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### Ethics in Locality: Confessions of a Not-So-Innocent Bystander

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## **Ethics in Locality: Confessions of a Not-So-Innocent Bystander**

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**Abstract:** Using narrative form, so important in the Indigenous tradition, this paper tells the story of Ojibwa philosopher, Dennis McPherson, a friend and colleague of the author, and his persistent efforts over the years to liberate Locality.

**Keywords:** ethics, Lakehead University, Locality, Dennis McPherson, Native Philosophy, the Native Philosophy Project, the North American Academy

In this paper I raise the issue of systemic racism in the North American Academy. I discuss it in the context and with the help of a Native Narrative Ethics; hence the title, “Ethics in Locality.” The particular locality is Ojibwa country, Ojibwa Land, at the head of Lake Superior, at the head of the Great Lakes. The Academy I use as a kind of case study in story form is the Thunder Bay campus of Lakehead University in Northwestern Ontario. Story is very important in the Native narrative tradition. Indigenous philosopher Shay Welsh explains:

Traditional Native American and Indigenous storytelling serves many functions within a community. [It has to do with] a people’s origins, their relation to the land or water, the origin of the universe and stars and thunder beings, [it] relay[s] cautionary tales about proper ethical behavior and the consequences of misdeeds and missteps... Most importantly, [it is] metaphorical because most forms of education, formal and informal, are not comprised of directives that must be remembered and obeyed. The goal is for individuals, especially children, to unravel the meaning of the stories in their own time and in their own way to guide them on their right path.<sup>1</sup>

In this form of narrative ethics, any appeal to universal principles in making moral judgments is clearly avoided. It is not a prescriptive ethics. Directives and principles *prescribe* while narrative and stories *provoke* an ethical response. Further, there is always an ethical component in epistemic judgments. As Welsh puts it:

Primarily, the purpose of pursuing knowledge is to help guide individuals along the right path. Relatedly, knowledge has as its end the nurturing of relationships between individuals and community members, including non-human persons and the environment... It is in this sense, then, that knowledge within the Native American worldview is regarded not only as relational, but also as ethical.<sup>2</sup>

In discussing Native philosophy, I usually work with my colleague and coauthor, Ojibwa philosopher, Dennis McPherson. Over the past thirty years we have developed a sort of research methodology of Native and non-Native philosophers working together.<sup>3</sup> Dennis McPherson is not coauthor of this paper as I am writing about writing with Dennis. He has, however, been consulted. I thank him for his help. I am, in actual fact, using Dennis' story as a kind of microcosm of the North American Academy in its attempt to accommodate Indigenous students along with their Indigenous values and worldviews.

I can recall a number of occasions when we were walking down the corridor--actually Lakehead is a northern university where most of the buildings are connected by tunnels, so we were walking through the somewhat wider tunnels. We would meet a senior administrator walking toward us who would greet me but ignore Dennis. Instead of a nod in our direction and a friendly "Hi," it would be the nod and a curt "Dr. Rabb." It happened so often I finally said, "Dennis you're invisible." We would laugh about it. Sometimes, as I like to put it, Dennis would throw his Indigenous invisibility blanket over the both of us, and we would both be ignored. We used to joke that if I hung around Dennis too long, I might become permanently invisible.

Dennis is a former student of mine, having completed the Honours Bachelor of Arts degree in philosophy. We first met when he approached the Philosophy Department looking for courses on Ojibwa Philosophy. The story of this meeting has been told too many times for me to want to repeat it here in any detail.<sup>4</sup> However, yes, Dennis did have a copy of the University calendar with him, and he did point out that we offered courses in Ancient Greek Philosophy, British Empiricism, German Idealism, and even some Eastern philosophies from India, China and Japan. He suggested that, in what professed to be a regional university, we might be expected to offer Ojibwa Philosophy in Ojibwa country.

