Chapter 1

Introduction: Indigenous and Western Philosophy in Native North America

This book is designed to engage you (students of philosophy such as preservice teachers, public school teachers, and teacher educators) in a discussion on the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous (Western) philosophical traditions as part of the process of developing our own personal and collective philosophies (of education). In the process of reflecting on the relationship between Native and non-Native philosophies, I demonstrate how Indigenous perspectives Native to North America can assist in further contextualizing Western approaches to liberation. For example, Indigenous philosophies challenge those of us who, philosophically, are Westerners, such as myself, to consider place rather than time as our place of departure or the primary lens of analyzing events *in* time (Deloria, 1994). When considering philosophy from a place-centered perspective, we realize that philosophies are not abstract entities that exist in a vacuum waiting for the enlightened *man* to bring them into human consciousness. Rather, they are dynamic, forever-transforming products of human creativity and thus represent real people with specific cultural orientations emerging from geographical locations.

For example, progressive teacher educator Richard Brosio in *Philosophical Scaffolding for the Construction of Critical Democratic Education* (2000) begins his study with "...considering how our near and remote ancestors tried and often succeeded in making sense of their worlds" (p. 2) referring to those of ancient Greece because "my life and intellectual experiences in the West and its civilization(s) makes it natural to express myself within its framework" (p. 3). Brosio's attention to detail, he contends, and I would concur, is not indicative of a conscious bias on his part, but rather correctly represents the recognition of origin, that is, *place*. Brosio does not argue that ancient Greeks

were the *first* or the *only* people "doing philosophy" in *the old days*, acknowledging that people all over the world also have long and rich traditions in philosophy, including Native North Americans.

However, what tends not to be discussed as frequently are the Afroasiatic roots of Greek and thus European philosophy in general (Bernal, 1987, 2001; James, 1954/2005; Sarton, 1952). That is, there is a relatively recent tendency within Western philosophical discourse regarding the African and Phoenician influences on ancient Greek civilization to downplay, deny, or avoid it all together. For example, critical authors such as George G.M. James (1954/2005), in effect, argue that Greek philosophy is a Eurocentric construct, which metaphorically represents black Africa painted in whiteface. The African roots of Greek philosophy, from this perspective, have therefore been died blonde, or made to look like a European (blonde being the most obvious metaphorical association). More recently, however, scholars such as Martin Bernal (2001) contend that the early ancient Greeks appropriated their religion, philosophy, and science from Phoenicians and Egyptians (specifically "black" Egyptians, which is a point of contention among Eurocentric historians) because they both expanded on them and referenced their original sources. For the remainder of this volume, when we refer to "Greek philosophy" or the "Western" tradition, this is what we mean, that is, a hybrid approach with roots in the Middle East and Africa, as well as Europe (these issues will be further explored in Chapter Two).

Also, contributing to the complexity of the situation, another issue that is not always considered when reflecting on the genealogy and archeology of our own philosophies, especially when coming from the perspective of the occupying force (the dominant or ruling society), is the relationship between the immigrant philosophies, consisting largely of appropriated and distorted epistemologies, and the Indigenous traditions of the colonized, especially in the last five hundred years in the Americas. That is, since European colonizers, referred to as "predator" by self-identified "Indigenist" scholar/activist Ward Churchill (1995), came to American shores drawing on their Western philosophies and theologies to legitimize genocide and an insatiable appetite for destructive plunder (Churchill, 2004).

Contributing a slightly different analysis, Semali and Kincheloe (1999b) locate colonization within the process of Western Cartesian-Newtonian science and knowledge production. Western science, from this perspective, presents the knowledge it produces as constituting a universal truth therefore excluding other forms of knowing and knowledge production as inferior or

