Witnessing Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug's Strength and Struggle: The Affective Education of Reconciliation in Environmental Education

Lisa Korteweg, Lakehead University, and Emily Root, Cape Breton University, Canada

Abstract
Escalating environmental controversies are placing Indigenous peoples and First Nation communities at the front lines of protests, opposing unjust government policies and corporate actions. Yet, many environmental educators are not actively engaged or affectively learning about Indigenous Land struggles against Canada's colonial oppressions. Environmental education has a strong record of research to promote ecological, place-conscious pedagogies that build socio-emotional connections to nature, but it can also perpetuate settler colonialism by avoiding or ignoring Indigenous (Land) title. This article calls on settler environmental educators to shift towards decolonizing and Land-based reconciliation, by bearing witness as support to Indigenous struggles for jurisdiction and protection of Land. We focus on our own settler affective processing towards decolonizing as we witnessed the strength of the Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug (KI) First Nation, whose Chief and Council were jailed for protecting their territory from mining in Ontario's Far North.

Résumé
À cette époque où les controverses environnementales sont de plus en plus nombreuses, les peuples autochtones et les Premières Nations se retrouvent en première ligne pour protester et s'opposer aux politiques injustes des gouvernements et aux actes abusifs des entreprises. Toutefois, bon nombre d'éducateurs en environnement ne soutiennent pas activement les revendications territoriales des Autochtones, qui luttent contre les répercussions de l'oppression coloniale du Canada, ou ne se sentent pas touchés par ce qu'ils apprennent à ce sujet. L'éducation à l'environnement cherche depuis longtemps à promouvoir des approches pédagogiques écologiques ancrées dans la réalité territoriale qui permettent d'établir des liens socioémotionnels avec la nature, mais elle peut également perpétuer la tradition colonialiste en éludant ou en ignorant la question des droits des Autochtones sur leurs terres ancestrales. Cet article invite les éducateurs en environnement allochtones à témoigner en faveur de la décolonisation et de la réconciliation territoriale pour soutenir le combat des Autochtones qui cherchent à faire reconnaître leurs droits et à protéger le territoire. L'accent est mis sur nos propres émotions en tant que colonisateurs allochtones face à la décolonisation et au courage de la Première Nation Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug (KI), dont le chef et les membres du conseil de bande ont été emprisonnés pour avoir défendu leur territoire contre les minières dans l'extrême nord de l'Ontario.

Keywords: reconciliation education, Land-based issues, settler colonialism, decolonizing, affective learning; Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug (KI)

> *We must understand that the lives of Aboriginal people across Canada are connected to the lingering effects of residential schools and that many of the most destructive attitudes are perpetuated in our public education.*
>
> *We must remember that at the same time Aboriginal children were made to feel inferior, generation after generation of non-Aboriginal children were exposed to the false belief that their culture was superior.*
>
> *Imperialism, colonialism and a sense of cultural superiority linger on.*
> -Justice Murray Sinclair, Chair of the Truth & Reconciliation Commission
> (Sinclair, 2015, para 52-54)

Context

In Canada, we live in a time of mounting controversies over land/water protection and protests, peaceful and violent, over resource extraction centred on Indigenous[1] lands: Elsipogtog First Nation against natural gas fracking, a coalition of northern British Columbia First Nations against the Enbridge Northern Gateway pipelines, Athabasca-Chippeweyan First Nations against the Alberta Tar Sands, the Unist'ot'en activist group in the Peace Valley of British Columbia, and the jailing of the Chief and council of Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug (KI) in northern Ontario. These controversies are placing First Nation communities at the front lines of environmental battles to protect their territories, while pitting Indigenous peoples against governments (provincial and federal) and extractive corporations. At the same time, Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) has issued its final report, *Calls for Action* (TRC, 2015), urging all educators to teach "intercultural understanding, empathy and mutual respect" (63.iii) because "education is key to reconciliation" (Sinclair, 2014, p. 7). Many educators, however, do not know what reconciliation is or what they are supposed to be reconciling for in their daily practice, or how intercultural empathy with Indigenous peoples impacts their teacher identities. By extension, many settler environmental educators have been slow to inquire and engage in environmental-Indigenous Land[2] crises as curriculum, or expose themselves to decolonizing experiences where they could learn "to defy the colonial logic [in curriculum]… and see oneself related to and implicated in the lives of [Indigenous] others" (Donald, 2012, p. 106).

