

# Pedagogies of Resistance: Living Resistance by Writing

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*Abstract: The focus of this (English) Special Issue is to provide an academic space for junior scholars to bring forward the perspectives, histories, and knowledges that have traditionally been excluded from mainstream Canadian educational discourses. Through their writing the authors in this issue have situated anti-oppressive pedagogies into their individual praxes. This is demonstrated by examining the tensions that exist between Chinese Confucian-based pedagogies and Communicative Language Teaching (Guo); experiencing the pedagogical interventions intent in the Walking With Our Sisters memorial exhibit (McKinley); engaging in narrative inquiry to outline the ongoing colonialism within systems of education in the United Kingdom, the United States, and Canada (Mir); challenging how white settler colonial norms have manifested in Canadian university hiring demographics (Abwi); confronting the hegemonic masculinity of the Ultimate Fighting Championship while contrasting it with the need for wellness-based martial arts practice for gay male youth (Chan); and advocating for the importance of Marie Battiste's "Visioning a Mi'kmaw Humanities: Indigenizing the Academy" edited collection (Downey).*

*Keywords: Resistance, Unlearning, Kyriarchy, Intersectionality, Decolonization, Anti-oppression.*

The treaties that we broke;  
The lands that we filched;  
The settlements put to the torch;  
The children we abused;  
All for your own good of course!  
It just happens to be the way history has been made!  
"Comply/Resist" by Propagandi

## Disparity by Design<sup>1</sup>

Canada is unequivocally a white settler colonial nation-state (Lorenz, 2017; Razack, 2002); it is a dominion formed in the image of a small group of wealthy, able-bodied, Christian, predominantly English-speaking, educated white men. For those that did not meet such requirements, policies and legislation were created to maintain the status quo initiated by these politicians in 1867. As a result, many groups of people have been systemically and legally discriminated against in what is presently known as Canada. More specifically, for Indigenous peoples, Canadian laws have, and still do, negatively impact Indigenous movement (Tester & Kulchyski, 2011), lands (Coulthard, 2014; Wildcat, McDonald, Irlbacher-Fox, & Coulthard, 2014), inter-species relationships (Todd, 2014) education (Battiste, 2013), knowledges (Tuhaiwai Smith, 2012), histories (Donald, 2004; Napoleon, 2005), languages (Battiste, 1998), governance (Borrows, 2002; Simpson, 2014), families, societies (Vowel, 2016), and identities (Lawrence, 2003). Other racialized groups have also faced legalized discrimination in Canada: two such examples include (a) anti-Chinese sentiment manifested through the Chinese Head Tax and the 1923 *Chinese Immigration Act* (Li, 2008), and (b) distrust of Japanese Canadians following the bombing of Pearl Harbor, which resulted in their forced internment during World War II (Nakano & Chan, 2012). Race was not the only social identifier used to lawfully discriminate against groups of people: gender-based rights were also regulated by law. It was illegal for women to participate in federal electoral processes for over fifty years following Confederation. (White) women became eligible to vote federally in 1918 (Elections Canada, 2016), but these rights did not extend to all women: it was not until 1960 that status First Nations women (and men) had the legal right to vote when sections of 14(2) of the *Canada Elections Act* were repealed (Leslie, 2016). Though governmental discourses around Canada have long constructed it as a peaceful, accepting, and welcoming nation (Mackey, 2002, 2012, 2016; Maynard, 2017), discrimination and oppression are unmistakably structured within the institutions that make up Canada – even with the introduction of antidiscrimination law.

The *Racial Discrimination Act*—passed in Ontario in 1844—prohibited the “public display of signs, symbols or other representations that expressed racial or religious intolerance” (Mackintosh, 1982, p. 8). The *Saskatchewan Bill of Rights*, passed three years later, disallowed “discrimination based on accommodation, employment, land sales, education and business on the basis of race, creed, religion, colour, ethnic or national origin” (Mackintosh, 1982, p. 8). In 1977 the Canadian government passed Bill C-72—the *Canadian Human Rights Act (CHRA)*. Though similar laws had been passed by the provinces and territories in prior years, the *CHRA* was the first federal anti-discrimination law in Canada. This law banned discrimination based on “race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, marital status, or conviction for which a pardon had been granted,” and could be applied to employment; the delivery

<sup>1</sup> This subheading comes from the song “Disparity by Design” by Rise Against.

