

## Editorial: Negotiating Settler Colonialism, Activism, and Emerging Scholarly Identities

Casey Burkholder, McGill University, Canada

*Abstract: Inspired by Indigenous water and land protectors in Standing Rock (ND) and Muskrat Falls (NL), as well as her new identity as soon-to-be 'parent', the editor suggests that issues of activism and identity are intertwined in the ways in which the political and academic lives of new scholars are developed during their training in Canadian post-secondary institutions. The editor also presents an overview of the five articles in this Fall issue related to issues of identity and rethinking educational theories in a variety of Canadian educational spaces, including: post-secondary vocational education (Gustafson), physical education programs and models-based practices (Baker), exploring feminisms in educational contexts (Syme Anderson), exploring academic discourse socialization in post-secondary institutions (Vasilopoulos), and a reflection on theories surrounding adolescent motivation in Quebec's educational context (Gaudreau).*

*Keywords: Education, Identity, Settler Colonialism*

### Editorial

I am writing this editorial from unceded Wolastoqiyik and Mi'kmaq territory—Fredericton, New Brunswick—a city I have recently settled in as I anxiously await the birth of my first child. Fredericton as a territory is included in the “‘Treaties of Peace and Friendship’ which Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet) and Mi'kmaq peoples first signed with the British Crown in 1725. The treaties did not deal with surrender of lands and resources, but in fact recognized Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet) title and established the rules for what was to be an ongoing relationship between nations” (CAUT, 2016, p. 4). As I work to get things in order for this new phase of my life (new scholar/new parent), I have been thinking deeply about what it means to give birth to and raise a new settler in the context of ‘reconciliation’. I have also been thinking about the connections between scholarly identities and the physical spaces—both the Treated and unceded lands—where we, as new scholars, practice these identities. Patrick Wolfe (2006) has argued that “land is life—or, at least, land is necessary for life. Thus contests for land can be—indeed often are—contests for life” (p. 387). We have seen these “contests for life” playing out in relation to the critical work by Indigenous water and land protectors in [Standing Rock](#) (ND) and [Muskrat Falls](#) (NL) and in activism related to land/bodies/consent by groups such as the [Native Youth Sexual Health Network](#), the [Women's Earth Alliance](#), and the [Defenders of the Land](#).

In 2002, Marie Battiste and her colleagues wrote that many education departments at Canadian universities systematically “ignore”, “reject”, “suppress”, “marginalize”, and “underutilize” Indigenous ways of knowing (Battiste, Bell & Findley, 2002, p. 82). As new scholars working within the context of the findings from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC, 2015), I believe we must not ignore, reject, suppress, or marginalize Indigenous ways of knowing, and we must also acknowledge the place of Canadian education systems (including post-secondary institutions) in furthering settler colonialism. I believe acknowledging this complicity is necessary in thinking deeply about reconciliation.

In their blog post on settler colonialism Laura Hurwitz & Shawn Bourque (2014) argue that in settler colonialism,

the land itself is the profit. Another important concept in understanding the settler colonial system, protected and furthered by education systems—is the idea that in settler colonialism, invasion is a structure not an event. This means that settler colonialism is not just a vicious thing of the past, such as the gold rush, but exists as long as settlers are living on appropriated land and thus exists today. (para. 3)

Veracini (2011) agrees, and argues, “on the one hand, the colonial ‘encounter’ is mirrored by...a settler colonial ‘non-encounter’, a circumstance fundamentally shaped by a recurring need to disavow the presence of Indigenous ‘others’” (p. 2). This “strategic ignorance” has been taken up in the context of Canadian teacher education by Jennifer Tupper (2011) who has argued that new scholars and

faculty members must carefully consider the ways in which our own pedagogies and course content either reproduce settler identities or work to disrupt them (or in some cases both)... a more challenging aspect of this work requires focus on the “settler” problem and the naming of strategic ignorance when it is used by students (and colleagues). (para. 29)

Recently, in 2016, the Canadian Association for University Teachers (CAUT) published a [Guide to Acknowledging Traditional Territories](#) for universities across the country, and many folks working within post-secondary institutions are engaging in territorial acknowledgements during conferences and events across the country. At the same time that these decolonizing measures are being implemented, I am left wondering: What does it mean to be a new scholar and an activist who will be looking to work and make changes within the institutions that continue to bolster the settler state? How might new scholars navigate the political issues that matter most to them and for me?: Indigenous rights, ethical pre-service teacher education (acknowledging the peoples, lands, languages, and stories, too often absent from curricular narratives), land/bodies/media/consent, and ethnic minority educational rights in Hong Kong and elsewhere. These are inherently political concerns—each linked to the ways I understand schools and education systems to be agents that promote state values. How might Canadian graduate education programs address decolonizing research, teaching, and activism, and how might new scholars take up these issues in their work in the spirit of reconciliation?

In the Fall 2016 Issue of the CJNSE—my final as managing editor—ruminations on identity, educational theories and frameworks are taken up in diverse spaces in each of the issue’s contributions. Theories around existing and desired educational theories and practices are taken up in each of the issue’s contributions, including: challenging discipline-specific identities (Gustafson; Baker), thinking critically about theories and frameworks, such as feminisms (Syme Anderson) in historical and contemporary understandings of educational contexts, academic discourse socialization (Vasilopoulos) in post-secondary institutions, and through the application of self-determination theories within the educational context of Quebec (Gaudreau).