Most settler[3]-teachers live and think within the discursive walls of Donald's (2012) metaphorical curricular fort, the locus and well of colonialism, where they have little knowledge or affective experience to relate to Indigenous students and Indigenous ways of knowing. It can be difficult for many settler-teachers, including environmental educators, to know how to process emotional responses

as non-Indigenous Canadians when they begin to see stark colonial realities such as the institutionalized poverty of First Nations children (Blackstock, 2011), the traumatic intergenerational histories and ongoing impacts of Residential Schools (TRC, 2015), the shameful oppressions and racist legacies of the Indian Act (Daschuk, 2013), the underfunded federal schools on reserves (Auditor General of Canada, 2011; Drummond & Rosenbluth, 2013), and the increasing protests and stand-offs by Indigenous peoples against extractive industries and courts endorsing these conflicts.

Settler colonialism is “a form of structured dispossession of Indigenous peoples of their lands and self-determining authority,” and a set of ongoing social relations where the primary goal is “access to [Indigenous] territory,” and where Land remains the focal point of political struggle (Coulthard, 2014, p. 152). Through their opposition to Land injustice, First Nation communities such as Elsipogtog (New Brunswick) and KI (Ontario) are making concrete and visible in the media the ongoing pervasiveness of settler colonialism in environmental controversies. The central question for this paper is how can settler environmental educators become affectively capable to work against reproducing a curriculum of settler colonialism and teaching a “cultivated ignorance” (Godlewska, Moore, & Bednasek, 2010, p. 417). Or, “how do we [settlers] open our minds to listen and [hearts to] learn” (TRC, 2015, p. 437) a decolonizing education-for-reconciliation? We contend that attention to non-Indigenous (settler) environmental educators’ affective learning—opening minds, hearts and souls together (Tanaka, 2015)—is a critical step forward towards a decolonizing process that does not re-enact “decolonization as a metaphor” and steers away from “settler moves to innocence” (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 9).

Gregg and Seigworth (2010) write that “Affect, is the name we give to those forces—visceral forces beneath, alongside, or generally other than conscious knowing, vital forces insisting beyond emotion—that can serve to drive us towards movement, toward thought” (p. 1). Our own affective learning as environmental educators and researchers took a forceful turn into complex and fluctuating emotions as we tackled concepts of decolonizing and settler responsibilities when faced with KI First Nation’s struggles to protect their territorial homelands in northwestern Ontario that resulted in the trial and jailing of the “KI6”: five members of the band council and Chief Donny Morris. Although witnessing this case of injustice was emotionally trying, our affective strife was mostly insignificant when compared to the suffering of the KI community. While not comparable to Indigenous peoples’ struggles, our settler affective learning did strengthen decolonizing awareness and a resolve forward on a path of ongoing reconciliation. By learning, witnessing, and teaching the KI story, we engaged in an affective learning process attuned to difficult knowledge that improved our environmental educator responsibilities to be more accountable for ethical relationality (Donald, 2012; Wilson, 2008) with Indigenous peoples and Land-based pedagogy (Wildcat, McDonald, Irlbacher-Fox, & Coulthard, 2014) in our teaching praxis.

A number of Indigenous scholars conceptualize *decolonization* as theoretical components in Indigenous contexts such as language revitalization, cultural resurgence, reclamation of Indigenous voice, self-determination of Land title, and self-governance by Indigenous communities (Battiste, 2013; Dion, Johnston, & Rice, 2010; Iseke, 2008). Tuck and Yang (2012) critique the way that the term decolonization has been frequently used as a general metaphor for diverse social justice projects, asserting instead that decolonization must first equate to the rematriation of Indigenous Land. This assertion compels settlers to consider different nuances and complexities as settler-decolonizing, including the following conceptual shifts: respectful relationality for Indigenous Land rematriation, Land-based experiences and acknowledgement of Indigenous Land, engagement with resilient Indigeneity (identity and futurity), respectful relationships with Indigenous peoples, critically reflexive autobiographical work that accounts honestly for settler legacies, connections to settlers' own cultural and ancestral heritage, unsettling complexities of settler dis-placement from ancestral places/lands, and responsibility for and actions to disrupt ongoing systemic settler colonialism in Canadian institutions such as education (Root, 2015).

Given its disciplinary origins and history, much environmental education has been based in and oriented towards Eurocentric epistemologies (Kapyrka & Dockstator, 2012) and, until recently, settler environmental educators have been largely under-educated or reticent to engage with Indigenous worldviews or teach environmental struggles as *Indigenous* Land controversies. We focus on one potential source of reticence and/or resistance by settler environmental educators: the uncomfortable affective or disturbing emotional dimensions of learning decolonizing realities and settler responsibilities for repair and reconciliation. Our purpose is to identify the complex range, untangle the potentially paralyzing, and model an affective learning journey that could be faced by other settler environmental educators who want to decolonize their environmental praxis. Despite persistent ignorance, feelings of fear, or uncertainty about engaging with Indigenous issues, environmental educators are in fact "ripe" for decolonizing learning (Root, 2010), and could, by extension, become "natural" allies in Indigenous Land issues (McKeon, 2012). By examining our own journey of bearing witness to the KI controversy for Land rights and environmental protection against the mineral exploration company, Platinex, that resulted in a landmark lawsuit and court case from 2006-2008, we examine the unsettling, affective, decolonizing learning that can serve as an example to other settler environmental educators.

