonialism in the academy.

Decolonizing is important as a symbol and process rather than a possible theoretical or societal destination. Imagining what it is to decolonize writing practices can be a valuable exercise. I don’t believe it’s possible to undo what colonialism has already done to the earth and to the mind of the colonized or colonizer (Memmi, 1957). I do believe it is possible to heal and to change. Decolonization, the field of research and discourse in which I am situating this thesis, may provide some suggestions on ways to heal through research and essay writing practices.
Bruce McComisky and Cynthia Ryan’s *CityComp: Identities, Spaces, Practices* provides suggestions of embedding essay writing in space, place, and identity. Jeanne Perreault and Sylvia Vance’s collection *Writing the Circle: Native Women of Western Canada* demonstrates the greater respect and care for words required for more thoughtful academic writing. Guy Allen’s *Showing the Story: Creative Nonfiction by New Writers* provides examples of how simple achievable writing exercises can be a critical lens through which to view lived experience and improve the way one writes.

Each of these examples, and the additional examples found throughout this thesis, are reminders that decolonized essay writing cannot depend on a loose unaccountable relationship to words, syntax, sentences, and paragraph structure. My intent is to draw attention to the power of words, language, and writing to transform the colonial mindset that is entrenched by some essay writing conventions and styles of rhetoric and argumentation. Dr. Donald Trent Jacobs, the editor of the collection *Teaching Truly: A Curriculum to Indigenize Mainstream Education* offers the most concise explanation of the importance of addressing language convention in academic inquiry:

Transformative learning stems from a balanced integration of both hypnotically acquired ideas and rationally considered ones. Any psychology course that does not address hypnotic phenomena is insufficient and any religion that does not reveal how its practices can elicit or play upon hypnosis is deceptive. Ignorance about human susceptibility to trance logic or hypnosis has largely led to the uninvestigated and irrational behaviors in our world today because during times of stress people become hyper-suggestible to the communications of perceived authority figures[…]

Indigenous Peoples have understood this phenomenon of learning for thousands of years. Their coyote stories, use of images and art, experiences with Nature, ceremonies, rites passage and so on both warn of the potential problem of being hypnotized by others and teach the importance of intentionally using hypnosis or trance states to help direct deep learning. Such an understanding is crucial for undoing the hypnosis of Western hegemony, religion, materialism and anthropocentrism that continues to be a cause of the increasing fear and stress in our world. (2013, p.251)
Decolonization discourse has taken many forms. Some decolonization studies focus on the ceding of a colony, the changing laws, and development of legal sovereignty. Other decolonization studies focus on Eurocentric forms of overt power that, at its worst, enact forms of genocide, and at its best, systematically marginalize outsiders (Duara, 2004) (Scott, 1996) (Veracini, 2007). I am more specifically interested in studies that consider the next potential step of decolonization- decolonizing the self. Decolonizing the self involves collective acknowledgment of Canada's colonial history and thoughtfully situating its impact on the formation of beliefs, identities, and conventional communication patterns in the academy and between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people (Regan, 2005) (Iseke, 2013) (Shahjahan, Wagner, & Wane, 2009).

Collective acknowledgment of Canada's colonial history begins with the self. I agree with Dr. Roxana Ng (2013) that "integrating body, mind, and spirit is not only disruptive to established educational conventions in North America but is a method of decolonizing—undoing—ways in which we have come to be in the world" (p.355). Personal work, the emotional experience of contradiction, guilt, shame, transformation, and the embodied interpretation of academic learning are fundamental to the individual and community driven project of decolonization within the university.

Indigenous scholar Denise Nadeau and non-Indigenous scholar Allanah Young collaborated to create a program of self-determination and self-empowerment for urban Indigenous women. They describe the journey of the return to the self as a sacred vitality:

The process of recovering this sacred vitality involves reversing the levels of disassociation and disconnection in the body caused by daily racial, sexual and colonial
violence. It starts with developing a felt sense of one's basic goodness and the sacredness of the body and its connection to land and relations. (p.11, 2005)

These reflections on the deeply personal work necessary to process the violence of colonialism prompts me to investigate the personal and emotional dimensions of decolonization, in particular for those who feel they are not connected to this system of oppression and marginalization. Decolonization is not only a political or intellectual project but also an embodied emotional process, as evidenced by the work of community activist scholars such as Nadeau and Young.

The emotional and psychological aspects of decolonization are important as they implicate each person in understanding the connection of colonialism to the project of nation-building in Canada. Ideas of land as property, social arrangements as earned or deserved, and the earth as a manageable resource, for example, enter a state of flux through the lens of Canadian colonialism. Deeper still, structures of education, post-secondary research inquiry, and the ideal of prosperity are fraught when discussed in relation to colonialism in Canada. These are foundations upon which Canadian identities, communities, laws, and rights are formed. Consequently, understanding colonialism's connections in Canada requires identity shifts that imply significant emotional, spiritual, and psychological work in particular for non-Indigenous people. In *Unsettling the Settler Within*, Dr. Paulette Regan points out that "Failure to link knowledge and critical reflection to action explains why many settlers never move beyond denial and guilt, and why many public education efforts are ineffective in bringing about deep social and political change"(p. 23, 2010). The personal and emotional dimension of critical reflection represents the initial entry point for non-Indigenous people in Canada to decolonize. Students and scholars, those individuals meditating, concentrating, and critically considering colonialism must be able to learn and demonstrate the skill of decolonization if others, less focused on colonialism, can
begin to process its immense emotional baggage. Consequently, linking this critical reflection to action through mindful expressive writing practice is the pre-occupation of this research paper.

In 1972, George Manual a Secwepemc (Shuswap) chief from Western Canada and former President of the National Indian Brotherhood made a speech which provides insight into the importance of communicating clearly with the non-Indigenous public in the service of Indigenous self-determination: "The question now is for non-Indian North Americans to decide how they want to relate to this struggle. We will steer our own canoe, but we will invite others to help with the paddling." This quote, cited by Dr. Paulette Regan, in a chapter entitled “Peace Warriors and Settler Allies” in Unsettling the Settler Within, demonstrates how Indigenous activists and scholars have worked to simplify the complex struggle of decolonization and self-determination for the sake of the potential non-Indigenous ally. Dr. Manuel (OC), working to overcome the enormous struggles of educating the Canadian public in the aftermath of the White Paper which sought to abolish the concept of Indigenous identity and Indigenous rights altogether, uses the metaphor of paddling a canoe to which most everyone in the Canadian public had been familiarized, in particular, the family of Pierre Trudeau, famed canoeist and the 15th Prime Minister of Canada.

The responsibility must rest with Indigenous allies to elaborate the personal meanings of decolonization and provide real world strategies that are practical and feasibly integrated into the lives of non-Indigenous people. The conversation of decolonization develops strength inward and among Indigenous scholars, however, it is necessary to amplify and demarcate the texture and tone of decolonization as it broadcasts outward to decision makers, community leaders and
citizens of Canada. Dr. George Manuel(OC) demonstrated this sensitivity to texture and tone in the speech noted above. His words were carefully designed considering his audience.

Here, we arrive at the significance of the personal dimension of writing in a decolonized manner. Since writing is a ubiquitous and simultaneously emotional and intellectual task asked of students in all education institutions, discussing a decolonizing writing practice has far reaching potential to impart more consciousness of colonialism across academic disciplines. I have kept my scope to an academic audience by discussing decolonized writing as a potentially transformative exercise for adults. It is possible to envision decolonizing writing strategies at other educational levels, programs, and forums. I use the term adult learning because I am directing my argument to an adult education audience (Knowles, 1950) (Freire, 1970) (Mayo, 1999) (Allman, 2010). Writing instruction is frequently associated with primary and secondary school learning- this is not my concern or scope. I am concerned with the writing we ask of all adults in post-secondary degree, doctoral, post-doctoral, diploma, or continuing education courses. Specifically, I am concerned with the writing that occurs within the social sciences and humanities disciplines.

The historical roots of adult learning that can be traced back to Alexandre Kapp, Eduard Lindeman, and Malcolm Knowles, included character building, meaning-making, a sense of integrity, sound judgment, motivation, self-concept, choice, and, for Kapp, a fit body (Kapp, 1833) (Lindeman, 1926) (Knowles, 1955). The underlying project of basic holistic betterment, while frequently subsumed into the critical literature of identity formation, personal politics, dialectics, and praxis, may have a re-imagined purpose while discussing adult learning principles in relation to decolonization. The current adult learning principles offered by the Canadian
Literacy and Learning Network emphasize choice, meaningfulness and relevance to the lived experience of the adult student (CLNN, retrieved: 06/19/2014). Consequently, it is the challenge of instructors of adults to develop the meaningful intellectual and personal link between adult learning and colonialism. A fundamental question for which there is no readily accessible answer is: how might adult learners benefit from learning about colonialism in Canada, and the opportunities and contradictions of decolonization? In what ways might working adults directly benefit from this knowledge and process? Answering these questions can provide crucial pathways that would lead to more broad-based efforts to decolonize adult learning spaces in Canada.

As mentioned above, acknowledging colonialism's continued impact on post-secondary research inquiry is emotional, spiritual, and psychological work based on collective understanding of shared history, as opposed to disembodied epistemology couched in intellectualism. It involves cooperation and compromise among disciplines, among scholars, among communities and levels of government (Regan, 2013). One possible benefit of adults learning about the legacy of colonialism is self-improvement- learning about the importance of history to contemporary circumstances, honest self-reflection, intercultural connections, and the simple virtues of communication skills, cooperation, and civic involvement.

Decolonization asks adult learners to do more than write a paper, complete a course, achieve a degree; it asks adult learners to change from within, and share this change with those in their lives (Nadeau and Young, 2005). Universities were once used to inculcate religious doctrine and entrench colonial mindsets, and now, the involved personal work required to reverse these ideologies is often subsumed by academic objectivity, the guise of neutrality, and the almost
dogmatic adherence to criticality and cynicism at the expense of earnest exploration, truthfulness, and real scholarly interaction. Mayan American theorist, Dr. Sandy Grande, cited by Dr. Paulette Regan in the chapter “Rethinking Reconciliation” in *Unsettling the Settler Within*, identifies the "need to examine the degree to which critical pedagogies retain the deep structures of Western thought" (2010, p.65). There's an Indigenist imperative, which I'll discuss throughout the four sections of this thesis to critique criticality and re-integrate the simpler impulses of academic inquiry and academic writing. It is possible that the uncritical use of criticality, in some circumstances, is another institutional practice that allows students to achieve a degree without undergoing personal transformation necessary to decolonize the self.

Praxis is a term that implies transformation of a theory or idea into action. Praxis encourages students and scholars in the humanities to critically reflect and act upon their studies, instead of passively writing papers (Freire, 1960). Praxis denotes work (Rasanan, 2008). Praxis enacts theory (Arendt, 1958). Praxis transforms through action (Smith, 1997). There is much writing on the importance of the use of the word praxis in scholarship as it suggests an everyday ethic and a struggle (De Certeau, 1984).

Praxis and the academic inquiry into decolonization are necessarily intertwined (Grande, 2003). It simply isn't enough to debate and discuss decolonization as a concept- real strategies must be offered to adult learners. Identifying decolonized expressive writing practices as praxis gives it heft and intellectual importance to scholars. Decolonization is a process guided by the self and unique to each person; there cannot be a guidebook. By citing scholars in this thesis who have contributed to critical understandings of praxis, decolonization, adult learning, Indigeneity, and composition, I am providing intellectual prompts for other students and instructors to engage in
the emotional and ethical journey of decolonization in its disciplinary particularities. I suggest that the decolonized writing that might arise from this inquiry occurs when the student or scholar writes honestly, from a place of emotion, spirit, and individuality. This will look different for each adult and different than most standard essays. Consequently, I provide arguments, case studies, examples, that point toward a decolonized writing praxis in order to distinguish this thesis from tips, tricks, and techniques of the various existing text-conscious and narrative oriented academic disciplines. This thesis, like all that have come before, is a try, through which other tries might flourish.

Writing, broadly conceived in education institutions, is a potentially decolonizing process that has undergone major flux and development according to the whims of cognitivism, rhetoric, and the corresponding academic conventions and style guides of the day. Inherent in the act of writing has always been an aspect of emotive self-expression that, I will argue, has the power to transform the surmountable legacy of colonialism within universities and within ourselves. I will distinguish my argument from ethnography and arts-based scholarship by discussing the essay itself, its origins, its tensions, and its potential. I will identify the opportunities essays provide to utilize expressive writing and challenge conventional writing practices. I will review some hopeful Indigenous education models, promising uses of writing, and some of the methods employed by Indigenous scholars to transform institutional practices through what is termed “Decolonizing Methodologies”, “Native Renaissance”, and, the “Indigenist agenda”.

In the section entitled 'Dispossession of Land and of Voice', I'll outline existing efforts to make academic discussion more accessible and accountable to the communities who are connected to the subject of study. Teaching practice, critical interpretations of praxis, and blogs have begun to
transform what the post-secondary institution is, what it does, and how it communicates with those outside its walls. I will cite examples of teaching practices of my professors, specific blogs, and discuss my use of image based communication among adults to demonstrate the existing opportunities to confront and re-work the conventional wisdom ascribed to the authoritative voice of the academic person.

In the section entitled “Colonial History of Academic Output”, I will consider the history of the essay, and the tension arising from contemporary uses of the essay format, in particular within Indigenous focused inquiry. The guiding research methodology for this section was inspired by the Algonquin words of my former professor Dr. Bob Lovelace:"Apich ki andakinige pinawigo, Nishin wejibabaman Kwazigwan" ("When you put yourselves in the past, it is important to have good dreams"). Through the lens of Dr. Lovelace's words, I will identify the insights into the use of history by the early classical historian, Thucydides, as conveyed by the classicist scholar Dr. Donald Kagan.

Dr. Kagan's ambiguity toward the American ‘culture wars’ of the 1990’s, and his bias toward conservative viewpoints that has been welcomed by the Republican Party, resulted in his being denied a twenty million dollar endowment to start a Western civilization history program of study at Yale (Kaminski, retrieved: 08/20/2014). Dr. Kagan's situation of creating laudable critical inquiry into Thucydides and learning to be accountable for his political bias speaks to the prevailing impulse that scholars (and by extension, post-secondary institutions) must dream more responsibly by aligning form with content, words with politics, and thoughts with action. I'll finish this section by exploring the legacy of fascism as an example of a 20th century nightmare that citizens and scholars must continue to process and understand to avoid the potential excesses
of extremist forms of political thinking. Dr. Peter Cole's book, *Coyote and Raven Go Canoeing* represents the academic risks necessary to align form and content, resolve tension, and attempt to embody, through writing practice, the good dreams necessary to incorporate decolonization into the academy.

The third section, “Hope, Indigeneity, and the Art of Writing”, examines the promise of writing, the need to unlearn conventional essay writing tropes, and looks to Indigenous education models to recognize the power of simplicity to develop effective educational frameworks, research models, and decolonized writing practices. In this section, I will report in detail on the use of simple writing exercises by Dr. Sondra Perl, a university instructor with Jewish background, attempting to prompt Austrian teachers to understand their relationship to the legacy of fascism, Nazism, and the Holocaust. Her challenges may reflect challenges faced by university instructors in Canada intending to introduce their students to the legacy of colonialism. In the final parts of this section, I will cite Indigenous writers who created stories of survival of the residential school experience. Writing in these circumstances was not simply literary but a critical, dialectic, and didactic form of decolonization that subverted overly academic disembodied responses to the generational struggle of residential schools. I'll speak about my personal relationship to writing, and end the section citing Indigenous scholars who describe the differing affect and political texture of words used creatively and words used in academic spaces.

and Sheila Cote-Meek (2014), have created the theoretical and practical foundation for
decolonization to occur within the academy in Canada and beyond. Their work is decolonized
and decolonizing. By generating scholarship, they begin to create critical, pedagogic, and
physical pathways for non-Indigenous people to understand how to decolonize, for Indigenous
people to sustain control of Indigenous education, and for increased recruitment of Indigenous
people into post-secondary institutions. I suggest that decolonizing writing practices may
provide another possible pathway to increase the relevance of the post-secondary academic
discipline to Indigenous people in Canada. I also suggest that decolonizing writing practices
may provide non-Indigenous students a safe exercise in which to address their own privilege,
experience of contradiction, and complicity with the legacy of colonialism. I'll cite an OISE
thesis by Chantal Solange Marie Fiola to demonstrate the importance of self-location as an
existing practice and opportunity to decolonize writing by challenging the authoritative voice of
the academic essay.

