

Indigenizing Philosophy on Stolen Lands: A Worry about Settler Philosophical Guardianship[1]

by Anna Cook

English Abstract

Many Canadian universities have taken heed of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's recommendations to 'Indigenize' their curricula. The worry remains, however, that the language of reconciliation is empty rhetoric that "metaphorizes" decolonization, rather than responds to the demands of Indigenous communities for self-determination and land back. This paper aims to consider what the activity of 'Indigenizing' academic philosophy (and ethics more specifically) might involve. In particular, it raises the worry that the integration of Indigenous philosophy into ethics curriculum might assimilate an understanding of "grounded normativity" into settler understandings of groundless or placeless normativity. Such an assimilation would be an operation of what Cherokee philosopher Brian Yazzie Burkhart calls "settler philosophical guardianship." For this reason, this paper contends that the work of meaningfully 'Indigenizing' philosophical curricula must first critically investigate an account of placeless normativity as a function of the settler colonial drive for expansion and elimination.

Resumen en español

Muchas universidades canadienses han hecho caso a las recomendaciones de la Comisión de la Verdad y la Reconciliación a "indigenizar" sus planes de estudio. Sin embargo, sigue la duda que el lenguaje de la reconciliación sea una retórica vacía que "metaforiza" la descolonización, en lugar de responder a las demandas de las comunidades indígenas de autodeterminación y devolución de tierras. Este artículo pretende considerar la actividad de "indigenizar" la filosofía académica, con enfoque en la ética. En particular, plantea la preocupación de que la integración de la filosofía indígena en los planes de estudio de ética asimilara una comprensión de la "normatividad fundamentada" dentro del punto de vista colonial de una normatividad sin fundamento o sin lugar. Tal asimilación sería designada por el filósofo Cherokee Brian Yazzie Burkhart como "tutela filosófica de los colonos". Por esta razón, este documento sostiene que el trabajo de "indigenizar" significativamente los planes de estudio filosóficos debe empezar con una investigación crítica de la normatividad sin lugar, entendida como una función del impulso colonial de los colonos para la expansión y la eliminación.

Resumo em português

Muitas universidades canadenses tomaram em consideração as recomendações da Comissão de Verdade e Reconciliação para 'Indigenizar' seus currículos. No entanto, a preocupação continua sendo que a linguagem da reconciliação é uma retórica vazia

que "metaforiza" a descolonização, em vez de responder às demandas das comunidades indígenas por autodeterminação e devolução de terras. Este documento visa considerar o que a atividade de 'Indigenização' da filosofia acadêmica (e da ética mais especificamente) pode envolver. Em particular, levanta a preocupação de que a integração da filosofia indígena no currículo ético possa assimilar um entendimento de "normatividade fundamentada" em entendimentos de normatividade sem fundamento ou sem lugar. Tal assimilação seria uma operação do que o filósofo Cherokee Brian Yazzie Burkhart chama de "guardião filosófico do colonizador". Por esta razão, este documento sustenta que o trabalho de "Indigenização" significativa dos currículos filosóficos deve primeiro investigar criticamente um relato da normatividade sem lugar em função do impulso colonial do colonizador para expansão e eliminação.

In Canada, after the publication of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's final report on the Indian Residential Schools, universities and town halls have been flooded with questions about how they are going to implement its ninety-four calls to action and how they are going to promote reconciliation on stolen lands.[2] Many universities have taken heed of the call to "Indigenize" their curricula.[3] The worry remains, however, that the language of reconciliation is empty rhetoric that "metaphorizes" decolonization, rather than responding to the demands of Indigenous communities for self-determination and land back.[4] For example, we might be wary of the Canadian government's language of reconciliation when it is compatible with police raids against Wet'suwet'en land defenders opposed to the Coastal GasLink Pipeline Project (which prompted the creation of the hashtag #reconciliationisdead on Twitter).[5]