As Indigenous injustices become more media visible or public, settler-educators may experience many types of emotional responses: overwhelming shame or disbelief, paralysis by guilt or fear about perpetuating colonial harms by "making mistakes," righteous ignorance (Schreiber, 2012), or frustration that access to Indigenous knowledge (Schreiber, 2012) or special "places"—cottages, parks, or pristine "wilderness" (Korteweg & Oakley, 2014)—could be limited or

forfeited by reclaimed Indigenous title. We concur with Newbery (2012), who states that part of the difficult knowledge and emotional work of environmental educators “must be to confront the traumatic traces lingering in a nation born through colonization” (p. 30) while “the past reverberates into the present and structures contemporary Aboriginal inequalities and conflict over lands and resource use” (p. 39). To move towards reconciliation, environmental educators need to acknowledge and discuss their affective processing as they contend with their settler positionality in the Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationship that constitutes Canada. A decolonizing shift of the environmental education field will require affective introspection, critical consciousness, and the difficult emotional work of repair and reconciliation (see the Tikkun Youth Project, 2015) when grappling with ongoing settler imperialism, colonialism, and non-Indigenous cultural superiority perpetrated in and reproduced through curriculum (Sinclair, 2015). In the very act of acknowledging and witnessing struggles for Indigenous Land justice, all educators, especially environmental educators, will have to contend with historic and ongoing complicities in Land-based settler colonialism (Coulthard, 2014; Jafri, 2012), the intertwined damages and injustices towards Indigenous peoples and the Land (Root, 2010), as well as the ensuing complex emotions that accompany these realizations of traumatic injustices (Korteweg & Russell, 2012; Newbery, 2012). We are hopeful, however, that environmental educators are more attuned to the affective connections to place, nature, or Land, and that these sensibilities can steer a disciplinary focus towards (environmental) education-for-reconciliation (TRC, 2015).

Decolonizing Environmental Education through the Affective

For too long, non-Indigenous environmental education, itself positioned as a field on the fringe of mainstream education, has focused on promoting Western Eurocentric models of curriculum as beneficial to all students, subsuming Indigenous students, rather than seriously considering what environmental education *owes* Indigenous Land, peoples, and communities, and becoming responsible to co-learn with Indigenous educators. Settler environmental educators can appear reticent to acknowledge and engage Indigenous peoples and knowledge in research and curriculum while other concepts, “wilderness” and “more-than-human”—animals, lakes, mountains, and trees—are assigned central importance (Sobel, 2008). Yet, histories of colonization against Indigenous peoples exist in “wilderness” or “special places” envisioned to heal nature-deficit disorders or disturbed urban malaise of disconnection (Korteweg & Oakley, 2014). Furthermore, many settler outdoor enthusiasts have claimed images of pristine (unpeopled) wilderness, the canoe (Erickson, 2013), and nature escape (MacGregor, 2004) as the central cultural constructs of a Canadian identity, all while ignoring, erasing, and displacing Indigenous peoples from their Land and Canadian “myths.” “Settler-Canadians erroneously cling to a foundational

identity myth—that of benevolent peacemaker—despite the fact that denial and guilt pose barriers to real socio-political change" (Regan, 2011, p. 11).

While not legally accountable or directly impacted by what happens in Land-based controversies, environmental educators should be committed to knowing and responsible for teaching the socio-cultural-historical realities of all Canadian places as Indigenous Land. For example, in Canadian environmental education literature, there are close to no references or discussion of the KI-Platinex Land controversy, court case, or jailing. And we wonder if an affective impasse or emotional blockage could be dissuading many colleagues in the environmental education field to make the effort to confront Indigenous Land controversies as complex environmental education issues of settler colonialism? We are optimistic, however, that there is no better situated educational discipline to engage in these core environmental or Indigenous Land issues of affective sensibilities and connectedness, the interrelatedness and interdependence of all beings—human and more-than-human, the holistic engagement of learners' minds-bodies-hearts-spirits with nature, and the collective realm of relationships and community in/through place/Land (McKeon, 2012).

