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The Location of Knowledge: A Conversation With the Editors on Knowledge, Experience, and Place

Introduction

As co-editors of this theme issue of *AJER*, we have accepted that knowledge systems and teacher education programs are deeply interconnected. Further, we claim that teacher education programs must incorporate in theory and practice the fact that knowledge systems are a determining factor in the effectiveness of a teacher education program. In assessing these statements, as educators involved directly in teacher education programs, we decided that a substrate of theory underlies this discussion of knowledge systems and teacher education. This deeper level of theorizing about education in general speaks to the location or *place* of knowledge, and ultimately knowledge systems, especially in relation to knowledge and knowledge systems as we understand these in the context of teacher education programs. The significance of this question about the *place* or location of knowledge and knowledge systems is certainly important to teacher education programming.

In this article we use the term *knowledge systems* to refer to those systems of knowledge and information that are connected to physical locations or places. The term *knowledge system* as we use it in this article refers to a basic understanding that knowledge itself is directly linked to place, and thus knowledge cannot be accessed without an individual's preparation and conscious acceptance of particular knowledge as an integral part of the particular place from which it springs, arises, or is derived. The collection, or whole, of the particular parts of knowledge together comprises the knowledge system, also connected to particular place or places. This definition of knowledge system differs from the more common usage where *knowledge system* is understood in reference to a system of information collection, management, storage, and/or distribution (usually computer-based or computer-driven) or in reference to a collection of information or knowledge about a specific subject or area of study. Such use of the term can give rise to misunderstanding and misrepresentation of the thinking behind the argument that teacher education programs need to acknowledge formally and include knowledge systems as a plurality in their classrooms. To persist in maintaining teacher education programs that promote a singular Western intellectual tradition is to promote educationally unsound and ethically questionable educational programming on unsuspect-

ing postsecondary students, many of whom enter teacher education with the highest ideals of public service and human compassion.

Whether or not we as postsecondary educators explicitly recognize the foundational interconnection between knowledge systems and teacher education, we are necessarily and constantly enmeshed or immersed in it. As we accept and become conscious of this interconnection, we become more effective in the development of formal ways to acknowledge the *other* knowledge systems that are operating in our classrooms, whether these are in postsecondary or primary education institutions. These *other* knowledge systems will continue to stand in relation to mainstream Canada's version of the Western intellectual traditions because this is the intellectual tradition that has governed all educational programs into the present, and it is this system that we have all experienced as children and adults. However, teacher education programs cannot continue to ignore the fact that student bodies represent multiple knowledge systems. In public school classrooms across this continent, increasingly those knowledge systems are representative of African, Asian, and Indigenous intellectual traditions and not of the European Western tradition. How we prepare education students, preservice teachers, to respect, recognize, and include students' and communities' knowledge systems into their planning and delivery of school programs is a matter of crucial importance. Maintaining the integrity of distinct knowledge systems as these are evident and lived through students' lives must be a goal of teacher education: it is the foundation of a student's life and thought, and as such it cannot ethically or morally be set aside as a supplemental objective of a program. The vitality of knowledge systems is tied directly to survival and quality of life for students. If your knowledge system is respected and is a part of the teaching content and pedagogy of your classroom, you will be successful in that classroom.

Teacher education programs accept and hold responsibility to prepare teachers to work with children, youth, and adults representing knowledge systems that are often different from their own. These teachers need opportunities to interact in other knowledge systems if they are to gain an understanding of how knowledge systems, which are all tied to specific cultures, histories, and places, can and do affect the effectiveness of all mainstream Canadian educational effort including those that are presently termed *multiculturalism*, *diversity*, *inclusivity*, *international education*, *global education*, *sustainability*, *environmental education*, *cross-cultural*, and *Indigenous or Aboriginal education*.

This article is written as a conversation that addresses the connection of knowledge (or knowledges) with *place*. Our purpose is to share one part of our own process of "coming to the questions" that framed this work on expanding knowledge systems in teacher education programs. The work is a process of conversation as a scholarly endeavor based on our understanding of the importance of dialogue as an educational praxis that takes us into the conflicting and often liminal spaces of identity, inclusivity, bordering, and belonging. Our intention is to provide a critical engagement with these issues through our own experiences and theoretical positions. We found after numerous conversations that we were delving into complex intellectual challenges to what we had learned about the meaning of *knowledge* in academic settings and what this