I'll conclude by identifying the simple power of offering some thoughts on topics rather than the
insatiable drive to be the definitive voice of a specific field of study. Dr. Marie Battiste
references 'ecology' as a metaphor for Indigenous ways of thinking. Dr. Battiste says “Ecology is
the animating force that teaches by trial and error, and elders’ guidance, how to live and how to
be human”(2013, p.114). Decolonized writing practices, I'll offer, may be as simple as a
demystification of the centuries old process of essay writing by way of a consideration of Dr.
Battiste’s ecology as it might relate to the act of writing. Writing originally reflected, verbatim,
the words of the professor- the ‘logie’ was singular, linear, male centered, prescribed thoughts
passed down and occasionally updated. Writing has matured organically to reflect the more
broadly interpreted research experience of the student, their individual engagement with books,
literature, data and research subjects. Understanding these components as actors within an ‘ecology’ may provide an Indigenized form of critical synthesis. Writing in the humanities and social sciences, like walking to enhance one’s health, is healthier when it is done casually, consistently, thoughtfully and through many environments. From Dr. Battiste's ecology perspective, one might reasonably frame the Deleuze and Guattarian ‘rhizome’ as an Indigenized or, at least, an Indigenizable concept and metaphor (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). The academic experience reflected in writing is no longer a hallway of hallowed white men; it is now, as Dr. Restoule has pointed out to me and to his thesis writing group, a forest.

Before arriving at this conclusion, however, in the following sections, I will review the ways that colonialism, criticality and cognitivism have shaped the writing process. With a deeper consideration of praxis, decolonization, the history of the essay, promising uses of writing, existing strategies and research practices of Indigenous scholars and their allies, there are hints of how to make writing a more meaningful relatable and transformative act for those seeking to decolonize. The ecology you are experiencing through these paragraphs and pages is the result of working with Dr. Jean-Paul Restoule between 2011-2014 on elucidating my relationship to words and writing within the academy in my attempt to be allied with Indigenous scholars and scholarship. Together, through course work, experimentation, and multiple layers and rounds of editing, this is a collective effort towards what Dr. Battiste calls 'Displacing Cognitive Imperialism' in her book Decolonizing Education: Nourishing the Learning Spirit (2013).

In attending conferences at OISE, lectures, and symposiums, I have found that I am continually bringing up voice in my questions to my colleagues: "How have the voices of the participants impacted your research question?", "What role does a discussion of voice play in democratic
education?", "In what ways does your paper respond to and honour the voices of those of the community?

Voice has been a bridging word - one that can be understood creatively as an intangible form of personal expression, and conceptually as a source of information through which research establishes its legitimacy.

Through physical interacting at the university, presenting my ideas with colleagues, and through discussion, I have come to realize that my underlying research interest is voice, as it is presented and conveyed in writing. In the humanities and social sciences, often, scholars interact tangibly with communities by accessing, citing, eliciting, conveying or amplifying the voices of research participants. I hope that a decolonized writing practice helps to form a more sensitive context in which voices thrive, both the scholar and the people their research references, uses and impacts.
Chapter 1
EAST: Dispossession of Land, and of Voice

All levels of government in Canada have been divesting and downsizing crown corporations, programs and services consistently throughout the 21st century. Consequently, it is particularly urgent for students and scholars in the humanities and social sciences to develop their individual and collective voices to combat the impulses of divestiture and dispossession. This section explores ways to make the authoritative academic voice increasingly accountable to the legacy of colonialism, responsible for the words it produces, community and action oriented in its nature.

1. The Culture of Dispossession in the Context of Government Divestiture

When we arrive at a topic as fundamental and personal as decolonization in a university classroom, divestment comes in handy. It's a special trick to read about the way that marginalization exists in Canada and then divest oneself of the responsibility to do something about this marginalization. If I write about decolonization, perhaps I do not need to question my complicity with racism and class privilege. If I use the words racism and class privilege, perhaps people will ask me less about my own embodiment of colonialism. I am referring to false criticalness that is cloaked in decolonizing jargon, the use of which is at risk of becoming normalized in academic spaces. I am suggesting that words as personal, relevant, and urgent as decolonization can be reduced to an academic sleight of hand. Consequently, scholars working toward the decolonization of post-secondary research frequently employ strategies that emphasize honesty, self-reflection, and community driven practices (Dion, 2009) (Restoule, Gruner, Metatawabin, 2013) (Cannon, 2010) (Laenui, 2000).
We read with a view to divest our insights in class. Writing is widely used as a form of divesting—dispossessing one's self of something that was once inside. We accumulate and dispossess works cited. Professors dispossess themselves of our dispossessed insights. The result is a colonial mindset based on dispossession enacted through uncritical use of conventional writing practices. We are awarded letters beside our name, and then the university dispossesses itself of us. Apart from alumni fundraising, what relationship does the university desire us to maintain with it? More important still, what relationship does the university desire us to maintain with ourselves, our integrity, our personhood? De Certeau compares this process of dispossession to death: “Writing is a tomb in the double sense of the word in that, in the very same text, it both honors and eliminates” (De Certeau, p.101).

In this section, I will open this discussion by identifying opportunities to experiment with mindful writing practice that inspires and decolonizes by re-imagining the role of the essay, situating praxis in relation to academic writing, highlighting blogs as critical responses to colonial hegemony, and offering a subtle intervention of authorial academic voice through the use of image based communication systems.

Frequently, even within critical disciplines, writing practices encourage loose connections between students and ideas. The pillar that 'theory,' ‘theorist,’ or ‘idea’ conjures in one's mind plummets into papers and trumps the way it feels to read theory and our collective and individual relationships to theory, theorists, and ideas (Meyer, Hazel [blog: ‘No Theory, No Cry’], retrieved: 07/29/2013). I am not lamenting the loss of theory nor am I calling for a focus on theory. I am offering insight into the type of loose unaccountable relationships with words, and the processes
they represent, that are being formed by allowing students to use jargon without explaining its meaningful connection to their social location.

For the purposes of this discussion paper, the sentiment I am expressing relates to the way that topics as critical as decolonization are swallowed by classrooms of students and professors who have been taught to expertly and paradoxically divest themselves of the very voices required to decolonize. Criticality, if not incorporated thoughtfully, can overcomplicate the simple offering that is post-secondary adult learning. Existing programs and guidelines often encourage the use of expressive or personal narrative writing strategies to strengthen the process of academic writing. The underlying motivation in these programs is to equip the writer with a natural writing style that could be applied readily to describing elaborate concepts and theories (Northey & McKibbin, 2012). Truthfully, however, elaborate concepts and theories, beneath their lengthy words, sentences, and paragraphs, all contain simple motivations, relatable suggestions and explorations that amount to an attempt, a try at knowledge.

My interest is in expressive writing as a tool to decolonize concepts, theories, abstractions, and ideas by drawing out simple truths and connections to colonialism throughout all disciplines in the humanities. For some, this suggestion could be taken one step further to develop a decolonizing writing process that can be used as a fulcrum to write against cognitivism, to resist intellectualism, and to write knowledge back to a place of Indigenous mindfulness. This may correspond with an 'Indigenist' agenda, that Dr. Marie Battiste (2013) proposes, and that I'll return to in the final section.

2. Chipping Away at 'Hegemonia': Taking Responsibility for Scholarship Through Critical Writing Praxis
Writing proliferated during antiquity but was only recently made a standardized requirement for students in universities. Thucydides, the early historian, made use of writing in order to document the Peloponnesian War. His account of this 300 year war was lauded for its balance, directness, and objectivity. About the History of the Peloponnesian War, Thucydides wrote that future generations may "wish to see clearly what has happened and what will happen again, in all human probability, in the same or a similar way" (Kagan, p.1).

The eminent scholar, Dr. Donald Kagan, spent twenty years analyzing the events of the Peloponnesian War, the varied accounts, and, in particular, the work of Thucydides. On the teaching quality of Thucydides’ writing, Dr. Kagan says, "The didactic aspect of his work—the attempt to identify underlying patterns—is intended to supply some perceptive individual with the insight (gnômē) with which to see the course of political events and to control them"(p.15).

Dr. Kagan admires Thucydides recounting of the great plague that occurred in Athens in 430 BC. The illness that Thucydides was afflicted with is described in detail so that students of Hippocrates might learn from the experience and prevent it from occurring again (p.12). This demonstrates the admiration Thucydides held for the rational approach offered by Hippocrates-the process of identifying an ailment, and resolving this ailment or, even better, preventing the ailment from occurring at all. This Hippocratic approach considered that the body might be guided by its own internal impulses rather than a divine presence. Consequently, Dr. Kagan concludes that "Thucydides assumes the role of diagnostician of the ills of society"(p.12).

The Greek scholars of antiquity developed what they considered an important distinction between hegemonia, known contemporarily as 'legitimated leadership', and arkhe, understood
now by the English word 'control' (Lebow & Kelly, 2001). Thucydides was particularly interested in this distinction as he tracked the epic centuries-long battle between the Athenians and the Spartans- the Peloponnesian War. Many North American scholars have taken up increased interest in Thucydides and the Peloponnesian War for its supposed similarities with the Cold War, and for the implications to foreign policy of Western nations (Drezner, retrieved: 06/25/2014).

The distinction of *hegemonia* and *arkhe* was important for Thucydides as he tracked the ebbs and flows of the Peloponnesian War. Thucydides suggests that it was a lack of respect for *hegemonia*, that is, a demonstrated balance between justice and self-interest, that led to the demise of the Athenian forces. Thucydides believed that legitimated leadership, *hegemonia*, offered longevity and secure rule of an empire, whereas, *arkhe*, rule by control was fickle, susceptible to uprisings, rebellions, and revolt (Lebow & Kelly, p.593). The two terms provide some pause for reflection on Canada's historical relations with Indigenous people.

Canada has traditionally pretended to know what is best for Indigenous people and Indigenous communities. Canada continually feigns legitimated rule over Indigenous people (see *Indian Act*). While quietly instituting genocidal policies, refusing to acknowledge negligent and abusive practices present during the era of the Indian agent, denying the deaths and generational trauma caused by residential schools and the impact of the Sixties Scoop, Canada offered another story to its citizenry, one of benevolence offered through the noble project of ‘assimilating the Indian’ (Armitage, 1995). This is a history of extremes- employing *arkhe* over a dominated group of nations, while grooming an image of the most gently earnestly administered *hegemonia*. 
There is now a critical mass of events happening among Indigenous people in Canada: Idle No More (the outcome of which is still underway), land claim settlements, residential school settlements, Indigenous-led education models, politicians and activists advocating for renewed treaty relationships. The lie of *hegemonia* is gradually melting away to reveal the insidious forms of *arkhe* underneath, a government policy most tangibly represented by the Indian Act, leading to the loss of language and continuity among all of Canada's Indigenous Nations.

The authoritative singular academic voice conveyed in essays contains elements of *arkhe* and *hegemonia*. Uncritical adherence to conventional writing practices in the academy contributes to the unquestioned *hegemonia* of objective, clinical, disembodied paradigms of Western epistemology in Canadian universities today. In turn, the *arkhe* of the Canadian government over Indigenous people persists unencumbered. A stronger, grounded, emotive, relational academic voice has an important role to play combatting the myth of "settler neutrality versus Native emotionality" (Regan, p.39). Decolonized writing, with the help of expressive writing strategies, acknowledges that "neutrality is actually an expression of settler symbolic violence, or power over, Indigenous people"(p.39).

3. Public Access: Blogs as a Decolonizing Praxis

Praxis, like *hegemonia* and *arkhe*, has roots in ancient Greece. Old fellows like Plato and Aristotle discussed theory, debated ideas, and praxis represented a translation of theory or cerebral ideas into physical action. Dr. Hannah Arendt and Dr. Paolo Freire helped to bring praxis back to the forefront as a way to challenge the seeming inertia of contemplative, duplicitous, and complicit academic spaces in the 20th century. Arendt developed a Theory of Action that re-introduced praxis into contemporary thought. Dr. Freire called for action in the
area of advocacy for oppressed people, social injustice, and inequalities using a thoughtful and equitable sense of academic and pedagogical praxis (Freire, 1960). In *Liberating Praxis*, Dr. Peter Mayo suggests that "The central concept adopted by Freire to capture the dialectical relationship between consciousness and the world, reflected in the pedagogical approach for which he became famous, is praxis" (2004, p.48).

Dr. Dorothy Smith offers a different response to the capitalist and colonialist dialectics present within the academy - a critical ethnography. In *Institutional Ethnography as practice* and *Writing the Social*, Dr. Smith describes the way that essays can resist the dialectics of colonialism and capitalism by way of practice (Smith, 2006; Smith, 1999). Her work speaks to the possibility of forming a Feminist or Marxist praxis of academic output. Dr. Smith offers a way to map the inner workings, the power imbalances, and injustices embedded in convention, structure, and everyday practices within institutions through conscientious writing practices. By “writing the social,” Dr. Smith forms a critical pathway to “write sociological studies at the conjunction of scholar and the piece of the beast that she has hold of and that gives determination to her experience of it” (1999, p.227).

Dr. Smith’s work addresses decolonized writing practice because *Writing the Social* offers a way forward, an alternative, and the possibility of a praxis in response to an in-between space, a “conjunction” as she puts it. These conjunctive in-between spaces that are characteristic of colonial societies such as Canada can stymie scholars in the social sciences and humanities who contend with constant contradiction and the pressure to provide a linear, authoritative response to the unjust relations around them. With *Institutional Ethnography*, Dr. Smith offers a way to
write through the male-centered, product-based and settler-oriented “ruling relations” embedded in post-secondary institutions.

Dr. Paula Allman has advanced the discussion of praxis in *Critical Education Against Global Capitalism*. Dr. Allman highlights the dialectical relations within graduate level academic spaces for those wishing to enact a Marxist or Freirian model of liberation education through adult learning. Dr. Allman brings a critical understanding of dialectical relationships to the contradictions and potential of academic spaces to offer a transformative experience. In Chapter 5, in a section entitled “Critical, creative, and hopeful thinking,” she offers alternatives to the existing status quo of adult education. Rather than use what she calls “reproductive praxis” Dr. Allman proposes a system where “education is aimed at the development of both critical and creative thought, which in combination lead to realistic hope”(2001, p.167). Her view is that it is not simply enough to talk about ideals, but to reflect these ideals in the way that a classroom space and corresponding discussion is structured. Dr. Smith and Dr. Allman have been instrumental in responding to the insidious effects of capitalism. They subvert the white male centered ethos of the 20th century and global economic neo-conservatism (and its implied dialectical consequences within the academy) with suggestions on how to flatten and re-orient the power dynamic of academic spaces and academic inquiry (and thus work to avoid re-enacting the dialectical relations of capitalism).

Within the study of decolonization, we find a varied offering of approaches to praxis: decolonizing the mind through Indigenous psychology (Pe-Pua, 2006), arts-based approaches (Barndt & VIVA!, 2011), and the practice of spirituality or Indigenous ceremony in academic spaces (Wilson, 2008), for example. In the section entitled “Native Renaissance and the
Indigenist Imperative,” I will return to the existing work being done to align thought and action through writing by Indigenous scholars and their allies. For now, Tejada and Espinoza's definition of praxis offers a generalized application of the necessary personal and collective transformative processes implied by the term decolonization: "Guided action aimed at transforming individuals and their world that is reflected upon and leads to further action" (Tejada, Espinoza, Gutierrez, 2003, p.4).

Conscious of the power dynamic in which academics speak for those who do not have access to scholarly spaces, the journal Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society makes itself available for free online through a WordPress blog and website. The journal states that:

decolonization must happen at all levels, in all fields, and all locations; decolonization seeks to explore the relationships between knowledges and tears down the artificial disciplinary demarcations of dominant ways of knowing and being. Colonial power affects all areas of life and study- this journal seeks to engage and confront that power at every level. (retrieved: 07/21/2013)

This citation demonstrates that the Decolonization journal is working towards a praxis of academic dissemination about the topic of decolonization.