The Affective Process of Witnessing for Decolonizing Environmental Education

Many settler educators find it more palatable to avoid lessons about the colonial history of Canada, the injustices and tragedies against First Nations, Métis, and Inuit (FNMI) peoples, and ongoing Land controversies because these topics can trigger emotional discomfort, push the boundaries of affective complexity and reveal traumatic racism in Canada's past and present policies (Dion, 2009; Kanu, 2011; Schick & St. Denis, 2005). Environmental educator theorists and practitioners may prefer the emotive state of "perfect strangers" (Dion, 2009), or trying to elide these uncomfortable feelings through what Tuck and Yang (2012) call "settler moves to innocence." As settler perfect strangers, environmental educators may ignore their implications in Indigenous matters, preferring to hone a "love" of lakes, trees, animals, and nature, rather than decolonize relations with Indigenous peoples and their Indigenous Land (Korteweg & Oakley, 2014). Or, through "moves to innocence," well-intentioned settler educators attempting to decolonize their praxis may inadvertently re-inscribe their settler privilege and power by romanticizing Indigenous cultures and knowledge (Root, 2015; Schreiber, 2012; Wall, 2009), fantasizing adoption by Indigenous communities (Tuck & Yang, 2012), or lumping through metaphor that all social justice is akin to decolonization (Tuck & Yang, 2012).

This is a challenging time for Indigenous peoples and the Land, increasingly threatened simultaneously as more remote corners of Canada—the homes and traditional territories of Indigenous peoples—become the intensive zones of the extractive economy. It is also a challenging time for settler environmental

educators who are individually seeking to understand and enact more respectful, reconciliatory relationships with Indigenous peoples and Land (Root, 2015), while the field is not yet equipping them with a collective framework or affective discourse to engage in these emotive discussions. It is time for settler environmental educators, as "ripe" (Root, 2010) ready-to-shift "natural" allies (McKeon, 2012), to witness and grapple with the difficult knowledge and complex emotions of decolonizing in order to develop an affective discourse that can aid environmental educators to address questions such as: What's good about environmental education for Indigenous peoples/communities? Or, What can environmental educators offer to reconciliation education? Addressing settler colonialism requires going into spaces of potential shame and vulnerability—a difficult, even "dangerous" (Milner, 2007) task not typically asked of environmental educators—and requires the act of being present, attending carefully without guilt, avoidance or defensiveness, while trying to listen generously and "witness honourably" (TRC, 2015).

An Indigenous principle of witnessing, which varies among FNMI peoples, generally refers to a role where witnesses are responsible for communicating the significance of a historic event while keeping the knowledge alive and validated through personal relationships. The TRC asked settler attendees to store and care for the knowledge of survivor testimonies that they witnessed, by sharing with their own people (settlers) and communities (TRC, 2015). Or, as the TRC appointed Honourary Witness, Shelagh Rogers, explains: "What is this white middle-aged woman doing in their [survivors'] company? I came to understand [as witness] that I could use my voice to speak to Canadians the length, breadth and height of this country" (CBC-Aboriginal News Blog, 2014). Witnessing can also be understood as an educational process: "Pedagogical witnessing allows … reading, viewing, or listening to be an event in which I allow the understanding of someone else's life to interrupt my own life" (Iseke, 2011, p. 311).

Much of the problem of settler colonialism in environmental education is not out of an absence of concern or recognition of injustices against FNMI peoples, but rather a lack of genuine opportunity and purposeful discursive space to consider settler-colonial entrenchment or investment (Battiste, 2005; Haig-Brown, 2008). We contend that to "nourish the learning spirit" (Battiste, 2013), more time and space for witnessing and affective reckoning are required. Educators should be encouraged to explore our touchstone stories (Strong-Wilson, 2008) and settler dis-placement vignettes (Root, 2015), and engage in layered and generous listening (Schultz, 2003) for honourable witnessing and ethical relationality (Donald, 2012; Wilson, 2008). This might assist us to attend more deeply to the holistic models of Indigenous learning (CCL & Battiste, 2007; Parent, 2011), including emotional modes of learning and integration of Indigenous values (Toulouse, 2008). This affective processing can become "doorways" (Tanaka et al., 2014) for settler-educators to witness Land-based controversies and process empathetically what these issues mean from an indigenized perspective.

Rather than relying primarily on intellectual or mental information as awareness to inform settler environmental educators' attention and engagement, we argue that environmental educators need to locate, acknowledge, and express the range of complex emotions (anger, shame, guilt, frustration, fear, anxiety, hope, admiration, curiosity, etc.) when encountering the ongoing injustices against FNMI peoples and their territories. By critically pondering these emotions, environmental educators can begin to bridge their personal responses as settlers with their professional work as teachers of the environment, places, and nature. Ideally, the environmental education field would become the model of how to be open and vulnerable enough to affectively learn and discuss Indigenous Land-based controversies based upon strengths of personal connectedness to nature and place, fused with serious responsibilities to enact justice and reparation towards Indigenous peoples and their Land.