term meant to each of us as individuals and cultural beings. In the process, we excavated some deeply entrenched and personal root understandings about knowledge and knowledge systems. Because this journal issue addresses the expansion of knowledge systems in teacher education programs, we agreed that the relationship of *place* to knowledge and knowledge systems needed to be included. If we are to expand the concept of knowledge systems and our own thinking about how to include them in teacher education programs, then we need to understand also that there are deep philosophical and/or theoretical underpinnings to knowledge and knowledge systems and that at least one part of these underpinnings is how knowledge is related to specific place or location. This conversation is a way to contextualize and elucidate the intent of this issue to move beyond the belief that the Western is the only intellectual tradition or knowledge system available to us as educators. In fact the Western is only one of many intellectual traditions and/or knowledge systems. In accepting this as a premise in our work as teacher educators, we are then challenged to move toward an ongoing dialogue that includes representatives from the various knowledge systems that are represented in the various and multiple educational contexts.

This conversation represents our understanding of knowledge and knowledge systems, but it goes deeper into the question of *place* and source of knowledge and knowledge systems. The challenge to accept other knowledge systems as factors affecting teacher education can be relatively easy; putting action to this acceptance raises administrative doubts and seemingly difficult logistical questions. However, in facing these potential challenges, we found that before we even began to look at the *how to* of the issue, we were driven to understand knowledge in relation to *place* or location as a source of knowledge itself. Ancient teachings of many peoples tell us that we understand anything by going to its source. We found no easy answers to moving forward in the present situation; we followed our own dialogue and came, we believe, a little closer to understanding the sources of knowledge systems and, therefore, a little closer to being able to think about how we might begin the work of expanding knowledge systems in teacher education programs. We share ideas and reflections based on many years of work in the field of education, but we do not provide conclusions and answers. Knowledge systems live in the hearts of beings.

The Conversation

CORA: So what are our questions relating to knowledge and place?

LYNETTE: Well, my first question is about place and knowing. Does place reveal knowledge? Is there a kind of knowledge that exists in a place, or does knowledge emerge from a relationship with a place? It makes me wonder about revealed knowledge, received knowledge, constructed knowledge, intuitive knowledge, and experienced knowledge. What kind of knowledges exists in a place?

JENNIFER: I would say that it's a mixture of both intuitive and experienced knowledge. In terms of the intuitive, I am struck by how being in certain places can affect a sense of self and feel more calming than others. Here I'm thinking of places with water. I now realize that intuitively I have often ended up living

near to water. But it is also learned knowledge, as garnered through experiences of living near to water.

LYNETTE: That's exactly what my first question was about: Does that place reveal a kind of knowledge for us, or do we interact with it to feel calm and to know what calm means? I think there is an intuitive kind of knowledge—a way of knowing that it comes from that place, from being with water, on water, by water.

JENNIFER: I think it is sort of intuitive because it affects what you come to see as a nice place to live or a good place to live. I don't start by saying, yes, I really want to live here because there's water. It's by being reflective now that I am able to bring that knowledge into a conscious realm. I've just realized places I've lived have these commonalities.

LYNETTE: I struggle with understanding how our relationship with a physical space results in a relationship where we feel a particular sense of belonging, a sense of connection. And I think it is intuitive in particular places because it doesn't seem to happen everywhere. There are particular places where we have a sense that we belong. So for me it's about relationship.

JENNIFER: I think you mentioned connection as well. I wonder what that connection comes from or what exactly is that connection. I think there is some memory that's evoked somewhere that makes you have a connection with place; it's like interpellation in some way, Althusser's (1972) idea of calling. Something hails you into a specific subject position in relation to a place. One ends up recognizing something about the self. Some sort of knowledge is generated. This knowledge relates to a connection between identity and place as the moment of recognition is achieved in the moment of reflection. So the moment of recognition is in the turning

CORA: It requires a recognition.

JENNIFER: So I wonder how that connection gets recognized then?

CORA: So you don't have a calling until you turn?

JENNIFER: Well, the calling exists, and makes you turn, and if you turn ...

CORA: Then you're recognized, so it's a reciprocal recognition in some ways.

JENNIFER: It has to be that, because you could easily imagine walking down the street, something calls you. If you don't turn, it's a different experience in that moment than if you turn.

CORA: In thinking about a question to begin with, I am reminded of a Cree word, *nitisiy*, meaning my navel. When I say *nitisiyihkason*, I am saying "my name is ..." so the connection between my name (or what I call myself) and my navel is clear. The deeper meaning of this term is shown in the practice of burying the umbilical cord after it detaches from the baby's navel in the place that is recognized as the baby's ancestral or family home territory. This ongoing cultural practice indicates clearly the significant connection between place and identity for thousands of Cree people of Canada. *Nitisiyihkason* is a reference to both my name and my navel, as *kitiyihkason* is a reference to your name and your navel; the connection of *itisy* or navel with the burying of the umbilical cord in a particular location with a particular purpose points to the importance of the physical environment or place in the continuity of Cree identities and beings. The umbilical cord is buried in that place where you are supposed to be and where you belong. Place, then, is a part of who you are, a part of your

identity. The elders have said that because so many generations don't do that anymore, people have become confused about where they belong. The land is part of your identity, and your place is the land where your umbilical cord is.

