

Decolonization Education as One Future Trend in School: Recognizing the Absence and Disengagement

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ABSTRACT

Since the West civilization has constructed "elites" as the powerful through the social and political sciences within a social structure based on world-system theory, several social justice movements, such as Black Lives Matter (BLM) and the protest vandalizing Sir Winston Churchill's statue, have delivered public messages debunking white privilege in higher education. This paper is aimed to inspire students of color, indigenous students who are seeking self-identity, and educators who are interested in education and race to recognize the challenges and meaningful pedagogies to eventually build a culturally harmonious environment in class. The analytical method would focus on illustrating the importance of decolonization in the school system by reflecting on case studies of how educators decolonize the way the subjects are presented within the classroom in Hawaii and Canada. From the education analysis under a critical theory framework, the decolonizing pedagogy in a Hawaii education institution has focused on understanding metaphors through oral storytelling to deliver the ancestry wisdom in a rich-native language immersed environment. The instructor in the Canadian music class applied pedagogy that listed both native and Western music analysis theory to expose binary elements in the current curriculum to help students recognize and embrace the diversity of analytical approaches. These decolonizing pedagogies would be helpful in the education field for supporting educational justice and equity reform in the curriculum.

Keywords: *Decolonization, Education, Case Study, Education Justice*

1. INTRODUCTION

Most education systems are established based on the Western European culture in higher education through multiple subjects, determining how people recognize and guiding ways of thinking. Shiva [1] has criticized how the economy of 1%, the wealthy elite from core country society, is twisting human cognition with hypocrisy: people mistakenly consider that resource extraction and colonization would represent essential economic progress and democrats in modern times. Nonetheless, a cosmopolitan understanding of decolonization has yet to emerge, particularly in societies of the global South and elsewhere [2], leading to abysmal and exclusionary thinking and acknowledged practices in their education and learning systems.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) suggests a novel inquiry for education that education must be about "learning to live on a planet under pressure". This

purpose would require the future education framework to pursue cultural literacy, and focus on the basis of racial respect and equal dignity. The decolonization curriculum can develop as one pedagogy in helping future generations to cooperate together with the social, economic, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development [3]. The research focuses on seeking sustainable education development under racial ethics to emphasize the importance of effectively decolonized education and discuss how school educators can integrate indigenous knowledge into school curriculum and practices.

Understanding and recognizing a discipline is constructed to a form of colonial and Eurocentric would be considered a complicated endeavor. This paragraph provides a rationale for the paper, centering on a critical theory which has been coined by Max Horkheimer in 1937 to represent the work of the Frankfurt School [4]. With this critical theory framework, the investigation of decolonization can beyond a dogma of Western-style reality that is riddled with politics, culture, economy,

and ideology of what Grosfoguel [5] calls a “global colonial power matrix” — a modern/colonial, capitalist/patriarchal world-system of intersecting global hierarchies “produced by thinkers from the North”.

This paper is outlined based on critical theory, with the following cases as examples to demonstrate how decolonization is implemented in school-based curriculum and pedagogies. The first case is from a school for mainly Native Hawaiians’ and the second case is from a Canadian Music Theory class for students with different cultural backgrounds. In the future, decolonization would not be superficially depicted as “adding indigenous knowledge” to pique student interests, but rather consider how to recognize the meaningful pedagogy of an education system primarily for indigenous peoples and incorporate it into a school curriculum that takes into account the needs of all students, school educators, and staff.

2. KANAKA ‘ŌIWI RESURGENCE: RECOGNIZING “ ‘AINA” IN INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE AND VALUES FROM MO‘OLELO STORYTELLING

2.1. Background Information

Kovach [6] has acknowledged that a fundamental epistemological difference is influencing Western and Indigenous researchers’ ways of thinking, eventually leading to radical conflict in multiple fields including philosophical, ideological, and methodological context for Indigenous researchers. Kanaka iwi, which means “of the ancestors’ bone,” has been used in Hawaiian as an appropriate indigenous term for Native Americans. Unlike tourist brochures and fancy postcards, native Hawaiians have experienced colonization and its multigenerational impact on social structure, economic values, and political values based on Western ideas [7]. To achieve the Kanaka ‘Ōiwi resurgence, many indigenous educators and teachers have established institutions that use the ancestry’s wisdom as the model of validity and empowerment. Kamehameha Schools was endowed by the will of Ke Ali‘i Bernice Pauahi Bishop (1831-1884), the last direct descendant of Hawaiian King Kamehameha, to carve a path toward Native Hawaiian’s restoration [8].

2.2. Decolonizing Strategy Applied: Focus On the Ancestral Experience through Metaphors in Oral Storytelling

The Kamehameha leadership has come up with a strategic plan is known as Ku”hanauna[9]. Ku”hanauna has been applied as an instruction guideline to direct and complete school institutions’ discipline policies and practices. is being used to direct the complete re-

working of the educational institution’s policies and practices. In 2016, the Kamehameha school released the E Ola! Learner Outcomes based on the instructions of Kū hanauna [10], and the editor constructed ‘Ike Kupuna’ in the first place: “the ancestral experiences, insights, perspectives, knowledge, and practices”.