At OISE, I have been able to experience forms of decolonized teaching practice. In Dr. Restoule's courses, we have begun and ended classes through circles, ceremony, smudging, and sometimes song. In Dr. Ng's course, "Decolonization and Transformative Learning", she shared teachings of Qi Gong at the beginning of each class. Students were offered the opportunity to move their bodies in an academic space with increased consciousness and spirit.

Through embodied practice, Dr. Restoule and Dr. Ng communicate to their students that we are not simply thinking beings- we are feeling beings with bodies, emotion, needs and wants beyond conventional grades, feedback, and comments. These decolonized practices often meet
opposition administratively and from some students due to their disjuncture with the typified hierarchical structure and simplified colonial relationships implied by university level instruction.

It is important to recognize these are not simply teaching practices accommodated by students and OISE. These practices represent a critical praxis that begins the work of institutional change necessary within universities. Devoting class time to spirit, circle, or meditation nudges students to think more broadly about the experience of an academic space. From this broader perspective, one might recognize that colonialism staked out physical land in Canada as well as psychological space among people, including those who go to and work at universities.

Praxis, at its root, has provided an academic discussion that centers accountability for talk and theory. Praxis holds scholars accountable for their words (Lather, 1998). Through blogging, scholars have opened the forum for dialogue and debate about the 'praxis' of decolonization. One fundamental component of academic discussions of decolonization is accountability. The OISE decolonization blog offers insight into the need for accountability:

Decolonization provides immediate and full open access to all of its content on the principle that making research freely available to the public supports a greater global exchange of knowledge. Decolonization research and knowledge is accountable to communities of struggle far beyond the academic community, and how can these communities hold us accountable without access to the research? (retrieved: 07/21/2013)

I do not wish to place knowledges alongside one another in competition. University spaces, academic journals, and the work of scholars have a role in preserving discussions that are relevant to society. There is a danger in suggesting that because a journal has open access online, it embodies values of decolonization or democracy to a greater extent. Decolonizing knowledges from outside the university, from the front lines of community work or unmoderated 'kitchen table' discussions are also fraught with complexity, contradiction and power dynamics. Within
popular knowledge, we also find "dominant ideology and strategies that anaesthetize people's thinking" (Tejada & Espinoza, p.75).

The editorial board of the Decolonization journal identifies its own fraught relationship with the technology of the internet:

Within the chosen online medium, Decolonization is also cognizant of the history and role that technology has played within the colonial project, being held up as the measuring stick for 'development' and civility, as a tool of Western modernity. We hope to be part of the ongoing interrogation of how to best use technology for decolonizing purposes without neglecting to shine a light on its past and current implication within colonization. (retrieved: 07/21/2013)

I believe the move to place discussions of decolonization in a venue more accessible and accountable to the public enhances the reflection and meaning of the academic construct of decolonization. The underlying message is "I want more people to know, more people to ask, and a more diverse discussion in multiple locations."

Dr. Bob Lovelace, professor and activist scholar from the Four Directions Aboriginal Student Centre at Queen's University, coordinates a decolonization blog through Facebook. In the “About” section, the blog sets out its mission:

This page will follow developments on Algonquin Land and to keep members up to date on Bob’s continuing efforts to resist colonial processes and to educate for decolonization. Bob will post information on initiatives he’s involved in, share his writing, share information he thinks is valuable, and contribute thoughts on the process of decolonization. Chi Meegwetch. Anishnabe Debewewin/Stay Human. (retrieved: 08/11/2013)

I reference these blogs here because I believe they represent an emerging praxis that seeks to provide access and forum for interaction for people in Canada without voice in traditional academic circles. The OISE decolonization blog is peer-reviewed (and has a non-peer reviewed section). Dr. Lovelace's is not. However, both blogs reach out to the public with a similar access
to information philosophy of writing motivated by the possibility of decolonization. Their existence acknowledges the importance of opening up academic debate to communities impacted by them.

Blogs provide a tangible point of departure for a writing form that has previously been inaccessible to the general public. Blogs are simply one tool that can reduce the opacity of academic discussion that is convenient to colonial structures. There are several other and more conventional ways of inviting diversity and interaction with academic writing. Freire (1960), Allman (2001), and Smith (2006) have brought a conversation of action through scholarship in response to corporate capitalism, misogyny, and its totalitarian regime that sometimes permeates throughout liberal academic institutions.

The decolonization blogs create transformation by flattening the hierarchy of academic knowledge-making. Professors such as Dr. Restoule and Dr. Ng embody institutional and educational transformation through pedagogy or perhaps what is better described as andragogy—that is, teaching practice designed for adults. In this section, I have offered the theoretical foundations and practical strategies being deployed by scholars and institutions to decolonize and bring greater consciousness to the complicity of academic writing practices with capitalism and colonialism. The unique contradiction of developing an adult learning praxis of decolonized writing is working with an authoritative academic voice to challenge the implied syntactical structures, academic conventions, and claim to authority of this very voice. I will move forward mindful of the linear and thus colonizing quality of this voice as I am bound to convey it in the conventional thesis format.
In formulating my approach to this thesis, it was important for the research to breathe, to be real, to be relatable to the people I know and work with and accessible to those in my life (Lather, 1996). I knew people would ask me about it and I wanted to involve them rather than simply explain my research interest. In my daily work as a special education teacher, I am responsible for developing alternative communication methods with the use of images. My students are presented with images when making a choice, or communicating a need or want.

I felt a strong connection with these images as they became extremely important to some of my students as a form of communication. In some instances, students would develop enough of an image vocabulary that they would have a binder of images, or an iPad, or iPod, that they could bring with them wherever they would go.

There is a dimension to these images that is readily readable and transparent. Images can be read by people with varied abilities, whereas text is specifically available to a literate population and is more exclusive by nature. A recent advancement in post-secondary learning is the admission of people living with a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder. Consequently, universities are beginning to adapt their instruction to people who may not communicate in conventional ways, and those who may use an image based alternative communication method. At OISE, I began experimenting with images as an adult learning tool to explore the communication sensibilities, the limits, and possibilities of scholarship. I wondered if complex topics, theories, histories, could be conveyed using these images. I formed sentences and research statements using images
and shared them with colleagues at OISE/UT. Eventually, I decided to shape a questionnaire that could be used as a data gathering tool.

From this image based questionnaire and the lessons learned attempting to employ it as a research methodology, I have subsequently developed a deeper connection to the writing process of an essay or thesis. The images have prompted me to be more open about the creative sensibilities underlying my approach to writing for academic forums. The images, as fundamental as they are to some of my students, reminded me not to take text for granted, and instead, to harness its use, to build its potential as a communicative tool in humanities and social sciences.

I've subsequently moved forward in my research interests by seeking out other scholars who attempt to enhance the meaningfulness and thoughtfulness of the academic writing process. Within this scholarship arises several opportunities to decolonize writing, the discussion of which I will return to in the remaining sections of this thesis. For now, to end this section on the Dispossession of Land, and of Voice, I will discuss the process of attempting to interview adults with the use of images, as a case study. My aim is to highlight the important role of communication within teaching and research to re-imagine the authorial voice employed in traditional academic essays.

The following image statements may not represent a successful praxis or reflect critical decolonizing research methodology, however, they create a unique space in which to critique and develop critical reflection concerned with the forms of communication privileged by traditional and conventional text based learning spaces. When a research subject, or research subjects are determined, the academic and the subject of study often become isolated, disembodied from the
lived reality that inform their identities within the illusory vacuum of academic inquiry. I share these image statements in an effort to prompt deeper conversations about the tools of the academy, questionnaires, data, essays— their origins, their quality, who they are for and who they are not accessible to. These aspects of research are expressions themselves that have inherent communication systems embedded within that an ethics review attempts to address and mitigate.
Figure 2.

The Picture Communication Symbols ©1981–2011 by Mayer-Johnson LLC. All Rights Reserved Worldwide. Used with permission. Boardmaker® is a trademark of Mayer-Johnson LLC.
Figure 3.
These images represent the initial ideas, words, verbs, people and relationships that informed this thesis project. By including them, I want to highlight the process of elimination which reduces the transparency of social influences of research inquiry. Text on a page lends itself to a state of authorial ownership (e.g. my words, my essay, my argument) while, quite the opposite is true, text arises from the influence and support and acquiescence of a community of people. These images were selected both as representations of my research, my sense of humour and imagination, as well as selections of images for participants to be able to use to form their own statements. Using images as a form of questionnaire allowed me to expand the sense of ownership of this research project and create a collective intervention of the traditional academic authorial voice. Questions, especially in a research interview, can re-enforce norms of academic power, researcher authority, and colonial condescension. These images sought to engage participants with a research dish- a space of not knowing, for both myself, and for them. I felt I was being more honest in positioning this image questionnaire as a ‘try’, an attempt, of which I did not know or expect a certain result.
I subsequently collaborated with colleagues and associates to produce image statements using the box depicted above (see Figure 4.). On the left are the images that described my research interest in communication and colonialism and simultaneously provided the images/words with which participants could explore and create their own response. These image statements often spoke to issues of disability as we were aware that we were engaging with a communicative modality usually used by people with a disability. However, for my purposes, and indeed for speech pathologists and therapists and specialists, Boardmaker images are most effectively interpreted as an alternative communication method. The style, subject, and sensibility of the collaborative statements act as discussion starters to take the lens away from the perceived ‘disability’ or ‘communication impairment’ and place the focus on the knowledge making mechanisms of the academy and of adult learners.
In this example, I've used this statement to simplify the motivation, rationale, and hope for my thesis project. The box of picture symbols sat atop my desk at my school. Several people asked me about it and were quite engaged by the idea of broadening our use of picture symbols. There was an informal waiting list of participants eager to take part in using these symbols to build a statement of their own.

Figure 6.
One day after work, at a coffee shop down the street, I brought this box to a colleague and talked about how to make a sentence that was meaningful. "An impact statement?" she asked. "Yes, we can write words on the blank ones, if we want, to finish the sentence," I told her. After we finished, she was quite excited by the prospect of giving people the chance to 'play' with research and come up with an achievable accomplishment - a short simple sentence. In this statement (Figure 6.) she expressed how disability is meaningful to her. She had been involved with the school's iPad research study and asked me to integrate the use of the school's iPads with this project.

Figure 7.

In this statement (Figure 7.), the nurses who assist with the medical needs of some of the school’s students decided to highlight the spectrum of support within which they situate their work. They asked to include a stethoscope with their images as it was an object meaningful to their work with the students of the school.
A colleague wanted to convey the importance for professionals and all adults to engage in the process of self-development and reflection to build mindfulness into the work we perform. In this response (Figure 8.), the layers of professional learning and the sentiment expressed demonstrate the knowledge deepening potential of working with alternative expressive modalities within the academy. In this example, making use of visual communication adds an emotional potency to the ideas conveyed.

In each of these examples, I learned a little more about the way in which we approach communication within a research or thesis context. I found that the idea of using images ourselves, as verbal and explicitly communicative adults, was an entirely new concept. Consequently, it provided a new perspective on what knowledge making, data, and the research process entails. While initially, my plan was to engage in interviews using only images, I realized quickly that this would result in much confusion, due to the newness of the communication format and would skew my analysis of the data.
Ultimately, I guided the image statements, describing the process in more detail than I would have liked, sometimes showing examples, extracting suggested sentence starters, and prompting people along the way. I created these statements with the input of people around me. Consequently, I cannot offer insights into a particular research subject or group, an analytical process that traditional data gathering might entail. It is important to note that conventional interviews consisting of questionnaires, to which an ethics review process often ascribes appropriate balance and objectivity, for some, is as disconnected and mediated as a box full of image booklets.

In the 21st century, researchers in the humanities disciplines are sensitized and amenable to the reality that data gathered in questionnaire and interview is highly contextual and conditional on many outside factors which the ethics protocol attempts to reduce or mitigate. Beyond the ethics protocol process, it’s beholden on the researcher to be honest about the way that their own research interests guide the direction of questions, the interpretation of answers, and the presupposed consequences of the entire interaction between interviewer and research subject. In building a box of image booklets, I wanted to suggest ways to empower ‘research subjects’ to dismantle, and reconfigure the concepts, words, and, in this case, images driving the research. In so doing, my hope was to shift the power dynamic of traditional knowledge making during the interview process.

By allowing the interview tool to be controlled and manipulated by the ‘interviewee’, I hoped that the subject’s knowledge, rather than the researcher’s knowledge, would take precedence. In writing these reflections about the image statements above, I am in a knowledge space mediated by the people with whom I collaborated. Upon reflection, the word ‘collaborator’ may be a more
accurate descriptor for the people with whom I explored this interview process. Because images are relatively unique as a knowledge making tool in contemporary academy, I am in flux with my role as an interpreter and collaborator in this case study. As a result, analysis depends upon where and how the reader of this thesis engages in meaning making.

The etymological considerations that provide a backbone to this case study involve redefining the parameters of an 'interview' and roles of researcher and collaborator such that collaborators may reconfigure the researcher's question and proposal to create their own meaning. These statements are collaborative, and they do not seek to provide any insight into the collaborators involved. It’s possible that the terms interviewee, respondents or participants may not properly denote the people who worked with me to create these statements. By collaborating, being open and honest about the experiment of using these images among adult learners, my intent was to reconfigure the power dynamics of disability, communication, and research by complicating the in-between space of ‘interviewer’ and ‘interviewee’.

Decolonizing research methodologies deal with similar power dynamics in re-negotiating knowledge making spaces and making these spaces more accountable to the people implicated in its research. Historically, the benefit for the researcher is privileged over the potential benefits of research participants. Decolonized research methodologies work to change this dynamic that re-enforces institutional power and privilege. Decolonized research works to identify and address the invariable imbalance of some research, the community impact of research, and the measures employed at a variety of research stages to ensure some form of community empowerment.
Some of the powerful components of decolonized research speak directly to the impetus to privilege text based, documentable, and measurable data. I hope the images I’ve employed highlight the dubious, at times duplicitous use of text, questionnaires, and other standardized data gathering tools in the academy. I hope that examining writing practices can bring a sense of wonderment back to the use of words and text as visual representations of research. I wonder whether text can appear as surprising and fresh as images did in this case study.
Figure 9.
In this example (Figure 9.), I have attempted to express a complex thought with the use of images exclusively (no words or labels). My goal was to create a cohesive statement or sentence that might convey to an academic audience some of the motivations, and the in-between spaces of communication, colonialism, representation and identity that this thesis sets out to explore.

The inevitability of 'writing' as academic output spurs me on to investigate whether the expressive nature of writing may provide critical pathways to decolonize scholarship across disciplines through a simpler unmediated relationship to words and texts and the metaphors they imply. Mindful that my interest in writing came about from the richness I encountered in images during my role as a special education teacher, in the following sections, I will move on to a discussion of the potential that expressive writing might hold for a decolonized adult learning praxis beginning with an examination of the historical underpinnings of the essay itself.
Chapter 2
SOUTH : Colonial History of Academic Output

Acknowledging the generational terror of colonialism in Canada implies the responsibility to imagine good dreams for the future. Good dreams must be weary of the type of political extremism that has led to and continues to lead to nightmares for marginalized and vulnerable people in Canada and beyond. This section emphasizes the importance of understanding the history of academia and Canadian colonialism and its impact on the most widely disseminated form of academic output - the essay. I will set the historical context in which to identify ways to decolonize the writing processes asked of adult learners in Canada.

In the 20th century, as all 7 billion people on the planet came closer together, the stakes became higher. In the academy, everything was questioned, even the academy itself for its cooperation with capitalism, colonialism, and corrupted epistemologies. With everything in question, cognitivist and critical forms of academic writing took on more profile. The more critical, clinical or cognitivist approach was equated with a more intelligent or advanced form understanding (Lather, 1998). Extreme adherence to critical and cognitivist approaches to writing, however, can lead to suspicion and fear among scholars. The combination of high stakes, suspicion and fear occasionally results in a sense of policing among students and professors, and policing is symptomatic of an extremist style of social relations (Brookfield, 2000).