This paper considers what the activity of "Indigenizing" academic philosophy (and ethics more specifically) might involve, and envisions philosophy education that is responsive and responsible to land and community.[6] As a settler[7] to the Stó:lō territory,[8] where I currently live and teach, I question what "Indigenizing" ethics might look like in the *academy*, which is itself an apparatus of colonization.[9] While I have a vested interest in learning about Indigenous philosophizing[10] in order to better understand the place where I am (and how this place informs what and how I teach), framing these efforts in terms of "Indigenization" makes it about me and *my* learning, rather than about listening to Stó:lō elders when they say "S'ólh Téméxw te it'kwelo. Xyólhmet te mekw' stám ít kwelát" [This is our land. We have to take care of everything that belongs to us].[11] In other words, I worry that the call to Indigenize philosophy ultimately serves settlers in assuaging settler guilt while leaving structural settler-colonial power intact. This echoes Andrea Sullivan-Clarke's recent concerns that land acknowledgments often become rote and are performed to mark the beginning of the meeting "before 'the real content' gets underway."[12] While adding land acknowledgments to the beginning of university events is a helpful reminder to settlers that they are on unceded territory and that Indigenous nations have had a long

relationship with these lands, the acknowledgment falls far short of returning land to those communities and nations.

In particular, I contend that the integration of Indigenous philosophy into ethics curriculum might assimilate an understanding of “grounded normativity” into settler understandings of groundless or placeless normativity.[13] Such assimilation would be an operation of what Brian Burkhart calls “settler philosophical guardianship.”[14] For this reason, I contend that the work of meaningfully “Indigenizing” philosophical curricula must first critically investigate an account of groundless normativity as a function of the settler-colonial drive for expansion and elimination.

Indigenous Philosophizing and Locality

A helpful starting point in articulating an account of the role of land in Indigenous philosophizing is Vine Deloria, Jr., and Daniel Wildcat’s 2001 *Power and Place: Indian Education in America*. They define Indigenous philosophy as philosophy “of a place.”[15] The emphasis of being “of a place” puts forward an ontology in which place, defined as “the relationship of things to each other,” is an agent.[16] This means that place, or land, is an active participant in the life of the community. Deloria puts it plainly: “[P]ower and place produce personality.”[17] This means that agents or persons are the intersection of power and place, where power names a kind of motivating force and place names the complex network of relations that make agents what they are. A particular person, for example, is *generated* by a particular place. In this respect, Wildcat affirms that identity —“who one is”— is emergent from place. Sonny McHalsie’s (Naxaxalhts’i) research on how Stó:lō placenames reveal Stó:lō understandings of place and relationships with land supports this claim.[18] The Katzie story of white sturgeon, in which the descendants of the daughter of the first man created at Pitt Lake, highlights this connection.[19]

Burkhart expands on Deloria’s insistence on the central role of land to Indigenous philosophizing in terms of locality, which he defines as “being-from-the-land, knowing-from-the-land, and meaning-from-the-land.”[20] In a similar vein, Glen Coulthard uses the term “grounded normativity” to name the ethical framework that emerges from “Indigenous land-connected practices and long-standing experiential knowledge that inform and structure our ethical engagements with the world and our relationships with human and nonhuman others over time.”[21] Land here refers to systems of relationships between “people and animals, rocks and trees, lakes and rivers, and so on.”[22] Leanne Betasamosake Simpson affirms that grounded normativity does not have a predetermined structure or conclusion, but is generated and “maintained from deep engagement with Indigenous processes that are inherently physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual.”[23] Since land is a connection of relationships, a land-based ethics is one that emerges from the particular obligations to the particular relationships in place. For example, a First Salmon Ceremony shows honor and respect to the salmon for giving its life to nourish the Stó:lō people. Iolehawk Laura Buker asserts that

this ceremony reflects “an indigenous epistemology towards a basic truth: sharing is a value, a personal commitment to sustaining a community and a cultural resilience.”[24]

An exploration of land as a “system of reciprocal social relations and ethical practices” provides a relational understanding of self and morality.[25] In turn, this calls for an awareness of one’s place in a web of different connections with human and non-human parties. For this reason, Robin Wall Kimmerer calls for a shift in language to hear better and see the animacy of the land.[26] The shift to viewing non-human living beings as kin can help to see them as fellow moral agents enmeshed in relations of interdependence. The recognition of my interdependence motivates my responsibility to foster reciprocal relationships. A relational understanding of the self whereby relationships are ontologically primary means that morality “can be understood as a feature of *relationships* rather than founded on the value of things.”[27] Kyle Whyte puts it succinctly: “As responsible agents, a range of human and nonhuman entities, understood as relatives of one another, have caretaking roles within their communities and networks.”[28] The emphasis on reciprocal responsibility teaches one to live in relation “to other people and nonhuman life forms in a profoundly nonauthoritarian, nondominating, nonexploitive manner.”[29] This means that moral obligations do not arise from the appreciation of the intrinsic value of a person, but from the recognition of how we are embedded in relationships that call for reciprocity and respect.