Like other native communities, the Hawaiians hold mo‘olelo (indigenous storytelling) and metaphor as strong esteem to construct the Ōiwi teaching framework [11]. This pedagogy would ensure that the context foundation is based on‘ano Hawai‘i (Hawaiian style). In order for the Kamehameha School educators to achieve the very first learner outcome (Ike Kupuna), they are compelled to immerse themselves in an environment that is full of Aw”awa, acknowledgments of ‘place-based knowing’. Kanalu Young [12] emphasized the importance of ‘Aina as the fundamental education system for indigenous people. He used the metaphor of the Beach and the Island to illustrate the interaction of Native and haole (foreign) knowledge systems. The “Aina ” means Island refers to the innermost workings of indigenous knowledge systems, and the Beach is where haole (foreign) ideas come ashore. The differing epistemologies would meet on the Beach and before anyone goes to the beach it is the Papa, the goddess of the earth mother, as the Papa to greet the haole. Hawaiian indigenous educators have described themselves as the “Papa ” (also reef) and function as a bridge by contacting and processing foreign ideas with indigenous knowledge. Ho‘ohawai‘ does not simply hold alternative histories of indigenous knowledge, it involves filtering and transforming the haole knowledge but also consistently brings support to ‘ano Hawai‘i thoughts. School educators must hold a visceral understanding of Aloha ‘A”ina, the love of the land, to complete the ‘Ike Kupuna learner outcome. This in-depth knowledge of the language would motivate indigenous educators to acquire the ability to apply that knowledge in a particular ‘oihana (occupation)’ [12].

2.3. Analysis of the mo‘olelo Pedagogy

In this section I consider the critical theory to acknowledge its past omissions in the Western education system. The mo‘olelo pedagogy of oral storytelling helped students get immersed in connections to Native histories, learning relationships with the environment, and connect the ‘Ike Kupuna’ knowledge to what comes to Papa. The effort to Ho‘ohawai‘i is based on the idea that “life thrives in the Aw”awa and that placed in a museum gathers dust and becomes outdated and eventually extinct” [8]. Indigenous people have the right to speak out their own history, stories based on their own perspective, and truth-telling, connecting thought with meaningful education action reform, restoring indigenous values, and Kanaka ‘Ōiwi

culture resurgence is a meaningful pedagogy of decolonization.

3. RECOGNIZING THE WESTERN EUROPEAN MUSIC NORMS IN A CANADIAN CURRICULUM REFORM

3.1. Background Information

In 1867, Canada's federal government became responsible for supporting the curriculum for Indigenous children. Based on federal policy, status Indians and some Métis were permitted to attend schools on reserves; other non-Status Indians and some Métis would attend schools in the province [13]. Nevertheless, before 2015, many Canadian higher educators did not put decolonization education as the primary position until the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) released its final report and completed 94 Calls to Action [14]. That large-scale call brought a profound impact in triggering both educational institutional and personal interest in decolonization and ethical justice in indigenous education.

3.2. The Pedagogy In Canadian Musical Curriculum: To Help Students Establish Critical View on Eurocentric Analytical Practice

One current issue in higher education is that the European curricular models dating back to the 19th century played a role in establishing the “classical music” Music theory dogma that became the exclusive theorem of most Bachelor of Music (BMs) programs in Canada, the United States, and Europe [15]. Without an understanding of the effects of colonization, social workers, many of whom will work with Indigenous clients, will be less prepared to encourage positive change. Robin Attas, a school educator, has constructed a decolonized musical curriculum to counter the lack of diversity in her music theory class [16]. She has established a primitive purpose of “Don’t do anything about us without us ” to build relationships with indigenous musicians to access the musical content under indigenous knowledge. The teaching strategy included increased Indigenous content in terms of repertoire to offer the historical orientation. Robin considered there is another music theory content that is fundamentally constructed under the Western European music paradigm: the analytical approach. To fully uncover and expose colonial/Eurocentric elements of a discipline, a list of six different music analytical methods are paired with each of the indigenous artist-focused units and one method based on the Eurocentric analytical practice and epistemology. The relationship between indigenous people and settlers has been conscientiously considered, maintaining a focus on

music analysis (rather than political advocacy) between settler artists and indigenous artists.

3.3. Analysis of the Decolonization Analytical Approach Pedagogy

This pedagogy has promoted students’ critical view on the colonial focus in higher education by tracing back to the dismissed achievement for non-Western artists. The historical context in the curriculum has been reassociated into multicultural space to promote diverse thinking from a mutual commitment to emancipation and justice. It is also important to emphasize that western thought has not developed in a vacuum, but is an outcome from different ancestry’s influential ideas. If Islam performed a significant inspiration in shaping many of the ideas which transformed as ‘western’ ideology in modern times [17], while students need to hold a critical view to recognize how western thought has also shaped aspects of Islamic thought over time [18]. Back to the higher education class, decolonization pedagogy in higher education is a process of remaining the previous knowledge structure of Western power rather than establishing binary comparably analysis between “indigenous” and “Western European” norms.