“of services, facilities or accommodations customarily available to the general public”; and “the provision of commercial premises or residential accommodation” (Mackintosh, 1982, p. 81). According to both federal and provincial laws it is illegal to discriminate; however, many groups of people in Canada endure oppression as a result of the legacies of Canadian state formation (Maynard, 2017; Thobani, 2015).

Black activist and author Robyn Maynard (2017) identified the ongoing construction of black people as “criminal, dangerous and unwanted” (p. 10), as contributing to overrepresentation of children in government care, school push-out rates, and incarceration. Women are paid less than men (Boudarbat & Connolly, 2013; Statistics Canada, 2016), with racialized women being paid less than their white peers (Block & Galabuzi, 2011; Conference Board of Canada, 2017). Moreover, women report higher incidences of violent crime and sexual assault (Statistics Canada, 2016). While sexual minorities have been included as a category under the *CHRA* since a 1996 amendment, queer individuals often face homophobic taunts, bullying, and violence – particularly as school-age children (Taylor & Peter, 2011; Peter, Taylor, & Chamberland, 2015). Likewise, the Canadian Senate recently passed Bill C-16 in order to add “gender identity and gender expression to the list of prohibited grounds of discrimination” under the *CHRA* (Parliament of Canada, 2017, para. 1); yet, some cis<sup>2</sup> people purposefully target transgender children and adults with harassment, bullying, and violence (Bauer, Scheim, Pyne, Travers, & Hammond, 2015; Moody, Fuks, Peláez, & Smith, 2015; Taylor & Peter, 2011). Relatedly, since demographic statistics collection relies on the categories of “male” and “female,” gender nonconforming persons are continually stigmatized through legal means.<sup>3</sup> Lastly, people with disabilities are also protected by law according to the *CHRA*, but scholars (Shier, Graham, & Jones, 2009; Vick, 2014) document their frequent lack of access to employment.

Serving as a minute number of examples among many, the lived experiences cited above illustrate the ways in which oppression is part of Canadian society. These multiple, interconnected socio-political structures of submission and domination—what Schüssler Fiorenza (2002) termed *kyriarchy*—that impact historically Othered populations are experienced by many graduate students in Canadian faculties of education. As junior scholars, one way we can utilize anti-oppressive praxis is through writing theses, dissertations, and articles that disrupt, challenge, and resist common-sense notions of the way things are. In gifting our experiences to the world through our words, we can disseminate ideas and discourses that challenge the kyriarchal norms of Canadian society. In so doing, we are writing resistance.

Even objects go mad  
I know what I want, I know what I need  
And you say faultable, but I say there’s nothing wrong with me  
“Meathead” by War on Women

Don’t let them break you.  
Don’t let them tell you who you are....  
Push back, push back, push back,  
With every word and every breath.  
“Bamboo Bones” by Against Me!

## Writing Resistance

Fighting oppression is work. For some of us, this labour comes from learning to respect historically marginalized histories and knowledges. Cochran-Smith (1995, 2000, 2003) called this *unlearning*, or the process by which we challenge what is seen as “normal” or “how things are”; it is also how we “confront the systems of privilege and oppression found within society” (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018, p. 167). For others, unlearning is engaged with by pushing back against those whose ideologies are bounded in xenophobia, violence, and hate. This happens in discussions and conversations while teaching, engaging in academic pursuits, and at the dinner table. For others still, the effort that comes with resisting oppression comes from simply existing as a living, breathing, human presence. Sometimes, it is all of these all at once.

<sup>2</sup> Someone who is cis is a person who is not trans: a cisgender person identifies as the sex they were assigned at birth (Johnson, 2013).