primitive. Consequently, from this Eurocentric perspective, non-Western, non-white, non-male, and non-middle-class people are defined as equally primitive and in need of civilizing. Considered from this vantage point, colonization/subjugation is not only inevitable but also a paternalistic favor. To avoid this trap Semali and Kincheloe (1999b) advocate against the essentialism that situates indigenous and Western knowledge as binary opposites with nothing in common or no common ground from which to create a dialogue. For example, summarizing a series of reports on Native American education produced by the "Indian Nations at Risk task force," Grande (2004) highlights the similarities between their proposals and that which is advocated by an implied Western-based critical pedagogy such as "school reform" being just one "battleground in the 'war' against colonialism" and that "the struggle for self-determined schools must be engaged alongside other revolutionary struggles, specifically those that seek to end economic exploitation, political domination, and cultural dependency" (p. 20). However, breaking from the critical school of anti-essentialism, like Grande (2004), Vine Deloria, the late internationally renowned Lakota scholar-activist-historian-theologian, seems to cautiously embrace an Indigenous-informed essentialism in much of his work. For example, in *God Is Red* (1994), Deloria makes little distinction between liberal and conservative positions within the "Western" tradition, but makes a critical distinction between Western and Indigenous philosophy and world-view arguing that:

> When the domestic ideology is divided according to American Indian and Western European immigrant...the fundamental difference is one of great philosophical importance. American Indians hold their lands—places—as having the highest possible meaning, and all their statements are made with this reference point in mind. Immigrants review the movement of their ancestors across the continent as a steady progression of basically good events and experiences, thereby placing history—time—in the best possible light. (p. 62)

Grande (2004) argues that such essentializing is an important tool Indigenous peoples use to define their own sovereignty as something unique and distinct from the settler-community, but cautions against such definitions of self and the parameters of tribal community being informed by the colonialist gaze, or the white imagination (further explored in Chapter Two). Grande's (2004) cautions encompass some of the reasons why Semali and Kincheloe (1999b) argue that essentializing portrays a too simplistic picture of a more complex concrete context.

With these distinctions and complexities in mind, how has philosophy informed the interactions between Native North Americans and those from different geographical locations? Because colleges of education in the United States and Canada, at their core, are informed by Western philosophical traditions (yet are situated on land whose people have their own unique process of knowledge creation and wisdom, which tend not to be institutionally represented, except within the schools controlled by those indigenous to North America) we must ask: "Why?" In the process of answering this question we will inevitably uncover the ongoing war waged by the occupiers against Native peoples and their cultures and philosophies motivated by an effort to extract the maximum amount of wealth and use value (such as the value of spirituality, see Churchill's *Fantasies of the Master Race*, 1998) from the people and their land, even if it means destroying everything that is (including themselves).

In the following chapters we will therefore look at the relationship between Western and Native North American bodies of knowledge and the people and the land from which they emerged. This approach, in my view, has the potential to contribute to what Kincheloe, Slattery, and Steinberg (2000) describe as a truly contextualized critically complex education and therefore contextualized or grounded philosophies. I begin this endeavor in Chapter Three by looking at what I believe is one of the biggest differences between Western and Native North American societies—a difference Vine Deloria (1994) alludes to in his time versus place analysis previously mentioned—which is embodied in competing epistemologies and epistemological relationships, the tension from which has the potential to transform the bankruptcy of the material present as evidenced by the Zapatista uprising of dialogue and communication as a process of multicultural understanding and solidarity *for* humanity and *for* radical transformation against the "death sentence" that is an increasingly globalized capitalism, neoliberal capitalism (see Chapter Four), dubbed socialism for the rich, in particular. Within this discussion we will see that while hegemonic Western traditions stand in stark contrast to Native philosophies, there is considerable overlap and room for dialogue between Western counter-hegemonic and Indigenous approaches. Embodied in this discussion are the tensions between the non-essentializing and essentializing perspectives of Native and non-Native liberationists. The antagonistic relationship between hegemonic and counter-hegemonic Western traditions is a useful place of departure in understanding these dynamics.