I have slowly come to realize the implications of what has become the standard acknowledgment that we are a university built on the traditional lands of the Fort William First Nation. It also acknowledges by implication that we are not an institution that originates from the traditional lands of the Fort William First Nation. The concept of Locality is important here. Like all universities, Lakehead is a British/European institution. It has tried to set down roots here in North America, but at best it has merely laminated itself overtop of Indigenous Locality, "the original and true locality of this land," as Cherokee philosopher Brian Burkhart puts it in his 2019 book, *Indigenizing Philosophy through the Land*. Burkhart goes on to argue:

The problem with the colonial attempt to inject itself into the Indigenous land is that one delocalized locality (the abstract European cultural reality) can never completely replace the locality it is laminated upon... Indigenous locality can never actually be removed; it can only be obscured... Locality can only be hidden."<sup>5</sup>

Dennis McPherson has spent his academic career pushing back against this Eurocentric lamination, freeing locality to ooze up out of hiding, cracking and pushing aside the Eurocentric veneer laid down in the colonial lamination process. The goal is to liberate “the original and true locality of this land.” Dennis is constantly encouraging Lakehead University to live up to the Locality of its name, “Lakehead.” It is arguable that Universities like Ryerson and Dalhousie have more honest names. Don’t think of Dennis as merely speaking *for* Locality. We are dealing with a much more profound event than that. Dennis *is* Locality speaking for itself.

I see Dennis enrolling in the honours philosophy program at LU as part of his grander project, making Lakehead University confront and liberate Locality. Shortly after Dennis signed up as a philosophy major, I came across the book, *Clothed in Fur and other Tales: An Introduction to an Ojibwa World View*, by two philosophers from the University of Wisconsin--Stevens Point, Tom Overholt and Baird Callicott. Had Dennis not challenged me to take Ojibwa philosophy seriously, I probably would not have noticed this book. It was published by the same university press that published a book of mine on John Locke, which is probably why I was on its mailing list. *Clothed in Fur* is primarily a selection of Ojibwa narratives gathered and translated by William Jones (1871-1909). These narratives are analyzed and discussed philosophically by Overholt and Callicott. What is distinctive about these narratives is that, many of them were gathered by Jones from The Fort William Reserve and other Ojibwa communities right here in Northwestern Ontario. Talk about Locality; I could hardly believe my luck! I added it as a textbook for my course on Canadian Philosophy which I knew Dennis would take. What surprised me is that Dennis was not the only Native student who showed up for the course. In subsequent years the course always attracted a number of Native students, though I only spent a couple of weeks discussing *Clothed in Fur*. There was clearly a demand for a full course on Native philosophy.

Dennis graduated from Lakehead with the HBA in Philosophy and a HBSW in Social Work. He then moved to Ottawa to study Law at the University of Ottawa, but he returned to Lakehead every summer where we worked together to produce and team teach a full course on Native Canadian World Views, that is, on Native Philosophy. Once Dennis graduated from the University of Ottawa with his LLB and later a graduate degree in Law, LL.M., he returned to Lakehead where he was hired first as a sessional lecturer and ultimately as a tenured Associate Professor. We were finally able to offer the Native philosophy course in the regular academic year. It became a required course in the Indigenous Learning major. Dennis, who was in charge of the Department, had the name changed from “Native Studies” to “Indigenous Learning” on the grounds that Native people have been studied quite enough—“studied to death” would not be an exaggeration, as he likes to say.

At one point, Dennis found himself on a one-year sessional contract with responsibilities for Chairing the Department of Indigenous Learning and coordinating

Native Support Services and the Native Access program, as well as team teaching the Native Philosophy Course, among others. Now chairing a Department without job security might lead to a very compliant Chair, one not willing to speak truth to power. However, we are talking about Dennis here. It should be noted that, besides all his other administrative responsibilities within the University, Dennis at this time had also been appointed Council of Ontario Universities (COU) Representative on the Aboriginal Education and Training Strategy (AETS) Proposal Selection Committee. The AETS had been set up in 1991 by the then NDP Ontario Government to encourage Aboriginal programming at Ontario colleges and universities. This is important because Lakehead University, as might be expected, was drawing heavily on AETS funding. In approving program changes for the Department of Indigenous Learning at a LU Senate meeting, June 15, 1995, it became apparent that the University intended to cover the cost of sessional faculty delivering the program through AETS funding. Dennis, being the only lawyer in the room, having recently completed his LLB, pointed out that using AETS funds in this way would be “unlawful.” His voice was ignored, and Senate passed the program changes as presented.