<sup>3</sup> Statistics Canada will be offering “please specify” as a third option for the next census (Grant, 2018, para. 2). Relatedly, Newfoundland and Ontario have recently begun to offer birth certificates with gender-neutral identifiers (Dearing, 2017; Kilpatrick, 2018).

As a form of anti-oppressive labour, writing resistance encourages us to work from intersectional perspectives. Explaining the idea of *intersectionality*, Black legal scholar Kimberle Crenshaw (1989) described the way different parts of our identity impact how we are viewed and accepted (or not) by the world (see also: Cho, Crenshaw Williams, & McCall, 2013). For me, “a highly educated, straight white dis/abled<sup>4</sup> ciswoman, who is a colonizer on Indigenous lands” (Lorenz, 2017, p. 82), this means that although I am privileged (educated, straight, white, cis, settler), I also contend with some aspects of oppression (gender, ability). Naming the different parts of who I am in such a way in academic writing is a means to resist the kyriarchal nation-state that does not have my best interests in mind. Consequently, this understanding of myself has not always been this articulate, nor has this perception of my identity always been rooted in this terminology – it is something I came to learn.

Likewise, I did not always recognize how much of my identity was tied to where I lived and where I am from. “*Who* you think [you] are cannot be separated from *where* you are” (emphasis in original; Donald & Krahn, 2014, p. 123): that part of yourself is something you always carry with you even if it is not at the forefront of your mind. To think of it in another way, when you meet new people or when you travel, you are inevitably asked “where are you from?” That place—though it may change over the years—is always connected to your sense of who you are and is part of your life’s story. Until I started my PhD I resided in what is presently known as Ontario: there I lived within the boundaries of Sewatokwa’tshera’t territory<sup>5</sup> and on unceded Algonquin territory.<sup>6</sup> Presently, I live about five blocks from what was once Papaschase Reserve #136 in amiskwaciwâskahikan.<sup>7</sup> Like others living in what is currently called Edmonton, I have specific rights and obligations as a settler due to the signing of Treaty Six. These privileges and responsibilities extend elsewhere when visiting other treaty territories and unceded lands within the borders of the Canadian nation-state.

I always thought if you want to change the world  
You have to start with yourself  
“No Borders, No Nations” by Anti-Flag

I refuse to ever hold my tongue  
Kneel and bow won’t be silenced by the fear of death  
Until there’s nothing left  
To live for to die fighting  
The will of a new dawn rising  
No more, no less  
Bring it on, I stand defiant  
“Heads Will Roll” by boysetsfire

## Living Resistance Through Writing

Common Canadian settler discourse on treaties implies that Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples benefit equally from treaties (Epp, 2008). This is not the case; as Anishinaabe legal scholar John Borrows (2017) argued, “if an Aboriginal or treaty right does not have a connection to a pre-European practice, it will not receive constitutional protection” (p. 115). More simply, if Indigenous understandings of rights and law are not connected to settler or European legal practice, they are not likely to be safeguarded within Canadian legal systems. One example of this is how Papaschase Reserve #136 was purposefully and knowingly eliminated by colonial administrators over the span of 11 years.

With his brother Tahkoots, Chief Papaschase signed an adhesion to Treaty Six on August 21 1877 (Miller, 2011), about a year following the signings in Fort Pitt and Fort Carlton. Despite this, three tactics were employed by the Federal Government and its employees to eliminate the band. First, in 1880, Indian Agent T. P. Wadsworth knowingly

<sup>4</sup> I am using dis/abled to identify myself but not people with disabilities in general: “First, the slash operates as a means of disrupting the detrimental notion that to be disabled is to be in some way ‘less than’ someone who is not. Second, the slash acts as a visual marker that identifies the ways in which my ability levels may be impacted by any number of other factors” (Lorenz, 2017, p. 82).

<sup>5</sup> Sewatokwa’tshera’t is the Kanien’kéha (Mohawk language) word for Dish With One Spoon, a treaty agreement between the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabeg which ensured the peaceful sharing of land and resources in the Great Lakes area.

