

## **UNSETTLING SETTLER SHAME IN SCHOOLING: RE-IMAGINING RESPONSIBLE RECONCILIATION IN CANADA**

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### Article abstract

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# UNSETTLING SETTLER SHAME IN SCHOOLING: RE-IMAGINING RESPONSIBLE RECONCILIATION IN CANADA

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**ABSTRACT.** This paper draws on “reintegrative shame” (engaging the offender(s) in discussions of the moral dimensions of the act), and scholars who position shame as transformative. This paper reasserts shame as an ethical matter arguing that reconciliation is a particular response to the historical shame generated from the establishment of the Indian Residential Schools in Canada. What would it mean to conceive of education as a site for working *through* shame? If we find a way to acknowledge our settler-shame, what might a responsible way of acting on it be? This paper considers these questions to present evidence for the importance of education as a space for making shame a social, ethical, and pedagogical project.

**REMETTRE EN QUESTION LE CONCEPT DE HONTE DES COLONISATEURS EN  
ÉDUCATION : REPENSER UNE RÉCONCILIATION RESPONSABLE AU CANADA**

**RÉSUMÉ.** Cet article s’appuie sur l’approche de « honte réintégrative » (impliquer le (s) contrevenant (s) dans des discussions portant sur les dimensions morales des actes posés) et sur les chercheurs considérant la honte transformatrice. Cet article repositionne la honte comme question éthique, soutenant que la réconciliation est une réponse spécifique à la honte historique engendrée par la mise en place des pensionnats indiens au Canada. Quelles seraient les conséquences d’envisager l’éducation comme un lieu pour évoluer à travers la honte? Si nous trouvons une manière de reconnaître notre honte en tant que colonisateurs, quelle serait une façon responsable de l’aborder et d’agir? Cet article analyse ces questions afin de démontrer l’importance de l’éducation comme lieu de transformation de la honte en projet social, éthique et pédagogique.

The assimilation attempts made by settler-Canadians, and subsequent trauma endured by many Indigenous people are well documented (Chrisjohn, Young, & Maraun, 1997; Haig-Brown, 1988; Sellars, 2013; TRC, 2015a). However, until recently, Canada’s dominant historical narratives omitted the stories of former Indian Residential School Survivors, who experienced “cultural, psychological and emotional harms and traumatic abuses” as small children, resulting in “an

intergenerational history of dispossession, violence, abuse, and racism that is a fundamental denial of the human dignity and rights of Indigenous peoples” (Regan, 2010, p. 5). While researching the history of Residential Schooling in Canada for my dissertation, I was struck by the paradox of shame as both a dominant subtext and a concealed accessory to assimilation. There is some general understanding that through assimilation Indigenous children were taught to feel ashamed of their cultural identity, and there are several personal stories of survivors’ experiences that disclose moments of feeling shame, then and now; yet, shame as an explicit topic in the histories and enduring consequences of residential schooling is a stone largely left unturned. We have come to know through these stories and research that under the semblance of care and promise of education, colonial schooling delivered a curriculum that stripped Indigenous children of their identity, convincing them that their culture is not only inferior but also shameful. I suggest, if Residential Schools were the vehicles for imposing assimilation, then shame was the secret weapon that operationalized the command.

In this paper, I frame the history of colonialism in Canada generally, Residential Schooling specifically, and the more recent reconciliation efforts headed by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) within a lens of shame. Most people are familiar with the negative impacts of shame; indeed, the dominant narrative is that shame is bad. However, a more complex understanding of shame, as elucidated by leading scholars on shame in psychoanalysis and criminology, asks those initially deterred to examine how shame might also be a moral force. In this introduction, I contextualize how shame has been differently experienced as bad for Indigenous Peoples and settler-Canadians, and why each experience of shame merits further research in relation to reconciliation. This paper explores the moral character of shame as a way to open the discussion of shame as an ethical matter. In the first section, I offer my critique of reconciliation, as it is currently conceived, which fails to address settler-Canadian responsibility and dismantle settler shame, a significant barrier to achieving any vision of meaningful reconciliation. In the second section, I introduce the “productive” underside of shame and look at how “reintegrative shame” could be a meaningful way for settler-Canadians to engage with the collective shame of Canada’s current and historical injustices. I thus reposition shame as an ethical matter that can open up space to incite an ethical response to the collective shame rather than generate more shame. Through this repositioning, I attempt to make a case for why schooling is an important space for the vision of ethical thinking required to address the limitations of reconciliation.