For example, European peoples have a long history in the development of epistemologies of domination and are therefore tragically marked by internal conflict and competing interests. Consequently, Europeans, in Europe and wherever else they have tried to re-create their homelands (i.e., *New* York, *New* Zealand, *New* England, etc.), have developed competing philosophical traditions such as theology versus science and Marxism against idealism. Brosio (2000) traces these philosophical, and ultimately material, divisions to ancient Greece and Platonic epistemology that views human intelligence as naturally rank-able serving as a justification for the division of labor and the exclusion of large segments of the population from democratic participation. Semali and Kincheloe (1999b) locate these dynamics within the scientific revolution and the Enlightenment generally. Chomsky, on the other hand, situates the seventeenth century European Enlightenment as a direct response against Platonic epistemology with the intended purpose of increasing democratic control and reducing the external command of one's labor power. We can therefore view the Enlightenment, from this vantage point, as a signpost of counter-hegemonic philosophy against an authoritarian, antidemocratic ruling class whose hegemonic interests it has been to keep the general public subordinated by either force or consent (discussed in Chapter Four). Semali and Kincheloe (1999b), again, focus on the "west-is-best discourse of colonialism" (p. 25) that characterized how the emerging ruling classes of Europe employed the rationality and reason of the Enlightenment to support their own hegemonic interests ignoring the democratic and liberatory aspects of the scientific method embodied within critical theory in general and Marxism, for example, in particular. These competing perspectives will be further explored in Chapter Two.

Again, while European peoples have created hegemonic philosophy that supports oppression and domination, they have also created and re-created philosophy intended to be counter-hegemonic in order to liberate themselves from their own ruling classes. In other words, as Westerners, we have a long history of being, in a very real sense, against ourselves, and thus full of contradictions. Commenting on the internal conflict present within Western civilizations while performing in Buffalo Bill's Wild West show in New York City in 1887, Black Elk, traditional medicine man (philosopher) of the Oglala band of the Lakota Nation, in an interview with John Neihardt (1932/2004), comments:

> I could see that the Wasichus [white people, or those who represent the deceitfulness of the occupiers] did not care for each other the way our people did before the nation's hoop was broken. They would take everything from each other if they could, and so there were some who had more of everything than they could use, while crowds of people had nothing at all and maybe were starving. They had forgotten that the earth was their mother. This could not be better than the old ways of my people. (p. 167)

Like much of Deloria's work, Black Elk's position clearly represents the essentialism Semali and Kincheloe have wisely warned critical scholars against falling victim to, as it can too easily lead to romanticization, for example. Do Black Elk's sentiments represent, as critical postmodern critics would contend, as well as some Marxists, the mystical romanticism of a past that did not exist, or is there contemporary relevancy within his perspective? I believe Sandy Grande (2004) would include Black Elk's insights within what she identifies as "traditional knowledge." Making the case for the creation of a "Red pedagogy" that engages "American Indian education" in a dialectical relationship with critical theory, especially the Marxism of Peter McLaren, thereby strengthening them both, Sandy Grande (2004) notes that such an approach is imbued with an Indigenous sense of "...hope that lives in contingency with the past—one that trusts the beliefs and understandings of our ancestors as well as the power of traditional knowledge" (p. 28). The hope of which we speak is not the unrealistic, romantic hope that lives in the illusion of re-creating the past, but the hope of creating a present and future informed by the same values and ideals that were the foundation of a more democratic and egalitarian past, however imperfect.

For example, Joseph Marshall III (2001) in *The Lakota Way* documents through both story and analysis/narrative the virtues (humility, perseverance, respect, honor, love, sacrifice, truth, compassion, bravery, fortitude, generosity, and wisdom) that were characteristic of what was expected of the individual, and when functioning properly, passed on from one generation to the next through story, was (and still are) the basis of Lakota social life. Indeed, what has been widely argued and documented, and seems apparent from the most superficial analysis of historical accounts, supporting Black Elk's analysis, is that Native societies were more perfectly worked out in terms of human interaction with one another and their environment (Neihardt, 1932/2004; Zinn, 1995) than their Western relatives, negating the need for counter-hegemonic philosophies. However, things are not as they were, Western hegemony is ubiquitous, and the need for counter-hegemonic philosophy,

unfortunately, is all but obvious. While some of these analyses tread on the dangerous waters of essentialism, the risks, in my view, are worth taking given the benefits such subjugated knowledge (Semali & Kincheloe, 1999b) offer education in expanding dominant *whitestream* (Grande, 2004) conceptions and formulations of knowledge production.