LYNETTE: So how does that work, because humans have always migrated? Or is leaving our place and our umbilical cord just a human tension that we always carry with us and have forever? Is there something that pulls on us to ground us in one spot and then something else pulls us into a new place?

CORA: I think it has to do with time—the way and the rate at which people carried out their migrations to new places has changed and continues to change. Also, I think blood memory has an effect on the way we deal with migrations and its associated tensions.

LYNETTE: Blood memory, like a collective consciousness?

CORA: Yes, but blood memory is tied to your own people. The theory is if you have the blood of Cree ancestors, you have the Cree memories connected to those ancestors. But it's really your choice as to whether you use that or let it go. I think in terms of the difference this concept might make to teachers, and I started thinking about the reasons why those young people come out of our university as happy people, excited about going out to teach, and then, within a short period of time, they're really unhappy. What happens to them? I think the Western systems of education support that by "going for your head" and requiring a constant intellectual focus. So what happens is that you get disconnected from your feet, your roots; there's no connection with your roots anymore. When the Europeans came over to this land, there were people here who had been on this land for 10,000-30,000 thousand years. Most of the settlers themselves had had their own traditional ways, but their ancestors and perhaps themselves had been treated as they were treating the people they met here in this land. Most Canadian young people who go into teacher education programs don't have any roots. People have been hammering at their heads since the original movement from Europe. The colonizing governments would not let those people get on the ground; they wouldn't let them recognize that this is a different territory and one that has a history. You shouldn't ignore the land. If I went to China, I wouldn't ignore the land, but when you back up the colonial project through history, it seems to me that all those civilizations, as they're called, were built on war. It was conquest and riches.

LYNETTE: and patriarchy.

CORA: ... and the lords on the top, it was about winning and taking. Even art and philosophy that came out of that civilization was all under the war and the kings; it was about power, authority, riches, land—there was nothing else, really. Where does that leave you? It leaves you disconnected. So place, in that context, doesn't mean anything. It becomes something you theorize about.

LYNETTE: What that makes me think of is the problems with European ways of knowing and the insistence on rationality. There was certainly a time when practicing or engaging any kind of intuitive knowledge, particularly for women, might get you tied to a stake and burned as a witch (Mackay, 2009; Summers, 1971). Rationalism was disciplined into the system and with that came the hierarchy, with men on the top, and everyone else below. So didn't we all just learn to look up? We learned to be uninterested in our feet, our roots. I find that in much of the critical education work people aren't really wanting

to transform the system; they just want to get positioned higher in the hierarchy, so it's not really any radical change. By always looking up, we have completely lost where our feet are; we have lost our groundedness. When we can all put our feet on the ground, I think that would be the time when the hierarchy shifts.

JENNIFER: Well it will be, because people will put their feet on the ground.

LYNETTE: Put their feet down, and we're not looking up. What if the people at the top of the hierarchy learned to have their feet on the ground and needed to look at others "in the eye," on the same level? That's just a huge shift in how we would see and know each other.

JENNIFER: Oh, absolutely.

LYNETTE: But it would require, then, as you say, reclaiming the different kinds of knowledge, those lost knowledges for European people, and then hearing the knowledge that people around the world have to share. It's come to the point where I think Western epistemology has been spread around the world as the only epistemology and much has been lost. The Western kind of knowledge and ways of thinking don't allow us the concepts and words to discuss many things. For example, we have to know intuitively in order to really understand the umbilical cord connection, because that's intuitive knowledge, isn't it?

CORA: Maybe those are categories that don't fit. Or we need a different category.

JENNIFER: Again, I don't think there has to be a loss in terms of fit and categories. I think we can use intuitive knowledge as a starting point and then blend with knowledge acquired through experience to move to a space that does not see knowledge generation as an *either* or *binary*. For example, through intuition I have come to recognize that the mode of entry into a land and place leaves a historical trace. For me the violence used by early settlers in the United States to seize land from Aboriginal peoples has traces and consequences in terms of present-day violence. Once land is taken in a violent way, it's really difficult to remove that violence. However, I could be criticized by those who adhere strongly to a Western thought system based on scientific rationalism for making such a statement based on intuition. Yet I think that using intuition, then moving to further reflection as a basis of knowledge generation can be very useful.