Shame is pervasive, yet uniquely one’s own. Shame is an affect or emotion that is considered to be a painful one, inducing desires “to cover, to veil, to hide” (Wurmser, 1981, p. 29). It is described by self-evaluation, and is linked to identity construction because it shapes behaviours and understandings of

worth (Tangney & Dearing, 2003). Shame becomes a transitive verb in its forms “shamed, shames or shaming,” used to describe the forceful action of driving someone into shame. Where shame is the name of the feeling, ashamed is the feeling of shame itself. I can be ashamed because I did something bad (this is behavioural and is the state at which shame can be productive, because behaviour can be amended), but shame can become an internalized belief, appearing fixed and permanent. Internalized shame is the belief that “I am ashamed because *I am* bad” (this is my identity — this is how others see me, real or imagined). Repeated exposure to shame can lead to internalization, where shame becomes a part of one’s identity, thus greatly affecting interpersonal relations (Harper & Hoopes, 1990; Kaufman, 1985), and interfering with our “ability to form empathic connections with others” (Tangney, Stuewig, & Mashek, 2007, p. 350).

The negative functions of shame are generally known, but Silvan Tomkins (1962) discerned that the catalyst of shame is care, noting that shame “operates only after interest or enjoyment has been activated,” (p. 134) and therefore paving the path in which psychoanalysts theorize shame. It is the relationship between shame and care that illuminates “our intense attachment to the world, our desire to be connected with others, and the knowledge that, as merely human, we will sometimes fail in our attempts to maintain those connections” (Probyn, 2005, p. 14). Gershen Kaufman (1985) added that shame originates interpersonally, that “whenever someone becomes significant to us, whenever another’s caring, respect or valuing matters, the possibility of feeling shame emerges” (p. 17). Whatever shames a person will be of great interest to them, and when that interest is “ripped away” (Probyn, 2005, p. xii) or threatened, shame can emerge.

Colonial settlers took control over Indigenous children in Residential Schooling by shaming all Indigenous beliefs and behaviours. Even the assimilation attempts were a form of shaming. Assimilation is the process by which a minority group is integrated into the dominant culture. Integration is a nice way of putting it. United, joined, combined — these words imply some form of choice in the decision to come together. “Indigenous” will always be seen as “lesser than” in the colonial mind. From the colonial standpoint, being Indigenous was not only considered “sinful” because of cultural activities or perceived ignorance to the “white-man’s superior ways”.<sup>1</sup> Worse, the sin was seen as innate — it was their identity — a colonial belief that became internalized by individuals and institutionalized through schooling. I see the institutionalization of shame as a process of internalizing shame, and inherent in the colonial project. Because shame has yet to be taken up explicitly, publicly and historically as an inherent part of schooling, the negative impacts of shame continue to be seen as an individual experience, and consequently suggests an individual responsibility for healing, which disregards the social responsibility of settler-Canadians.

It is certain that “Canada’s treatment of Aboriginal Peoples in general, and its creation and operation of Residential Schools in particular, was and continues to be nothing short of genocide” (Chrisjohn et al. 1997, pp. 59-60). For generations, many settler-Canadians descended into unrestrained displays of hostility toward the “Other” so it is no surprise that many Canadians feel ashamed of this history, and others feel shame in the present moment for recognizing the impact of this history on present day issues (Taylor, 2018). Unfortunately, “the paradox about shame,” Tomkins determined, “is that there is shame about shame” (as cited in Kaufman, 1985, p. xxvii). This feeling is so unbearable that it makes us want to disappear, it remains hidden, deep within ourselves. The history of Residential Schooling is consistently referred to as the legacy of shame (TRC, 2017a) that plagues Canada and one of the most shameful chapters (“New Heritage Minute,” 2016) in the nation’s history. Therefore, I contend that shame can actually prevent settlers from engaging with social injustices, and I assert that the Calls to Action (TRC, 2017d) to redress the legacy of Canada’s colonial history are also calls for settler-Canadians to respond to the related collective shame — a seemingly unbearable task.

An encounter with shame is uniquely one’s own and it varies in degrees of discomfort and pain, but all human beings share “the capacity for feeling it” (Probyn, 2005, p. xiv). While we experience it individually, we can share a collective responsibility to acknowledge it and take just action. Elspeth Probyn (2005) aptly cautions us that “when we deny shame or ignore it, we lose a crucial opportunity to reflect on what makes us different and the same” and therefore, “we must use shame to re-evaluate how we are positioned in relation to the past and to rethink how we wish to live in proximity to others” (p. xiv). In this paper, I take up the issue of settler shame because there is an urgent need for the majority of the population to dismantle shame’s cringing withdrawal to hide in order to carry out the Calls to Action (TRC, 2017d) that are required for any vision of reconciliation to transpire. Non-Indigenous Canadians have an ethical responsibility to confront this ongoing historical shame. I propose education as a potential site for working *through* shame.