Simpson illustrates a model of grounded normativity through her turn to land-based education, which emphasizes the resurgence of Indigenous traditions, governance, and connection to land through the process of recovering and revitalizing the Nishnaabeg language, Creation Stories, and relationships with Elders. Simpson proposes that a return to land, as opposed to efforts to “Indigenize the academy,” can nurture a generation of people who can think “within the land and have tremendous knowledge and connection to the land [to aki].”[30] The model of land-based education does not aim for reconciliation through the tokenized inclusion of Indigenous epistemologies within settler education but seeks to revitalize Indigenous communities to work toward decolonization.[31]

Simpson uses Nishnaabeg stories to reclaim land as pedagogy, in which “stories direct, inspire and affirm [an] ancient code of ethics.”[32] She recounts the story “Kwezens Makes a Lovely Discovery,” a retelling of a traditional Michi Saagig Nishnaabeg story she learned from her Elder Doug Williams. It is a story of a young girl learning from a red squirrel (*Ajidamoo*) about licking sap from maple trees (*Ninaatigoog*), in a context of loving support from family. The story highlights more than the belief that Kwezens learns *from* the land, but that she also learns *with* the land. The land is an agent that can teach Kwezens once she properly acknowledges her reciprocal responsibilities. She knows to give tobacco (*semaa*) to the tree in thanks before collecting the sap in order to build a relationship based on “mutual respect, reciprocity, and caring.”[33] Importantly, the “context is the curriculum and land, aki, is the context.”[34] For Simpson, Kwezens embodies the core teachings and philosophies of Michi Nishnaabeg culture and, as such, is a model and leader of resurgence.[35] This

story is not from a distant pre-colonial past, but rather envisions a model of Nishnaabeg morality in the past, present, and future.

Kwezens offers tobacco to the maple tree in recognition that she is in a relationship of mutuality and reciprocity. This conception of ethical obligation grounded in relationships with land is at odds, however, with many understandings of normativity in the Western philosophical canon. Whereas Western ethical theory understands a distinction between normative ethics and applied ethics, where ethical theories can be brought to bear and applied to particular problems (such as concerns about animal welfare, euthanasia, or the allocation of scarce health resources), the model of grounded normativity flips this paradigm on its head. Instead of applying theory to help solve problems on the ground, it attends to relationships to and with land in order to form a basis of normative evaluation. Indeed, even the idea that one can *apply* an ethical theory to any given problem reflects a meta-ethical position that a theory can, and should, transcend its context—in short, that the theory is *placeless* such that it can be applied to the problems of any place.

Groundless Normativity as Settler Philosophical Guardianship

Patrick Wolfe describes settler colonialism as a logic of elimination, whereby it functions to eliminate Indigenous peoples to gain access to land. One technique of elimination is the use of the settler guardianship principle, which Burkhart defines as the “legal and political doctrine that settler states have the right and obligation to protect Native people and Native tribes, particularly from themselves.”[36] This principle has been used to justify laws prohibiting ceremonies, such as the potlatch and ghost dances, which were banned in Canada until 1951.[37] Burkhart shows how this guardianship doctrine operates in academic *philosophy* as well. He uses “settler philosophical guardianship” to refer to the act of assimilating and translating Indigenous philosophizing into the “realm of proper civilized philosophy in contrast to what is seen as mere religious thought or mythopoetics.”[38] In other words, settler philosophical guardianship determines the way Indigenous ways of knowing are met with radical suspicion and only accepted to the extent that they are translated into dominant settler philosophical frameworks.[39] This guardianship is mainly done with good intentions, as the superiority of Western theory is experienced as natural and necessary in settler societies.[40]