CORA: That's what the Elders have said too. That the Europeans brought that violence over when they came, but it was perpetuated because they stayed in their heads while they were desecrating this place. But they did that on their own lands for how many generations? At least those histories of civilizations that we teach in school—the Romans and the British, the Germans and the French, the Portuguese and the Greeks—were all like that: they did it to their own peoples, and so how many hundreds of years does it take? Then they came over to other countries and did the same. The old people talk about the concept of the giving of self for these people who came over. One of our traditional knowledge teachers, Lionel Kinuna, said that they, as the Aboriginal peoples, were the elder brothers and had to be patient with the bullying and violent attitudes of their Euro-American adolescent brothers. Carl Jung in his Introduction to the *Secret of the Golden Flower* (Lü, 1931/1975) compares eastern and

Western philosophies, saying that with the Western mind, you approach through the head and from there the teaching goes to the heart. With the eastern mind, you approach through the heart, and from there the teaching goes to the head. With Indigenous peoples of this land, teachings follow the Eastern approaches, entering through the heart and then going to the head. Most Canadians need to be approached through the head, and in order to get to their feet, you have to reach their heads. As the Elders say, you take them to the bush, and give them this connection to the land, and it puts them in a different context. When it comes to teacher education, nobody has helped these young people to find their own relationship with the land. That's one reason they need that Canadian history of the people of this land in order to start to understand this land.

JENNIFER: So you have to start from a respect for the land.

CORA: And that only begins with knowledge. You're not going to respect something you don't know and unless you have the intuitive magical experience, which, you know, you can.

LYNETTE: Is that like post-colonial writers, for example Gabriel García Márquez (1967), Carpentier (1974, in Davies, 1984), and also anti-colonialist Aimé Césaire (1972, 2001), who along with others engage magical realism as an act of decentering Western thought? For many people, describing their environment using magical realism is a decolonizing act. These authors tell us how their writing expresses their deep and profound connection to their place that is so tremendously lush and abundant. The *magical* is set against or beside *the real* to decenter it. Also, the places in the writing are seen as magical by people in the north because our land is so harsh and finding food and beauty requires a very different way of interacting with the land. In describing Carpentier and Césaire, Davies (1984) states that the marvelous and extravagant magical environments in their work are intrinsic to and indissociable from their local experience. These writers suggest that locality, impossible for the outsider to imagine or describe, is the root of the very different epistemological and ontological perspective and knowledge systems that grew out of the northern countries. And with this, of course, the project of modernity has promoted a linear, rationalist development paradigm as universal. As a result, people can be disconnected from the land and from any relationship with the land. I think it is important to address this in teacher training, that teachers (and students) do need to know where their food is from and their absolute dependency on where they are standing, and include the historical context of that place. For non-Indigenous people, this can frame a whole new relationship with Aboriginal people, but also with their own sense of self. So how do we include the extraordinary and marvelous abundance of the world's natural environments as part of teacher education? How would students respond to a required course on "the magic of place and identity"?

JENNIFER: It's useful to pursue the idea Cora raised about the head and how very much that's what we tend to work at in terms of generating knowledge. That what we privilege, in terms of Western rationalism, is always in the head, and what we need, and certainly educators need, is more knowledge that goes through the heart and leads to understanding the place where they are located. I think that form of knowledge generation would give a very different perspec-

tive to what preservice teachers encounter at the moment. Despite the overall resistance from students to required courses, you do still encounter students who are really keen. They say they want guidance, but in some ways it's not always easy to know what to do. But I think taking a course on place and identity would require looking beyond the head. Many students can manage the head, they can learn the banking knowledge (Freire, 1972) but it's the rest, the emotional effects of it that they can't really manage. I think you have to understand where you're living and have a respect for that land. And it gets manifested in different ways, whether it's through ecology or sustainability or environmentalism, which is one thing that we talk about, but there's no real examination as to why these issues are important other than the fact that the earth will be destroyed one day. There may be other reasons why it's useful to try to engage with environment in terms of developing respect for the land and its ecological power.