John Bradshaw (1988) argued that “shaming has always been an integral part of the school system...Even though most modern forms of education no longer use dunce caps there are powerful sources of toxic shame still operating in the school system” (p. 61); the Residential School system in Canada is no exception. Schools present several opportunities for young people to experience shame, including the possibility of shame as an innate possibility in the learning process itself. When someone achieves a learning objective, learning is a positive experience, however challenging. When someone perceives themselves as failing (actual or feared), they can experience shame. If schooling is a place where shame can arise and sometimes is exerted deliberately (though perhaps not consciously), what would it mean to conceive of education as a site for working through shame? If shame is a significant barrier to reconciliation efforts, how

might beginning a journey of understanding shame through schooling help Canadian society move towards a more meaningful reconciliation?

## REFLECTIONS ON RECONCILIATION IN RESPONSE TO THE INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL HISTORY

If the history of Indian Residential Schools in Canada is generally understood as shameful, what have been the public responses to this national shame? The Government of Canada responded by working to advance reconciliation to restore Indigenous-settler relations through formal channels. The Aboriginal Healing Foundation (AHF) and the TRC are two examples of government-funded initiatives. The TRC (2015b) recognized, "Silence in the face of residential school harms [as] an appropriate response for many Indigenous peoples," and that "We must enlarge the space for respectful silence in journeying towards reconciliation, particularly for Survivors who regard this as key to healing" (p. 18). The Commission collected statements of truth to generate an official record of the Indian Residential School legacy, promote public awareness, and create a recommendations report (TRC, 2017b) before holding its closing ceremonies in Ottawa on June 3, 2015. Publications of the *Final Report* (TRC, 2017c) and *Calls to Action* (TRC, 2017d) documents followed.

The *Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, Volume One: Summary* claims "the Commission created space for exploring the meanings and concepts of reconciliation" (TRC, 2015b, p. 18). The TRC (2015b) mandate defines reconciliation as

an ongoing individual and collective process [of establishing and maintaining respectful relationships that requires] commitment from all those affected including First Nations, Inuit and Métis former Indian Residential School (IRS) students, their families, communities, religious entities, former school employees, government and the people of Canada. (p. 16)

In one arena, government initiatives act as fact-finding bodies that focus on "legal truths" for arbitration purposes as in a court of law. In another, they fund community-based healing events to support Survivors, their families, and communities in sharing narrative truths that acknowledge the violence and crimes that occurred. These government responses are one necessary form of reconciliation: they help to create a public record of the previously ignored history and silenced voices. Nevertheless, the governments that established the Indian Residential School system in the first place created these initiatives, exposing them to inevitable public scrutiny and criticism by both Indigenous and settler-Canadians.

Skeptics of truth and reconciliation commissions in their general forms, agree with Michael Ignatieff's (1996) assessment that the function of commissions "is simply to purify the argument, to narrow the range of permissible lies" (p. 113) but they are unable to reach healing. In her analysis of amnesties

and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder vocabulary in post-conflict states, Claire Moon (2009) asserted that new governments used this discourse to construct their legitimacy in legislating social healing, which led to individualizing social problems. National crimes cannot be reduced to the individual afflictions experienced by victims of governments whose policies were intended to harm them. This is an example of how a focus on social rebuilding can fail to account for the correction of other power inequalities that can impede reconciliation. Moon (2009) cautions us that reconciliation can reconstruct narratives in terms of “re-conciliation” to a former cordial state, which ignores truth telling in its inclusion of inharmonious histories. Reconciliation, then, implies that once upon a time, both parties lived in peace and harmony. This belief of reconciliation is a way settler-Canadians can deflect shame and uphold the narrative that historical injustice is in the past or that it was not all bad, therefore creating a “reality” that reflects only the positive or only what settler-Canadians are comfortable with.

In the context of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Indian Residential Schools in Canada, Roland Chrisjohn and Tanya Wasacase (2009) discussed the rhetoric of reconciliation and the problems with its application. Illuminating a misdirect in the application of the term, the authors asserted that “before two parties can *reconcile*, they must, at some earlier time, have been *conciled*” (Chrisjohn & Wasacase, 2009, p. 221). This simply is not the case with Indigenous/non-Indigenous relations in Canada’s history. Canada has consistently established and maintained policies that have worked towards the termination of Indigenous people, and the reactions of Indigenous peoples to those policies have been resistance. Chrisjohn and Wasacase (2009) continue to expose the duplicity:

The job of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, like that of a good marital therapist or (more appropriately in this instance) a concerned priest, is to mend the rift, heal the rift, and make two conjoin again as one. It is an interesting fable, but there is more history to *Star Wars* than to this scenario. The (ex)termination of Indigenous peoples and their unsundered pre-existing title to land and resources is central to the political economy of Canada; was, is, and will continue to be. (p. 222)

The authors challenge the reciprocal action between reconciliation in theory, however well-intentioned, and what it is actually capable of doing through government channels. What is the commission designed to do, and is this the best way to accomplish such intentions? Indigenous scholars are also asking a similar question. Taiaiake Alfred (2009) is equally critical of the commission’s merit and reconciliation itself as a concept: he saw “reconciliation as an emasculating concept, weak-kneed and easily accepting of half-hearted measures of a notion of justice that does nothing to help Indigenous peoples regain their dignity and strength” (p. 181). Arguing for restitution over reconciliation, he explained:

If we do not shift away from the pacifying discourse of reconciliation and begin to reframe people's perceptions of the problem so that it is not a question of how to reconcile with colonialism that faces us but instead how to use restitution as the first step towards creating justice and a moral society, we will be advancing colonialism, not decolonization (Alfred, 2009, p. 182).