The purpose of AETS was to encourage Colleges and Universities to hire full-time Native faculty. It was intended to cover the cost of Native support services, visiting Elders, furnishing a Native student lounge complete with computers, mostly one-time expenses supporting the academic program for Native students. Nevertheless, the academic program was intended to be part of the regular budget of the University, not something taught by sessional lecturers funded by soft money that had to be applied for every year. At the June 1995 Senate meeting, it was made clear that the Senate was not going to follow either the letter or the spirit of the law. This, Dennis felt, put him in a difficult position. In his own words:

As a result of their vote, I felt I had to choose one of three possible options. I could have left the Senate meeting, gone back to my office and carried on with my business, pretending nothing had happened and hope that sometime in the future someone would not start digging into administrative matters and learn that what had occurred in Senate was unlawful. I could have simply quit my job and gone away as my predecessors had done for various reasons. Or, since I was a faculty member, I could do some Action Research<sup>6</sup> while making my person visible to the whole world twenty-four hours per day, seven days per week until these matters were put right. I decided to do the research. At 1:00 PM on June 15, 1995, I set up my tent on the front lawn of the Lakehead University Centre.<sup>7</sup>

The University let him sit there for a month; at which time he decided to do a protest walk to Ottawa to take things up with the Federal Government since, under the Constitution (91:24), it is the Federal Government that has the responsibility for “Indians and Lands reserved for Indians.” Again, in Dennis’ own words:

I left the University on foot at 1:00 PM on July 15, 1995, and reached Ottawa on Sunday, September 24. Once there, I met with the Minister of Indian Affairs, the Honorable Ron Irwin, on September 25... On September 26, 1995, I hand-delivered a letter, along with a bear's head, a copy of the Criminal Code of Canada, and a pouch of tobacco, to the office of the Prime Minister of Canada, the Right Honorable Jean Chrétien.

The contents of the letter and details of “the walk,” as well as events leading up to it, have been published in the *American Philosophical Association Newsletter on American Indians in Philosophy*, Vol. 05: No. 2, Spring, 2006. The entire *Newsletter* is devoted to Dennis. It contains an article by Dennis entitled, “Indian on the Lawn;” two comments: “Living in a World of Bees: A Response to the Indian on the Lawn,” by Ryan Heavy Head, and “A Response to Dennis McPherson,” by Elizabeth Wilson; and finally Dennis’ Response to Comments, “Living with Bees, W.A.S.P.s, and Other Stinging Critters: A Reply to Ryan Heavy Head and Elizabeth Wilson.”

In the Spring of 2008, another edition of the *American Philosophical Association Newsletter on American Indians in Philosophy* was devoted entirely to Dennis and the issues he was raising, Vol. 07: Number 2. This volume contained a further response to “Indian on the Lawn,” a reply by Dennis and myself, and another article by one of the coeditors of the *Newsletter* who was also a graduate of the Lakehead Graduate Program in Native Philosophy: “What Happened at Lakehead: The Dilemma of Racism, Corruption or Incompetence?” Both of these APA Newsletters are part of Dennis’ story and are available on-line:

[https://www.apaonline.org/page/indigenous\\_newsletter](https://www.apaonline.org/page/indigenous_newsletter)

Why was Dennis not just fired? The level of frustration with Dennis was certainly rising. I was told by a senior administration to “control your Indian!” I remember the exact words, “control your Indian,” because my spontaneous and immediate reply was “He’s not my Indian.” They didn’t seem to appreciate my suggestion that this sort of language was a holdover from the days when slavery was legal. The academic term had begun and Dennis was not on campus to teach his classes, though colleagues were covering the classes for him.