CORA. I like that and the relationship with the power of the land. That's really what makes it more specific, because that's what would help the young people we're talking about—providing opportunities that get them into that awareness and experience. But what I'm seeing is that these teachers in training need to be moved beyond just a sense of place and groundedness; they need to be able to understand it fully and name it, and build it into their lives so that it becomes who they are, so that being rooted doesn't mean being bound to the ground. Being rooted is part of who you are; you've got to know your physicality, and in order to know your physicality you have to recognize that you're on the ground. And as soon as you do that, you're going to have to realize the ground is more than just dirt. To have this experience with relationship means you're connecting with the powers that are there. It goes back for me to those teachings about where you bury your umbilical cord; that's your power, that's your sense of being and the power that you connect to. I guess you'd call it Indigenous science of the powers, and power of the land is only one of them. But you can't take people there, or they can't go there unless they are prepared. They have to be given the opportunity for those experiences that prepare them for this learning.

JENNIFER: You have to feel it, and that was the image that I had of the feet. That we are not just anywhere when we teach, we are, no matter how momentarily, in a specific location and place.

CORA: But I think we would really have to plan it carefully, because it's a very delicate balance.

LYNETTE: Through the Global Education Network¹ and environmental education, there's a holistic approach to doing education work that's very experiential. I was talking to a kindergarten teacher recently, and she described how at the beginning of the term she was taking some kids out for a walk, and one little guy started to cry because he had never been off the sidewalk. She had them down into a natural area, so it wasn't lawn or cement, and this little guy, who is about 5 years old, had never had his toes on anything but cement or manicured grass. And so she made a commitment that every day these kids were to be in the dirt and with plants. Unless the kids have experience with natural spaces, they can't even begin to talk about their own identity in the place where they live

JENNIFER: I think the other thing is that it is a collective experience, because when you experience something, often you want to share it with somebody. So the other aspect is that educators need to have a process for dialogue, which is something that's really missing from some of our present approaches. This aspect is connected to your earlier point about entering through the heart or through the head; it's a fine balance. I think it's the dialogue that might make the difference.

LYNETTE: Make the connection.

JENNIFER: I think also, that when they have some of these experiences or try to relate back to the land, it's really important that an Elder or teacher is there to talk with them through that process.

CORA: It is very critical. This is about you and your survival as a human being. If you can't relate to place, then you just robbed yourself of an important part of your being as a person. You're walking around as a head, and the rest of you is nothing. You're robbing yourself, and I feel like that's what this society does to its young people. It robs them, and they are lost and searching. I think there is also resentment, which is the basis for a lot of the racism in Canadians. The resentment develops because "You (Aboriginal) people just won't go away. If you could go away, we could forget about where we are." Meyer (2003) talks about Hawaii and being Hawaiian. It's all water, so she talks about water and you know that this is her place. I know the bush; I know what that feels like and I know the power of that. The plains peoples have something different. You said you have mountains. It goes back to your being, I think, and to the memory and how your being remembers its source. But I think too that everybody has to have that and that most Canadians were robbed of that knowledge and that sense of themselves. I think that you begin to reclaim it if this is your chosen place to be. You have to make peace with this land, and the only way you're going to make peace is to first see it. A lot of people don't want to see it or they don't know how.

JENNIFER: Maybe make peace is a more useful word than respect. I'm thinking back again to the land as violent. Having been violated in some way, I think making peace and healing is coming to know the land. That's really important in terms of working with students. It's important to recognize what someone who's entering that dialogue brings with them because raced, classed, sexualized subjectivity shifts what gets spoken about in the classroom. You can have some conversations, depending on what people bring with them, but there are other conversations that will be more difficult to engage with because of what they bring.

LYNETTE: To me it's pretty interesting thinking about the idea of dual place. This idea that the preservice teachers in our classes will have a classroom with Aboriginal kids who have a sense of place, and then beside them, others who may or may not have a sense of place or perhaps they have a dual sense of place. Many people who come here, particularly in the last two generations, tend to hyphenate their identity. For example, they say, I'm Brazilian-Canadian. They often have dual citizenship so have a sense of dual place. How do we work with that?

JENNIFER: I have a sense of three places. Because I was actually born in Jamaica, then I lived in England, and then I moved here. When I was in

England, home was Jamaica, so, you know, my mom would talk about going home, and we'd all talk about going home, so that was where home was, but it occurred to me that when we moved here, I kept thinking, so where is home? Can I still refer to Jamaica as home, and what do I refer to England as? Is that a home? So does home shift to the last place that you were in, or is there a quintessential home you actually need to reside in.

CORA: It's where your *kitisiy* is.

JENNIFER: I should ask my mom what happened to my

kitisiy, whether it's buried in Jamaica, because it may well be.