1. Origins of the Essay: From Oral Language to Latin to English to Writing
In the 19th century, fundamental transitions occurred in the style and format of academic output and academic progress. Firstly, rich debate occurred over the use of Latin versus the use of English in the academy in the British Isles. English and Latin were often taught and translated alongside one another, orally and through writing. As a result of these debates and concurrent instruction, English sought to establish its primacy and legitimacy by adhering to grammatical and dialectic standards to the same degree as Latin instruction:

Teachers, elocutionists, grammarians, and lexicographers-with Enlightenment faith in rationality and rules- set out to understand and standardize English, firm in the belief that change indicated deterioration and that Latin grammar was the standard by which all languages should be measured. (Ferreira-Buckley, p.176)

Universities outside of Oxford and Cambridge were beginning to accept students with a variety of modes of speaking, dialects and varying degrees of skill in Latin and/or English. Education was becoming accessible to a lesser elite class of people. *A Short History of Writing Instruction* notes that "eradicating provincialisms became part of the educational mission of individuals and institutions" (p.180). With many believing the translation from Latin to English was already a deterioration of academic standard, it could be argued that English fought its way to acceptance through a dogmatic enforcement of grammar and style (p.180).

Rhetoric and oratory, the skills that were paramount to academics in the medieval period, began to be accompanied by writing, or reproduction of rhetoric by way of composition in the 19th century. Students were expected to copy down lectures word for word. The lecture system became entrenched which utilized notebooks and writing implements and became a popular venue for students to engage in a closer study of their professors, to mimic, and demonstrate their composition abilities (p.183). Initially, professors would question their students orally on the
material covered in class. (p.187) In the 19th century, gradually this monitoring process was replaced by the more standardized written test and the separate tutorial (p.184).

Richard Whately, a professor from Oxford, wrote *Elements of Logic* (1826) and *Elements of Rhetoric* (1828) that each provided pedagogical guidelines for 'Argumentative Composition' (p.182). With instruction, composition, and rhetoric in flux, writing became a discernible and controllable way forward. Consequently, well into the 20th century, "memorizing books and literary passages remained common practice even at the university level, for students were expected to have patterns of good writing in their heads"(p.181). The proliferation of entrance exams, which was entrenched by Harvard in 1874, ensured writing would be a necessary component in secondary schools as well.

In the 20th century, several different approaches to writing emerged. Grammar and proper writing practices persisted partly due to its use in primary and secondary level instruction, and partly due to the proliferation of entrance exams to large colleges and universities. The structure of this writing hearkened back to logic, reasoning, and rhetoric- forms of classical essay writing and argumentation entrenched through instruction in the 19th century, as described above. In addition to the rhetorical approaches to writing and argumentation, expressivist, cognitivist, and literary writing became mainstream among teachers of English at the primary and secondary levels throughout the 20th century. Writing itself became a discipline and eventually a degree program. Debate occurred at all levels. Poor writing became the linchpin for the deterioration of quality education. Through writing, the degradation of language appeared tangible- from Latin, to English, to mediocre written English. Printing, cursive writing, legibility were additional forms of language instruction and critique on top of grammar, use of language, and logic.
Consequently, writing became a contested battleground in the 20th century (just as the use of English, as opposed to Latin, became a battleground in the 18th and 19th centuries). Writing could be used as a barometer for cognition and psychological development. Writing could be used to convey complex and nuanced academic concepts. Writing could be used as a tool for free expression and association. Writing was the most accurate way of assessing a grade level. Writing was the only adequate way to preserve respect for classicist rhetoric, logic, and argumentation. None of these approaches emerged triumphant.

In the 21st century, writing continues to be used as a tool to assess cognition, levels of understanding, and psychological development. English teachers often mix the expressivist and classicist approaches to writing, through creative writing or response journals, complemented by conventional essay writing skills. The rich variety of writing used in primary and secondary schools includes essays, written responses, journaling, reading notes, lecture notes, and several other creative forms. To some, this has resulted in tremendous freedom of expression for students at multiple levels and in multiple areas of interest. To others, this has resulted in the begrudging allowance of poorer quality writing and rhetoric.

University professors frequently bemoan the quality of writing and grammar of first year students, implying a lack of rigor in secondary schools. Secondary teachers frequently bemoan the quality of writing of their students, implying poor instruction in elementary schooling. And elementary school teachers are often left to bear the weight of blame, all the while, burdened with what might be regarded as the largest emotional workload, assessing dozens of aptitudes for young children.
The mix and match of writing exercises, tools, and conventional writing practices is now accompanied by a saturation of writing tools. Whereas the 20th century saw little more than computer word processing as a major advancement to writing implements, in the 21st century, people write to one another all the time by way of texts, email, blogs, comments, alongside all of the traditional forms, by way of touchpads, keyboards, and talk to text software. It is difficult to walk on a sidewalk without running into someone writing on their mobile device! Very few celebrate the proliferation of writing, as it is seen as diluting clear thought, and contrasted with the depth and correctness of literary classics and formalized academic inquiry.

I believe there is a dire need to discuss writing more thoughtfully as it relates to academic disciplines. Indeed, writing has a new and changing role to play in preserving knowledge and values in post-secondary institutions. My concern is more specifically the social relationships of writing and its impact on the decolonizing potential of an essay. The question worth exploring further is how have the humanities disciplines across institutions settled on the present writing practices? What is the history and colonial trajectory of the American Psychological Association’s manual, the Modern Language Association format, and the Chicago Manual of Style?

In order to come to a place of decolonizing writing practices in the academy, there are important givens that require conscious attention and discussion. The first is distinguishing between writing that is asked of children, and writing that is asked of adults. Alexander Kapp’s term ‘andragogy’ has been subsumed under the grander project of pedagogy in the 20th century (Lindeman, 1926). Andragogy, I believe, may be an appropriate tool to distill academic writing
from the many debates of cognitivists, expressivists, psychologists, elementary and secondary teachers.

Andragogy means the teaching philosophy of instructing adults. Alexander Kapp, a German gymnasium teacher, helped coin the term andragogy in writing the book *Education for the individual* (1833). In it, he essentializes some behaviours of men and women and re-enforces dominant male centered paradigms. Andragogy, however, was an important term in the development of contemporary adult learning theory as it differentiated instructional strategies for adults, as a distinct category. Eduard Lindeman and Malcolm Knowles picked up andragogy and propelled the study of adult education with the understanding that adults approach learning experiences in a fundamentally different context than children and youth. In other words, adults’ needs and expectations are unique and multi-dimensional.

In the 20th century, Malcolm Knowles picked up on Kapp's andragogy by developing learner centered education, humanist learning theory, and the modern concept of the adult learner (Knowles, 1955). Dr. Paulo Freire, largely responsible for critical pedagogy, provided a political interpretation of learning theories through a Marxist and anti-oppression framework (Freire, 1970). Dr. Freire suggested that "unless the mind is decolonized, the people's thinking would be in conflict with the new context that would be evolving as a result of the struggle for freedom" (Mayo, p.64).

Dr. Freire's critical literacy provided strategies for educators to consider the way that colonialism and capitalism continue to persist through the education system (p.64). Criticality has subsequently become an important component of humanities and social sciences, and in
particular, adult education studies. A 2008 discussion paper entitled "An Analysis of the Concept of Criticality in Adult Education" proposes that:

The concept criticality has emerged over the past 25 years as central to the field of adult education. At the same time, its conceptualization has been problematic to participants in the field because of vagueness and ambiguity of the term criticality and associated expressions and collocations of the word critical, such as critical thinking and critical reflection. (retrieved: 07/08/2014)

Far from Dr. Freire's intent in using the word critical, academic fervour infused with a righteous sense of criticality has given adult scholars a tool with which to attack fellow academics in other departments and disciplines. To identify a paper, or colleague, or competing program of study as uncritical is, justified or not, an attempt to discredit another knowledge of an adult learning institution for the sake of one's own. The adult learning principles crafted by Malcolm Knowles and Eduard Lindeman in the 20th century, and the ones promoted by the Canadian Literacy and Learning Network in the 21st century do not discuss criticality, however, it has become one of the major factors, attributable in part to the writings of Dr. Freire, that adult students and scholars in the humanities disciplines must consider and address in their writing.

In *Educating the individual*, in a chapter entitled "Self-knowledge as the foremost demand on the human being", Kapp says "even if we know nothing so to speak, we nevertheless imagine that we know everything" (as cited in Loeng, p.16). In academic spaces, and especially in writing, the very real and honest feeling of 'I don't know' is usually shared with fear for being judged or harshly critiqued by colleagues. With colonialism and capitalism implicitly affecting the dialectic, dialogic, and didactic relationships within adult learning spaces, it is particularly poignant for a scholar to share what they do not know about the function of these historical, political, ideological, and economic structures.
There is an emerging need to assess the potential pitfalls of an increasingly critical adult learning environment in the social sciences and humanities disciplines and in particular, the field of adult education. Kapp, Knowles, Freire, and Allman each provided increased consciousness of the adult learning process. Criticality has emerged as a prominent dimension of this consciousness but few have examined its impact on the quality, texture, and relatability of academic discussion. If criticality isn't thoughtfully considered as a powerful theoretical resource and simultaneously a tool that can be wielded as an impenetrable weapon in academic writing, it threatens to perpetuate a binary way of thinking that takes its cues from a colonial mindset. As Dr. Taiaiake Alfred points out:

More than the moneyed privilege of the newcomers, more than the chaotic disadvantage of the original peoples, this is what we have inherited from our shared past: relationships founded on hatred and violence and a culture founded on lies to assuage the guilt or shame of it all. We are afraid of our memories, afraid of what we have become, afraid of each other, and afraid for the future. Fear is the foundation of the way we are in the world and the way we think about the future. (p.90)

In some academic spaces, fear can be a by-product of criticality- fear to express oneself, fear of saying 'I don't know what it means to be critical', and fear of saying 'I don't know, I was wrong, I have been wrong, I am wrong'. Decolonization requires a collective recognition that disembodied, distant, objective scholarship has created minimal space to admit wrong, confront error, and accept large scale failure. In terms of addressing the history of colonialism in the academy, processing large scale and widespread failure requires some basic human attitudes such as humility, honesty, bravery. Extremism, intelligence, criticality have been tried during the 20th century to address colonialism.
It is time for people with simpler impulses to come forward, share their learnings, and suggest community alternatives to colonialism. This work is already occurring in some parts of Canada and it is a matter of sustaining, sharing, and building upon these successes and this hope. I am proposing that a broader honest discussion of the purpose of adult learning in the social sciences and humanities in Canada will highlight a close relationship between criticality, essay writing conventions, citation styles, and the competitive colonial mindset that persists within the academy. Thankfully, the simple self-expressive potential of voice still holds much power and opportunity for those wishing to decolonize the primary form of academic output—the research paper.

In *Unsettling the Settler Within*, Dr. Paulette Regan attempts to strengthen the type of honest dialogue necessary to decolonize thinking and writing among non-Indigenous allies of Indigenous people:

> As a settler ally, I must continuously confront the colonizer perpetrator in myself, interrogating my own position as a beneficiary of colonial injustice. Exploring the epistemological tensions of working between these two identities means embracing persistent uncertainty and vulnerability. (p.236)

In order to decolonize, it’s necessary to create an environment in which students feel comfortable with their vulnerability. The danger of not critically interrogating our own use of criticality is that we might "have built a discourse of reconciliation that promises to release Indigenous-settler relations from [...] colonialism but will actually achieve just the opposite"(p.236).  

Deeper consideration of the lived experience of adult learning principles is necessary to create a context of decolonization within the social sciences and humanities disciplines. Productive discussions of a decolonizing praxis require a reduction of fear among students and scholars. Reduction of fear is achieved by fostering a feeling of safety to convey the contradictions of
colonialism inherent in the post-secondary experience, as Dr. Regan noted above. Reduction of
fear may create more expressive scholars, relatable scholarship, and meaningful interventions of
the traditional authoritative academic voice.

2. Tension in Our Dreams: Historical legacy of Canadian colonialism and the Historical
   Legacy of Fascism

While at Queen's University, Dr. Bob Lovelace taught me an Algonquin phrase "Apich ki
andakinige pinawigo, Nishin wejibabaman Kwazigwan". This translates to "When you put
yourselves in the past, it is important to have good dreams".

North American universities can be seen as sites of extreme tension in the 21st century. There
are scholars identifying the unethical practices of a corporation such as Monsanto and Monsanto
sponsored post-secondary research institutes. There are professors who act as consultants to the
oil industry alongside research programs focusing on the health impacts of carbon dioxide
emissions. There are scholars exalting the virtues of higher education and professors questioning
the foundations from which higher education derives its credibility. This is both an indication
that universities encourage freedom of speech and an indication that universities lack a nuanced
political and/or ethical guide in determining the appropriateness of private sector driven research.
Regardless of what these realities indicate, they result in tension and institutions of higher
learning subject to manipulation and vulnerability to the most powerful and profitable ideas, not
necessarily the best and most broadly beneficial ideas.

Within the humanities, gradually, this tension is being broken down into its component parts.
For example, women's studies departments are often changing their designation to gender studies
to reflect the prevailing belief that women's studies is a form of scholarship rooted in white
women's middle class movements of the 20th century. Departments of Aboriginal or Indigenous studies are beginning to entrench measures that ensure community research includes community-based outcomes at multiple stages of the research process. Some recruitment strategies ensure diversity within specific disciplines.

These impulses, represented through policy and practice, speak to the need to create scholarship that reflects the transitional ideals, the hopes, and the dreams of the discipline itself. The change in etymology, ethics review processes, hiring practices, demonstrates the efforts to resolve the tension between the academy as it has been and the academy as it is envisioned for the future. These subtle changes begin to acknowledge the past and the universities' participation and complicity in the power structures of sexism, racism, classism, and colonialism.

This tension is more notable under the lens of Thucydides’ conception of *hegemonia* and *arkhe*. By making subtle institutional shifts, the post-secondary system attempts to maintain its *hegemonia*, that is, its legitimated rule of knowledge making. However, the tension between the political positioning of universities, its growing reliance on practices of *arkhe*, and the claim to good scholarship is becoming too great to avoid discussion. Dr. Donald Kagan, a renowned Thucydides scholar whom I referenced earlier in this thesis, and notorious supporter of the American military industrial complex, is a tangible example of this tension arising between politics and the noble ends of effective scholarly writing.

In Dr. Kagan's detailed account of the early historian, *Thucydides: The Invention of History*, he compares Thucydides to a diagnostician of society's ills. In describing in vivid detail the worst examples of human excess, atrocity, and aggression, future students might learn what has led human nature down this path. Bizarrely, Dr. Kagan has been a proponent for the increase of
defense spending in the United States during the same time he has offered his lauded research inquiry into didactic potential of the life of Thucydides.

The dream that Dr. Kagan decided to explore was that of a hateful protracted war that lasted for centuries- the Peloponnesian War. In documenting Thucydides, comparing his accounts with that of other historians, he became a part of the Peloponnesian War by preserving the spirit of its legacy. In so doing, he, ostensibly, began to believe in the inevitability of war and, from his quiet office at Yale University, advocate for the ‘West's’ place as a more powerful policing state in the contemporary world.

Dr. Kagan says of Thucydides, he is "part of his time and place and influenced by them and his own experience in them"(p.19). So too is Dr. Kagan. Dr. Kagan's dedicated scholarship and award winning histories are now subject to associations with the American Republican Party and the military industrial complex. From afar, it would seem that Dr. Kagan began to meld the American dream with that of a civilization from 2400 years ago. Dr. Kagan discussed Thucydides, "as diagnostician of the ills of society"(p.12), while simultaneously supporting the armament of the United States, a nation that has visited horrors on several parts of the world in the latter part of the 20th century and early part of the 21st century.

Dr. Kagan says "Fear and hatred drove both sides to increasingly extreme measures, as considerations of party gave way to personal vendetta" (p.13). This could apply to several domestic and international disputes of Americans in the 21st century; Dr. Kagan's scholarship gained currency precisely for this reason. However, here, he is speaking of the Athenians and Spartans. Dr. Kagan, an esteemed classicist professor, who was once jointly endowed 20 million dollars to establish a Western civilization program at Yale, has put himself in the past, but his
dreams do not seem good. The endowment of 20 million dollars for Dr. Kagan to begin a course of Western civilization sparked protests and the gift and the opportunity for Dr. Kagan was gradually revoked and re-worked. Thankfully, Dr. Kagan's dream of the Peloponnesian war and its supposed present-day connection to Western civilization was prevented from becoming a nightmare of today. I wonder myself, by citing Dr. Kagan in the earlier portions of this thesis, have I been uncritical?