The stark differences in Indigenous and settler-Canadian governance and social organization models, drove Alfred to question the logic of whether these two cultures are reconcilable in the first place. Adding to this disjuncture is the lack of defining reconciliation as a process, outcome, or goal. If the outcome of reconciliation is marked by better future relationships, how will we get there? Conceptions of reconciliation vary across scopes; what counts as reconciliation in one context might not count in another.

### *Reconciling relationships through art, education, and land*

Critics of reconciliation argue that reconciliation could offer a more hopeful future for Indigenous-settler relations, but not as the government has imagined and enacted them thus far. Reconciliation is taking shape in many different forms across the country, and while some are legal, formal pursuits of redress, not all efforts are government initiated. Artist Jamie Black created The REDress Project (2010-ongoing, <http://www.theredressproject.org/>) as an aesthetic response to the 1,000+ missing and murdered Indigenous woman and girls across Canada. Adrian Stimson contributed an installation of three windows filled with feathers and an infirmary bed from Old Sun Residential School in Gleichen, Alberta, titled *Sick and Tired* (2004) to the exhibit *Witnesses: Art and Canada's Indian Residential Schools* (Turner, 2013). Valerie Galley (2016) is pursuing reconciliation goals through the revitalization of Indigenous languages, which the federal government has failed to recognize and support. In a recent article for *Policy Options*, she wrote:

Today, there is no statutory legislation or overarching federal policy to recognize and revitalize Indigenous languages in Canada. The excellent work undertaken to revitalize Indigenous languages is being done entirely by community champions and language activists. Organizations such as the First Peoples Cultural Council of British Columbia, the Kahnawake Cultural Centre and the Ojibwe Cultural Foundation are some of the Indigenous organizations that have developed and perfected language revitalization efforts, which are resulting in fluency in these languages. (para. 6)

In the recently released TRC's *Calls to Action* (TRC, 2017d), there are recommendations that speak to language revitalization (#14 is for an Aboriginal languages act and #15 is for an Aboriginal languages commissioner), but there is no legislative requirement to fund the revitalization of Indigenous languages, however the Trudeau Government has been drafting the Indigenous Languages Act since 2016, and is anticipated to be introduced with fall 2018 legislation (Meyer, 2018). More emphasis is given to "education" in its broadest characterization as a form of reconciliation, as determined by the TRC.



The TRC (2015c) expressed an emphatic belief in the potential for education to “remedy the gaps in historical knowledge that perpetuate ignorance and racism” and that “Educating Canadians for reconciliation involves not only schools and post-secondary institutions but also dialogue forums and public history institutions such as museums and archives” (p. 117). In the past, history curricula have primarily focused on nation building, and textbooks neglected to provide context for the understanding of how Indigenous Peoples have been portrayed through the decades. Prior to 1970, Indigenous peoples were portrayed as savage warriors or irrelevant onlookers. The 1980s showed Indigenous peoples in a more positive light but emphasized poverty and social dysfunction without any understanding as to how these conditions emerged, and the 1990s showed Indigenous peoples as protestors advocating for rights. However, Canadians lacked an understanding of the significance of rights in relation to assimilation in the education system (TRC, 2015c). Because we fail to acknowledge the past about the residential school system in our textbooks, tourist guides, and cultural consumption, we uphold the reality that most citizens say they know nothing about it. For the last two years, I have confronted this reality with my group of teacher candidates in a foundations course that takes up the issue of omitted histories in our school curricula. Student responses to the coursework reveal their own shock, sadness, rage, and shame about: 1) the long history of abuse and; 2) their late, little or no knowledge about this history. It is clear that reconciliation means different things to different parties. What it means to individuals is an important avenue schools could explore — what does it mean to you, your family, or your communities?