CORA: Behind or beneath this ceremony of burying the umbilical cord is a meaning or an essence that does not change. Even though the practice itself has changed and many Aboriginal children have no idea where their umbilical cords are, the essence of meaning in that ceremony continues to be passed on. People remember the meaning, and you can see it carrying on in how people talk about the land and individual identity, how they live, what they say about going home. But then, when you talk about Canadian school contexts, you have all these kids who have dual or multiple identities that teachers tend to avoid addressing because it seems like an unsolvable problem. But I think education has to focus on what we were just talking about; your first thing is to figure out how to relate to this land, because you can't figure out who you are, except in relation to this land, right now. You're here; you can't be there and here too, in that sense.

LYNETTE: But people describe that they are and that they would feel equally connected to two places. And now we have the technology to make that a very easy connection. They can talk together with people around the world anytime and can travel there within hours. So I think that complicates our relationships to place. Vertovec (2004) discusses the transnational migrant's experience and that aspects of life *here* and life *there*, whether perceived from the migrant starting or destination point, are perceived as complementary aspects of a single space of experience. So what's the tension or the relationship between place and mobility? Does mobility establish categories of persons who will be prohibited from knowing place, or does mobility give us an opportunity to explore planetary place? I was wondering how mobility defines place and our experience of place. What does this mean in terms of migrant transnationalism and that evokes for me the idea of being on the border and in the "trans" of place, a liminal space? Is it possible to be between places, or is that bifocality? Can we have a relationship with two places, and what does that do to our identity when we hold two places as our place? And how does existing on the border of place affect how we know place, self, and others?

CORA: For me, the question that persists relates to listening to people from other countries talk about being here; they're busy trying to be Canadians, and it seems a very superficial experience: "I'm Canadian."

LYNETTE: Being Canadian in relation to the state?

CORA: I don't use that language, but that's exactly what it is. Being Canadian is not about being a person per se, nor does it seem to relate to a personal experience. It is a reference to a relationship with the state. That's all it is. And so you don't really have dual being (though you may claim dual identity). For example, you have your being from India because that's who you were up to

now. But then when you get here, if you don't relate to this land as Indigenous, that is, to this land as its own forest of being, you don't know what it means to be on this land. You are here only as a member of the state and you're claiming your rights as a Canadian citizen and you're talking that language. So newcomers can state that they are Canadian because they have the legal documentation, papers, that make them "Canadians." So *Canadian* does not in any way imply a feeling or a sense of connection to this land as the source of knowledge or power of being, nor does it give a sense of identity beyond political association with the state. That's all we are when we say that we are Canadians, and I think that's really sad. I think too that that's what keeps the country a nation without a heart. There's no soul of a Canada in evidence here; mostly there are only isolated and ignored people trying to rally around a flag for some reason that the state proclaimed. But once in a while, you meet a person who has truly *seen* the piece of land that he grew up on. It is like he went on a vision quest and he saw the years on that piece of land. People have to find that here on this land, and when they find that here, they belong here. It doesn't matter how many years or months. When they are open and they have had that experience of connection with the land, they're here.

JENNIFER: I think that's interesting as well because it allows for people to move and to make peace and to relocate in a different location.

CORA: Absolutely.

JENNIFER: Maybe it's not place, or place is the relationship you have to the land. That's what place is. It's the relationship you have with the land.

CORA: It's like place has it's own. Place exists without us, that's what I'm trying to say. And we can go and make the connections, the relationships with different places.

LYNETTE: That takes us back to our first question. Does place reveal knowledge or is it about our relationship that reveals the knowledge of place and our understanding of place?

CORA: I think it's that both things happen.

JENNIFER: It's not necessarily something out there, it's more something here. It's not about fitting into that space.

CORA: Well, if you want to know it, it is. But you don't need to know it...

JENNIFER: Well, that might be the next question: how do you know place?

LYNETTE: When I was young, there was a little meadow that was close to where I lived. It was spectacular. I would lie down on the grass, watch the sky and the clouds, and listen to the trembling aspens. I know it so profoundly that even now I can be there in a millisecond whenever I need to be there. But when I go to some places in West Africa, I have this crazy urge to touch the ground; I just want to bend over like something pushes me and I have to just touch the ground. There is also a third place to which I have a similar powerful response. But I don't feel connected to this place in Edmonton, where I live now, in the same way as those other three places, and I don't understand why that is. I can't think through those places; I only experience them.

JENNIFER: Well, that's the feel of the place.

CORA: But if you went to older traditional people who were going to teach you, they would explain that to you, because that old knowledge is there; it's been there a long time. But your question: is it revealed or constructed? Well, I

think the places are trying to reveal something or are revealing something already.

LYNETTE: If that is the case, then it's very important that we make those people with the knowledge available to students. This is another of those places where teachers need to be able to say, "I need some help on this one." So part of our teacher education is to say, "You need to be connected to someone from this place, wherever you are, who can come and be telling you what you need to know."

