

Decolonized research:

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As I have mentioned previously, I attempt to keep my research as open and unbiased as possible, as well as keep my research topic as non-traditional as possible as well. I have previously mentioned that I have attempted to do research projects outside of the preconceived norms of literature and anthropology, and part of this can be attributed to decolonization of these topics. Anthropology has a deep history of involvement with colonization of different populations, as it has tended to be used as an instrument for colonizing cultures to normalize them into euro-centric concepts of culture and society. That said, as someone who is the offspring of immigrants from Europe, I feel like I have been somewhat indoctrinated into the colonial mindset of our Eurocentric society. In addition to this, I personally have no real connection to first nations groups or social problems, so as such I am not fully motivated to truly understand the marginalization or disenfranchisement of minority groups or traditionally marginalized cultural groups.

Some of the ways my research can touch on colonized areas however are actually fairly significant. In the most obvious example, my work surrounding the literary validity of non-traditional literature can easily be related back to decolonized philosophy regarding what is and is not “literarily valid”. One can easily see the parallels between my work in non-traditional literary analysis of Magic cards and how it can be applied to First Nations subject matter, such as verbal heritage or the non-traditional methods of storytelling found in First Nations culture. In this way, I attempt to decolonize the traditional literary standards and qualifiers for what is considered “literary”, and what would normally be considered irrelevant in regard to literary analysis. Similarly, my work surrounding the cultural aspects of nerd culture and Magic culture in B.C. is also somewhat decolonized, as I attempted to create

a more holistic and all-encompassing ethnographic research, with a special focus on keeping an ethical and non-judgemental approach to the cultural analysis.

All of this being said, I am a white north American male of Germanic decent, so I can understand that I will have some kind of bias and culturally appropriate views that are not necessarily as holistic or unbiased as they could be. I understand that this is a product of my upbringing, as well as of the environment I find myself participating in and part of the social and environmental structures that I include myself in. As such, I endeavor to look beyond my social and cultural “boundaries” in an effort to open my mind to new or alternative ways of viewing the world. I attempt to take these new perspectives with me into my academic work, hence my drive to generate non-traditional tutorial and grad work based within traditional academic faculties. I believe through the decolonization of academia, we as a society have the potential to reach even wider demographics and encompass more unique and distinct types of learning and knowledge.

To draw on the talk provided by Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun, there are discrepancies and divisions throughout our country, in more than one way. Our social and educational systems are stratified, and through his stratification a hierarchy of what is considered “proper” knowledge and what is not even considered has become more and more relevant in our society. In this regard, I wholeheartedly agree with him. There is a wealth of indigenous knowledge that has been passed from group to group and from generation to generation via non-“traditional” methods, namely oral traditions, that is not commonly accepted within academic circles. This is a massive oversight in regard to social and cultural information that could be learned and shared, but because of the euro-centric academic structure, it is deemed invalid due to its incapability to be referenced or catalogued. In this sense, we as a social group of academics are restricting our worldviews and our potential to learn based on ancient and archaic codes of what should and should not be considered academically relevant.

To draw all of this together, I wish to take the lessons learned from this class and from Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun's talk and incorporate their essence into the grad work that I am planning on doing. I have already mentioned how I try to eschew the normative and traditional barriers provided by academia and differing academic faculties throughout the tutorial projects that I have completed, but I wish to continue this even further on into my grad project. I look forward to generating unique work in regard to how it interacts with data, and with what it qualifies as relevant information, beyond what is traditionally deemed "acceptable" sources of information and research.