The publicity he was generating was not exactly positive for the University. On the other hand, Dennis and I had secured a \$250,000 US dollar institutional research grant from the Rockefeller Foundation making Lakehead the first Canadian University to host the prestigious Rockefeller Foundation Visiting Humanities Research Fellowships. We had not done it alone, of course. We had help from friends and colleagues in other Departments. Research on Native issues was being carried out in such Departments as Anthropology, History, Visual Arts, Sociology, English, and Native Languages. Still, the grant was for “The Native Philosophy Project” of which Dennis and I were co-directors. It allowed us to bring in up to Three Visiting Fellows a year for three years. Furthermore, the Rockefeller Foundation made it very clear: “The Foundation’s support is, and will

continue to be, contingent upon the central presence of Native scholars in this effort. Simply and baldly put, we would not be recommending this project for funding if it involved only non-Native scholars examining these topics.”<sup>8</sup> Dennis’s participation in this project was seen as crucial.

An essential part of our Native Philosophy Project was the development and Provincial accreditation of an Interdisciplinary Graduate Program in Native Philosophy run through and by the Department of Philosophy. This turned out to be an historic first according to a recent comprehensive History of American Philosophy. In discussing the thought of various Indigenous philosophers, including Dennis McPherson and Viola Cordova, the authors of this History note:

In 1996-7 Cordova became a Rockefeller Visiting Research Fellow at Lakehead University in Ontario, where McPherson and J. Douglas Rabb helped to begin the first graduate degree in indigenous philosophy. The program began in response to a call from First Nations students for a program in which they could more formally study their own philosophical traditions. According to McPherson, the call for the program was not an effort to avoid studying Western philosophy, but rather a chance to study indigenous traditions and to use the resources of these traditions as a resource for examining Western philosophy. The Program was closed in 2001, for reasons of enrollment and cost according to the institution. According to others, it closed for reasons related to the University’s lack of interest in engaging Native people on any but their own terms.<sup>9</sup>

The authors go on to discuss the significance of our book, *Indian from the Inside*:

Despite the fate of the graduate program, McPherson and Rabb were instrumental in making Native philosophy accessible to Native and non-Native students in both Canada and the United States. In 1993 they published *Indian from the Inside: Native American Philosophy and Cultural Renewal*, as a collaborative project ...<sup>10</sup>

There follows a short discussion of our principal themes, but what is important here is to explore the reasons the first ever graduate program in Native philosophy was closed, indeed cancelled, in 2001. Was it really “for reasons of enrollment and cost”?

At this time, sixteen fully funded Native students had applied to the Qualifying Year for the Academic term 2000-2001. Their Band Councils covered fees, living and moving expenses, books, etc. The Qualifying Year was set up in recognition that some Native students interested in the graduate program may not have studied philosophy in their undergraduate years. Many Native students are guided into Social Work degrees, for example, including Dennis himself. So, the Qualifying Year gives them a one-year intensive introduction to philosophy, its history and methods, using their own traditions and worldviews “as a resource for examining Western philosophy,” as Dennis put it. Those who hadn’t taken our undergraduate course in Native philosophy would have a chance to do so in their Qualifying Year. Further, the Rockefeller Foundation Humanities

Research Fellowship Grant, though officially non-renewable, had been deemed so successful that the Foundation encouraged us to apply for it again. We won the second quarter million US dollar research grant, which should have enabled us to bring in Visiting Research Fellows for another three years. However, we noticed something different in the University's reaction to this second unprecedented grant. When we won the first grant, the University's publicity machine had swung into action. We had media interviews, newspaper articles, and Dennis was even given the 1994 Alumni Honour Award with a full colour photo of him on the cover of the Alumni Magazine. This time, there was nothing. Perhaps they thought Dennis had generated enough publicity on his walk. I don't know, but things certainly felt different.

In our application for the second grant, we had promised the Rockefeller Foundation that Visiting Fellows would meet and work with not only Native graduate students but also a second Indigenous philosopher, as the University had committed to a tenure track position for a new Native philosophy appointment as a condition of the approval of the Graduate Program. This commitment to the Rockefeller Foundation and to the Graduate Program in Native Philosophy went out under the signature of the University President. However, we had a change of Presidents. No commitment was forthcoming. The University seemed to have other priorities. The fallout should have been predictable. We did not bring in any more Rockefeller Foundation Visiting Fellows as we could not provide what we had promised. At this point we could not even be sure we would have a Graduate program. Such programs are assessed on a seven-year cycle and our turn was coming up. Without the promised appointment, it is unlikely that it would have been approved to continue.