### **Overview of the Issue's Contributions (English)**

The first article in this issue is Barbara Gustafson’s (University of Saskatchewan) mixed-methods research study, ““Nailing It Across the Board”: Negotiating Identity as Trades Teachers”, which explores the interconnected nature between post-secondary vocational educators’ identities as both tradespeople and teachers. Gustafson argues that her participants saw teaching as an important facet of their work as journey-people—experts in their trades.

The second contribution, “Exploring International Student Academic Discourse Socialization in Canadian Universities through a Deleuzian Lens” comes from Eugenia Vasilopoulos (University of Ottawa). Vasilopoulos critiques the notion that academic discourse socialization takes place in a uniform fashion, and she employs Deleuzian theories surrounding “becoming,” “assemblage,” and “language,” to explore diversity within academic discourse socialization for international students in Canadian post-secondary institutions.

The third article, Joëlle Gaudreau’s (Université de Montréal), “Adolescents’ Motivational Support in School: A Self-determination Theory Perspective.” Taking a Quebec-centered inquiry, Gaudreau explores how teachers, administrators and educational policies can best support young people’s motivation within schools. In this examination, Gaudreau argues that self-determination theory can be used to support existing challenges identified within the Quebec school system, including relatively high dropout rates and lower levels of academic literacy practices amongst its adult populations.

The fourth contribution, a critical literature review by Heather Syme Anderson (University of Manitoba), “Feminisms in Canadian Educational Contexts” looks to feminist theorizing (feminist empiricism, feminist standpoint, and postmodern feminisms) and feminist conceptualizations of gender inequality (liberal feminist, socialist feminist, radical feminist, and queer theory) to explore how feminism operates differently in educational contexts. This piece calls on researchers and practitioners to explore a

nuanced understanding of feminisms to understand historical educational practices, and to move toward gender equality in schools and society.

The final contribution in the issue is Kellie Baker's (Memorial University) thoughtful literature review, "Models-Based Practice: Learning From and Questioning the Existing Canadian Physical Education Literature" critiques traditional physical education practices, which are seen to promote competition to the exclusion of 'lower skilled' participants. Models-based practices, by contrast, makes space for student-centered learning, values the development of affective, cognitive, and psychomotor skills, and has been argued to encourage the development of students' healthy and active lifestyles, both inside and outside of the physical education classroom.

## Acknowledgements

I have had such a wonderful and lesson-filled time in my role as Managing Editor of the CJNSE, owing to the contributions, guidance, and assistance that I have received from a dedicated team of new scholars. As I embark on my new role as a parent, I leave the journal in the very capable hands of Joelle Nagle (Western University) who will take on the Managing Editor (English) position in January 2017, with the support of Danielle Lorenz (University of Alberta) who will move into the Associate Editor position. Working with Joelle has been a true pleasure, and I know that the CJNSE will continue to grow and foster the work of new scholars under their capable direction. I would also like to give special thanks for the wonderful collaboration and willingness to work between our official languages with Nancy Allen, the former Managing Editor (French), Ugo Collard-Fortin the new Managing Editor (French), and Andréanne Gagné (French) for the CJNSE/RCJCE. The CJNSE is made possible due to the volunteer labour and dedication from a number of graduate students and new academics from across Canada. I would like to thank a number of these contributors for their assistance with this publication: Sarah Cashmore (University of Toronto), Dr. Alison Crump (McGill University), Chloe Garcia (McGill University), Olga Kharytonava (Western University), Danielle Lorenz (University of Alberta), Joelle Nagle-Crestan (Western University), Selvi Roy (University of Prince Edward Island), and Constantinos Yanniris (McGill University).

## REFERENCES

- Battiste, M., Bell, L., & Findlay, L. M. (2002). Decolonizing education in Canadian universities: An interdisciplinary, international, indigenous research project. *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, 26(2), 82-95.
- Canadian Association for University Teachers. (2016). CAUT guide to acknowledging traditional territory.
- Hurwitz, L. & Bourque, S. (2014, June 6). Settler colonialism primer. [Web log post]. Retrieved from <https://unsettlingamerica.wordpress.com/2014/06/06/settler-colonialism-primer/>
- Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2015). Honouring the truth, reconciling for the future: Summary of the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. Retrieved from [http://www.myrobust.com/websites/trcinstitution/File/Reports/Executive\\_Summary\\_English\\_Web.pdf](http://www.myrobust.com/websites/trcinstitution/File/Reports/Executive_Summary_English_Web.pdf)
- Tupper, J. (2011). Disrupting ignorance and settler identities: The challenges of preparing beginning teachers for Treaty education. *In education*, 17(3). Retrieved from <http://ined.uregina.ca/index.php/ineducation/article/view/71/409>.
- Veracini, L. (2011). Introducing: Settler colonial studies. *Settler Colonial Studies*, 1(1), 1-12.
- Wolfe, P. (2006). Settler colonialism and the elimination of the native. *Journal of Genocide Research*, 8(4), 387-409.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Casey Burkholder:** Casey Burkholder is a Ph.D. candidate at McGill University's Department of Integrated Studies in Education. Her doctoral work intersects the study of citizenship, gender, inclusion, DIY media-making (cellfilms), multiliteracies, and Social Studies education. Upon completing her role as the managing editor (English) for the Canadian Journal for New Scholars in Education in December 2016, Casey will continue to support the journal as a Senior Review Mentor, and employ the lessons learned from her time with the journal as she edits a special issue of *Language and Literacy* (Spring 2017).