JENNIFER: Well, that's the importance of who is, or what is the educator.

CORA: This is the common sense to me. If I was going to another country to stay there and learn, I would expect somebody to say to me, "This is the old person who will teach you when you have questions. That's the person who comes from the land, there, they have that knowledge. There's nobody else who could tell you."

JENNIFER: But I think sometimes people who come to the land don't come with that openness to say that they have things to learn; they think that what the land needs is what they bring.

CORA: The teachers I am talking about come from the land and they're teaching from that land. My son had friends among the Vietnamese who had come over as boat people. These were young children who needed to know from their own people who they were as people, their own history, where they came from. They need to know these things just as strongly as they need to know about this land, its Indigenous peoples and its histories. And it's only their wise people who can help them bridge these two collections of knowledge,

LYNETTE: This makes me think about a young woman who met with Jenny and me recently to talk about a leadership project for immigrant youth in Edmonton. The first part of the work is about identifying yourself as a person from your original place and your sense of being, for example, Somali, your language, your family, your history. As we talk here about these educational spaces, I understand in this project that there is no place in which to connect with Aboriginal Canadians, and what Cora just said seems to be so obvious: the second piece that needs to happen is a connection with Aboriginal Elders from Edmonton so that they can talk about this land. Otherwise, how will they ever feel connected to this community?

CORA: They won't; that's why it's really important to make those connections. And you know from your own work that that's where racism is so destructive. It deliberately keeps a wall between the Indigenous peoples of Canada and the immigrants, always. It's about power; it must be about power; what else is it? Why would they hate us?

LYNETTE: Well, if you keep them apart, how will you know us? I mean that's it.

CORA: You keep power. In my own work, I had one rare opportunity to dialogue with graduate students from Africa, and surprisingly, they indicated a strong desire to talk about their lives as Indigenous students, and their stories were about experiences and feelings that are deeply familiar and are very similar to those shared by the Indigenous graduate students from Canada and the US that I work with daily. I encourage my students to meet with them, but there's this artificial separation between international Indigenous students and

Indigenous students of Canada. I think the international students are worse off, because they are many days away from their homes, and where are their people or their spiritual supports and connections? We could be helping.

LYNETTE: But in order to know the person, the people, the place, the people of the place, that's who they need to talk to.

CORA: Well, they need to know themselves, but then they also need somebody to show them the places and to show them how to get there. Just like if you went to Africa, you'd go looking and ask: "Where are your sacred spots?" You'd share songs and stories because that's what strengthens and that is diversity, the sharing of songs, not entertaining with songs. Songs have your being, and when the persons come from a country where they have that song in their own being, they know how it translates into this country and the songs of this country. That is the sharing of songs.

LYNETTE: Can we know across places? Is there a level of knowing that is planetary? Is our sense of place always particular, or is it planetary? Is our sense of place particular, or is it planetary? I'm thinking about interconnectedness and that when we think in a hierarchy, we see ourselves as above or below but not connected. But if one of the ways of seeing interconnection is to understand the planet as a whole, and our connection to the planet as a whole living system, then what we see playing out in Canada is just a statement of what that whole world system has suffered—not just this place where we are tonight. So violence here and environmental destruction there sends people looking for safety and in search of a place. We need to see that connection; we need to see that we're connected. It matters to me, here in this place, that there is violence that is destroying people's lives to the point where they have to flee their places. It is part of my reality, my life, because it's all connected.

JENNIFER: I suppose it's that idea of connection in the John Donne (1595) sense that no one is an island. In some ways, people are connected in a broader sense, and whatever you do has an effect somewhere else. I don't know about the planetary aspect, I've never thought of it as planetary.

LYNETTE: Because in my thinking, thinking of interconnection helps shift from the hierarchy. In the logical playing out of non-hierarchy you've got an interconnectedness that is this whole amazing planet that we are in, that everything, everything affects everything else. When the ice shelf melts in the north, and the flooding happens in the South Pacific, we need to invite those people here, right?

JENNIFER: I'm not the Minister of Immigration!

LYNETTE: It's all connected.

CORA: I think so too. The whole is connected. And the Elders have always said that where physics and traditional knowledge come together, it's the same message: We're all connected, and the butterfly wings in California link movement in Tokyo. I think that's not disputed any more in scientific terms.

LYNETTE: So how does that extend our discussion so far about understanding place, in this place, right here? For me to understand this place, do I also need to understand this place as part of the planet?