Most of the members of the Philosophy Department had gone along with the Graduate Program in Native Philosophy on the understanding that it would generate additional Faculty. With the retirement of one of our members, I was informed that now no one in the Department supported the Graduate Program. A number of Indigenous Learning students, having taken the undergraduate course in Native Philosophy, were enrolling in philosophy courses as electives in order to get into the Graduate Program in Native Philosophy without having to go through the Qualifying Year. This was changing the conversation in these philosophy classes, as the students were eager to critique Western philosophy from their own Indigenous point of view. I was happy to facilitate such discussions, though not everyone in the Department was. The undergraduate course on Native philosophy encouraged such discussions, as did the text *Indian from the Inside*, which developed out of the course. This is confirmed by Cherokee philosopher/historian Jace Weaver, Director of the Institute of Native American Studies, University of Georgia. In the Foreword, he was kind enough to write for the book: "Without sacrificing either a colloquial writing style or their indigenous lens, McPherson and Rabb discuss and draw in philosophers as varied in time and theme as Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas, Locke, Kant, and Merleau-Ponty." On a more personal note, Weaver goes on to say "I love their



characterization of Socrates as a ‘city boy’ within their discussion of Western alienation from land. And their “Red reading” of Plato is alone worth the price of the book.”<sup>11</sup>

Unfortunately, if you think that there is no such thing as Native philosophy, or if you are not interested in learning anything about it even if there is, then you do not want your class interrupted by a student criticizing what you are saying, from an Indigenous perspective. Brian Burkhart, citing Vine Deloria Jr., the acknowledged “Dean” of Native philosophy, captures this widespread negative attitude perfectly:

One of the reasons that Deloria was so insistent that I complete a Ph.D. in philosophy, and in his constant encouragement of Native students to do the same was his sense of the need to underscore Native American philosophy with a deeper sense of its metaphysical and epistemological base. His belief was that Native American philosophy will always be seen as. . .representing the stage in human development in which superstition and ignorance reigned supreme. . . unless philosophers are given a bigger picture of the deeper unity and completeness of Indigenous philosophy through locality.”<sup>12</sup>

As more and more Native students do graduate work in philosophy and publish books like Burkhart’s, these negative attitudes towards Indigenous philosophy are slowly, very slowly, changing. I do not blame my fellow philosophers at Lakehead for manifesting some of these negative attitudes and pushing back against the encroachment of Native philosophy on their world. Had the University fulfilled its commitment to providing the promised tenure track position in Native philosophy, it would have taken much of the pressure off the other members of the Department. Further, Dennis had hoped to provide a Qualifying year program on Couchiching First Nation, his home Reserve, as he knew that a number of potential students worked full time and had families to support. This is not as difficult as it may sound. Dennis and I had team taught our Native philosophy course on the Rez a number of times. LU runs numerous such distance education courses throughout Northwestern Ontario. Dennis and I would drive to Couchiching Friday afternoon (three hours and forty-six minutes driving time, depending on who is driving). We would run the class Friday evening and Saturday, returning home Sunday. This only had to be done once every two weeks to cover the required three hours per week class time. Dennis felt that teaching on the Rez was part of his obligation to community involvement and development. He also taught Indigenous learning courses on more northern reserves without road access, flying his own Rockwell Commander. And yes, photographs of his plane were part of the supporting documents in our funding applications to the Rockefeller Foundation.

As for the Qualifying Year, it would be difficult to give even on campus without additional faculty. I was also concerned about the negative attitude toward Native philosophy in the Department. One faculty member actually said that we shouldn’t be encouraging Native students to take philosophy classes because “philosophy is hard.”