4. DISCUSSION

Bernd Reiter contributes to the constant effort of decolonizing the social sciences and humanities field, by persisting that true decolonization not only relates to territorial liberation but also breaks mindsets from the elite culture that Western civilization has perpetually represented. Although critical theory situated itself as an alternative to traditional western philosophy, it still has a common core purpose with indigenous thought in this decolonial age: to see a genuine transformative change occur [19]. Through my personal experiences as a mentor at a middle-school after-school Math program, most of my students are first-generation from Latino immigrant families who are seeking a balance between American culture and their community heritage. From one ice-breaker activity, students are encouraged to recommend a great TV show or movie. Most students chose Marvel movies or Japanese anime, but a shy girl was hesitant to raise her hand because her favorite TV shows are “all Mexican ” and “not cool”. This experience has implied that the purpose of our current education system may have ignored all human beings and there might be a greater number of bilingual students who are lacking cultural confidence to express and show indigenous knowledge to peers who have different cultural backgrounds.

Decolonization education refers not only to the practice of dismantling colonial systems but also to a trend of rethinking future educational frameworks as one common good. Decolonizing the curriculum implies

hearing the silent voices of those who have been ignored and not been heard before. Naturally, teachers conform to the curriculum content rather than reflect on “how” and “why” these contexts can serve all students. Educators are encouraged to consider education not only as a tool of enculturation and knowledge adaptation but also as one that can be oriented towards the cognitive transformation of comprehending human well-being. Besides, a decolonization curriculum would encourage students to fully investigate their social role based on the community identity to express cultural confidence in the future multicultural society. Although world-system theory has identified nations under the authority and priority paradigm, with an unstoppable trend of globalization, a future society must be constructed with different religions, ethics, and values to embrace racial diversity. Critical studies of the curriculum are the fundamental step to reveal the inherently racist nature of the school curriculum. Therefore, efforts to make compulsory schooling more successful for the Indigenous population must be centrally concerned with the school curriculum.

The critical theory would be relevant to the decolonization responses based on the two cases of how both Hawaiian and Canadian school educators demonstrate their effort in designing a decolonization curriculum. As the core theme of decolonization and critical theory, a sense of community is formed through personalization in changes. The metaphor of the island in ‘Ike Kupuna’ pedagogy [9] and how Robin Attas [16] would transform indigenous knowledge into the curriculum to show a concept of a decolonial conversation: “a way forward beyond simply ‘inclusive conversations’ between western and Indigenous thought”. The rich context of the native language would enable students to discover how the indigenous thought has been presented under the Western education system, affecting their value and previous curriculum. These teaching pedagogies are not focused on comparative studies between indigenous and Western thought but offer a space for both students and school educators to place multicultural knowledge on equal footing and make that theory-coexistence transparent for students.

5. CONCLUSION

From the modern social movements including Black Lives Matter, it is challenging to understand the discipline was originally constructed under a colonial system that implied a structure of inequality. Decolonizing curriculum would generally refer to making revolutionary progress in presenting an education system as a human good for all students. The importance of decolonization would help students, especially students of color, to establish cultural confidence and create a racial harmonious environment in school institutions.

Based on the decolonizing pedagogy cases that have been analyzed, the Hawaiian school institution applied oral storytelling as a tool to deliver ancestors’ wisdom in a rich endogenous language environment. For students who share different cultural backgrounds in the Canadian music class, instructors would offer a vast range of indigenous and Western analyses in music theory that has a profound influence while changing students’ critical view in the modern Western-based education system.

The future action underlines an individualized level, is the scale of change in school institutions and the social policy. As the curriculum instructor mentioned that not many indigenous scholars have participated in the current educational institution to offer a decolonial conversation in the curriculum rather than adding cultural context to construct the “fun” part in the class. The decolonial conversation would be expected to happen in the minuscule, everyday ways that must enable interconnections between multicultural thoughts to happen. Decolonial policies including recruiting indigenous people as school educators would lead to the dangers of placing the burden for decolonizing curriculum and indigenizing higher education onto them by asking indigenous people to lead the change, and appropriating Indigenous knowledge and pedagogies in a way that become recolonizing rather than decolonization in a colonial institution. To expect future engagement to occur, the changes would focus on decolonization and should leave personalization marks of who I am. Beyond a decolonial policy or improved teaching pedagogy, it is only this change in recognizing who we all are as academics, that genius thought can lead us to explore through the absent voice and look forward. To move forward, people need to look back in history with clear-sighted acknowledgment of the ancestor’s wisdom in our eyes.

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