Following the TRC mandates, I believe curriculum-specific materials and public education campaigns can inform Canadians about the history and ongoing impacts of Residential Schools. While these represent important steps towards reconciliation, they are just one of many steps to take. Educating Canadians about history and the social impacts of past colonialism as “content” is one thing, but where is the curriculum on critical thinking, on considerations of the systemic inequalities of power and *current* colonial issues and practices impeding visions of reconciliation? Where is the curriculum on learning how to express the feelings (of shame) that arise when one learns about these histories, or current injustices and what are their responsibilities to them? Adding to the significance of these omissions, as Paulette Regan (2010) articulated in the results of their research on how people learn about historical injustices, most non-Indigenous people “resist the notion that violence lies at the core of Indigenous-settler relations” (p. 21). After all, resistance or outright denial is easier to enact than confront the shameful reality that Indigenous-settler relations are more often than not, characterized by everyday violence. Only a year after the establishment of Canada’s TRC and the Formal Apology for Indian Residential Schools from Prime Minister Stephen Harper, Harper blatantly denied the existence of a history of colonialism in Canada in a speech at the

2009 G20 summit, thus again perpetuating the “dominant-culture version of history,” and yet another example of “the more subtle forms of violence that permeate everyday Indigenous-settler relations” (Regan, 2010, p. 10).

Waziyatawin (2009) and Alfred (2009) are focusing on land restoration and reparations as a fundamental step towards reconciliation. Settler society has prevented Indigenous Peoples from living on their own lands, therefore “true” reconciliation must involve the return of land. Waziyatawin (2009) assures us that there are ways to conceive of this that do not involve current settlers renouncing their individual property rights; the return of all Crown lands currently designated as federal, or national lands is a given, but it is a contested issue. Suggesting we must also return to the land, Celia Haig-Brown (2009) posed the question, “Whose traditional land are you on?” (p. 4) to her readers and to her students as a way of prompting Canadians to decolonize their lives. Looking to the land shows us the many ways we come to be part of a colonized country. She explained:

We have stories of how we came to be here: we need to trace those stories and our place in the process of colonization — whether it is as entrepreneur, refugee, Indigenous person, adventurer, or any one of a myriad of possibilities. None of the players in these stories escape the effects of colonization, but in each case, one takes the time to think through what these effects are and what their significance is. (p. 14)

Discussion around reconciliation in Canada has focused on remedying the previous omissions of history by sharing Survivors’ stories and formally acknowledging the history and impact of Residential Schools. A less common but blatant omission is the “erasure of Indigenous peoples from the lands,” (Haig-Brown, 2009, p. 16) and so reconciliation with the land is an important step towards redress for all Canadians. Reconciling with land requires one to think about both the land from which one comes, but also “the land and original people of the place where one arrives” (Haig-Brown, 2009, p. 16).

Another topic of reconciliation is Indigenous-settler relationships. However, if we describe reconciliation as an individual process of restoring harmony with oneself and a collective process “that brings adversaries to rebuild peaceful relations and a new future together” (Chambers, 2009, p. 286), we are ignoring the complexities of social and environment interactions, only to re-inscribe simple binaries that will further impede reconciliation attempts (Haig-Brown, 2009). As the critics of reconciliation have demonstrated, the discourse of reconciliation *will* look like in Canada, citizens might be inclined to question what it looks like in its current, imagined and future forms and what are their roles or possible roles in moving towards it might be. It is more complicated than restoring peaceful relationships, which some would argue is an illusion anyway. Regan (2010) called for settlers to “unsettle” (p. 11) the settler within, which is realized in part by matching human faces to the truths and impacts

of colonization, and also by dismantling the settler privilege that has upheld dominant narratives. Natalie A. Chambers (2009) adds to this idea of unsettling:

For settler peoples and their descendants to authentically participate and respond to the call for truth and reconciliation, we need to look, in all honesty, at our complicity in maintaining the status quo – the hegemonic colonial paradigms that historically, and in the present day, perpetrate unequal power relationships through the systemic privileging of settler peoples' knowledge, languages, and values. (p. 286)

When previously unknown or deliberately ignored facts about the histories of Indian Residential Schools become connected to human faces, we are confronted with a powerful and uncomfortable history of shame and otherness. This encounter with shame can lead to more shame, particularly settler shame that induces desires to look away rather than drive aspirations to reconcile.

#### UNSETTLING SETTLER SHAME TO RE-IMAGINE RECONCILIATION

In Regan's (2010) book, *Unsettling the Settler Within*, unsettling is a process that requires Canadians to unlearn our "historical amnesia" (p. 6) and settler narratives that ignore Canadian colonialism or portray it as a benevolent paternalistic attempt to assimilate Indigenous children into mainstream Canadian culture. To "unsettle" our comfortable assumptions about the past, Regan (2010) argued, is to confront colonial violence as part of our own settler truth telling and make space for counter-narratives as told by Indigenous peoples themselves. Unsettling calls for a re-imagining of reconciliation, "as a decolonizing place of encounter between settlers and Indigenous people" (p. 12). How do we begin to access this space of "settler truth telling" that Regan advocates for, and what would a caring curriculum look like; one that does not perpetuate settler shame, but rather addresses shame as an ethical way to begin to unpack the issue of colonial violence?