That same faculty member actually referred to Dennis as “the crazy Indian that walked to Ottawa.” He was not the only one to disparage Dennis in this way. I could not in good conscience be responsible for bringing Indigenous students into this kind of negative environment. I did not know what to do. After clearing it with Dennis, I resigned. I was just 55 but had taught at Lakehead for thirty years. Dennis withdrew as Co-director of the Native Philosophy Project, which pretty well sealed the fate of the second Rockefeller Foundation grant. My letter of protest to the President was made public in Dennis’ “Indian on the Lawn” article.

Dennis felt that the University had one more chance to support Native philosophy. Since my full professor’s salary was now available, would part of it be used to provide the elusive tenure track position in Native philosophy? Within two years of my retirement, the Philosophy Department had hired three new faculty members, one limited term contract and two tenure-track, none of whom were Indigenous. In advertising the positions, the Department had included Native philosophy among a long list of specializations, but no Indigenous philosophers had applied. If you really want to hire Native philosophers, you actually have to go out and look for them. When I was Chair and co-director with Dennis of the Native Philosophy Project, we filled three limited term contracts with Indigenous philosophers. One was a Rockefeller Foundation Visiting Fellow who was persuaded to stay on after the Fellowship. That was supposed to be the position converted to tenure-track. The other two were sabbatical replacements. We had to attend many conferences where Dennis and I presented and attended papers as we looked for possible candidates. We found one at an APA session and the other at a meeting of the Society for the Advancement of American Philosophy, yes SAAP. This is the kind of work you have to do if you are serious about attracting Native philosophers. Of course, the principal reason Dennis and I have given presentations at both Philosophy and Native American Studies Conferences is to see how what we had to say about Ojibwa values and worldviews resonated in other localities.

The final chapter in our story of Dennis and Indigenous Locality has to do with the new Bora Laskin Faculty of Law at Lakehead University, the first new Faculty of Law in Ontario in 44 years. At first the University had difficulty gaining approval from the Law Society of Upper Canada. It was not until Dennis was brought onto the Proposal Committee and it emphasized Aboriginal Law with the endorsement of local Native community leaders that the Law Society accepted the proposal and the Government-approved funding. The Bora Laskin Faculty of Law in fact embraces three mandates in its curriculum: Aboriginal and Indigenous Law, Natural Resources and Environmental Law, and Sole/Small Town Practice.

Since Dennis had helped with the proposal and accreditation of the new Law School and since he has a graduate degree in Law, he let his name stand for the

advertised position of Dean. He did not even get an interview. The first Dean of Law did not stay for his full term. An interim Dean had to be appointed while the Law School formed a search committee and advertised the position. Dennis did not apply. However, a well qualified Indigenous law professor and legal scholar did apply. In May of 2016, Angelique EagleWoman of the Dakota Nation became the first Indigenous Dean of Law in Canada. Unfortunately, just two years later, by the end of June 2018, Dean EagleWoman was suing the University, and had resigned her position citing systemic discrimination and lack of commitment to the Aboriginal and Indigenous Law mandate.

The University had to appoint another interim Dean. The person they appointed was a Judge with the Ontario Superior Court who had jailed five Native leaders/protesters for contempt of court. The Native community was visibly and vocally very upset. It was very much aware that the existence of the Law School was due in large measure to its endorsement. The Native community did not like to lose Dean EagleWoman, and it did not like the appointment of the interim Dean. Native leaders demanded that the next Dean of Law must be Indigenous. Dean EagleWoman had set the standard. The University did advertise for a Native person with an advanced degree in Law, preferably with local Community knowledge. The winning candidate, Dr. Jula Hughes, then Professor of Law at the University of New Brunswick, is non-Native, born and educated in Europe with a Canadian Law degree from the University of Ottawa. Her advanced degrees are in Literature from a prestigious German University.

Dennis did apply for this position. I think I regret encouraging him to do so. He was not immediately invited for an interview. They shortlisted two other candidates, Dr. Hughes, and an Ojibwa law professor from the United States. The Indigenous candidate withdrew his name before his interview. Then and only then was Dennis invited to participate in the interviewing process. The day-long interviews included a public presentation by each candidate. I attended both presentations. Yes, Dr. Hughes' was very impressive. Her basic theme seemed to be that the reputation of a law school depended on its students and faculty, not on its Dean. She allowed that, from what she had seen, we were in pretty good shape.