Adding another layer of analysis, in the capitalist present of native North America counter-hegemonies are needed in defense of, and strategies for, humanization. Grande's (2004) observation that Native American educational practices could benefit from critical theory finds evidence in Frank Black Elk's (1992) observation that "the Lakota have never had a ruling class; the leaders serve by consensus of the people" (p. 139). Black Elk's analysis, while an important observation and evidence for the current relevance of Indigenous knowledge for those of us interested in the global anticapitalist movement, evacuates the capitalist present as tribal governments based on a European model set up by the U.S. government not only resemble, but too often function, as ruling classes, and therefore vie for control of capitalist enterprises. Critical theory challenges us to better our practice as change agents through a process of reflecting on the dialectical relationship between the concrete and theoretical contexts. Rather than romantically drawing on "how it used to be" to name the present, we would do better to learn from "how it used to be" to humanize how it is. I am not suggesting that white people go to reservations to fight capitalism, but that our international struggle against dehumanization can be enhanced by not only critical theory, but by Indigenous knowledges as well. Again, the focus of struggle we are concerned with here is education, and in Chapter Four we see how Native educational practices can advance Western counter-hegemonic educational objectives.

As long as we are appropriately cautious of not falling victim of romanticization and cautious of the dangers of essentialism, there is much to be learned from the valuable insights of "how it used to be." For example, in Vine Deloria's (2006) posthumous *The World We Used to Live In: Remembering the Powers of the Medicine Men*, where he explains how native North American tribal communities, in "the old days," had not created the conditions for the need for competing philosophies, which stemmed from how humans' natural connection to specific geographies was viewed. Such knowledge offers powerful argumentation against the colonial and capitalist present. Consider his words:

> Every Indian tribe has a spiritual heritage that distinguishes them from all other people. Indeed, in the past, recognizing their unique relationship to the world and its creatures, most tribes described themselves as "the people" or the "original people." Regarding themselves as unique, they rigorously followed the commands of the spirits as they had experienced them over uncounted generations and recognized that other peoples had the same rights and status as themselves. So the idea of quarreling over the traditions by which they lived was felt to be absurd. Religious wars, then, were simply inconceivable. (p. xxiii)

The philosophical traditions that have served as the foundation for the worldview described by Deloria (2006), it seems, based on my review of the literature, has provided strength and guidance for Indigenous resistance to occupation since 1492 and also the target of attack by the occupiers who understand that Native culture is what ties Native people to unique land formations, the object of much of predators' desire (Churchill, 2004). Again, Grande (2004) looks to critical theory and pedagogues for broad-based coalitions against the reeling present. In Indigenous traditions, philosophers, since time immemorial, have been medicine men engaged in the pursuit of truth and knowledge to solve problems in this material world. In Western societies, on the other hand, philosophers have tended to come from privileged backgrounds or were rebellious intellectuals seeking justice from tyranny (Deloria, 2006). It is this tradition, forged and maintained by Western rebels, that Grande (2004), as noted above, argues offers valuable tools for resisting the global encroachment of capitalism, and should therefore not be rejected outright as inherently Eurocentric and thus only capable of addressing the European condition. If my analysis is correct, Indigenous knowledge *and* critical theory offer valuable insights for Natives and non-Natives alike, because, in a sense, we are all wrapped up in some form of European capitalist condition on land Indigenous to a particular people.

However, because the primary motivation behind this work is radical social justice, it is my intention not to fall victim of treating Western counter-hegemonic or Native philosophies as pristine and untouchable relics, but rather, to hold these living and breathing knowledges to the same respectful, yet critical, analysis afforded our engagements with hegemonic traditions. Summarizing a similar perspective in his brilliantly conceptualized and executed introduction to critical pedagogy, Joe Kincheloe (2004) notes, with the vision and clarity we have come to expect from him, that:

> Critical teachers explore non-Western, subjugated, and indigenous voices in order to better appreciate the nature and causes of human suffering and the process of domination. Such knowledges are very important to the critical project because of the unique perspective they bring to scholars saturated with the Eurocentric, patriarchal, and elitist ways of seeing. As important as they are, however, indigenous knowledges are not exempt from critique. Advocates of critical pedagogy always respect such knowledges but refuse to turn them into icons that are too precious to analyze and interpret. (p. 26)