One manifestation of the settler philosophical guardianship principle is the attempt to assimilate an account of locality and grounded normativity into one of delocality and groundless normativity. Grand Chief George Manuel states that settler-colonial expansion has led to a struggle between two incommensurable understandings of land.[41] Burkhart draws the distinction as one between land as *object*—of “land as a mere object that only has meaning or value in relation to people”—and land as *kinship*—of “land as the relational ground of kinship.”[42] For Burkhart, these different

understandings of land lead to differing conceptions of people—“the idea of people as floating free from the land and the idea of people as fundamentally a part of the land.”[43]

According to Burkhart, coloniality attempts to delocalize locality through the “unmooring of the roots of being, meaning, and knowing from out of the land itself, or the attempted breaking apart of being-from-the-land and knowing-from-the-land.”[44] Delocality articulates a *groundless* framework of meaning, knowing, and being, insofar as it aims to understand meaning, knowing, and being as “floating free from the land.”[45] This occurs through the attempt to obscure Indigenous locality in order to remold Indigenous land as a new (and delocalized) Europe, as a new England or new France, for example.

Following the settler-colonial logic of elimination, land is remade and reconceptualized as a mere object that only has meaning or value in relation to people, conceived to be floating free from the land. This view reconfigures land and people as resources to be extracted, rather than as relatives to be respected.[46] As such, epistemological, ontological, and ethical relationships with land other than as property are deemed “pre-modern and backward.”[47] We see this at work, for example, in the legal doctrine of *terra nullius* that justified settler-colonial expansion by defining a populated land as belonging to no one.

Burkhart’s concept of settler philosophical guardianship highlights the need to question efforts to “Indigenize” ethics that do not also challenge a groundless account of normativity. For example, the integration of Indigenous philosophizing with a Kantian understanding of moral autonomy upholds a groundless account of normativity. In that case, it does not address differences in ontologies and performs this settler philosophical guardianship. In this respect, any attempt to integrate Indigenous philosophizing *into* Western ethical theory must pay attention to whether the act of integration works to obscure and delocalize an account of grounded normativity.[48]

In order to challenge the settler philosophical guardianship, settlers first need to see locality through the “blanket of European delocalized locality that attempts to hide [...] the original and true locality of this land.”[49] Burkhart names “epistemic locality” as the framework that creates an opening to see delocality as a function of the settler-colonial logic of elimination. Simply put, this epistemic locality shows how delocality aims to cover over the relationship between morality and the land by putting forward a groundless normativity in which values arise from a consideration of universal, abstract principles. If normativity is groundless, it can go anywhere. Likewise, if the land is unowned, the settler can go anywhere.

Burkhart affirms that injecting “even a bit of locality” into conversations about morality can create new ideas and new relationships to the land.[50] Most importantly, this works to “chip away at the naturalness of the colonial attitude of delocality.”[51] The acknowledgment of locality requires settler educators to form intimate relationships with land. This includes hearing origin stories (when invited) and learning about the histories

of settler-colonial policies that have severed Indigenous communities' connections with the land, as well as their ongoing resilience in the face of such policies. Reading the story of Kwezens learning from and with the land in an ethics classroom, for example, can challenge and unsettle taken-for-granted assumptions of morality as arising from abstract and universal concepts. The moral obligation Kwezens has toward the tree does not arise through an abstract theory that is extended to include non-humans, but from an understanding of morality that is relational and non-anthropocentric from the start. Crucially, the meaning of Kwezens' experience is not "legitimated" by referring to Western thinkers or the academy but is instead determined by her in relationship with the land. Considerations of categorical imperatives do not enter the conversation. A groundless conception of morality, for a moment, floats away and is out of view.

Implications: So, What Does This Mean?

The integration of Indigenous philosophizing in ethics curriculum calls for a radical re-understanding and reimagining of the very practice of ethical inquiry. Understanding land as both teacher and source of normativity challenges fundamental assumptions of Western ethical theory. The very distinction between theory and application collapses since theory emerges from a particular place, from particular relationships. This means that common distinctions between meta-ethics, normative ethics, and applied ethics must be re-evaluated, as well as divisions between ontology, ethics, epistemology, and politics.