Our position as non-Indigenous settler-learners in the KI case study, while on the margins of the real activism, did allow us to learn a great deal about *decolonizing* ourselves as environmental educators. It was witnessing KI's strengths and struggles that began an affective reckoning process about how to support Indigenous struggles for treaty and traditional rights, and Indigenous laws for Indigenous lands through learning and then teaching the case study of KI. We present the specific truths or facts of the KI case study in the following section.

The Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug (KI) Case Study[4]

Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug (KI) is a remote Canadian First Nation community of approximately 1200 people, located in the roadless heart of the world's largest intact boreal forest on the Lands of the Nishnawbe Aski peoples in Ontario's Far North region (which is 2/3 the geographic surface of the province of Ontario). Less than eight per cent of the land in Ontario is protected from industrial development (mainly through park conservation), yet this is the Land that Indigenous peoples depend upon for their cultural survival and their sacred and spiritual sites. And it is the same territory being staked in an extensive mineral exploration boom fueled by recent finds of diamonds and the largest chromite deposit in the world, the Ring of Fire deposit.

In 1929, KI First Nation leaders signed a treaty of peace and friendship with Canada and Ontario (James Bay Treaty #9). Since that year, the terms of the treaty have been in dispute. The provincial and federal governments state that KI surrendered and ceded their lands in return for a small reserve and the rights to hunt, trap, and fish, whereas KI claims that the terms of the treaty have never been honoured and implemented. In May 2000, KI filed a land claim, stating that the Land promises of the treaty were never fulfilled by the treaty partners, Ontario and Canada. Mining claims and leases held by an exploration company, Platinex, fell within this KI land claim. Platinex's mining claims were designated for a pristine boreal forest on a significant travel-way used for community

activities with a number of culturally and spiritually significant sites. Shortly after filing the land claim, KI issued a moratorium on resource development on their territory to ensure that the Lands claimed would not be damaged.

KI wanted to focus attention on the issue of an Indigenous community's right to say no to industrial development and environmental damage. They built a community consensus process and then publicly said no to mining exploration, while offering a development alternative through community land-use planning. However, this approach put KI in direct confrontation with the mining industry and the Ontario government who depend upon mining and forestry revenues (Peerla, 2012).

Chief Morris and five other KI leaders (all band councilors), also known as the KI6, were put on trial in a lawsuit for $10 billion in damages and access to drill their lands—ostensibly, for threatening a mining company who refused to respect a community moratorium on resource development. The province of Ontario intervened in the case and, by allying with the mining company, arrived at a conclusion that found the KI6 leaders guilty of contempt of court and sentenced to six months in jail. The KI community was effectively bankrupted by the complex lawsuit that lasted over two years (Peerla, 2012).

The small community of KI ran one of the most visible and successful environmental and Indigenous rights campaigns ever mounted in Canada's boreal forest and with an unprecedented alliance of environmental, human rights, and social justice organizations such as Amnesty International and the Rainforest Action Network. The KI controversy has come to stand for what is wrong with mineral exploration and industrial development in the boreal forest and for the principle set out in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: a First Nation community's right to say no and that "no means no" (Peerla, 2012).

The Canadian Court's decision to jail Chief Donny Morris and the band council on March 18, 2008 shocked the Canadian public, many of whom viewed the jailed leaders as prisoners of conscience and called for their immediate and unconditional release. In May 2008, the Court of Appeal released the jailed KI6 for time served in a decision that affirmed that the KI protest was reasonable in light of constitutionally protected Indigenous and treaty rights. According to KI's own laws (Ariss & Cutfeet, 2012), the Treaty (#9), Canadian laws, and community protocols, KI continues to publicly insist that it had a right to say no to the Platinex mining project while KI's jurisdictional disputes with the province remain unresolved, contentious, and disputed (Peerla, 2012).

Decolonizing Shifts for Non-Indigenous Settler Environmental Educators

All of the ways in which we found ourselves becoming engaged in the KI case study would be available to all Canadian environmental educators and their classes, from learning and witnessing the actual events or facts of the KI case, to acknowledging our personal touchstone stories connected to Indigenous

peoples and Land, to opening up to emotional vulnerability as entry points into conversations of decolonizing environmental education. When environmental educators are of the mindset that Indigenous issues or Land controversies are not our "expertise," or not part of our mission/focus as environmental educators, then we abdicate a relationship to Indigenous peoples and Land. Any decolonizing or reconciliation work in environmental education has to acknowledge the affective processing that accompanies new awareness of Canadian injustices against Indigenous peoples.