Supporting Kincheloe's critical perspective, Daniel Wildcat (2001a)—while cautious of the ways in which European scientism has excluded or appropriated extra-Euro insights, Native American in particular, outlining the ways in which European science has begun to move toward a more holistic view of the world—makes the case for Native students to not disregard the knowledge passed down to them by their elders, but qualifies his position by stressing the importance of not romanticizing the past because "...everything was not perfect" (p. 8). Romanticizing the past, by Native and non-Natives alike, according to Gerald Vizenor (1990), has too often led to discursive departures from the present in what could only be failed attempts to "go back" to pre-Columbian times. As an example, Vizenor (1990) points to "Pine Ridge Reservation born Edward McGaa, law school graduate and former combat fighter pilot" and "Oglala Sioux" (p. 245) who supports efforts to return to "traditional" ways and therefore to "Mother earth," representing the essentialist "Indian" expected by whites, all the while, and most importantly, not engaging with strategies of resistance and critical pedagogies demanded by the tragic capitalist present. Theoretically situating the solution to the material conditions of the present outside the concrete context of the lived realities of Indigenous people today discursively disconnects the word from the world, thereby occluding a viable praxis (theory *in* and *of* practice) for humanization (Freire 2005).

Scholars of Indigenous knowledge (see Dei, Hall & Rosenberg, 2002; Grande, 2004; Semali & Kincheloe, 1999a; and Vizenor, 1990), on the other hand, rather than argue for a return to the past, advocate for the use of Indigenous Knowledge as a tool to resist the colonial present—that present, in no small way, includes the ways in which European thinking have assimilated Native communities resulting in what Vizenor (1990) has described as the existence of "corrupt Indian capitalists" living side by side with "corrupt white capitalists," as if there existed any other kind of capitalist—where the capitalist is someone engaged in appropriating the wealth-generating capacities and the

very humanness of others—than a corrupt one. Again, this point cannot be stressed enough, Grande (2004) argues that Indigenous philosophy and ways of knowing not only have valuable insights for criticalists, but critical theory can also strengthen Native perspectives in the areas of understanding the global system of capitalism, the ways in which it is impacting Native communities, and ways to fight it. Semali and Kincheloe (1999b) offer considerable caution here. That is, unconsciously armed with the mentality of the missionizing savior, the white radical is too easily posed to impose critical theory and appropriate Indigenous Knowledge in *his* engagements with the other. The lucidness of Semali and Kincheloe's (1999b) comments in the context of the arguments presented herein renders them worthy of notable attention. When considering the following excerpt, reflect on the ways in which you (everyone, regardless of Indigeneity) have learned to think about the Indigene.

> Western scholars and cultural workers concerned with the plight of indigenous peoples and their knowledges are faced with a set of dilemmas. Not only must they avoid essentialism and its accompanying romanticization of the indigene, but they must sidestep the traps that transform their attempts at facilitation into further marginalization. Walking the well-intentioned road to hell, Western scholars dedicated to the best interests of indigenous peoples often unwittingly participate in the Western hegemonic process. The question: how can the agency, the self-direction of indigenous peoples be enhanced? must constantly be asked by Western allies. What is the difference between a celebration of indigenous knowledge and an appropriation? Too often Western allies, for example, don't simply want to work with indigenous peoples—they want to transform their identities and become indigenous persons themselves. (p. 20)

Semali and Kincheloe's (1999b) challenges are relevant to all of those indoctrinated with European/"Western" thinking, Native and non-Native alike, as evidenced by the discussion above on Native peoples who have internalized the "romantic Indian" of the colonial gaze. However, because 90% of teachers in North America are "white," we will gear the following discussion toward the white Europeans of the present era, "members" of the dominant group. Because of the implications for white teachers when this issue is not resolved, it is worth taking a moment to consider why "whites" seem to be so susceptible to identity crises and a retreat from their European American present. The late Detroit radical Fredy Perlman (1985) situates the weakness of whiteness within the lie upon which it was/is based—racism—and the guilt associated with the ongoing atrocities committed in its name from international wars to the multitude of domestic policies informed by the white supremacist Indian

Reorganization Act that led to the official termination of many federally sanctioned tribes that, in effect, told thousands of Native Americans that they were no longer recognized as a distinct human group and therefore were no longer eligible for claims to land rights of national sovereignty (see Chapter Two). Written in the humorous yet painfully clear prose of revolutionary populism, reminiscent of Black Panther Party co-founder Dr. Huey P. Newton, with the honesty and vividness of independent radicals such as Noam Chomsky, Perlman (1985), in the following excerpt, offers a perspective on the emergence of whiteness useful for our present discussion. Again, because of the relevance of his analysis of whiteness as only ever racist and, as such, a tool of nationalism, and the pedagogical value of *hearing* his voice, we will not attempt to use his words sparingly:

> The North American colonizers broke the traditional bonds of fealty and feudal obligation but, unlike the French, they only gradually replaced the traditional bonds with bonds of patriotism and nationhood. They were not quite a nation; their reluctant mobilization of the colonial countryside had not fused them into one, and the multilingual, multi-cultural and socially divided underlying population resisted such a fusion. The new repressive apparatus was not tried and tested, and it did not command the undivided loyalty of the underlying population, which was not yet patriotic. Something else was needed.... The American settler-invaders had recourse to an instrument that was not, like the guillotine, a new invention, but that was just as lethal...racism, and it would become embedded in nationalistic practice.... Human beings were mobilized in terms of their lowest and most superficial common denominator, and they responded. People who had abandoned their villages and families, who were forgetting their languages and losing their cultures, who were all but depleted of their sociability, were manipulated into considering their skin color as a substitute for all they had lost. They were made proud of something that was neither a personal feat nor even, like language, a personal acquisition. They were fused into a nation of white men....and mobilized...into white mobs, lynch mobs, "Indian fighters." (pp. 15–16)

Perhaps it is the pedagogical and curricular bankruptcy of whiteness and the guilt associated with its unjust privileging and the countless atrocities committed in the name of its un-reasoning, alluded to above by Perlman, that account for the many mistakes well-intentioned white people too often make when relating to people of color. This is important for white teachers, who are not a part of the ruling class (their wealth does not come from surplus value expropriated from the labor power of their fellow humans); they themselves are workers, however glorified, because they rely on a wage for survival. While white teachers are part of that shrinking and terrified "middle-class," they are

not like poor whites that tend to be too preoccupied with their own suffering to think of "helping" people of color, whom they are led to believe are part of the source of their own problems. The issues that arise from white "do-gooders" are therefore largely the problems of those who suffer from excessive guilt. However, mobilized around whiteness, all white people, including white teachers, have been conditioned to support the ruling class and are therefore rewarded for their role in maintaining the basic structures of power, however meagerly, and feel guilty for it because their support is a sellout—the sellout of their fellow human beings. White progressive and radical teachers who want to be a part of the solution have to get over their white guilt, and the only way that can be genuinely done is to *fight the bosses*, as it were, and not fall into the trap of nationalism or romanticism. In other words, if white people want to be a part of the solution, they need to save themselves by reflecting on and challenging their own internalized white supremacy and support for wealth and power. Only then will they be fit to fight for freedom as a process and not as an end point, paraphrasing Freire (2005).

Another point in need of serious consideration is where some white Marxists come into conflict with contemporary tribal leaders who advocate for a tribal sovereignty in the form of a nationalism of the oppressed for cultural and individual freedom (Perlman, 1985). For example, the dominant crux of Ward Churchill's massive body of work, cited widely throughout Chapter Two, is based on movement toward Native Nationalism. Such an approach is based on the perspective that nationalist liberation struggles, such as the Cuban Revolution, is a way to break up the capitalist empire. However, independent Marxists such as Perlman (1985) argue that nationalism is just the most current form of capitalism, and hopefully the last, when defeated by the world's vast majority relegated to the status of worker. While this discussion needs to be open and honest, white people need to be cautious not to let their white supremacy get the best of them, and therefore attempt to tell Native Americans, for example, what they arrogantly think is best for them. White teachers in particular would do better by demonstrating a pedagogy of humility by listening to those who have traditionally been oppressed. Marxists such as Peter McLaren exemplify this humility while simultaneously arguing for a socialist future, however undetermined, by supporting Native treaty rights. In a personal communiqué, McLaren summarizes his position:

> I support the land claims of First Nation peoples, those land claims recognized by treaties with the U.S. government but never actually carried out. I would also support

> the notion that unceded territory belongs to the First Nations peoples under international treaties. I support, for instance, the Black Hills being returned to the Sioux Nation. Ultimately, as a socialist, I believe a post-capitalist world would be such that all land would be shared in common by all peoples of the world with appropriate steps being taken to protect and respect sacred sites.