The dominant story of shame points to colonialism as an "Indian" problem, which places responsibility for reconciliation and healing in the body and being of Indigenous peoples. Regan (2010) wrote that it is easy for settler-Canadians to "judge the apparent inability of Native people to rise above" the conditions of poverty, abuse, addiction, and high rates of youth suicide and "easy to think that we know what is best for them" (p. 11). This singular focus on the Other, they say, "prevents us from acknowledging our own need to decolonize" (p. 11). In the film *Rhymes for Young Ghouls* (Christou, Chin-Yee, & Barnaby, 2013), Mi'gmaq director Jeff Barnaby unsettles his audience with his overt use of violence. My interpretation of this unsettling is to confront viewers and unsettle potential feelings of shame. The film is about Aila, an Indigenous heroine, and her vengeance against the abusive Indian Agent, Popper, who regulates the community and St. Dymphna's Residential School.<sup>2</sup> When Aila's mother's drawings spring to life in an animated sequence, *Rhymes* takes up the issue of "acknowledging the settler need to decolonize" and confronts its

non-Indigenous audience to encounter the decolonizing struggle of their own discomfort and shame.

The story is about the Wolf and the Mushrooms. Wolf is the settler, who either directly or indirectly colonized the land to its demise. Symbolized by the residential school, the greedy wolf devours Mi'gmaq children, who are mushrooms. With little left to devour and horrified by the seismic wake of destruction left by his actions, Wolf is so consumed with his shame that he eats himself, tail to stomach to heart, extinguishing himself entirely. In this story, I see Barnaby asking his non-Indigenous viewers the following question: if we find a way to acknowledge our shame, how can we act on it responsibly? Settler shame is different from settler denial in that the realization that the Residential School system and lingering experiences are indeed a “settler” problem (not an Indian one) carries such an unsettling discomfort that it can even produce more shame. Rather than *shaming* settlers or Canadian actors and the role they have played in colonizing the land, what would it mean to reconceive of reconciliation as an encounter with shame that advances into care? How might shame unsettle the moral settler to incite the move towards responsibility?

The potential to unsettle the “dominant-culture version of history” (Regan, 2010, p. 6) as it has been presented in education is significant, and it begins with including Indigenous counter narratives, like *Rhymes*, in the curriculum. Just as Barnaby hopes to unsettle his audience by reconnecting historical truths to human experience, so too can educators work towards unsettling shame to foster caring students. Barnaby uses extreme violence in the film to waken the discomfort that so many Canadians would rather conceal or deny, and in doing so, he risks shaming his non-Indigenous viewers further. This is the risk inherent in working with one’s shame, and also what makes it a potentially affective curricular intensity. Shame unsettles us. With this discomfort, the possibility to retreat into more shame emerges, but so too does the possibility to advance care. Educators cannot know which possibility will emerge, but if it means the reimagining of reconciliation that could advance into a deeper reflection on care and responsibility, it is a risk worth taking. The risk of working with shame parallels what many teachers know but are prevented from talking about — that real education always involves risk. As asserted by Gert Biesta (2015) in his book, *The Beautiful Risk of Education*, the real risk lies in ignoring the risk in education, for any attempt to know robs both teacher and student of the true experience of curriculum as always in the making. Furthermore, the inclusion of unsettling pedagogies in curriculum is necessary for decolonizing and transformative learning, which can inspire new ethical charges. If we wish to unsettle our comfortable assumptions about the past and open our hearts to a reconciliation that is to confront colonial violence as part of our own settler truth telling, we must risk interacting differently with shame.

*Reintegrative shame and the move towards ethical responsibility*

Following psychoanalysis scholars who theorized that shame can be productive because it can only exist with the initial expression of care or interest, I reassert shame as an ethical, rather than a behavioural, matter that can teach moral individuals how to think about their responsibility towards others. In order to understand how we might engage with the registering of care, education scholar Leon Benade (2015) makes the distinction between “stigmatic shame” and “reintegrative shame”: stigmatic shaming is the act of belittling, discouraging and marginalizing the offender, whereby “shaming [is] actively *done to* the offender” (p. 667, original emphasis). His definition of shaming and use of the word “offender” to describe a person who violated a social norm is in reference to reintegrative shame theory, as theorized by criminologist Jonathon Braithwaite. Stigmatic shaming has a long history of practice in Western societies, most overtly used in the justice system: provoking an emotional response of shame to the extent an individual will not commit further crimes (Braithwaite, 1989). The key is that shame “maintains the structure of society [through conformity] by ensuring that the internalized [dominant] norms and rules operate through the consciences of the individuals” and culture impacts individuals through the fear of rejection from the dominant group (Leitch, 1999, p. 5). Braithwaite (2000) asserted that most contemporary Western societies believe in learning by fear of punishment to refrain from misbehaving (ranging from criminality to minor wrongdoings). This belief is certainly supported by and learned in schooling, where the history of shame-based classroom management techniques is shown to depend on consequences, as opposed to other devices like positive reinforcement (see British Public School and Indian Residential School histories (in chronological order): i.e., Gathorne-Hardy, 1977; Miller, 1996; Chrisjohn, Young & Maraun, 1997; Milloy, 1999; Schaverien, 2015).