CORA: Well, flashing in my head is a story that this traditional teacher in Fox Lake told me when I went to ask him about why we don't make *manitokans* anymore? These are objects that are placed in particular locations to indicate

places of prayer and offerings. They were usually built or placed along the trails above rivers, for example, or wherever the trapping, hunting, and traveling trails were laid out across the northern parts of the provinces. He just laughed and said, "Well, I guess nobody feels like they need to do that anymore. And when somebody feels a need or wants to do that, or they have a dream to do so, then that person will build one."

LYNETTE: To understand this place, do you need to understand this place as part of the planet?

CORA: The answer from that would be Yes and No, because in a way, you understand everything. When you understand the small thing, the microcosm, you also understand the macrocosm. It's like a fractal. That's how the old people teach. Inside of you, you have the whole. And if you honor that and live with integrity, that's where everything is. If we all live like that, then we're not endangering somebody else. It's when we don't live like that that we endanger and we create problems. Even to think a negative thought about somebody or send the words out will have negative effects. So when you want to contribute to the world positively, you do it right here in your own being. People talk about the collective, but the collective is nothing without the individual. People are expected to be themselves and accountable first to themselves for their actions. If this individual sense of integrity is maintained, the collective is secure and protected.

Conclusions

CORA: Where have we come in our dialogue?

LYNETTE: For me, a key point was the idea of shifting hierarchy. We're in a position where we are so engaged in hierarchy, in thinking hierarchy and knowing through hierarchy, that what we're talking about through the idea of place is shifting hierarchy and the image of "feet on the ground," a horizontal, a collective shifting away from hierarchy will allow us in fact to engage deeply in what *place* means. And so I also engaged in that idea that for the non-Aboriginal person living in this place, it requires understanding the bi-focality or multifocality of that positioning and engaging with Aboriginal people who hold Aboriginal knowledge, to understand bifocality. It is to me a very exciting way of expanding consciousness when we enter into that relationship. I was also thinking in terms of the historical context, so not only this hierarchy, but understanding how then mobility was used to categorize, to make people have a sense of placelessness that served the project of imperialism. People believing in placelessness was necessary to make room for capitalism's individual that emerged out of that whole project to privatize and propertyize place. Place became property. Our project of education somehow has to identify how we help students come to the realization that they need to turn to each other. Our job as educators is not to give this knowledge, but to create the possibility that students will ask that question, come to that place of knowing. That to me is a kind of co-creating and intentional process. We educate so that they know that they need knowledge of place. Things are knowable, places are knowable in relationships of the individual and in a collective in space and to me maybe that answers the question of "What is space?" It is that idea of an individual in a collective. Educators need to create the container for this knowing and this process of knowing: know yourself, know the original people. Original people

also need to know self and others. Knowing the relationship in space, and so that's about space, time, and consciousness, not just space and time. I think it means revolutionizing how we do teacher education. It's completely shifting the links of the community so teacher training has to be located in community in a much more profound way. Now we make superficial links to community, but I think there needs to be a way to ground teacher education really in community, and in this idea of understanding place. I think Cora's statement stood out for me, that it's not the work of Aboriginal people to do this work, to do this educating. It has to be done as a collective endeavor. Once we come to this idea that we must turn to each other, then it becomes everyone who is in this place who needs to know this and that this is the work of everyone.

CORA: I like that too, that we need each other and that knowledge and space are integrally connected. So teachers need to know the history of the land on which they are located because space is inseparable from places on one level. On a higher level, spaces may be entered into through places and hence our access to another form of knowledge through those places.

JENNIFER: I came up with a triangle: knowledge, space, experience and its that relationship we're trying to tie up. I'm not sure if you said this or not, but this is what came to me, the idea of the classroom (to relate it back to that) as a place to access spaces. That's the other thing I think we can offer. How can classroom be a place to access spaces?

CORA: There's no limit to the kinds of levels that people can reach by being together in the classroom. The limitations of the student ought not to come from the limitations of the teacher.

JENNIFER: I was thinking Indigenous knowledge and knowledge systems include Indigenous pedagogies. They are not just about content. We can seek new pedagogical approaches to engagement with Aboriginal ways of understanding and relating to the land of this country. This is one way to reclaim for ourselves our own sense of belonging and our own connection to the power of place as an important source of our own knowledge about ourselves and how we can access knowledge embedded in Indigenous knowledge systems about who we are and can be in relation to this land and its peoples. It is about how pedagogically these ways of understanding and engaging with land are based on forms of relationship that come to construct spaces as places.

Note

1. Global Education Network, Department of Educational Policy Studies, University of Alberta

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