

Bringing Spirituality into the Academy

Stories, Perspectives, and Academic Application

Jandrea Rose Oddoc (Kalinga and Igorot) (University of the Philippines)
Emma Litschko (Mi'kmaq) (York University)
Jen Bolton (Anishinaabe) (York University)

INDIGENOUS SPIRITUALITY

WHAT IT IS?

-Interconnectedness of elements

-“Humanization” of elements

WHAT IT IS NOT?

-Mere superstition

-Seen as an Anti-development

-Spectacle

Can our spirituality and stories influence how we think in academia?

- values from the story of Moccasin Slipper: community responsibility, working towards the ultimate goal

-guided by morals and cultural teachings - humility, respect and openness- in situating oneself in the academe.

-Adapting Indigenous ways of 'knowing and doing things' in academic research

Take-Away

Spirituality and traditional stories is influential in how we think in academia. It provides moral values that guides us in the academe. It also provides us a sense of responsibility which can keep us grounded and directed towards the ultimate goal. Lastly, it provides knowledge on how we propose to solve a problem.

**Do our programs and institutions
accept knowledge from our stories
and spirituality?**

Commonalities

-stories used to form ethics

-considers life forms other than humans as relatives

-teachings, responsibilities, accountability: Humility

-isolation from non-Indigenous beliefs and practices

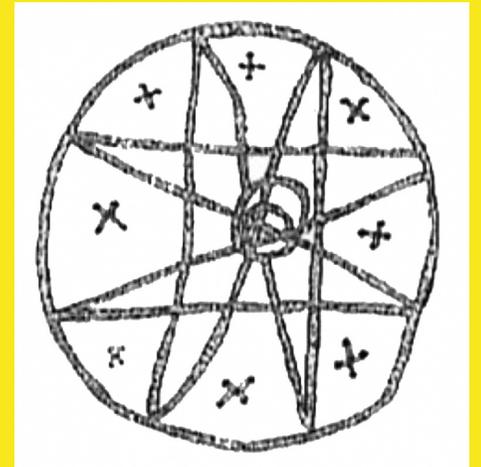
**Do our programs and institutions
accept knowledge from our stories
and spirituality?**

Differences

-identity in academia

-pride in identity

-concerns of bias



**“Stories are medicine. A story told one way
can cure but the same story told another
way can injure”
Thomas King**

Take Aways



-there is more than just academic/colonial methodology

-Indigenous methods are valid!

-Indigenous ethics have different morals and values

-stay humble and respectful

-ask questions instead of making assumptions

-ask Indigenous colleagues/students what can be done to make colonial places more comfortable

In our experience, does Academia create space for Indigenous Spirituality?

-The availability and inclusion of spiritual knowledge within in our programs ranges from no offerings to dedicated courses

-The comfort we feel in sharing our spirituality within our institution varies.

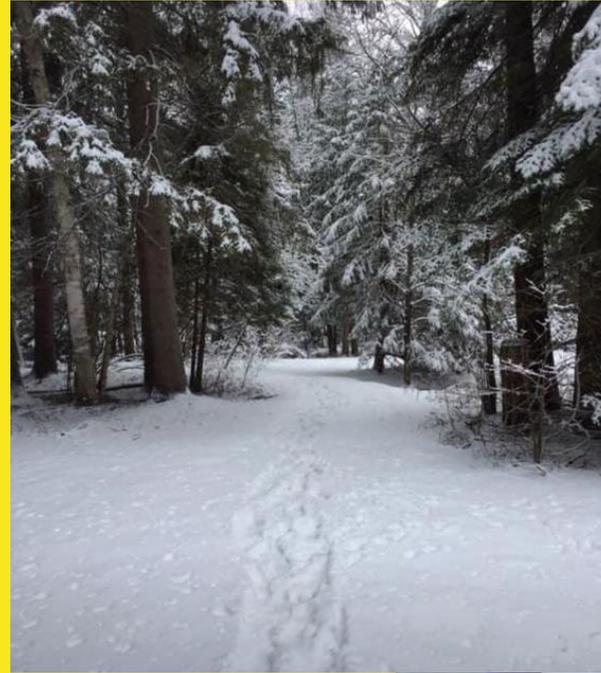
-Our knowledge must be verified from outsider “expert” sources

Do our Institutions actively create space for Indigenous Spirituality ?



-We have all been in spaces within our academic institutions where our spirituality is respected and valued. There are moments of spiritual inclusion.

Reflections

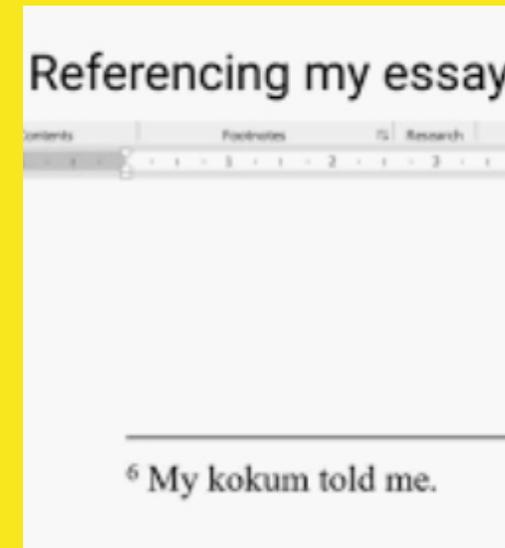


-We see slow but positive change, but there is much to be done

-What is determined as 'credible knowledge' must not be limited to colonial and Eurocentric knowledge. Indigenous Knowledge holders and Elders should be recognized with the same respect and reverence as those holding an academic title.

- cite our Elders, Spiritual sources, and knowledge holders.

Take-Aways



**Thank you (Agyaman; Wela'lioq;
Chi Miigwetch)**

Questions?