Indigenous land-based education is not only helpful for thinking through particular problems (such as the dwindling sockeye salmon population due to the warming of the Fraser River, or the need to protect sacred sites, such as Lightning Rocks that sit in the path of the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion) but also offers a productive and enriching understanding of the very source of normativity.[52] It unsettles the desire of Western normative theory for abstraction and universalization. From the perspective of grounded normativity, a practice gets its normative force by maintaining, not transcending, contact and relationships with land.

An understanding of being, knowledge, and morality as fundamentally tied to land can be challenging. However, since it requires an intimate relationship to land (such as the one Kwezens has with the squirrel and the maple tree), delocality has been normalized in the academy (and in philosophy, more specifically). In addition to the difficulty of challenging taken-for-granted assumptions about what ethics curriculum should include, an understanding of oneself as "floating free from the land" can prevent settlers from forming relationships with land grounded in reciprocity. For this reason, the activity of challenging internalized settler colonialism involves a critical interrogation of the desire for abstract and universal groundings of normativity. According to Chief Luther Standing Bear, the attempt to control and master the land creates a settler worldview that is "reluctant to seek understanding and achieve adjustment in a new and significant environment into which it has so recently come." [53] In other words, the need

to dominate the land prevents the settler from “finding an epistemological and moral home on this land.”[54] A centering of grounded normativity disrupts Western philosophy’s ambitions for a groundless account of the world. It reveals that this ambition only serves to justify, and thus evade ethical responsibility for, the destruction and genocide of Indigenous nations.

So, what could “Indigenizing” philosophy or making a little space for locality mean? Here are some initial ideas: learning from Indigenous scholars and elders (which first requires hiring Indigenous scholars and elders) about the origins of the land where one lives; allowing courses in Indigenous Studies to satisfy philosophy requirements; building relationships with local Indigenous communities; moving the class *outside* of the classroom; and including storytelling as a key method of investigation.[55] In addition to these practices, we need to critically investigate the settler-colonial assumptions that remain intact within the academy and within philosophy’s own aim at placelessness.

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Notes

[1] This article will also be published in *The Pluralist*.

[2] See Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action, *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action*, July 2015, https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2015/trc/IR4-8-2015-eng.pdf

[3] See Levi Gahman and Gabrielle Legault, “Disrupting the Settler Colonial University: Decolonial Praxis and Place-Based Education in the Okanagan Valley (British Columbia),” *Capitalism Nature Socialism*, 30.1 (2019): 50-69; and Karen Ragoonaden and Lyle Mueller, “Culturally Responsive Pedagogy: Indigenizing Curriculum,” *Canadian Journal of Higher Education*, 47.2, (2017): 22-46.

[4] Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, “Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor,” *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education and Society*, 1.1 (2011): 1-40.

[5] See Pam Palmater’s explanations of the failures of the Canadian government’s actions in the name of “reconciliation”. Cf. Pam Palmater, “At Every Turn, Canada Chooses the Path of Injustice toward Indigenous Peoples,” *Macleans Magazine*, 29 Jan. 2021, www.macleans.ca/opinion/at-every-turn-canada-chooses-the-path-of-injustice-toward-indigenous-peoples/

[6] This follows Scott L. Pratt's insistence "that American philosophers *must* consider the genocide of indigenous Americans in their work," Scott L. Pratt, "So Much Has Been Destroyed": Genocide and American Philosophy," *Pluralist*, 14.1 (2019): 9.

[7] I use the term 'settler', as Chelsea Vowel does, to refer to non-Indigenous peoples living in Canada or the United States who form "the European-descended sociopolitical majority," Chelsea Vowel, *Indigenous Writes: A Guide to First Nations, Métis & Inuit Issues in Canada* (Mississauga: Highwater Press, 2016), 16. Emma Battell Lowan and Adam J. Barker further explore the meaning of settler identity, cf. Emma Battell Lowan and Adam J. Barker, *Settler: Identity and Colonialism in 21st Century Canada* (Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 2015).