Writing is also dream-making. In the humanities and social sciences, the past is often invoked directly through reference and citation, and indirectly by the reproduction of the epistemological method of essay. The past, encapsulated on paper, blends with the scholar's dream for the future. Dreams, such as those in Dr. Kagan's case, in the modern university have been stretched to their outer limits; the dissonance between the ideals discussed among scholars and the lived brutality of colonial ignorance in the 21st century is too much for words. Some scholars are identifying and attempting to resolve this tension by refining methodology and creating a quality of writing and research practice that reflect and are accountable to the sensibilities of the subject of study.

In *Unfinished Dreams: Community Healing and the Reality of Aboriginal Self-Government*, Dr. Wayne Warry experiences this dissonance with regards to Indigenous research in Canada and rather than move on to the conclusion, he speaks up. Dr. Warry reviews the necessary elements of community healing, justice, and health care in the aftermath of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, contemporary politics and policy in the Canadian context. Dr. Warry ends the book with a discussion of the role of the social sciences within universities to support the project of Aboriginal self-government. He notes:
much social science falls short of truly motivating people to act positively in the world they inhabit. In part this is because the medium of writing—whether the form itself or the academic expectations that accompany the form—is restrictive. (p.244)

Dr. Warry even goes as far to say "my description of Aboriginal affairs is soulless" (p.244).

"When you put yourselves in the past, it is important to have good dreams." This phrase brings consciousness to the implicit community aspects of orality, writing, and knowledge sharing. It demonstrates wisdom in the larger societal planning, the collective histories that are shared by people who dwell on a land together, and that are necessary to build collectivity and community. It is perhaps the reason Dr. Kagan was denied the opportunity to structure a history program of Western civilization at Yale.

For Dr. Lovelace, embedded in this statement is the passing of values from elder to youth in the Algonquin nation. The Algonquin practice of Midewiwin concerns itself with the type of medicine, healing acts or stories to sustain the spirit of a person or of a people (Acoose, 2011). Midewiwin provides a guiding ethic for passing down stories between Algonquin elders and youth. Dr. Lovelace's work includes sharing stories with others, activating the community, and engaging with families and with his relations.

For humanities professors in Canadian universities, passing down stories may seem a trite description for scholarship. However, stories and scholarship are intertwined. Hubner points out:

Writers such as Foucault have shown that communications do not just passively document an objective world, they construct and shape it and thus they help shape what later archivists and researchers can know about the past. This construction is done in many ways. Among the most important are the choices records creators make when they decide what to record, how to record it, how it is filed, and what to transmit to superiors. As these records are used in daily operations and they accumulate in massive filing (and later archival) systems, these records act as surrogates for reality, which means they become reality, or what is taken to be real about the world.

(as cited in Restoule et al, 2013, p.7)
The act of writing an academic paper implies an activation of the past. The format is dependent upon terms agreed upon centuries ago, albeit now translated from Latin into English. In offering new interpretations and perspectives on writing, the realm of ideas becomes broader richer and more informed. The underlying hope of an academic paper is that the state of human relations will improve through the process of sharing knowledge. The expressive quality of the essay provides space for the voice of the scholar. This voice can decolonize if the person using the voice can demonstrate how decolonization is achievable within their social spaces. It is necessary for adult learning environments to harness decolonization through its processes of knowledge production and dissemination in order to make way for other levels of education to decolonize as well.

As adults, there is need to dig deep, to question the tools with which we have to ask questions, to critique criticality, and dredge up and reconfigure old ideas of Canada, old ideas of epistemology if we are to challenge the untruths of colonialism and the extreme tension and contradiction present in academic spaces that wish to decolonize. I agree with Dr. Paulette Regan that "If we have not explored the myths upon which our identity is based, or fully plumbed the depths of our repressed history, we lack a foundation of living in truth"(p.236). It is for this reason, I bring up Thucydides and connect our knowledge of Thucydides to a scholar such as Dr. Kagan who contains within his work extreme tension between academic accomplishment and political positioning. Dr. Kagan's work represents the style of contradiction and tension typical within critical post-secondary humanities and social science programs.
Fascism in Germany was one of the great nightmares of the 20th century. While tremendous progress was made extending rights to marginalized people, addressing historical legacies left by war and genocide, fascism in Germany was a glaring failure and regression of intellectual progress. Besides the concept of inherited political power and military rule, fascism is one of the more overtly oppressive formalized political structures and extreme styles of social relations that was present in the 20th century. Among progressive thinkers, fascism often appears as the most offensive affront to free thought, democracy, and the teachings of anti-oppression. Colonialism and fascism are interconnected if not co-dependent forms of thinking about groups of people; 'the nation state knows best'. Canada has a history of fascism, arising from the global popularity of this ethos in the first half of the 20th century.

One thinks of fascism and images of Adolf Hitler, Benito Mussolini, or Francisco Franco come to mind. Alongside singular images of these men, fascism was rampant as an ideology around the globe especially prior to and after the World Wars and especially within democratic nations such as Canada. Movements, and sub-groups, took hold in dozens of countries in opposition to communism and inspired by the dreams of the leaders noted above. There were academic and romanticist defenses of fascism and it has been argued that the German's acceptance of fascism demonstrates a deep failure of intellectualism and academic inquiry as a guiding ethical ethos.

In Canada, in 1937, P.M. Campbell was elected as a fascist Member of Provincial Parliament for Lethbridge representing the Unity Party of Alberta. A major fascist rally consisting of 850 supporters took place in Montreal in 1965. Holocaust deniers, neo-Nazi groups, and churches calling for the use of Nazi ideology continued to be housed in Canada from that time into the 21st century.
The popularity of fascism grew during a climate of global conflict, depression, political flux and re-alignment. The globe continues to be in a state of political flux and alignment, due to ongoing relationships developed during the World Wars, the Cold War and the American-made War on Terrorism. There is much debate on the definition of fascism, nationalism, and authoritarian regimes. Some movements or governments might be considered fascist by some but not by others within different academic disciplines. However, there is widespread agreement that fascism has been influenced by both left-thinking, and right-thinking political beliefs (‘Fascism’ [Wikipedia] retrieved: 07/29/2014).

Its danger, which allows it to thrive as colonialism has, lies in its ability to appear as an innocuous and intellectually enlightened system. Fascism represents a politicized climate that fosters the use of extreme beliefs and positions to control groups of people. I am fearful that a unified and exclusively cognitivist and/or intellectualized approach to academic writing practices can be used primarily for the purposes of control of scholarly expression rather than meaningful engagement with subject matter. I am fearful that the multiplicities of voices, upon which ideals of decolonization (and democracy) draw strength, are too frequently being subsumed by the unquestioned authoritative academic voice.

I am fearful that academic writing conventions and standards can be applied to any student in a post-secondary program with an all-too-easy justifiable force and critical judgment. I am fearful that the exaltation of criticality, important as it is, has encouraged an extreme way of thinking and critiquing that, while effective in debate and discussion, is frequently utilized to justify the control of conventional writing practices approved by institutions. I am not calling for less
criticality, but rather an honest discussion of the role of criticality in entrenching conventions, often cognitivist, intellectual or psychological in nature, of academic writing practices. The stakes are indeed high with immense imbalances of power and inequality, actual 21st century examples of fascism and colonialism, however, this means there is even more reason to examine the pitfalls of conventional writing practices, and its impact on adult learning in the humanities and social sciences.

Writing practices as a decolonizing strategy for adults may be a space in which to safely frame the disturbing discussions of colonial ways of knowing. Referencing fascism serves as a reminder that writing, the primary currency of post-secondary assessment, is, at its root, both a form of expression and a way to control a large population by way of documentation. Through investigation of some other uses of writing, and some of the historical academic compulsions towards written documentation, I hope to bring more consciousness to the writing process and to the potential for decolonization.

Democracy means choice, but ironically, very little choice exists in how to write an academic paper. How are academic writing practices and dense scholarly language re-enforcing conventional intellectual connections to fascism, history, rhetoric, argumentation, and logic? Interesting research has provided updated ways of coming to know through writing- namely, critical ethnography, Indigenous worldviews, arts-based or writing inquiry, and found poetry, to name a few. Alan Paivio's dual coding theory suggests that adult learners in the 21st century can recall and retrieve information more readily when it is presented visually and verbally. How are institutions, through their protocols for academic writing expectations, responding to research and methodology that highlight a deeper consciousness of the writing process?
In this section, I have highlighted the tension and contradiction of post-secondary studies in the humanities and social sciences. Among such extremes, it is difficult to feel comfortable, at ease, and able to write for multiple audiences in multiple styles. Among such extremes, I am frightened and my instinct is to cling to the authority of the safest form of self-expression, and this instinct is dangerous. If I am alone, I need to re-examine my insecurity in relation to academic knowledge making. If I am not alone, if others also tend to cling to the safest forms of self-expression, considerable work is needed to build a context for decolonization within learning spaces in Canada.

3. Reflecting Indigenous Oral Culture in Writing: Limitations and Possibilities of Text

Dr. Peter Cole, a former York University environmental studies professor, brought the structure of story, thought, and non-linearity in producing the text *Coyote and Raven Go Canoeing* published by McGill Queen's University Press. Cole’s text contributes to the foundation required to decolonize writing practices. He says:

> this book is a 'decolonizing' a decristobalcolonizing an aboriginalizing of the epistemologies of academia and of the practices of western research methodology by honouring the wisdom of the first peoples their knowings protocols and practices by 'aboriginalizing' I mean rewriting rather than repackaging. (p.xiii)

Dr. Cole identifies the tension in attempting to translate his Indigenous language stl'atl'imx into English:

> by the shared dynamics of out stl'atl'imx' language ucwalmicwts and the english language rather than molded solely by the grammar syntax etymology and proctalgia of a colonizing language even one so rich and powerful as english (but aren't they all rich and powerful) I do not see my writing as having been composed (least of all) by me not always a passive automatic writer but a trusting recorder or scrivener. (p.xiv)
Dr. Cole's book contains all the necessary components of research—citation, evidence, explication, argument. His writings are a demonstration that convention, syntax, stasis, aspects of the printed word, are simply not adequate vehicles for Indigenous epistemologies, for the movement, poetic, and dance of language and storytelling. It is substantively and formally convincing as it reminds the reader that knowledges aren't only conveyed through writing. The book's style of argumentation is to re-configure conventional tropes of argumentation into cohesive fragments within which the writer reader and learner may dwell together. Through a book like *Coyote and Raven Go Dancing*, emerges the opportunity for:

- learning through mutual respect and caring sharing stories
- knowing that first peoples are working together throughout the world in ever community to enact their visions
- listenings feelings texturings sensings recognizing they are family they are coming home to the village wherever that village might be rural urban conceptual actual a key word is 'sharing' mutual nurturance looking after one another regenerating shared visions perceptivities a shared future and present a remembered 'history'. (p.6)

Dr. Cole's ability to express truth unencumbered by some of the traditional academic conventions speaks to the opening spaces in humanities and social sciences for unique individualized forms of expression in writing academic essays. Is it possible to envision a humanities or social sciences discipline encouraging, teaching, imparting the freedom to express truth in such a way to their students and faculty, as Dr. Cole was able to do at York University? The impact of opening up syntax, style, and citation, I believe, can have the potential to help decolonize the writing process as it is learned by adults.
This section will explore the promise of expressive writing to address and come to a collective acceptance of the legacy of colonialism in Canada. The work of Dr. Sondra Perl, Dr. Dorothy Smith, and the Indigenous scholar, Dr. Robin Patric Clair will be cited to demonstrate the way that writing practices can impart deeper consciousness of the historical constructs of capitalism and colonialism embedded within the dialectical relations of academic spaces. Indigenous education models, that I will reference in the initial part of this section, and Indigenous authors and playwrights, whom I'll reference in the latter part of this section, have begun this work and provide hope that the institution may possess the power to decolonize with the proper supports and sustained commitment in place. It is important to note that these concepts are arising from both academic and non-academic spaces, as well as Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars.

1. Decolonizing education models


This cover story article describes a Daycare-Kindergarten Transition program on Georgina Island First Nation. The program, partially coordinated by the First Nations Student Success program of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs Canada, and jointly run with the York Region District School Board, involves the collaboration of teachers, the band education manager, and the early childhood educators of the Niigaan Naabiyaw Child Care Centre down the road. This article does not elaborate on ancestral language learning, apart from indicating that their students
are exposed to their ancestral languages variably in their home environments, and through communication with elders. Instead, the article describes the success of generalizing language to increase learning within their written language program.

A teacher from the school provides an example to illuminate the work they are doing aligning their teaching practices at home and school for English language learning. Children, she says, learn many versions of writing the letter 'A':

At home:
“Start at the bottom, make an upside down V, with a stick in the middle”

At daycare:
“Let's print the letter 'A'. Start at the top, make a stick slanted down this way, and a stick slanted down this way, and put a stick through the middle”

At school:
“All letters, including A, can be made with four simple lines; Big curve, little curve, big line, and little line. To make an A, you start at the top, draw a big line down, go back to the top, draw a big line down, and draw a little line in the middle.”

The solution, she says, is to develop common language to generalize the knowledge and learning of the child. This is an important imperative of efforts towards decolonization at all school levels: the use of common language. As mentioned in the Introduction of this thesis, ‘voice’ is one such bridging word that has brought together the varied components and explorations of my research experience.
In January 2010, I took an Expressive Writing course with Dr. Guy Allen for my Masters in Education at OISE. Dr. Allen helped me to see why I've never trusted essay writing padded with academic words and philosophical concepts. He taught me that when writing is not clear and understandable and relatable, it is suspicious. He taught me that good expressive writing can be academically critical and bring a fuller discussion of truth to contemporary educational scholarship.

A child learning so many ways to draw an 'A'.

A student learning so many ways to write an essay.

Draw downward here.

Insert a quote through the middle.

Put a stick across the other sticks.

Provide evidence.

Join the lines together.

Cite your sources.

Make an upside down V.

Summarize your thoughts.

Common language, to put it plainly, cuts through dense unreadable academic language.

Incidentally, if there is a similarity of the case studies of successful decolonizing methodologies being developed right now in Indigenous learning spaces, it is, I think, that what they are doing, how they are doing it, and the mission and motivations are conveyed using clear and simple commonly understood language:

- Preserve culture
- Strengthen identity
- Facilitate knowledge quests
- Integrate knowledges
- Improve success rates
- Build attendance
- Support families

Even for Indigenous technical, science, and math institutes, you see these sorts of core values and goals encapsulated in mission statements and initiatives and 'about us' sections of their websites. The non-Indigenous observer might naively believe that these simply stated objectives demonstrate the newness of the school, institute, or program. These phrases, enshrined as values or core principles, however, represent thousands of hours of community consultation and thousands of years of knowledge about building and being a community:

- Liberation education in action
- Community reclamation
- Decolonization.

Dr. Linda Tuhiwai Smith describes these core values in the context of a rigorous form of decolonizing research:

> The acts of reclaiming, reformulating and reconstituting indigenous cultures and languages have required the mounting of an ambitious research programme, one that is very strategic in its purpose and activities and relentless in its pursuit of social justice. (2012, p.143)

Dr. Smith proposes 25 ‘projects’ through which this research is occurring and will continue to occur in the coming years. These projects include “Indigenizing and indigenist processes”, “Revitalizing and regenerating”, “Writing and theory making”, “Reframing”, “Restoring”, and “Sharing”. While the list is not definitive or exclusive, the words Dr. Smith uses maintain their
practical, theoretical, and ethical dimension by way of simple, accessible language. These are bridging words that bring together several sensibilities toward an achievable research goal. This is a deliberate act toward a decolonizing praxis that works through complex realities and critical discourse with relatable research objectives (2012, p.127-162).

2. Collective Action: Addressing Canada's Colonial History through Writing

Fine art programs allow people to formalize and apply theory to their craft. The craft is often a tangible or conceptual art form--sculpture, painting, art installation, and drawing. Writing is also the subject of some fine art programs. People in masters programs focused on creative writing hone their craft through a consciousness of style, voice, and structure. Fundamentally, the MFA programs in creative writing approach composition and use of language as an art form, rather than a utilitarian necessity in the service of knowledge.