In contrast, Braithwaite (2000) hypothesized that societies would have lower crime rates if the belief about shame in relation to crime encourages the offender to desist (reintegrative), as opposed to stigmatizing the shameful of crime, which would only increase recidivism. Simply put, “societies that are forgiving and respectful while taking crime seriously have low crime rates; societies that degrade and humiliate criminals have higher crime rates” (p. 242). Reintegrative shaming, then, “is a process *done with* the offender (and several others),” (Benade, 2015, p. 667, emphasis in original) engaging in discussions about the violation with the victim(s) and community, where dialogue works to restore relationships. Braithwaite (2000) hypothesized that “it is exposure early in our lives to the idea of the shameful of murder that puts it off the deliberative agenda of responsible citizens” (p. 244). If there is an offence, he sees justice as consisting of community engagement and a problem-solving environment, rather than punishment. Through communication, participation, and respectful dialogue, the offender comes to understand the consequences of the offence, and hears and understands the disapproval of the community. This leads the offender(s) to make reparation with the community, which includes

reconciling with the victim(s) (Braithwaite, 1989). I acknowledge that drawing on criminology scholarship while maintaining a commitment to decolonization might appear to be contrary, especially given the over-representation of Indigenous people in Canada's criminal justice system. However, I advocate using reintegrative shame as a concept with settler-Canadians, because shame, I assert, is itself a colonial concept (Bewes, 2011). Given the longstanding history of shaming as a punitive practice in colonial schooling, what does it mean for education to hold both the TRC and criminology as sources of insight for understanding ongoing histories of shame and colonization? What are youth's ethical responsibilities to these histories once they come to know of them, and how will they cope with their own shame if it arises?

Benade (2015) detected that for this concept of restorative practice to be effective, "both the victim and the offender must overcome their shame so that they can engage with each other and the offending" (p. 663). Following a similar notion, Ahmed & Braithwaite (2012) examined children's capacity to manage emotions, particularly shame, furthering Benade's (2015) claim that "Emotional management is seen to be critical to the later development and exercise of social responsibility, and may be assisted by restorative justice programmes at school" (p. 663). The key to shame management, he reasoned, is to

reflect a form of social responsibility as it contributes to community restoration by repairing ruptured social relationships. The notion of shaming and acknowledgement of harm thus assumes norms of acceptable community behaviour, attitudes and relationships, and is therefore also an ethical matter. (Benade, 2015, p. 661)

Shame can manifest when we feel that we are not worthy or when we feel that we are not living up to certain norms (upheld by self and others). Because we are motivated to behave in coherence with our ethical ideal, can shame be the impetus for behavioural change? Can the desire to move closer to our ethical ideal help us consider the harmed other(s) in a caring way?

From an ethical perspective, the Other<sup>3</sup> is a necessary condition for moral interaction. Likewise, shame hinges on the role of the Other as audience — it originates interpersonally and "it is ultimately linked to a desire for reciprocity;" thus, it is a medium of relationality (Werry & O'Gorman, 2007, p. 218). Drawing on Sartre's discussion of shame, Sandra Bartky (2012) flushed out the role of the Other in the process of internalizing shame:

Once an actual Other has revealed my object-character to me, I can become an object for myself; I can come to see myself as I might be seen by another, caught in the shameful act. Hence, I can succeed in being vulgar all alone: In such a situation, the Other before whom I am ashamed is only — myself (p. 85).

That is, once we have experienced shame in the presence of another individual, we can relive that experience over and over again by becoming our own audience. This is when shame becomes toxic, but you will recall that not all shame is internalized. If we are able to develop our capacity for healthy self-evaluation,

we might be able to 1) cope more effectively with shame in proactive defense against internalization, and 2) mobilize the adaptive functions of shame that help us grow and develop in our relations to others.

It is shame's relational quality and dependence on the Other(s) that makes it an interesting emotion to explore potential moral dimensions of behaviour, particularly as one encounters difference. How difference registers with one's ethical ideal will influence one's interpersonal relationships. After all, it is otherness (relationality – living in relation to others) that characterizes our social life. Where difference appears as a nonreciprocal relationship, Levinas and Cohen (1987) wrote, "The Other as Other is not only an alter ego: the Other is what I myself am not. The Other is this, not because of the Other's character, or physiognomy, or psychology, but because of the Other's very alterity" (p. 83).