[8] I am a visitor to the unceded Stó:lō territory by the powerful Fraser river (Stó:lō is a Halq'eméylem word that refers to both a river and a people). The eagles have recently finished feasting on the spawning salmon and the salmonberry shoots mark the beginning of the spring salmon run. As a new visitor to this place, I am starting to learn stories of this land, such as the draining of Semá:th Lake in the early 1900s by settlers, and the rampant sexual abuse at St. Mary's residential school, which closed in 1985. See Chad Reimer, *Before We Lost the Lake: A Natural and Human History of Sumas Valley*, Caitlin Press, 2018; and Rafferty Baker, "Reconciliation Tour' Reveals Dark History of Mission, B.C. School," *CBC News*, 25 Oct. 2016, www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/reconciliation-tour-reveals-dark-history-of-mission-b-c-school-1.3821530

[9] See Scott Morgensen, "Destabilizing the Settler Academy: The Decolonial Effects of Indigenous Methodologies," *American Quarterly*, 64.4 (2012): 805-08.

[10] Burkhart suggests the term Indigenous "philosophizing" in order to reflect philosophy as active and dynamic so that it is a "movement back to the land, regrounding our language, being, knowing, meaning, and so on back in the land," Brian Yazzie Burkhart, *Indigenizing Philosophy through the Land: A Trickster Methodology for Decolonizing Environmental Ethics and Indigenous Futures* (East Lansing: Michigan State UP, 2019), xxv.

[11] Translation by the Stó:lō Nation / Stó:lō Research & Resource Management Centre, "Man Turned to Stone." www.srrmcentre.com/StoneTxwelatse/06NoteHalq.html

[12] Andrea Sullivan-Clarke, "Relations and How Allies Acknowledge Land," *APA Newsletter on Native American and Indigenous Philosophy*, 20.1 (2020), 12.

[13] For the purposes of this paper, I use the terms "placeless" and "groundless" interchangeably.

[14] Brian Yazzie Burkhart, "The Groundedness of Normativity or Indigenous Normativity through the Land," *Comparative Metaethics: Neglected Perspectives on the Foundations of Morality*, edited by Colin Marshall (New York: Routledge, 2020), 42.

[15] Vine Deloria, Jr., and Daniel R. Wildcat, *Power and Place: Indian Education in America*, (Golden: Fulcrum Publishing, 2001), 31.

[16] *ibid.*, 22-23.

[17] *ibid.*, 23.

[18] Keith Thor Carlson, et al., editors, *Towards a New Ethnohistory: Community-Engaged Scholarship among the People of the River* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2018), xi-xii.

[19] Métis playwright Marie Clements narrativizes this origin story in her one-act play *The Girl Who Swam Forever*, Marie Clements and Nelson Gray, *Talker's Town and The Girl Who Swam Forever: Two Plays* (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 2018).

[20] Burkhart, *Indigenizing Philosophy*, xvii.

[21] Glen Coulthard, *Red Skins, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 13.

[22] *ibid.*, 61.

[23] Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, "Land as Pedagogy: Nishnaabeg Intelligence and Rebellious Transformation," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, 2.3 (201): 23.

[24] Iolehawk Laura Buker, "Walking Backwards into the Future with Our Stories: The Stó:lō Is a River of Knowledge, Haq'eméylem Is a River of Stories," PhD diss., (Simon Fraser University, 2011), 83.

[25] Matthew Wildcat, et al., "Learning from the Land: Indigenous Land-Based Pedagogy and Decolonization," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, 3. 3, (2014): ii.

[26] Robin Wall Kimmerer, "The Intelligence of Plants," *On Being with Krista Tippett*, 20 Aug. 2020, onbeing.org/programs/robin-wall-kimmerer-the-intelligence-of-plants/

[27] Burkhart, *Indigenizing Philosophy*, xxxv—emphasis added.

[28] Kyle Whyte and Chris Cuomo, "Ethics of Caring in Environmental Ethics: Indigenous and Feminist Philosophies," *The Oxford Handbook of Environmental Ethics*, edited by Stephen M Gardiner and Allen Thompson (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2016), 12.