As an elementary teacher, in my classroom every day I provided students 15 minutes of 'free writing' time. I emphasized that their work would not be graded and they could decide to show me what they had written only if they chose to or desired feedback. This was a French language learning classroom; consequently I believed that their fear of getting something wrong would be amplified in a second language context.

I provided many options of implements. Students had the choice to use markers and large bulletin board paper, dry erase boards, pencils, pens, or chalk. After the 15 minutes, if any student was particularly proud of what they wrote, they had the opportunity to present their work in front of a small group or in front of the class. Often, students would show me their work but not desire feedback, but simply acknowledgment.
I share this anecdote because it highlights the reality that early on in education, due to testing and other societal norms, people are encouraged to function under the expectation that what is written can either be right or wrong, advanced or unclear. The binary way of thinking through writing happens early in life, which makes it particularly difficult to change. Concepts of right or wrong imply close scrutiny, and this scrutiny often results in all-consuming self-policing when an individual sits down to express themselves, share simple truth, or debate the merits of abstract concepts or ideology.

Occasionally, students find an ease and comfort in writing, encounter positive encouragement among teachers, and they may go on to higher forms of learning such as college or university. Writing, for me, never came easy. I continue to experience extreme unease in writing, figuring out what and how to express myself. I believe I have pushed myself to continue to do it because of this fundamental challenge to my comfort and confidence. I am not alone. Many other students of post-secondary programs carry this unease with them as they proceed through their diploma or degree programs.

The readings assigned in these programs are usually highly polished, peer-reviewed articles and books. Even if the authors experience their own unease, uncertainty and self-effacing habits around their experience of scholarly writing, it is usually not spoken about in the piece or abstract. I am not calling for a change to this convention, but merely identifying the polished readings we encounter as students and the intimidation it can cause.
Since the start of my Master’s program at OISE in 2008, I have collected, edited, and published writing of myself and others. This experience has given me insight into the processes of editing and peer review to which any academic published work is subject. While there may be one or two authors of a published paper, book, or research essay, frequently, I have learned that the editors, colleagues or the significant others of the authors, have played a substantial role in refining the clarity, style, and voice within.

Indeed, acknowledgments are made and thank yous noted. However, the fundamental exchange I am describing is between a student and knowledge that is mediated by an entire community surrounding the scholar who has assisted directly or indirectly distilling ideas, editing text, and sculpting paragraphs. Students are using the skill of reading to experience an advanced or complex form of writerly expression. Since students can write, a common feeling is that they too should be writing in the manner, style, or voice of these readings. Writing, though, is different than writing. Writing can be simple fun experimental, quirky upside-down circular, personal powerful pedagogical, for example. Writing, on the other hand, can be harshly judged and vehemently critiqued.

In a fine art program in painting, students may have access to brushes and pigment but there would not be the same feeling of expectation that they too ought to paint like a master right after viewing a work for the first time. Ideally, embedded in the structure of a studio program within a fine art department is a deep respect for the process of experimentation, failure, and critique, not to mention individual style. The student is not simply a student, but also an artist developing a practice through conscious combination of theory and action. Students in the humanities and
social sciences would benefit from the distance, thoughtful critique, and respect if they were regarded as writers, or literary artists, in training.

By bringing more attention to the act of writing, I hope to remind my colleagues that all undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral students are simultaneously studying and developing an art practice in articulating their research interests on paper or electronically by writing. The art practice of writing, in many educational spaces, has been subsumed by the capitalistic ideals of product and consumption, and other similar controllable prescribable forms of documentation. Experimentation, failure, and critique wither in the burning light of MLA, APA, or whichever style guide the institution enforces.

This is not to say that a code of style is responsible for this subsumption and a process that should be eliminated. Consistency and structure are essential to academic writing. I am proposing that the capitalistic subsumption of students’ voices is aided by an unthoughtful execution of a style guide. In other words, if I am already fearful to express myself, to fail in trying the art of writing, the presence of a style code and explicit essay conventions encourages me to revert to the safest forms of expression possible. I will read, and then try to emulate the type of writing I just read.

As a Grade 9 student, in a history course, I wrote on Henry VIII for my first essay. New to the essay format, I paraphrased passages from an 80-page book, an abbreviated history text about the life of the ruthless king. Only recently have I moved on to a stronger form of independent synthesis and individualized style. Coincidentally, I’ve developed my ability to write an essay in this way at the same time I have been through the publishing process of working with editors, colleagues, and their thoughtful and supportive critiques.
My experience is not isolated. Many scholars and professors have taken up the cause of enhancing the consciousness of writing in academic spaces. Many scholars and professors have experienced the liberating praxis of writing within their classrooms and are sharing this insight with others through research papers, articles, and books. Inherent in these accounts is a more artful sense of the act of writing, even if the writing itself is academic in format.

In 1996-2002, Dr. Sondra Perl, an English professor at The City University of New York, travelled to the University of Innsbruck in Austria to teach in a language and literacy program for English teachers enrolled in a Master of Arts program. Her journey speaks to the potential of writing to address the generational vestiges of atrocities that occurred in the 19th and 20th centuries, and the atrocities that continue to occur in the 21st century.

Dr. Perl, as a person with Jewish background, felt conflicted travelling to a place so close to Nazism. Her task, as CUNY faculty, was to teach language and literacy to people whose families, in her mind, may have participated directly or indirectly in the Holocaust. Dr. Perl's family escaped the Holocaust. However, her parents taught her the importance of remembering the Holocaust and the intellectual vulnerabilities that were exploited in the service of fascism, anti-Semitism and eugenics.

Fascism, anti-Semitism and eugenics demonstrate the destructive power of educational institutions when the social sciences and humanities are used to codify ignorance. Wordsmiths, tricksters and many people with the title professor in the UK, North America, and beyond proffered a hateful ideology under the guise of knowledge and a bizarre twisted sense of enlightenment through the proliferation of eugenics discourse. Playwrights, novelists, poets, and
artists too were hypnotized by the elaborate arguments coming out of eugenics and anti-Semitic movements, widely accepted as forms of knowledge, peer-reviewed, published, and diligently debated at symposiums and conference talks.

In the 21st century, there continue to be scientists measuring connections between ethnicity and degrees of reasoning, intellect, or aggression. J.P. Rushton’s work at the University of Western Ontario invoked worldwide opposition for its race based “scientific” research. Knowledge-making processes have indeed been abused and co-opted by regressive movements and this was the case in Germany in the 1930s.

Dr. Perl brought this sensibility to her language and literacy classroom in Innsbruck. The Nazi regime was not simply a political movement, or a coup that took the country of Germany hostage and manipulated educated minds. Nazism was couched in academic language, a twisted sense of German humanism and scientific enlightenment. Dr. Perl's mother summarizes the deep betrayal she feels in this statement: "No matter what they say or do, no matter how stunning their accomplishments in art, music, and philosophy, within every German, every Austrian, lies a Nazi in disguise" (p.3). Dr. Perl conveys this teaching by way of demonstrating her own unfairness in ascribing judgment to people she had not yet met.

Unable to keep her personal feelings about being in Austria out of the classroom, Dr. Perl told her students "The more I walk on this land, the more my mind fills with images of the Holocaust. I see it everywhere I turn, every time I see an old person, every time I try to write. But how can I talk about this?" (p.11).
Dr. Perl's students subsequently convinced her to reveal her personal conflict teaching Austrians in the context of her family's cultural relationship to the Holocaust. Many of her students, all of whom were teachers at the time, took Dr. Perl's reference to the Holocaust personally. The initial defensiveness of the students progressed to increased understanding of Dr. Perl's life and upbringing. The truth the students came to accept is that the responsibility of history is not solely the responsibility of historians, academics, or writers, but teachers and citizens as well.

On a walking tour of Innsbruck, a local history teacher, conveys the academic failure that he believes led to the Holocaust:

> All educated people revered Goethe, but no one knew how to live his ideas. For a long time, German universities lectured about humanism, but it was pure theory. It led directly to the cult of superiority. This is a huge failure, one that should not be masked by monuments. (p.82)

Throughout the course, Dr. Perl engages in what could be compared to a literary or narrative inquiry. She includes the students' journals and letters in her Carnegie award lecture entitled "Facing the Other" and in her book, *On Austrian Soil Teaching Those I Was Taught to Hate*. Dr. Perl's self-identified prejudice towards Germans and Austrians and her students' journeys of self-reflection in relation to the legacy of fascism demonstrates the ethical imperative for teachers to take responsibility for the seemingly out of reach historical narratives of their country, and to explore the pre-existing relationships to these narratives through writing.

In the course, Dr. Perl made use of the work of Max Van Manen, Glenda Bissex, and Vito Perrone to emphasize the interconnection of voice, inquiry and informed teaching practice. There are no great conclusions, however, the promise of writing and the potential of the writing classroom are evident in each chapter. In response to a student’s letter, Dr. Perl shares her belief that "Writing that teachers do have power and to pretend otherwise is dishonest" (p.118).
These types of simple affirmations are important to the academy. Writing that teachers do have power, and taking risks in writing are important. Sharing details of your personal life can have a positive impact on classroom learning. Teaching informs writing and vice versa. The meditative, contemplative and hypnotic power of writing often appear to be secondary to the academic person's ability to demonstrate criticality, defend an argument, highlight appropriate citations, and select the right theorists with whom to convene.

Dr. Perl did not choose to bring in the powerful scholarship of Hannah Arendt who investigated the inclination of pre-war Germany toward totalitarianism. Arendt's work speaks to the importance of teachers understanding their responsibility of contextualizing the Holocaust and understanding the psychological underpinnings that allow such an atrocity to occur. Instead, Dr. Perl cites the German philosopher Goethe: "One learns to know only what one loves, and the deeper and fuller the knowledge is to be, the more powerful and vivid must be the love, indeed the passion"(p.53). These are the very writings that were twisted, transformed, and overlooked in order to privilege a hateful ideology that caused mass destruction of human life.

Dr. Perl sought to empower her students to feel confident in who they are during their inquiry, in Goethe’s words, to “be the love”. She says:

> Little by little, we are chipping away at the standard research paradigm. The teachers will not have to prove anything. They do not have to show that one method of teaching is more effective than another. Instead, they are coming to see that classroom research is essentially an inquiry into meaning-into who they are, who their students are, and the ways they all bring themselves to learning. (p.52)

Dr. Perl offered simple writing exercises and letters as a mode of inquiry. She uses the immensity of the legacy of the Holocaust, and simply the immensity of History as a prompt for a
deeper learning. She achieved this in a cultural context not her own, for teachers participating in a limited session course, as a Jewish woman among Austrians. The achievement is laudable and merits greater academic consideration by scholars interested in the transformative potential of writing inquiry.

Colonialism is its own type of twisted ideology. Colonialism in Canada carries a far reaching legacy for all Canadians most tangibly represented by the Indian Act. The less tangible legacy exists in the social structures that have systematically excluded and suppressed Indigenous voices everywhere. It is not surprising that Dr. Ward Churchill has been smeared in the American media as his work brought the word ‘genocide’ to the mainstream. His use of the term, 'Holocaust', while controversial, was meant to confront the widely sanitized historical portrayal of the 'noble' or vanishing Indian in the Americas. While he qualifies his decision to use the term 'Holocaust', many who preferred not to recognize the genocide that occurred and in many pockets continues to occur through willful negligence in South and North America, used this decision to discredit his intellectual contribution.

Simple gestures, achieved through thoughtful writing practices, provide one strategy that can be adapted to the post-secondary classroom in Canada to confront the legacy of colonialism and the genocide that occurred and still occurs, just as Dr. Perl encouraged a confrontation of fascism for her students in Austria. There is a suffocating amount of colonial guilt, anger, and confusion that continues to be trapped within many inquiring minds that could be processed with a deeper relationship and understanding of the significance of the writing process.
Ethnography has provided means by which researchers can subvert, in simple relatable terminology, the traditional power dynamic of academic discourse. In visiting the Cherokee territories of her grandparents, the Purdue professor, Dr. Robin Patric Clair, describes the tourist-friendly venues she sees in the community:

With all the festive colorful commercialization it was easy to get lost in the commodification of a people. Identities bought and sold. No example portrayed this more succinctly than the photogenic Smiling Chiefs. Like Santa Clauses at Christmas time, several Chiefs worked at different locations. They greeted tourists. For a small sum of money tourists may have their picture taken with a Chief. The Chiefs dress in the traditional attire of Plains Indians, not in Cherokee regalia. Tourists, the Cherokee believe, like to see a Chief dressed in buckskin and ornamented with a grand feather headdress that encircles the Chief's face and trails down his back to the ground. (p.283)

This approach differs from Dr. Sondra Perl or Dr. Ward Churchill. Dr. Patric Clair conveys the complexity inherent in colonialism through simple lived experiences using a critical ethnographic approach. She speaks about this complexity through accessible anecdote. The underlying message is that traditional forms of scholarship that depend heavily on the nuanced debate of former theories, elaborate citation, and tangential discussion tend to re-enforce a colonized conversation. Writing of ethnographers such as Dr. Patric Clair brings attention to the process of decolonization that begins on a small level, the individual, the family, the community.

In Dr. Patric Clair's piece, she describes the visceral, emotional, and intellectual experience of returning home and seeing ‘Indian-ness’ used as a tourism apparatus. The impulses of critical pedagogy, sociology, cultural studies, and philosophy tend toward concepts such as Marxism, post-structuralism, anti-oppression, feminism, as ways to organize an argument. Dr. Patric Clair's description of returning to the Qualla Boundary (Cherokee Reservation) grapples with colonialism by way of genealogy, contradiction, tension, dissonance, and self-reflection. These
more personal organizing features of an argument, I am suggesting, have greater potential to
decolonize the academy through expressive writing.

Dr. Patric Clair's work, and the work of other ethnographers attempting to counteract the impact
of colonial thinking in the academy, demonstrate the power of using an old form of scholarship
toward progressive ends. There is a powerful movement of scholars working against the
machinations of obfuscation that have become so popular among progressive thinking disciplines.
These scholars have proven that long words and drawn out sentences do not always indicate an
advanced form of thinking. Speaking about ethnography's potential and limitation, Dr. Patric
Clair says:

Previous labeling of cultures has been grounded in a myopic view. That is, categories
like masculine or feminine, cooperative or competitive are derived from a European
cultural foundation. Thus, the category system encourages the old colonial bias. For
ethnography to step beyond its own inherent prejudice of the Other; its own inherent
privileging of the Self, the ethnographer must engage in serious reflective critique with a
considerably open mind. (p.290)

Dr. Dorothy Smith's Institutional Ethnography provided intellectual backing to the contemporary
use of ethnography among progressive scholars in Marxism, feminism and sociology. For Dr.
Smith, text is not simply the vehicle of thought, but it is thought itself that guides the relations
and actions of the writer and reader. In Writing the Social, she says

When a text is read, watched or heard it brings consciousness into an active relationship
with intentions originating beyond the local. Texts therefore are key devices in hooking
people's activities in particular local settings and at particular times into the transcending
organization of the ruling relations, including what sociology calls institutions or
organizations. (p.164)

Dr. Smith highlighted the interconnectedness of writing practices, research convention and
sociological discourse in theorizing Institutional Ethnography. Despite the common criticism
that all structures reinforce old ways of knowing, Dr. Smith and Dr. Patric Clair show that ethnography holds something worthwhile for academic discussions when there is a thoughtful consideration of standpoint, and the processes of writing, referencing, or reading that is involved in its dissemination.

Dr. Smith and Dr. Patric Clair are distinct among scholars because they stand for something, they offer strategies to create, rather than strategies to deconstruct and describe the potential of deconstruction. I reference Dr. Smith here, in part, for her belief in the process of writing and the mediating role of text. In her introduction to Writing the Social, she says:

> Writing the social profits from the dialogue between what we mean to say and what we discover we have said, and, of course, the work of rewriting to embrace what we find we have said that is beyond or other than our intentions. (p.9)

This statement speaks to the implicit coding and signification of academic writing and the subtle transformations that are possible through research, review, and dissemination. In other words, there are dead-ends and tail-chasing in sociology research, but none greater than the dead-ends and circles we work through in writing across all disciplines. Dr. Smith and Dr. Patric Clair's insights are simple, like the subtle ripples created by disturbing water.

