

Bruce's Facebook post

### **"CREATING INDIGENOUS PARADIGMS: An exercise in Revision or Delusion?"**

Paradigms are narratives of reality as we individually and as groups perceive reality. Colonialism was a reality, neo-colonialism is a reality in Canadian society. I find myself wondering if our own people speak against the neo-colonialist oppression in terms that are not ours but in terms we appropriate from the "other side of the coin" of colonial reality. An example, the idea of "this land is our land" when in fact no indigenous person connected to his or her people would understand the concept of "ownership" as defined and developed by the philosopher John Locke, land as a thing to develop to make use of in order to claim ownership; rather we claim that we have a relationship of responsible sovereignty to work with the land, to be sensitive to its limits and to take what is needed for our own survival. Our metaphysics states that the animal and plant world, the earth give to us generously and we ought to honor that. That is a different statement than putting a red face in front of a white argument.

Now, I think we as indigenous people owe it to ourselves to be self-reflective, to be sure we are not doing dishonor of the healthy work of deconstructing colonialism by arguing premises that themselves are faulty.. In philosophy I have learned a good set of rules that are working for me.

1. Ensure that the premises we put out to back our arguments are "reasonable to believe, that we are justified to a degree in believing them. - which does not necessarily guarantee validity but a reasonable premise is in building the argument.
2. Link the premises in manners that self-evident logic can support, the "if-then", "and", "or" "if and only if" are all logically connected to make a valid argument.
3. Most importantly, be self-critical, look at your own argument then try to tear it apart with your counter-argument to your own argument; this does two things for the activist and thinker;
  - It prepares you for any counter-arguments designed to oppose you and you have some response ready, and
  - as a thinker we begin to appreciate the weaknesses in our own argument because it forces us to drill deeper into the thought and clarify with a greater preciseness what it is that we are deconstructing. We need to explore knowledge and the problem we are addressing at a deeper and more authentic level than rhetoric alone.

4. And most importantly ensure that we are not engaged in delusional indigenous rhetoric based on reacting only to colonial metaphysics and their ontological commitments but countering those arguments with a) an understanding of their premises in mainstream philosophy and b) providing equally valid - perhaps onto logically pluralistic arguments that are reasonable and valid under logic rules to make a counter point with the full force of indigenous thought..

So, those are a few thoughts that I have of why it is important for indigenous students to learn from Indigenous academics about anthropology's world views, of what humanities can offer in the way of analysis of text, dance, lyrics, movies, legends and stories, etc., as well as draw from the rich resources of mainstream thinking...learn from all sources and carve these pieces of thinking about thinking into an emerging indigenous philosophical format. My thinking can be embedded into your framework or the framework you put forward can be embedded inside an indigenous expression of a vision for indigenous philosophy.

Thoughts? Thank you so much for your work.

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