



uOttawa

**Faculty of Social Sciences
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FEM1100: Settler Colonialism & Indigenous Feminisms

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Road Map

1. Canadian National Mythologies & Settler Colonialism
2. Truth & Reconciliation Commission (TRC, residential schools)
3. Indigenous Feminisms, Stolen Generations and Contemporary Child Welfare Policies

Canadian National Mythologies

"We also have no history of colonialism. So we have all of the things that many people admire about the great powers but none of the things that threaten or bother them."

Settler Colonialism

A settlement in a new country...a body of people who settle in a new locality, forming a community subject to or connected with their parent state; the community so formed, consisting of the original settlers and their descendants and successors, as long as the connection with the parent state is kept up (Ania Loomba from the Oxford English Dictionary)

- Terra nullius: peaceful settlement

Colonialism

Ania Loomba “reminds us that colonialism involved a wide range of practices including, “trade, plunder, negotiation, warfare, genocide, enslavement and rebellions” (*Colonialism/Postcolonialism* 1998: 2)

Loomba provides the following definition:

- “colonialism can be defined as the conquest and control of other people’s lands and goods”

White Settler Colonialism

“A white settler society is one established by Europeans on non-European soil. Its origins lie in the dispossession and near extermination of Indigenous populations by the conquering Europeans...In the national mythologies of such societies, it is believed that white people came first and that it is they who principally developed the land...European settlers thus become the original inhabitants and the group most entitled to the fruits of citizenship. A quintessential feature of white settler mythologies is, therefore, disavowal of conquest, genocide, slavery, and the exploitation of the labour of peoples of colour. In North America, it is still the case that European conquest and colonization are often denied, largely through the fantasy that North America was peacefully settled and not colonized” (Sherene Razack in *Race, Space and the Law* 2002:1-2)

The “Indian” Act

Key document that governs Aboriginal people and land in Canada. The following are some of the key parts of it:

- Federal government power to rule over Aboriginal people in the Indian act.
- It placed Aboriginal people and all parts of their lives under the total control of the federal government
- It is an Act based on the forced assimilation of Aboriginal people
- Defined who an “Indian” is by law

Role of Settlers

“I wonder how we can reconcile when the majority of Canadians do not understand the historic or contemporary injustice of dispossession and occupation...Canada must engage in a decolonization project and a re-education project that would enable its government and its citizens to engage with Indigenous peoples in a just and honourable way in the future” (Leanne Simpson)

The Sixties Scoop – Lost/Stolen Generations

- practice of removing large numbers of Indigenous children from their families & giving them often to white middle class families (adoption or foster care)
- Chelsea Vowel: what places children and families at risk?

Residential Schools & Lost Generations

“cultural genocide has been taking place in a systematic, routine manner...the provincial child welfare policy (referring to the Sixties Scoop) was remarkably similar to the old policy of sending Native children to residential schools. Indeed, the seizure of Indian children began to escalate just as the residential schools were winding down in the 1960's. In this way, the child welfare system simply replaced the residential school system, producing the same kind of damaging effects on the Native culture. It became the new method of colonizing Indian people after the residential schools were finally discredited” (The Dispossessed, Geoffrey York)

Kids in Care Today

- 48% of 30,000 children and youth in foster care across Canada are Aboriginal children, even though Aboriginal peoples account for only 4.3% of the Canadian population (2015)