I have referenced Dr. Robin Patric Clair, Dr. Dorothy Smith, and Dr. Sondra Perl in this section to bring attention to scholars who are adding consciousness to the process of writing. In each case, these scholars face immense challenge and respond with their intellect, their lived experience, and some hope. The process of developing a decolonized writing praxis requires restraint and focus. Common criticisms of colonialism embedded in the academy can sometimes result in inertia- 'It's so bad that I don't know what to do about it so I'll just criticize it'. These scholars offer suggestions of what to do- write in a thoughtful self-reflexive manner.
My concern, with regard to writing critical essays in the academy is that, in the extreme, criticality can lead to inertia. One might be convinced that a conclusion is colonized by its very nature, or that there is irony in writing an essay about decolonization. Criticism of academic constructs is compelling. In fact, criticism of structure itself became popular in the 20th century. It seemed appropriate to criticize structure since it had led to totalitarianism, fascism, the Holocaust, genocide, global suppression of Indigenous peoples, and continued exploitation of impoverished people. However, there is something that continues to be hopeful about the structure of writing and the implied self-expressive quality therein.

I am proposing that the structure of self-reflexive, direct, and clear writing that elaborates one's relationship to all things has the potential to decolonize the mind of the student in the 21st century. I am proposing that writing is an existing consciousness-raising structure of the academy that can be reclaimed as a decolonizing adult learning praxis. The Holocaust, colonialism and continued genocides in the world remind us to protect the spaces in which authority can be questioned and discussed. Universities represent one such space. Essays, if afforded more expressive freedom, can represent another such space.

In the following sections, I will discuss the way that writing has been harnessed by Indigenous storytellers, writers, and scholars to build awareness for the necessary next steps to address the surmountable legacy of colonialism in Canada. While academic spaces were often inaccessible to Indigenous people in the 20th century, many prominent storytellers published writing, poetry, plays, and novels to communicate with other Indigenous people on a more substantive collective basis.
These writers were not simply providing entertainment, by way of writing; they were
documenting struggle and hope, and disseminating the important stories to prompt broader
discussion of Indigenous self-awareness. To limit these storytellers within the category of
literature reduces the critical, theoretical, and academic import of these writings. Within this
'literature' are coded considerations of education, pedagogy, and statehood meant to inform,
reform, and ultimately transform Indigenous identity in Canada.

The power of story, the importance of history, and the fundamental worldviews preserved by
Indigenous storytellers of the 20th century are the subjects of study of scholars producing writing
with an Indigenist agenda in the 21st century. Before the final section discussing the specifics of
decolonized writing, it is important to recognize the Indigenous writers and scholars who
provided the pre-cursors that have made this type of argument possible at all.

3. Lessons of Literature: Indigenous Storytellers and Scholars Advance Writing

“Soulless writing,” that Dr. Wayne Warry bravely admits to using, as it developed in the 20th
century, provided a maximum amount of freedom to scholars to express nuanced arguments in a
disembodied manner within increasingly enclosed disciplinary practices. Scientific advancement
fascinated the world over with successful experiments and discoveries of drugs, vaccines, and
DNA, to name a few. Complicated words and concepts thrived in the social sciences and
humanities in an environment when there's little expectation to be real, direct, and honest
disclosing one's social location and its connection to research interests.

Qualitative and evidence-based practice became the standard for the majority of the professional
class, including university professors. In a world propelled forward by the advances of science,
teaching was not a matter of discussion and deliberation, but rather an identified and prescribed set of institution approved standards. Writing in the humanities followed suit.

Concepts of beauty, truth, spirit, nature, even the term justice itself gave way to the empiricist and rational sounding 'qualitative research methods' and 'isms'. University, its pre-occupations and debates, in most cases, became less relatable during this time. Writing practices became cold, disconnected, disaffected...soulless. With this type of writing taking hold, academic obscurity and obfuscation abounded. The black box of intellectualism, cognitivism, and empiricism grew stronger, impenetrable, and more difficult to unravel. In other words, I can't question it if I don't understand it.

In the work of advocating for Indigenous self-government, academics have used vocabulary to match the tempo and tone of the subject. For example, it might be regarded as awkward, if not colonial, to use the term 'narrative' to describe the 'story' of an elder. The term 'reparations' or 'reconciliation' could over simplify the complex processes implied in community healing. 'Legal agreement' advantages a colonial legal framework while 'treaty' and 'wampum' re-center concepts of an Indigenous relationship. These are major paradigm shifts, with academic and legal implications, occurring through simple changes of terminology.

The direction of writing practices in the subject of Indigenous self-government has moved away from obfuscation, towards clarity, directness, and relatability to the communities in question. This work towards clarity of communication attempts to address the previous impenetrable black box of bureaucratic speak through which the Indian Act and its associated assimilationist or neglectful policies thrived in the 20th century. We can't talk with complicated concepts to a
decolonized state of mind— it takes reflection, personal encounters with Indigenous epistemologies, communities, and a truthful meaningful portraiture of one's learning.

Scholars documenting Indigenous stories of elders, often referred to as 'oral histories', encounter tension in relating this work in writing. Many understand that the moment of the story being told, the context, the environment, and the physical experience is relevant to the shape and purpose of the knowledge (Smith, 2000). The structures of conventional academic research often cannot contain, and, do a disservice to, the centrality of learning within the present that exists in Indigenous communities (Chamberlain, 2000).

Decolonization has roots in community activism, cultural reclamation, healing, and advocacy work towards attitudinal shifts, both within and outside of post-secondary institutions. Before academic writing, literary writing was a form of expression more widely accessible to Indigenous people in Canada seeking to document stories, convey their experiences, and reach out to others. In Magic Weapons, Dr. Sam McKegney examines the historical, academic, and critical importance of Aboriginal people writing and publishing work about the experience of Canadian Indian residential schools. About the survival stories he studies, Dr. McKegney says:

> They articulate—and so proclaim— the beauty and power of writing as an Indigenous individual in a post-residential school Canada, and they re-imagine the relations between Aboriginal communities and the Canadian state. (p.8)

Dr. McKegney believes in the importance of the imaginative space of literature that provides explicit and implicit suggestions on ways for Indigenous communities to heal and move forward:

> Through their writings, Native authors imagine alternative ideological and political horizons for Indigenous communities and individuals, loosening the neo-colonial bonds of non-Native authority and mapping out possible paths to empowerment and healing that reinvigorate traditional knowledges while refusing to rely solely on the structures of governmental power. (p.180)
There is now significant cross-over that is expressed by Indigenous writers, storytellers, and playwrights, who attempt to negotiate a creative identity through academic writing and research.

In *Into the Moon*, Beth Brant writes:

Cat Cayuga tells us, 'I write by spontaneous combustion.' I often think that this is the way with us- First Nations women who pick up pen and paper, who tap out letters on typewriters or computers. The stories are burning inside us, heating the blood, firing our activism, sparking the dialogues between us and others. Story emerges in whatever form it needs to take- poetry, fiction, creative documentary- and ignites the very spaces surrounding us. (p.1)

In *Writing the Circle: Native Women of Western Canada*, Emma Larocque speaks of the continuum of language use, from creative to academic, as a difficult transition fraught with a sense of insider/outsider knowledges. She points out:

The Native intellectual struggle to maintain our cultural integrity at these profound levels is perhaps most severely tested within the confines of scholarship and scholarly writing. Some of us de-colonizing Native scholars are challenging existing conventions in research methodology, notions of objectivity, and writing styles [...] The academic world may be the hardest nut to crack. Long-standing conventions hold that objectivity must necessarily entail the separation of the "word" from the "self". As a scholar, I am expected to remain aloof from my words; I am expected to not speak in my own voice. But I am a Native woman writer/scholar engaged in this exciting evolution/revolution of Native thought and action. (p.xxi)

Sensing that the 'tough nut' makes itself even tougher when confronted with Indigenous scholars, Dr. Taiaiake Alfred calls for Indigenous scholars to actively combat the colonial mentality embedded in post-secondary learning. In an essay contributed to *Indigenizing the Academy*, Dr. Alfred dreams of a Warrior Scholar, whose work is "directed at a new adversary, and this is the current idea of 'authority' itself- statist authority, disembodied and disconnected from the people and in the service of corporate objectives"(p.96).
For the purposes of decolonizing writing for adults, Dr. Alfred's reference to authority can be extended to the authoritative voice encouraged by conventional cognitivist essay writing practices. By ensuring a paper is received as critical, are we challenging the authoritative nature of academic voice or shoring up its power? Of the university system, Dr. Alfred says:

they accomplish the acceptance and normalization of Western ideas, the glorification of Western societies as the highest form of human organization, and promote the emulation of North American culture to the next generation of citizens(and to Indigenous students as well unless there is some critical intervention)"(p.96).

Decolonization involves strategies that, in some cases, undermine the academic's claim to authority, superiority, and enlightenment. Decolonized writing practices utilize a Westernized tool such as printed text to highlight the contradictions of colonialism within the academy and offer simple expressive truths of the self in contrast to the grand illusions of higher learning. Indigenous scholars cited in this section have encountered the coding of academic writing and the coding of creative writing, and frequently integrate or favor the latter for change, community renewal, and institutional transformation. This reality may provide linguistic hints for those seeking to decolonize the practices of the institution.
Chapter 4  
NORTH: Native Renaissance and the Indigenist Imperative

This thesis is possible due to existing Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars working towards an Indigenist Agenda and whose writings have sometimes been considered a part of the 'Native Renaissance' in Canada (Battiste, 2013). The decolonization I am calling for can be co-opted, appropriated, and misused without the acknowledgment that decolonization begins with respect for Indigenous people, Indigenous communities, and Indigenous scholarship. For this reason, in this section, I will explore the theoretical pre-cursors, the scholars already doing the important work necessary to encourage greater participation of Indigenous people in post-secondary studies, to encourage a deeper relationship between scholarship and Indigeneity, and make space for allies who wish to take part in forming 'transcendent decolonizing' strategies.

1. Self-Identification in Indigenous Scholarship

In "Decolonizing the Social Sciences: Aboriginal-Centered Theorizing and Aboriginal Relationships with Post-colonial Theories", a Master’s thesis written by Chantal Solange Marie Fiola, the persistence and insidiousness of postcolonial theories are explored through the author's attempt to theorize in an Aboriginal centered manner. Of her experience, as a Méétis woman at OISE/UT, Fiola says:

> Upon beginning my Master’s degree there was only one Aboriginal professor in my department- luckily she is interested in Aboriginal relationships with Postcolonial theories. However, nearing the end of my degree there are no longer any Aboriginal faculty members in my department as Judy has taken a job with another university. I cannot stress the need for Aboriginal faculty members in each department who are in a position to supervise and encourage Aboriginal students and be role models.[…]

As a Méétis student who has been lucky enough to have a university experience that has encouraged me to embrace my Aboriginal heritage and strive toward
decolonization, I must re-iterate the importance of having Aboriginal professors and allies to work with at the university level"(p.5).

Fiola's experience conveys the present need for academic decolonization: a) through recruitment and retention of Indigenous students and faculty, and b) through the work of non-Indigenous allies. The work of the organization Supporting Aboriginal Graduate Enhancement (SAGE), which originated in New Zealand, and arrived at OISE/UT by way of University of British Columbia, has increased the success and admission rates of Aboriginal students attending post-secondary institutions in Canada.

In an article entitled, "Supporting Successful Transitions to Post-Secondary Education for Indigenous Students: Lessons from an Institutional Ethnography in Ontario, Canada," co-authored by SAGE network member, Dr. J.P. Restoule, insights are offered into the challenges experienced by Indigenous post-secondary students looking for meaningful connection to the academic institution. The study’s authors say that:

Although there has been an increase in the number of Aboriginal students enrolled in and completing post-secondary programs in the last two decades, Aboriginal people are still significantly underrepresented at colleges, universities, and other post-secondary institutions in Canada. Only 39% of those between the ages of 25 and 64 have graduated from some form of post-secondary education. (p.1)

The study, which focused on youth from various regions of Ontario, notes that formal education is critically important because it provides the kinds of experiences, knowledge, skills, and credentials required for success in contemporary Aboriginal communities and Canadian society in general (Holmes, 2006; Malatest, 2004 as cited in Restoule et al., 2013). The vast majority of youth respondents (16-24) indicated they would like to achieve some form of post-secondary education.
One of the resulting recommendations, summarized from the contributions of youth themselves, is to provide more information about “everyday issues” that relate to Aboriginal youth: funding (band funding, scholarships, Ontario Student Assistant Program), housing (single parent, on and off campus), food banks, childcare, and part-time jobs or job training opportunities (p.6). One youth stated that "[I]f they really wanted us, they would come to our powwows, our community events, not just court us a day and leave" (p.7).

If universities are to recruit Indigenous students, it is necessary to make the transition and the admission process meaningful and relatable to the students, their interests, and their ways of knowing in the world. This is especially crucial, the study says, given that many secondary schools or programs the youth attend don't provide the necessary pre-requisites that universities expect during the application process.

If the university's primary form of output, writing and research, are dynamic, able to speak to the life experiences of Indigenous youth, accessible to them outside the university, and outside the usual secondary school curriculum, the likelihood of recruitment increases. Fresh, decolonized, and Indigenized approaches to academic writing may provide one way to assist in making the university experience relatable and interesting to Indigenous youth.

In Colonized Classrooms, Dr. Sheila Cote-Meek reviews a range of pedagogies that "support and encourage students to find their voices, that resists further objectification and that helps students regain a sense of liberty in themselves"(p.163). Dr. Cote-Meek's book investigates the discrimination that Indigenous students face in attempting to achieve graduate degrees in different academic disciplines. Her work speaks to the necessity to infuse consciousness of colonialism into the administrative and dialogic functions of the university.
Dr. Cote-Meek suggests that issues of racism, colonialism, poverty and anti-oppression each comprise what she calls “difficult learning” for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students alike. She calls for new critical teaching pathways to establish a proper adult learning space in which to confront and work through our relationship to, privilege derived from, and responsibility for these “difficult learnings”. She contends that conventional approaches to the post-secondary classroom can re-enforce the narrative of colonial ways of knowing and create "a reaction that may be traumatic for Aboriginal students in that it can produce extreme reactions of anxiety, fear, and anger" (p.164).

Dr. Cote-Meek struggles to maintain a positive outlook for the future of post-secondary learning in Canada for Indigenous students because, she says, "the struggles the Aboriginal students and professors in this research shared are not all that different than the struggles I heard and read from Aboriginal students and professors some thirty years ago" (p.165). Dr. Cote-Meek identifies the exciting theory and potentially decolonizing pedagogy that has been produced by Indigenous scholars and allies but laments the lack of institutional change and pedagogical response from across university disciplines.

Writing--that is, meaningful expressive writing--may provide one way to decolonize a process embedded in the practices of every post-secondary institution across all disciplines. There is an existing practice already happening in many introductions of conventional academic papers that can be developed and expanded upon throughout the paper. That is, the identification of the author's social location. Absolon and Willet suggest that, “As Aboriginal researchers,
we write about ourselves and position ourselves first because the only thing we can write about is ourselves”(2004, p.5).

Frequently, in anti-racist, anti-oppression, and allied Indigenized scholarship, authors of research start their work by stating their social location, their background, their status in relation to a colonized privilege. In the introduction of her Master’s thesis, Chantal Solange Marie Fiola, says:

as a graduate student in the department of Sociology and Equity Studies in Education (in collaboration with Women's Studies) at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto, I am realizing that my interest in dense theoretical frameworks is a direct result of my privilege and security in life and the absence of more practical concerns in my day-to-day life. I believe that another result of my privilege has led to my ability to begin to embrace my Aboriginal ancestry. (p.4)

Fiola's openness represents a decolonizing writing strategy. In particular she has created the opportunity to discuss her personal relationship to the theoretical frameworks she investigates in the rest of her paper. It is not the use of first person that results in a decolonizing writing strategy; it is articulating the relationship of her research interests to herself and to colonialism. I believe expressive writing can help to bring this strategy to other parts of an academic research paper, in addition to the introduction.

The statement of social location so often seen at the beginning of critical theoretical research papers represents a thoughtful consideration of the authoritative voice used in formal academic essays. In other words, the authority conveyed in communicating thoughts and the findings are impacted by the author's personal life. The underlying message communicated is 'I come by way of this academic authority through the following experiences and privileged experience of
colonialism". The statement alone is a challenge to the conventional academic authoritative voice.