[29] Coulthard and Simpson respond to Jared Sexton and Nandita Sharma's concerns that Indigenous commitments to land imply anti-immigrant and anti-Black sentiments. Glen Coulthard and Leanne Simpson, "Grounded Normativity/Place-Based Solidarity," *American Quarterly*, 68. 2, (2016): 254. Burkhart argues that Sexton and Sharma's critique misunderstands Indigenous people's ethical commitment to land as an authoritarian, dominating, and exclusionary "Fatherland normativity," Burkhart "Groundedness of Normativity," 40.

[30] Simpson, "Land as Pedagogy," 23.

[31] Moreover, the turn to land-based education is inherently decolonial, insofar as its primary aim is to resist land dispossession by "putting Indigenous folks back into relationship with the land," Matthew Wildcat et al., "Learning from the Land: Indigenous Land-Based Pedagogy and Decolonization," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, 3. 3, (2014): ii.

[32] Simpson, "Land as Pedagogy," 8.

[33] *ibid.*, 12.

[34] *ibid.*, 12.

[35] *ibid.*, 12-13.

[36] Burkhart, "Groundedness of Normativity," 42.

[37] Burkhart enumerates instances of the use of the guardianship principle to justify the outlawing of "the potlach ceremony, the sundance ceremony, the gourd dance ceremony, and the removal of commonly held tribal land in favor of individual allotment as private property," Burkhart, "Groundedness of Normativity," 42.

[38] *ibid.*, 42.

[39] I see this in my students' reluctance to engage with Indigenous philosophy that they consider too spiritual, or with poetry that doesn't fit a certain mold of what philosophy should look like (arguments to be evaluated!).

[40] Consider, for example, the mandate of both the United States' boarding schools and Canada's residential school policy. Capt. Richard Pratt famously stated that the goal of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School was to "kill the Indian, and Save the Man."

[41] George Manuel, *The Fourth World: An Indian Reality* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2018).

[42] Brian Yazzie Burkhart, "Indigenizing Philosophy through the Land: On the Nature of the Concept," *Political Theology*, 2 July 2020, politicaltheology.com/indigenizing-philosophy-through-the-land-on-the-nature-of-the-concept/

[43] Burkhart, *Indigenizing Philosophy*, 6.

[44] *ibid.*, xv.

[45] Burkhart, "Groundedness of Normativity," 47. An understanding of knowing-from-the-land is a stark departure from Western epistemology's aim to articulate a "view from nowhere".

[46] Daniel Wildcat, *Red Alert! Saving the Planet with Indigenous Knowledge* (Golden: Fulcrum Publishing, 2009), 64.

[47] Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, "Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education and Society*, 1.1 (2011): 5.

[48] Albert Spencer contends that pragmatist ethics, however, with its emphasis on pluralism, rejection of dualisms, and return to lived experience, can avoid some of these charges. He frames American pragmatism as a philosophy of place and draws on Lakota philosopher Robert Bunge in contending that pragmatism can "appreciate this deeper epistemological and moral connections to the land," Albert R. Spencer, *American Pragmatism: An Introduction*, (Cambridge: Polity, 2020), 221.

[49] Burkhart, *Indigenizing Philosophy*, xvii.

[50] *ibid.*, xxxiv.

[51] *ibid.*, xxxiv.

[52] Jorge Barrera, "Stó:lō First Nation Eyes Claim over Lightning Rock Site in Path of Trans Mountain," *CBC News*, 13 May 2020, www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/sumas-first-nation-lightning-rock-tmx-1.5566941

[53] Quoted in Burkhart "Groundedness of Normativity," 50.

[54] Challenging this form of domination cannot be in the domain of theory alone, however, but rather must "acknowledge and begin to resolve the legal, moral, and material processes by which I have come to be a settler on these lands, that would, at the very least, include honoring the legal commitments made in the form of treaties and making consistent the moral proclamations of the absolute value of humanity and human dignity with our treatment of Indigenous people," Burkhart, "Groundedness of Normativity," 53).

[55] See Dustin William Louie et al., "Applying Indigenizing Principles of Decolonizing Methodologies in University Classrooms," *Canadian Journal of Higher Education / Revue canadienne d'enseignement supérieur*, 47.3 (2017): 16-33.