While McLaren's position provides considerable insight for democratic socialist practice and encompasses a post-nation future, the notion of nationalism still needs to be problematized. The idea of nationalism is a European construct and can be viewed as having supplanted indigenous relationships to land, which were, and in some instances still are (see Chapter Three for a discussion of the efforts by the Warm Springs Native American Reservation to restore wild salmon runs), based more on common usage and guardianship, rather than ownership and control. Out of fear of critique, much of the non-Native North American Left has therefore tended to avoid critical inquiries and engagement with Indigenous traditions, alluded to by Kincheloe (2004) and Wildcat (2001a), retarding the dialogue between Western and Indigenous peoples that is increasingly important as we enter the twenty-first century facing not only perpetual war and global poverty, but environmental devastation as well. Even though the most well-intentioned study of Native philosophy is Europeanizing, contend Semali and Kincheloe (1999b), non-Natives who want to be a part of the solution have little choice but to "...understand the dynamics at work in the world of the indigene" (Semali & Kincheloe, 1999b). In Chapters Five through Eight, very humbly attempting to be a part of this discussion, I engage Native and non-Native critical educators/pedagogues in a series of informal e-mail inquiries and recorded interviews about how they view their work in relationship to these and other related issues.

* * *

The primary question serving as the driving force behind this book, again, is how can students of philosophy (teachers) better our practice by considering the relationship between Native and non-Native philosophies? The question of philosophy, to be sure, is of the utmost importance for educators because every decision we make as curricularists and pedagogues, whether we are conscious of it or not, emerges from philosophy. That is, the choices we make about curriculum and pedagogy reside in our beliefs and understandings about

how knowledge is created and who creates it, and what constitutes truth and beauty, for example.

This book is unique in that it is designed to engage both current and future teachers in exploring the relationship between peoples and our philosophies and the many ways in which such an approach can inform the creation of our own philosophies of education and, ultimately, our practice in not only the classroom but in the world in general. I would consider this work a dismal failure if it became another tool the settler-community used to continue to plunder native North America, that is, philosophy as one more thing of value to steal and employ against those who created it to maintain the occupation. Why? That is, what is my own personal motivation?

First and foremost, it is my belief that the global movement against human suffering, engendered by the bloody hands of capital, can best be served by a complex theory informed by the invaluable insights of not just critical theory, that is, counter-hegemonic Western knowledge, but Indigenous knowledge as well. In other words, combining Western-based counter-hegemonic and Indigenous knowledges, in my view, offer the most powerful insights informing an educational practice against capitalism and its attendant hegemonies such as white supremacy, homophobia, and patriarchy. This call for unity and solidarity apply equally to everyone regardless of positionality. The motivation I have as a white person is slightly different because it focuses on what I feel I need to do to keep my own white guilt in check so it does not immobilize me.

Again, while I myself am a descendant of European settlers and am writing from the perspective of the settler-community, my own personal philosophical foundation is based on counter-hegemonic Enlightenment-based thought (Marxism in particular), which is grounded in notions of self-rule, democratic control, and social justice. These values and principles inform my own practice as a teacher educator and scholar (Malott, 2006). Because there is virtually nothing socially just about how Anglo-American officialdom, in both the United States and Canada, in general, have and continue to engage with Native North America, in an effort to avoid hypocrisy (and guilt), it is my responsibility to use my own limited power as an education professor to challenge future teachers to take seriously, with as much intensity as they can muster, the land on which they stand, every square inch of which in North America is indigenous to a particular group of people, to paraphrase Ward Churchill (2003a).

What this *could* and perhaps *should* mean for myself and other "white" North American "settlers" is to take on the role of twenty-first century John Brown abolitionists—that is, to be part of abolishing the illegal occupation of

the Americas by the colonialist governments of Canada and the United States. This, for me, translates into being part of the movement to globalize the resistance against capitalism. In the chapters that follow I will demonstrate that it is in the interests of everyone within North America to become abolitionists. Ward Churchill (2003a), and many others such as Peter McLaren, offers considerable insight into what this might look like in practice. For example, Churchill argues that siding with Native Americans on environmental issues is a matter of self-preservation because pollutants created on reservations, such as the highly toxic tailings from uranium mining, contaminates watersheds, which eventually becomes an issue for those both on and off reservations. The physical act of writing this book, and therefore engaging you in these debates, is part of my own personal action toward anticolonialist praxis, and hopefully, for you, as current or future educators, either an affirmation of an already-existing practice or the beginning of a new practice.