<sup>6</sup> This is presently known as Ottawa.

<sup>7</sup> Papaschase nehiyaw education scholar Dwayne Donald (2004) translates amiskwaciwâskahikan to “Beaver Hills,” or “Beaver Hills House” in nehiyawewin (Cree language); this place is currently called Edmonton.

miscalculated the size of the reserve and fabricated a new band that included some Papaschase band members; he called this group the “Edmonton Stragglers,” asserting they were just loitering in the area (Miller, 2011). Second, due in part to the threat of starvation at the time, many members of the band took scrip<sup>8</sup> in 1886, including Chief Papaschase (Goyette & Jakeway Roemmich, 2004; Miller, 2011). Since taking scrip meant revoking treaty Indian status, and non-status Indians were not allowed on a reserve, the band no longer had a governing structure (Miller, 2011). Fenwick (2004) called this “death by scrip” because it eliminated the “benefits” the Papaschase Cree had as status Indians. In other words, this was a way the Canadian government used to eliminate Indigenous identity (Downey, 2017; Tuck & McKenzie, 2015). Finally, on November 19, 1888, the reserve land was surrendered to the Crown (Goyette & Jakeway Roemmich, 2004; Miller, 2011); according to the Canadian federal government that was the day the Papaschase ceased to exist.<sup>9</sup>

The Canadian, Alberta, and Edmonton governments “painted over” the story of the Papaschase Cree because their story “was not considered to be a useful or viable portrayal of the new brand of Canadian society that was emerging” (Donald, 2004, p. 23). With Indigenous histories and memories beginning to “show through in the official history of Canada, conceptual holes in the historical narratives have become obvious, and this has caused many to look more closely to see what has been missed” (Donald, 2004, p. 23). Telling these stories—peeling “back the layers of memory” (Donald, 2004, p. 23) that have been covered by colonialism—is a way of writing resistance within a particular decolonial framework.

In their well-known and oft-cited article “Decolonization is not a Metaphor,” Unangax education scholar Eve Tuck and settler ethnic studies scholar K. Wayne Yang (2012) advised that in order to truly decolonize, we must actively engage in processes that make change. Some of these are encapsulated within unlearning paradigms: actions, policies, practices, and others challenge the normative assumptions of the status quo while confronting the ways oppression and privilege manifest in our world (Cochran-Smith, 1995, 2003). For the *Canadian Journal of New Scholars in Education* in particular, one of the ways to counter kyriarchal norms is to make space for perspectives, ideas, histories, and knowledges—and the authors that are putting them into words—that continue to be suppressed.

The authors in this special issue are finding ways to question the way things are and offer alternatives and insights into other possibilities. The authors are using the power of the written word to address the discords between Confucian education and Communicative Language Teaching; the enduring colonial norms within education systems in the UK, the U.S., and Canada; the ways the Walking With Our Sisters memorial exhibit challenges normative narratives of Canadian history; the ongoing white settler colonial imperialism of the professoriate; the development of alternative mental health strategies for gay male youth; and the importance of Mi’kmaw knowledges have to Mi’kmaw, Indigenous, and non-Indigenous readers within the education profession and beyond. These assessments recognize in their own ways that “neither knowledge nor the act of teaching is neutral or apolitical. What counts as knowledge, and how privileged knowledge is fostered and assessed, is largely promoted as natural, normal, and ‘common sense’” (Tuck & Gorewski, 2016, p. 203).

An open door another chance for you to start again  
You live and then you learn the hard way through it all  
“You’re Not 23 Anymore” by Mobina Galore

## Overview of the English Contents of the Special Issue

I am thrilled with the manuscripts that have been published in this Special Issue, and how the authors interpreted the “Pedagogies of Resistance” theme. These five articles and one book review are a welcome addition to graduate educational scholarship in Canada, and I am pleased to include them alongside the eight previous volumes of *CJNSE*. Like their predecessors, these texts give the reader much to think over in terms of who they are, where they are, and the ways they can choose to engage in different pedagogies.