We list here specific examples of what we witnessed and then processed as affective learning by attending rallies of support for the KI6, reading blogs and internet websites about the court case, following the media coverage, talking with KI community members, informing other non-Indigenous friends and colleagues about the issue, reading parts of the court decisions, and talking with activists more deeply involved in the case to educate ourselves and bring this monumental environmental chapter into our university classrooms and teacher education curriculum.

As we worked to disrupt our "perfect stranger stance" (Higgins, Madden, & Korteweg, 2015) as settler-Canadians and move towards decolonization, the KI case provided us with the following pivotal, though difficult, educative moments and affective range of emotions:

- to think about our own implication in the environmental destruction of Indigenous Land and how our choices impact Land and people. This engenders feelings of guilt, but also helplessness, that individual actions are shaped by systemic and institutional barriers.
- to observe and reflect on the emotional reactions of KI community members, other Indigenous activists, and settler Canadians in the settings of the protests and the court proceedings. We realized our privileged situation to be able to watch and sympathize from the sidelines of the events (rallies, protests, court proceedings, jail) and this positionality caused serious discomfort when we realized the disparities between our low-risk participation and the high-stakes activism by Indigenous communities.
- to consider how Indigenous Land controversies are portrayed in the media as distant and marginal. It was frustrating to see the miseducative stereotypical representations of KI people that encouraged mainstream readers to disconnect themselves from the local KI community (in northern Ontario) or other First Nation communities.
- to recognize the extent of Eurocentrism or settler colonialism. We observed that very few settler people were present at the KI solidarity rallies, and we frequently read racist responses to the KI case in the regional newspaper/media. We felt angry at the ongoing local racism, and severely embarrassed at our settler-entanglement in a culture of ignorance.
- to understand our duty to educate other non-Indigenous peers, colleagues, and networks about Indigenous environmental justice issues in order to act as

responsible treaty partners. While we recognized our responsibility to educate our Bachelor of Education students about the KI case, we felt uncertain as how best to talk to others without proselytizing or reinscribing injustices through opening space for potentially racist responses. We were, however, willing to encounter student resistance, recognizing that we could choose to face and address stereotypical assumptions instead of re-burdening Indigenous colleagues with the task of teaching ignorant settlers.

- a contextual example through which we could begin to discuss issues of institutional racism and Eurocentrism with our non-Indigenous students/colleagues and converse about our emotional responses to being re-implicated in ongoing colonialism. Teaching our Bachelor of Education students about the KI case required us to contemplate how to provide a supportive space to have settler-to-settler conversations. Employing a sharing circle pedagogy (Bishop, 2002) gave us opportunities to witness sincere care, self-awareness, and desire of many settler educators to learn and improve relations with Indigenous peoples. These positive reflexive conversations gave us strength, hope, and confidence to continue to teach other settlers.
- a very difficult case study of the extent and depth of impact of neocolonialism in the lives of Indigenous peoples. For example, we felt empathy, despair, and deep sadness when we witnessed the extreme emotional and practical difficulties faced by the family of Cecilia Begg, the only female band councilor and a mother and grandmother, who was jailed far away from her family in a Thunder Bay jail (580 km away by air travel only) and isolated from the other KI6 prisoners (due to gendered jail facilities).
- to experience being a visual and political minority (White-settler) in demonstrations by Indigenous protesters. We recognized the privilege that extends from how infrequently we experience being a racial minority within a dominant group. We experienced a variety of emotions, such as anxiety, that others would question our motivation or that we would offend, as well as a conviction to continue to learn and teach unsettling content.
- to learn about the intense political turmoil that can ensue within Indigenous communities due to the emotional stress of the situation. Through witnessing, we observed a diversity of perspectives about the KI controversy in the larger Indigenous community. This reminded us that all political issues are messy and complex within any cultural community and that our settler emotional work was to become more comfortable with feelings of uncertainty, pause to learn more, and maintain a non-judgmental lens.

With respect to *indigenizing* our understandings of the environment, or learning to live well on Indigenous Land, the KI case provided us with pivotal moments to reconcile and experience a different affective range of emotions:

- to hear Indigenous voices about the Land, the deep connectedness of the KI people to their homelands, and how to make collective (Seven Generations)

decisions about the Land. Witnessing the KI community's deep strength, knowledge, and Land-relationship left us feeling humbly appreciative of the richness of Indigenous knowledge, of the deep conviction of (and actions by) the community to protect their Land, and of their willingness to teach others.