* * *

Before we jump into Chapter Two I would like to engage you in one more brief discussion on the interrelated topics of discipline and indignation as informed by the late Paulo Freire (2005) in *Teachers as Cultural Workers: Letters to Those Who Dare Teach* first published in 1997 and *Pedagogy of Indignation* (2004) also by Freire, and in fact his last book. Our biggest challenge as educators is *engaging* the students we have the privilege of working with in the indispensable lifelong journey of teaching and learning. At the same time, my biggest challenge as an author is engaging my readers (many of whom are reading these very words not because they possess an internal drive to learn about critical theory and Indigenous peoples and knowledges, but because they have to, that is, it is a course requirement, it is assigned reading) in a genuine desire to know and learn from what I have written.

However, I will take a considerable amount of liberty and a good dose of optimism and assume, however naively, that you have placed yourself in the position of "student" and are therefore being assigned readings, such as this one, because you want to either become a good teacher or because you want to better your existing practice. If you are here because you feel you had no other options and are becoming a teacher until something better comes along, to paraphrase Freire (2005), hopefully this book will help you either rethink your attitude toward teaching or it will persuade you to immediately decide *not*

to teach because our profession is already undervalued and we therefore need fully committed teachers fighting as political militants to gain the respect our task deserves (Freire, 2005).

The struggle to gain the respect that the task of educating is justly due, to be sure, requires tapping into the same source of internal discipline needed to fully engage with this book. Freire (2005) argues that discipline is most effectively nurtured by an internal desire to know, "the passion to know," as it were. Such a passion most forcefully comes from the emotion of anger/indignation/outrage. It is my hope that what you have read thus far has sparked your epistemological curiosity and that Chapter Two will make you angry, and that your anger will inspire you to actively engage with the rest of the book. In other words, I want you to talk back and challenge what you read while objectively respecting that which is quantitatively and qualitatively sound. Put yet another way, I do not want you to engage with these chapters passively and mechanically simply regurgitating what you have consumed.

The question I want you to hear loud and clear, and reflect on, is How are the arguments and points of view presented within this book informing your future and/or current practice? To paraphrase my colleague and former teacher Rudolfo Chávez Chávez at New Mexico State University, asked in a slightly different fashion, what does it mean to your responsibilities as an educator that the concrete conditions of the material world demands not only outrage and anger but a critical pedagogical project with the theoretical tools embodying the ballast needed to not only understand and denounce that which exists but to create an undetermined future freed from the interconnected oppressions of human suffering and environmental destruction? It is my hope that your active engagement with this book leads you to what I believe are the "right" questions, away from the "wrong" questions, and on to new unasked questions.

For example, it is my hope that dominant society (i.e., white middle class) students do not walk away from the discussion in Chapter Two on the ongoing genocide waged against Native Americans by a predominantly European settler-community asking this historically oppressed group what can we do to help you? While such a position is obviously better than thinking you get what you deserve, it is not as useful as asking yourselves what can we do to better ourselves so we can (1) Fight the motivations behind genocide, that is, capitalism generally and white supremacy within the dominant group from which we come specifically, and (2) Create broad-based coalitions between diverse groups for systemic change? At the same time, it is my hope that those from

oppressed groups do not leave these discussions asking, What can we do to return to a less oppressive past, but rather how can we become an effective part of overcoming the oppression of the capitalist, white supremacist, patriarchal, homophobic, xenophobic present in the interests of creating a more humanized future?

Following Grande (2004) and Semali and Kincheloe (1999a), the book before you is informed by the belief that everybody, regardless of positionality, can become more humanized and better suited for the educational task of transformation by both Indigenous knowledge and critical theory, Marxism and progressive postmodernism in particular. This is a useful lens, I believe, that will assist you in successfully making it through the remaining eight theoretically intense and emotionally provocative chapters that follow. Enjoy, and do not fear anger or let it immobilize you. That is, draw on it as a source of pedagogical strength with the capacity to fuel your ontological right to possess hope—hope for a world without suffering and degradation of any kind.