This aligns with Dr. Taiaiake Alfred's proposition that "the new resistance should be directed at a new adversary, and this is the current idea of 'authority' itself" (p.96). Indigenous authors have led the way by creating stories, which, from a colonial standpoint are 'narratives', 'literary', or 'uncritical'. From a decolonization standpoint, these stories are critical creative contributions that can be used to assist Indigenous communities to recognize the importance of stories, and, a thoughtful authorial voice, that is often relegated exclusively to academic spaces.

Writing can be transformative. I propose that this transformation can result in decolonizing epistemologies and a decolonizing epistemology. Transformation can occur through simple writing exercises, encouraging students to express the connection between their lives, colonialism and their research interests, or utilizing the multiple forms of writing proliferating through societies in the 21st centuries: texts, twitter, blogs, comments, chats, online articles, to name a few. Decolonizing writing entails thoughtfully discussing the relationship between the 'authorial' voice and the structures of colonialism and mass consumerism that have exploited the disembodied nature of this voice.

Expressive writing toward decolonization can confront and challenge the uncritical use of rhetoric, argumentation, objective research and logic by unpacking the colonial history within these conventions from a simple, direct, clear point of view. Structures of essays may change and the hope is that new structures may encourage knowledge that is more grounded in experience, local relationships with the community, and with the environment that we all share.
Expressive writing can act as both a decolonizing adult learning tool as well as a strategy to help democratize epistemology, make it accessible, and provide choice and increased freedom.

2. Indigenous Scholarship arising from the 'Native Renaissance'

In the chapter “intertextual journeying: first nations”, Dr. Peter Cole speaks with and transcribes conversations with writers and academics of Indigenous background. These interviewees each represent dynamic relationships with language, academics, and the arts in Canada, including Dr. Lee Maracle, Joy Asham Fedorick, Dr. Jeanette Armstrong, and Dr. Maria Campbell. The nuances within their contributions to Dr. Cole's *Coyote and Raven* stories speak to the need for greater consciousness of writing practices within the academy.

Dr. Campbell, a Métis author, who has three doctorates, and is fluent in Cree, Mishif, and Saulteaux, says "When I was writing I always found that English manipulated me. Once I understood my own rhythms, the language of my people, the history of storytelling, and the responsibility of storytelling, then I was able to manipulate the language"(p.288). Rarely do academics reference the manipulation inherent in some English language. However, Dr. Campbell seeks truth, beauty, justice, through her writing, and brings a corresponding honesty and earnestness to bear on her academic work.

Referencing Dr. Campbell’s comments on the manipulative character of English, Joy Asham Fedorick discusses the obfuscation of English talk:

> The elusiveness stems from the construction of English: it is a noun-based language with immense material vocabulary, but it is poor in its content of verbs, adjectives and adverbs. Both the linear structure of the language and the formulae developed to use it, restrict the ability of a writer to express emotion, relationships, texture and depth, unless, of course, one deals with things instead of people.(p.293)
Dr. Lee Maracle offers a more direct appeal to question the inward looking nature of academic argumentation:

There are a number of words in the English language with no appreciable definition. Argument is defined as evidence; proof of evidence is defined as demonstration or proof; and theory as a proposition proven by demonstrable evidence. None of these words exist outside of their interconnectedness. Each is defined by the other. (p.299)

Later in the discussion Dr. Maracle adds that, "It takes a great deal of work to erase people from theoretical discussion. To delete passion from our lives leads to a weird kind of sociopathy- a heartlessness" (p.301).

Dr. Maracle's views arise from the varied and dubious uses of rhetoric and writing in the academy. Dr. Warry also encountered this awkward dispassionate (what he called 'soulless') voice in discussing Indigenous self-government. The tension these scholars, playwrights, and writers sense occurs between Indigenous ways of knowing and academic ways of knowing. This is a profound cross-road for academic discussion, the result of which has the power to transform the 'canon' within many humanities disciplines.

I have noted a few aspects of the history of writing in the 19th and 20th centuries in this section to seek out some of the origins of the 'sociopathy' that Dr. Maracle sees in academic writing of today. Greek rhetoric and other classics were indeed concerned with truth, justice, the sublime so why, with the advent of industrialization, and mass consumerism, did academic talk become so obtuse? The slow evolution of academic ideas ushers in an era within the humanities of longer and longer words. Strong argumentation, now, is often riddled with conditions, caveats, side-bar condescension, and tangential diversions. The manipulative, sociopathic, soulless writings are cited everywhere, and understood nowhere.
3. Transcendent Decolonizing Strategies

Harnessing theory and academic processes represents another realm of Indigenous self-governance and self-determination. Many scholars in Canada are researching the opportunities to decolonize academic spaces and processes. Indigenize is a new verb being activated across all disciplines, in the humanities and the sciences. There is widespread acceptance that the form of knowledge production and knowledge sharing requires a process of Indigenization or decolonization if institutions are to effectively provide the right to education for Indigenous peoples.

I have chosen 'decolonization' as an accessible term that references a transition from a colonial history. The term is not ideal, but I believe it serves a purpose, in particular, for audiences who prefer to deny persisting pernicious effects of colonialism. Dr. Graham Smith points out:

The term 'decolonization' is a reactive notion; it immediately puts the colonizer and the history of colonization back at the 'center'. In moving to transformative politics we need to understand the history of colonization but the bulk of our work and focus must be on what is it that we want, what it is we are about and to 'imagine' our future. (p.162)

The type of work necessary to decolonize denotes more involved processes such as re-thinking, challenging old ways of knowing, confronting stereotypes, and thinking in a more holistic embodied manner. However, decolonization acts as an appropriate lightning rod for the far reaching vestiges of colonialism that have placed both colonized and colonizer into a relationship mediated by power and inequality, politics, and intellectual positionality.
There are Indigenous scholars and allies suggesting ways to disrupt conventional forms of academic output. Megan Boler and Michalinos Zembylas's "pedagogy of discomfort" suggests that this type of critical discussion:

requires not only cognitive but emotional labour... [It] emphasizes the need for both educator and student to move outside their comfort zones. By comfort zone we mean the inscribed cultural and emotional terrains that we occupy less by choice and more by virtue of hegemony. (p.52)

Given this emotional labour, it is crucial to provide students tools to express themselves with a critical grounded personal voice that is considered, thoughtful, and their own. This type of decolonizing scholarship is being done in limited contexts. Through a critical approach to the act and tool of writing, decolonizing scholarship has the power to increase its reach by unpacking the colonial mindset present in other disciplines.

In *Red Pedagogy*, Dr. Sandy Grande describes the importance for critical scholars to work closely with Indigenous scholars. She suggests that "transcendent theories of decolonization" may help to infuse pedagogy with critical Indigenous thought and disrupt traditional disciplinary boundaries. She calls for this type of unifying decolonization because she sees the Western theoretical framework attempting to subsume Indigeneity. Of critical theorists, she says they, in particular, "need to examine the degree to which critical pedagogies retain the deep structures of Western thought"(p.65). Through theories of decolonization there may be a space in which new types of critical scholarship emerge, for allies of Indigenous people and Indigenous scholars as well.

Decolonized writing practices may provide a theoretical dish in which critical scholars and Indigenous scholars can begin to reformulate the type of knowledge production and academic output that is asked of students, and, perhaps, eventually professors too. Indigenous scholars
have begun this type of work, through the use of Dr. Linda Smith's *Decolonizing Methodologies*, and the *Handbook of Critical and Indigenous Methodologies*, and Dr. Gregory Cajete’s *Native Science*, among others. These books suggest alternative ways in which the academy can structure research, and work to shift, transform, and be changed by Indigenous communities, and Indigenous ways of knowing. Decolonized writing can take cues from the existing Indigenous and decolonized research, their core purposes and principles, being undertaken by scholars in the 21st century.

Writing, in addition to conveying research, is also a way of documenting trial and error, expressing one's connection to the whole and to one's social location. An essay can establish an ecology within itself, with various energies colliding, re-iterating, repeating the words of others, and offering some independent thoughts. Always, an essay reconfigures existing energies, values, or beliefs into new shapes. This format, which has been handed down over centuries in Western academic institutions, has now encountered and unsuccessfully attempted to subsume Indigenous epistemology. Rather than continuing to attempt to subsume this new way of learning, knowing, and being, perhaps the essay can be transformed by it. More specifically, perhaps the essay can be decolonized, by altering its structure, changing its ecology in subtle ways, with the help of some existing expressive writing practices.

4. Embodied Scholarship in Solidarity with Indigenous Scholars

Arts based practices, ethnography, and narrative inquiry have brought their own unique forms of consciousness raising to challenge and reconfigure the framework of the conventional academic authorial voice. Moving forward, I believe it is important to continue to keep in mind the theme of 'adult education' in relation to decolonized writing practices.
I have kept my discussion of a decolonized writing praxis focused to adult learning environments. The project of decolonization of the elementary and secondary school environments necessitates other types of discussion and theoretical frameworks. I have chosen to ground this discussion harkening back to 'andragogy' as it is the foundation from which adult learning theory originated. I believe that examining writing practices, from the standpoint of 'critical praxis', is an effective way to assist in reconfiguring this highly intellectual foundation into a consciousness raising exercise confronting the colonial mindset. With more meaningfully engaged students, the hope is that scholarship will move toward new methodological and emotional frameworks that decolonize academic spaces, and academic oriented minds.

Dr. Marie Battiste, in writing Decolonizing Education: Nourishing the Learning Spirit, has mapped out the current theoretical, political, and educational climate in which Indigenous scholars and their allies may enact a process that works against the prevailing colonial mindset of learning institutions in Canada. In discussing Indigenous methodologies, Dr. Battiste references the term 'Indigenist' agenda as a movement that consists of Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars and activists alike. I believe there are opportunities to enact an 'Indigenist' agenda in raising consciousness about writing in classrooms.

Dr. Battiste cites Len Findlay's essay “Always Indigenize” saying that his words are an example of an 'indeterminate provocation' that

non-Indigenous scholars can take to develop a connective critical stand from their location to the Indigenous agenda, noting, promoting, activating, defusing, infusing, complicating, and in general putting the Indigenous agenda firmly in the present and not only in the hands of the politicians and the activists. (p.74)
Dr. Linda Smith also provides specific ways to 'Indigenize' research and include 'Indigenist processes "through centering the consciousness of the landscapes, images, languages, themes, metaphors, and stories of the Indigenous world"(p.147).

Dr. Gregory Cajete has begun establishing the interconnectedness of Western science and Indigenous science or epistemologies. There is still much work to be done in the humanities disciplines establishing critical formal links between the formats of Western based epistemologies, often text-based, and Indigenous epistemologies, often ecology based. Dr. Battiste suggests that this requires

a different conception of humanity, one that rests its foundations on place and the ecological teachings and practices of what constitutes being human within a certain ecology [...] it is not derived from theological, moral, or political ideologies. Ecology privileges no particular people or way of life. (p.114)

Dr. Battiste offers a rich overview of the Indigenous renaissance in Canada and how universities and other educational institutions can take part in this exciting moment for Indigenous scholarship. Dr. Battiste discusses second language programs for Indigenous students, saying "Learning a language means, among other things, to learn to use a language to socialize, to learn, to query, to make believe, to imagine, and to wonder"(p.149). While Dr. Battiste is referring to Indigenous languages in this passage, it is possible to apply these insights to the language of writing as it is experienced by Indigenous and non-Indigenous students and scholars in Canadian colleges and universities. In terms of academic writing, there is a need to remember the simple benefits of self-expression: "to socialize, to learn, to query, to make believe, to imagine, and to wonder"(p.149). Remembering what it is to feel these things, even as critical thinking scholars, may provide some hints to decolonize the process of producing an essay. We just have to keep trying it out.
Conclusion

The theoretical foundation exists to decolonize the essay writing process in adult learning spaces in Canada. Indigenous writers and scholars have provided the context in which decolonization can be achieved. Decolonization is being accomplished by reclaiming research, re-imagining conventional cognitivist approaches to writing practice, and simply reframing some of the existing academic processes to address the persisting pernicious colonial mindset still present in critical disciplines within the humanities and social sciences in Canadian universities today.

Dr. Marie Battiste has set out the theoretical foundation and described the Indigenist imperative necessary to decolonize post-secondary learning in the 21st century by sharing *Decolonizing Education: Nourishing the Learning Spirit* (2013). In this comprehensive appraisal of the contradictions and opportunities of Indigenized scholarship in Canada, Dr. Battiste sets out the terms for the formal, institutional, and personal work necessary to decolonize among Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars and educators alike.

Most striking for the purposes of decolonizing writing is a critical deployment of praxis and Dr. Battiste's description of ‘ecology’ as a fundamental Indigenous epistemology. What does it mean to acknowledge, through writing, that we are, as students and scholars, merely components of an ecology, a larger conceptual and actual world that continues with or without us? I cannot answer this yet. However, it does seem appropriate that the essay, its sprawling requirements, its demand for references to other scholars, its necessary multiple paragraph format, is more relatable when thought of as an intellectual and emotional ecology.
Formerly, the essay often consisted of one type of definitive authoritative academic voice of the writer. Now, because of the work of scholars such as Dr. Marie Battiste, approaching writing as an activity within an ecology might mean encouraging more than one author, identifying natural and elemental influences, and speaking honestly about the multi-faceted relationships that comprise identity and guide academic inquiry of scholars, students, writers, researchers.

I have identified work being done in non-Indigenous focused disciplines such as Institutional Ethnography and narrative inquiry to demonstrate the power of writing to address deeply disturbing and disruptive discussions in the adult learning classroom. I have referenced the tension between Dr. Kagan's writings on Thucydides and his political positioning to demonstrate the dissonant disembodied voices that modern post-secondary scholarship contains. I have quoted Indigenous scholars who describe the varied quality of words when used creatively and academically to show the inherently transformative, creative and expressive potential of writing and personal voice. I have cited these examples, and my own use of images to interview adults, to demonstrate ways that writing can be harnessed to alter the affect of the authoritative academic voice.

Discussing history determines the possible decisions available to move forward, to change, and to heal. Fascism, like colonialism, is a legacy of which most of the world grapples. Consequently, I investigated the narrative inquiry used by Dr. Sondra Perl in Austria as a possible simple and achievable way to work through colonial legacies by way of writing exercises. First, however, there must be an acknowledgment across disciplines that post-secondary institutions continue to play a role in re-enacting the violence of colonialism on Indigenous people. Revealing the *arkhe* of the Canadian government, most overtly represented
by the Indian Act, is a mass history lesson that requires collective commitment and action if Canada is to honour its treaty relationships and its responsibilities toward citizens with Indigenous background. This may not result in a decolonized society. However, working toward decolonization, discussing its potential critical, academic and personal dimensions, may help direct the attention of large groups of people toward an achievable collective end with individualized benefits.

Writing exercises are a ubiquitous process embedded in most every educational institution in Canada. Approaching this process as a decolonizing opportunity may be a small gesture that begins to address the emotional and psychological dimensions of colonialism. The essay format has been incrementally adjusted in the last 200 years within post-secondary institutions. The next incremental adjustment to the essay, I am proposing, should take its cue from Indigenous scholarship. Dr. Marie Battiste's humanistic 'ecology' is one suggestion. However, many other suggestions are available such as Dr. Peter Cole's subversion of syntax and style in *Raven and Coyote Go Canoeing*, or Dr. Robin Patric Clair elucidation of colonialism by framing anecdote through critical ethnography.

Decolonizing academic writing practices necessarily draws from Indigenous epistemology to refuse the colonial mindset that has thrived on individualism, competition, and dispossession of responsibility. Using expressive writing as a decolonizing adult learning praxis means: acknowledging the self-reflexive nature of essay writing, being honest about the lack of any single authoritative voice on anything, and refusing to perpetuate the illusion that writing is produced alone and in a vacuum outside of colonialism, capitalism, and the vibrant culture surrounding academic oriented people all the time. It is time to ground the academic writing
processes within the humanities and social sciences, assess the roots of good relatable writing, offer real decolonizing strategies, and privilege academic output that demonstrates consciousness of the continued colonialism occurring in Canada.
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