- to think about what it means to be a responsible treaty partner. We learned about the Indigenous interpretation of this particular Land treaty (that was maintained through a strong oral tradition), the written colonial/Eurocentric interpretation of the treaty, and the discord between federal laws and provincial laws, and Indigenous systems of law (Ariss & Cutfeet, 2012). These teachings strengthened our emotional commitment to ongoing reflexivity for greater settler self-awareness.
- to witness examples of respectful allied collaboration between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. While ally-ship is no doubt fraught with complexity, it is important to see and teach about positive examples of Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples working together and actively talking about what respect looks like. Such examples of active relationship-building can generate important motivating emotions of hope and healing.
- to observe examples of an intergenerational community working together for the Land. Perhaps one of the more complex sets of emotions that witnessing KI generated for us was admiration, even envy, of the community's depth of ancestral knowledge and intergenerational cultural strength. This is an emotion that can be hard to admit from the position of a (so-called) "privileged" settler. However, this emotional response is an important one to acknowledge as it compels feelings of grief at our own deep disconnection from ancestral culture, knowledge, and homelands (Root, 2015).
- to become exposed to myriad examples of the strength and resilience of Indigenous peoples to confront industry, the government, and colonization in order to stand up for their rights. Indigenous people have a great deal of experience successfully resisting colonial forces (Simpson, 2002) and we feel gratitude for their Land stewardship and for the way that they generously teach settlers.
- to witness the richness of language revitalization. We felt humble as we heard community members speak in their Indigenous language (Oji-Cree) and saw the language written on protest signs. This also gave us the opportunity to have meaningful dialogue with Indigenous friends/colleagues about the meaning of the words.

Complexities of Affective Learning in Decolonizing Environmental Education

While reflecting on our own emotional dimensions of decolonizing through the KI case study, we were curious as to how the involvement of non-Indigenous environmental educators might be perceived by Indigenous peoples. After one large rally in Toronto, Chief Donny Morris of KI was interviewed from his cell in the Thunder Bay jail and offered the following observation:

> When you think of when the settlers first came, they tried to slaughter us. Why? For the mineral riches on our land like gold, and now it is happening again. I have been thinking about what it means that non-Indians are organizing all this support for us. I am thinking about that a lot here. I haven't seen this kind of thing in the past. … You [non-Indigenous Canadians] are starting to think like us about the earth. (cited in Rebick, 2009, para. 12)

While we were reassured that Chief Donny Morris observed non-Indigenous good intentions, settler environmental educators do need to remain vigilant that we do not look for decolonization as "moral reformation of individual[s] with privilege" (Jafri, 2012, para. 12). Educators need to stay focused on disrupting our settler-colonial complicity while we build respectful relations. The issue is not about individual absolution of culpability or other negative feelings but, rather, becoming accountable for neo-colonialism by working through the affective impediments that can besiege settler decolonial learning. Settler-educators need to stay mindful of sociologist Srivastava's argument (2006) that therapeutic "let's talk" consciousness-raising or affective models of decolonization could be problematic if they focus on an individualist level of emotional development and personal exploration, while consequently subsuming and negating "affect" as motivation for organizational change. By raising concerns over the emotional hurdles of settler colonialism in environmental education, we do not aim to emphasize a "dominant discourse of open emotional expression [for settlers when] there is no space of equal sharing" (p. 68) for Indigenous peoples. The primary goal of emotional decolonial learning for settlers remains reconciliation and respectful relationality with Indigenous peoples for rematriation of Indigenous Land.

Fortunately, the field of environmental education is on the precipice of a disciplinary transformation, and environmental educators do have the substantive theories to decolonize a settler reproduction of enlightened "us" going to support "their" struggles and the tangible means to focus on recognizing Indigenous sovereignty in curriculum (Calderón, 2014). Indigenous scholars and increasing numbers of settler environmental educators are thinking deeply about how to decolonize and indigenize environmental education through Land education. Two recent environmental education journals—*Canadian Journal of Environmental Education* volume 17 (Korteweg & Russell, Eds., 2012) and *Environmental Education Research* (Tuck, McKenzie, & McCoy, Eds., 2014)—have both published on this theme.

In other examples, Cole's (1998, 2012) provocative and lyrical prose has pushed the limits of colonial frames and languages; Lowan (2009) has conceptualized *ecological métissage*, an intercultural framework for environmental education; Root (2010, 2015) has studied decolonizing processes of settler outdoor and environmental educators; Scully (2012) considers possibilities for reconciliation in place-based education; and the Mi'kmaw concept of Two-Eyed Seeing, foregrounded by Elder Albert Marshall, is becoming more widely acknowledged

in the environmental education field (Bartlett, Marshall, & Marshall, 2012; also see McKeon, 2012). Furthermore, other settler and Indigenous educators are collaborating to conceptualize Indigenous *Land*-based pedagogies (e.g., Styres, Haig-Brown, & Blimkie, 2013) as distinct from place-based education. These approaches reflect values found in Indigenous education (CCL & Battiste, 2007) and directly address ongoing settler colonialism of Land and people. Tuck, McKenzie, & McCoy (2014) explain that one intention of Land-education is to "call into question educational practices and theories that justify settler occupation of stolen land, or encourage the replacement of Indigenous peoples and relations with settlers and relations to property" (p. 15).