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<sup>8</sup> Scrip Commissions were used by the Department of the Interior to eliminate what Andersen (2014) explained as “‘half-breed’ claims to ‘Indian’ title” (p. 40). Métis signatories of scrip were granted land or money for signing these agreements; these were administered by the government in ways that were inconsistent, deceitful, and did not consider Métis kinship and social norms (Andersen, 2014, citing Tough, 1996, 1999).

<sup>9</sup> The descendants of the Papaschase band would argue otherwise.

Yan Gao (University of Victoria) offers insight into Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) practices in China in “Localizing CLT: A Case Study of a Western-Trained Chinese EFL Teacher at a Chinese University.” Employing a case study approach grounded in Knowledge-Base of Language Teacher Education and Glocalization, Gao provides the context of English as a Foreign Language teaching in China and the resistance that CLT encounters as an imported pedagogy. In her analysis, Gao argues that as a Western-based method, CLT can be utilized in China effectively, so long as it is incorporated with traditional teaching practices and methods in a flexible and strategic way.

Laura McKinley (York University) assesses the ethical and pedagogical implications of a white settler attending the Walking With Our Sisters installation – a travelling memorial display that honours missing and murdered Indigenous women. “A Pedagogy of Walking With Our Sisters” considers McKinley’s own experience of the exhibit, and describes how the installation acts as a pedagogical intervention to official state narratives and the teaching of difficult knowledges. McKinley’s research considers the ways in which accountability, embodiment, and vulnerability as well as the affective and visual forces of the installation work as a way to consider social justice education while simultaneously critiquing the gendered and racial violence of settler colonialism.

Rabia G. Mir (University of British Columbia) weaves a story of formal educational contexts maintaining epistemic coloniality in “Migrations, Transformations, and Getting to Home: A Theoretical and Personal Reflection.” Using narrative inquiry, Mir outlines the ways her educational experiences in the United Kingdom, the United States, and Canada have demonstrated how colonial practices remain part of systems of education. Through assessing these experiences, Mir engages in epistemic disobedience, thereby challenging the normative practices of colonialism within education.

Zuhra Abawi (OISE/University of Toronto) propounds the ways in which current university faculty demographics do not reflect those of increasingly racialized and Indigenous student population. Applying elements of Critical Race Theory and Tribal Critical Race Theory in her analysis, Abawi argues that these demographic trends are related to white settler colonial imperialism found within higher education institutions. Ultimately, while problematizing “lip service” commitments to equity and inclusion policies, Abawi suggests that without strategic representation guidelines, solidarity-building practices, the university cannot be rebuilt in a way that uplifts marginalized persons.

Jacky Chan (Lakehead University) explores the role traditional martial arts practices can have in maintaining gay male youth mental health in “School-Based Karate-Do: Supporting the Well-Being of Gay Male Youth.” In this paper, Chan problematizes the ways in which the Ultimate Fighting Championship organization has utilized hegemonically masculine traits in such a way that the philosophical origins and well-being practices of karate-do have been eliminated. Recognizing that gay male youth often face mental health concerns as a result of heteronormativity, homophobia, and hegemonic masculinity, Chan advocates for school-based karate-do programming as part of well-being strategies in Canadian schools.

Adrian Downey (University of New Brunswick) offers a book review of Mi’kmaw education scholar Marie Battiste’s edited collection *Visioning a Mi’kmaw Humanities: Indigenizing the Academy*. In the review, Downey provides three conclusions. First, the volume is an important resource for education and other related fields (e.g. Native Studies, and social sciences and humanities disciplines). Second, the collection provides examples of how to do ethical research *with* Indigenous communities. Lastly, Downey stresses that the work is of critical importance to Mi’kmaw junior scholars since the Mi’kmaw authors within the book provide a theoretical base that is rooted in Mi’kmaw knowledges, landscapes, and stories.

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