Shame can generate as a personal failure in the eyes of the Other, where Other is not only to a singular other, but to all that is Other to oneself, or that which is outside of one's ideals of self. If we saw it to be our moral responsibility to examine how we relate to otherness, as Michael L. Morgan (2008) proposed, this standard would be a norm upheld by the reintegrative shaming process. I see this responsibility in Levinasian terms as an obligation, and yet Sharon Todd (2009) proclaimed you cannot teach responsibility. She explained:

the obligation we have toward others is not something one learns as a piece of knowledge. Responsibility is a response to the command of the other; it is a prescriptive to a prescriptive. In no way can responsibility be instilled or inculcated in a direct fashion and thus it cannot be systemized into any curricula or teacher manual. But this is not to say that it has no bearing upon education (p. 76).

I see shame as a pedagogical encounter that when responded to through dialogue with others, can provoke the kind of thinking and feeling in students for self that extends toward a responsibility *for* others. The process of reintegrative shaming *done with* the offender and wider community inherently includes not only the restoration of self, but also a restoration of otherness. Working with shame to incite ethical responsibility for one's (inter)actions with others is embedded in the natural desire to move closer to the standards upheld by the community; thus, shame might motivate our need to reconcile.

Shame might signal that we are in need of others to help us understand the source of our shame. Translated to the school setting, taking up shame in education goes beyond analyzing or altering the potential of shame embedded in the learning process itself. Shame is not to be avoided, but rather, understood and mobilized into something more productive than internalization. As a major influence in creating environments for the internalization of shame, how is schooling developing the capacity for shame in young people? External mechanisms of assessment, grading, selection, and discipline can promote



shaming in schooling, but whether a reintegrative shaming environment is fostered or not, students will still encounter shame. Young people will still face internal factors, such as deeply ingrained or partly unconscious feelings of low self-worth within the school setting. Why not take up shame as a curricular intensity that moves one to think and feel, as part of the curriculum? If not in school, where else will young people learn how to manage shame in more productive ways?

## CONCLUSION

My approach to shame in this paper draws on, but also diverges from, the two main disciplines that have taken up shame and schooling as a mode of inquiry—psychoanalysis and criminology. Psychoanalysts are doing meaningful work in studying the effects of shame, particularly the long-term effects related to boarding school, and criminologists are seeking to advance understandings of the role of shame in reducing recidivism rates in criminal offenders. Adding to this literature, I call for the collection of youth's interpretations of shame as they learn to process their shameful feelings for themselves, particularly in the school setting. Rather than ask youth if they can recall early educational experiences of feeling ashamed, which have already happened, let us ask if they can recall experiences of feeling ashamed (both in and outside of school) that are happening. Further research will help to corroborate whether an understanding of shame can expand to include one of care, and whether and to what end, this transformation can impact perceptions of worth and future relationships differently. Insight into this topic of shame, reconciliation, and schooling has significant implications for not only education as an ethical and pedagogical site of working through shame, but also for research on education as a form of reconciliation in Canada. Where settler-Canadians and Indigenous peoples experience shame differently, how might the process of reintegrative shaming aid restorative justice practices in school? Indigenous Survivors, their families and communities have taken the public stage to share their stories and the impacts of the Indian Residential School system. Reintegrative shaming demands that the settler take the stage *with* victims in order to engage in discussions about the moral offending and restore relationships. Can settlers move from internalized shame to reintegrative shame? I believe they can because Indigenous people have been asserting their agency through acts of resistance towards shame since the beginning and continue to demonstrate their resiliency in this way. By developing a capacity for coping with shame, and maybe even mobilizing it from a younger age, future generations might become more resilient adults, maybe even more caring and responsible human beings. While there is no guarantee that an inclusion of reintegrative shame will achieve such lofty aspirations, the prospect of shame as a curricular intensity is a hopeful one, and certainly stands to interrupt the role of schools in perpetuating a cycle of shaming experiences.



## NOTES

1. The terms in scare quotes have been employed here to mirror the language used at the time, which are not dissimilar to those of Sir John A. Macdonald (the first Prime Minister of Canada, who served during the time the federal government approved the first residential schools in the country). For an example, see [http://eco.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.9\\_07186\\_1\\_2/369?r=0&s=1](http://eco.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.9_07186_1_2/369?r=0&s=1). The language he used when speaking about Indigenous Peoples and culture is difficult to accept today.
2. St. Dymphna is the patron saint of mental health.
3. I refer to Other as the conceptual “Other” as it is used in sociology and other disciplines to indicate the concept of individuals or a group that is different from or unknown to the “subject” group. The concept of the Other highlights how many societies create a sense of belonging, identity and social status by constructing social categories as binary opposites.

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