Concluding Thoughts

Indigenous scholar Battiste (2000, 2013) reminds us that Indigenous worldviews consider Indigenous people, their language, and knowledge systems as deeply interconnected with the Land: to show respect to the Land requires respecting the people of the Land. Non-Indigenous environmental educators in Canada (and other former colony-states) must critically examine the ways in which they live as settlers and teach in relation to Indigenous peoples to reconceptualize environmental education pedagogies as located on Indigenous traditional territories with all the difficult emotional reckoning of settler colonialism.

We owe it to the KI6 and to all the other Indigenous protectors of the Land (that we call Canada) to humbly learn from those languages and knowledge systems that have grown from the Land—inseparable from the Indigenous people of the Land. Indigenous Land-based pedagogies *already* centre epistemologies honouring human-more-than-human-land-spirit interdependent relationships. We owe it to Indigenous peoples and all Canadians to spend our time following local empirical examples and research of Land-based (environmental) education such as: an Ecology of Indigenous Education (Cajete, 1994), a pedagogy of the Land (Haig-Brown & Dannenmann, 2003), a *Biimaadziwiin* pedagogy (Toulouse, 2008), a pedagogy of All Relations (Bishop, 2007), Land Education (Tuck, McKenzie, & McCoy 2014), and, Two-Eyed Seeing co-learning journeys (Bartlett, Marshall, & Marshall, 2012).

Our study demonstrates that there cannot be a relationship with the Land for settler-Canadians unless there is a decolonizing process of respectful understanding, active construction of an ethical-responsive Indigenous—non-Indigenous relationship, alliances for Indigenous justice, and an opening of a culturally responsive commons between all peoples, Indigenous and settler. We sincerely hope that many of our environmental education colleagues will embrace affective decolonizing journeys of their own towards education-for-reconciliation.

Notes

[1] Several related terms describe Indigenous peoples who are living where their ancestors have lived since time immemorial. "Aboriginal" is the Canadian government's official term for Indigenous peoples in Canada, including First Nations, Métis, and Inuit. "First Nations" signifies nationhood status of various groups of Indigenous peoples living throughout Canada. Many First Nations people refer to themselves by their distinct tribal or national identity such as Cree, Anishnaabe, L'Nu, etc. The term "Métis" initially referred to children of mixed heritage born to Aboriginal women and Euro-Canadian fur traders, although the Métis National Council states that "Métis" means a person who self-identifies as Métis, is distinct from other Aboriginal peoples, is of historic Métis Nation Ancestry and is accepted by the Métis Nation. "Inuit" refers to the Indigenous peoples of Northern Canada.

[2] Following the examples of Zinga and Styres (2011), Korteweg and Oakley (2014), and Tuck and McKenzie (2015), "Land" is capitalized in this article to recognize the collective community of all animate and inanimate beings, of which humans are a part. Often "Land" is used in Indigenous epistemologies to describe the complex, interrelated, more-than-human interconnected with human, natural world, including plants, animals, rocks, lakes, elements, and ancestral and spiritual presence.

[3] Very generally, "settlers" are those people living in Canada who are not Indigenous to here, or whose ancestors came from elsewhere. Nuanced, more in depth discussions about the complexities of the term "settler" can be found in Morgensen (2014), Root (2015), and Tuck and McKenzie (2015). We follow Lee (2015), who employs the term "settler" for all people who are not Indigenous and who intentionally, or unintentionally, enact a colonial relationship with Indigenous Land.

[4] We would like to acknowledge that we have drawn heavily upon David Peerla's (2012) pamphlet that documents the chronology and key events of the Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug (KI) case study. We have summarized his detailed historical account into a shorter condensed version for the purpose of this article but we highly recommend the original source for its complete version.

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Notes on Contributors

Dr. Lisa Korteweg is an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Education, Lakehead University, specializing in settler-colonial studies in education, decolonizing teacher education, and designing Land-based approaches for Indigenous education. **Contact:** lisa.korteweg@lakeheadu.ca

Dr. Emily Root is an Assistant Professor in the department of Communities and Connections at Cape Breton University. She also teaches in the Masters of Education in Sustainability, Creativity & Innovation at CBU. Her community engaged teaching and research focuses on Indigenous-settler relations, decolonizing approaches to outdoor environmental education, and Land-based education for reconciliation. **Contact:** Emily_Root@cbu.ca

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