

CLARE LAND. *Decolonizing Solidarity: Dilemmas and Directions for Supporters of Indigenous Struggles*. London, United Kingdom: Zed Books, Limited. (2015). 256 pp. \$27.95 (paperback). (ISBN 978-1-783-60173-8).

Clare Land's *Decolonizing Solidarity: Dilemmas and Directions for Supporters of Indigenous Struggles* makes significant contributions to the questions that non-Indigenous people must ask themselves in order to understand the politics of solidarity. Land is a non-Aboriginal person living on Kulin land, a community worker, researcher, and long-time supporter of Aboriginal struggles. Land's award-winning PhD dissertation interrogates her subject-position as a non-Indigenous person in solidarity with Indigenous communities.

Although the book is centred on Indigenous-settler solidarity in Australia, it provides a framework that can be utilized to decolonize Indigenous education policies and curriculum in the Canadian context. Considering the processes of colonization of First Nations Métis and Inuit (FNMI) communities and the recent history of residential schools, conversations around decolonization are highly relevant in Canada, especially with the recent release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) report (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015).¹

Land's book potentially presents a new and innovative framework for identity politics and relationships based on mutuality, which is a cornerstone of the TRC report's calls to action focusing on reconciliation. Land interrogates endemic white privilege and supremacy and its pervasiveness in the "white psych" in which it is embedded, while also providing concrete examples of the effectiveness of non-Eurocentric, communal epistemologies for solidarity work. The book presents a critical account of the politics of white settler and Indigenous solidarity activism centred on the disruption of white supremacy through the creation of dialogue, self-understanding and awareness. Land makes strong connections between past and present colonial projects and how understanding one's social location and position can disrupt the status quo of complicity in the ongoing colonization of Indigenous peoples.

In chapters 1-3, Land lays out the historical and what she refers to as the “political genealogy” of Indigenous and non-Indigenous solidarity activism in Australia. She outlines a critical history of non-Indigenous support for solidarity work in which she challenges how such histories are conceptualized and recorded from predominantly white narratives. Land posits that understanding political genealogy involves white activists familiarizing themselves with the history of political actions supportive of Indigenous struggles so that such solidarity activists can understand their social positionings in relation to both current and past atrocities which serve to perpetuate the colonial apparatus. Land’s decolonization theoretical framework calls on the disruption of binary identity categories of race such as “white / black” ranked binaries. Land advocates for critical self-reflection as a means to reconstruct whiteness such that non-Indigenous white settlers can come to terms with and acknowledge their unearned white privilege.

Chapters 4 to 6 discuss the centrality of identity politics in terms of reasons and justifications for white solidarity activists joining Indigenous movements in Australia. Land interrogates some of the multifaceted and problematic reasons for white activism and the complexities of white guilt and its implications for power relations. She demonstrates the means by which white privilege is embedded in such solidarity movements while articulating differing and albeit very problematic rationales for white solidarity in Indigenous struggles.

Chapter 7 emphasizes the necessity of preventing a focus on white guilt, paternalistic advice and white settler dominance of Land draws on Fanon’s notions of colonizer subjectivity and colonized objectivity, reiterating that disruption of whiteness requires removing white subjectivities into non white spaces. However, this analogy can go in two directions: white settlers in non-white “comfort” spaces can either interrogate their own complicity in colonialism and white privilege in such spaces or they may re-enact violence by perpetuating such racialized dualisms and narratives of superiority.

Although Land articulates the importance of de-centring white privilege and white perspectives in the politics of solidarity, there is no discussion of anticolonial resistance to structures of white supremacy that can be achieved in solidarity with racialized people in the Australian context. The solidarity that is possible between marginalized groups can facilitate a strong decolonization movement in which white voices may not be necessary at all. Her call for anti-racist work among white settlers does not acknowledge the inherent lack of Indigenous voices and ongoing colonial settler-Indigenous relations in anti-racist contexts. Land problematically references non-Indigenous Australian activists solely as white settlers, thus excluding the voices of racialized experiences in the Australian context. In Canada, on the other hand, the former chair of the TRC, Senator Murray Sinclair provides a nuanced perspective about newcomers, when highlighting that one of the 94 recommendations

proposes that new Canadians need to be educated and collectively responsible in current reconciliation efforts (as cited in Macdonald, 2016, p. 2). Counter to Land's more limited analysis, which examines non-Indigenous (as the white settler) and Indigenous relationships, Sinclair's perspective removes identity binaries between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. In doing so, Sinclair acknowledges new Canadians and their role in the building of mutual respect and reconciliation. Despite these limitations, Land provides meaningful and insightful accounts of community-based education initiatives necessary for solidarity movements. Land's voice and subject position, and the complexity of such as highlighted throughout this essay, shed light on the actualization of truth and reconciliation as presented in Canada by the TRC within the Australian setting. Anyone who is concerned with educational research on critical whiteness, solidarity, antiracism, Indigeneity, settler-Indigenous relations, and anti-colonial studies will find this book helpful.

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NOTE

1. The TRC released its final report in December 2015 after sharing over 6,000 testimonies of Indigenous residential school survivors. An important category among the calls to action is Education, advocating for the Canadian government to address gaps in funding of First Nations children's education, culturally appropriate curricula, language preservation, respect for treaty relationships, and full parental-community participation in education, among others. The TRC report's calls to action consists of 94 recommendations presented as a means to restoring relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. Though a long road forward, it is a good step towards fostering dialogue, community and allyship.

REFERENCES

- Macdonald, N. (2016, June 1). Sen. Murray Sinclair on truth and reconciliation's progress. *Macleans*. Retrieved from <http://www.macleans.ca/news/canada/sen-murray-sinclair-on-the-progress-of-truth-and-reconciliation/>
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