Her presentation was held in the University Senate Chambers. I arrived early as the room has limited seating capacity. I noticed a number of audio-visual technical staff setting up and testing their equipment. They were setting up a two-way link to the Law School auditorium where the law students and faculty could gather and participate. The Law School building is not on the main campus of the University. I also arrived early for Dennis' presentation. I saw no technical staff. The audio-visual equipment was already sitting there set up. The presentation was not in the Senate Chambers but in a tiered classroom. I do not know if its capacity equaled that of the Senate, but it was standing room only for those who arrived late. Though the link to the Law School seemed to work, it was obvious right from the start that the loud speakers in the classroom did not. No one called for technical support; they just let Dennis try to cope, using his professorial voice,

speaking as loudly as possible.

In his presentation Dennis argued first, that the University must recognize and accept its leadership role in the community. The way it deals with systemic racism, for example, inspires or gives permission for others to do the same. Second, Dennis suggested that if you are going to talk about Indigenous law, you had better ground it on Indigenous philosophy. Finally, he argued that it is important to study how actual Canadian law uniquely impacts Indigenous peoples. Dennis' entire presentation has been posted on a social and health practice Ottawa website which suggests that "[It] is worth an hour of your time if you are seeking to address the ideas of reconciliation."

I conclude my narrative on Dennis McPherson and the liberation of Locality by recommending that you listen to his presentation which he entitled, "Indian on the Lawn: Thirty Years of Reflection."

<https://socialhealthpracticeottawa.wordpress.com/2019/05/25/dennis-mcpherson-presentation-to-lakehead-university-law-school-indian-on-the-lawn-thirty-years-of-reflection/>

As I noted at the outset of this paper, with ethics in the Native narrative tradition, the "goal is for individuals...to unravel the meaning of the stories in their own time and in their own way to guide them on their right path."

## Notes

1. Shay Welch, *The Phenomenology of a Performance Knowledge System: Dancing with Native American Epistemology*, 76-77.
2. Welch, *The Phenomenology of a Performance Knowledge System*, 33.
3. Others have followed our lead: see, for example, Sandra Tomsons and Lorraine Mayer, eds., *Philosophy and Aboriginal Rights: Critical Dialogues*, xiv, xxiii, 306-307.
4. See Dennis H. McPherson and J. Douglas Rabb, *Indian from the Inside: Native American Philosophy and Cultural Renewal*, 5-6; Sandra Tomsons and Lorraine Mayer, eds. *Philosophy and Aboriginal Rights*, 306; Lorraine Mayer, "What Happened at Lakehead: The Dilemma of Racism, Corruption or Incompetence?", *American Philosophical Association Newsletter on American Indians in Philosophy*, Vol. 07 No. 2, Spring, 2008, 8, and Virginie Magnat, *The Performative Power of Vocality*, 176.
5. Brian Burkhardt, *Indigenizing Philosophy through the Land: A Trickster Methodology for Decolonizing Environmental Ethics and Indigenous Futures*, xvii.
6. According to Lawrence W. Neuman, *Social Research Methods: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches*, 25, a text in Dennis' Research Methods course, "Action research is applied research that treats knowledge as a form of power and abolishes the line between research and social action. There are several types of

- action research, but most share common characteristics: those who are being studied participate in the research process; research incorporates ordinary or popular knowledge; research focuses on power with a goal of empowerment; research seeks to raise consciousness or increase awareness, and research is tied directly to political action.”
7. Dennis H. McPherson, “Indian on the Lawn: How are Research Partnerships with Aboriginal People Possible?”, *American Philosophical Association Newsletter on American Indians in Philosophy*, Vol. 05 No. 2, Spring, 2006, 5.
  8. Cited in Dennis H. McPherson, “Indian on the Lawn: How are Research Partnerships with Aboriginal People Possible?”, 3.
  9. Erin McKenna and Scott Pratt, *American Philosophy from Wounded Knee to the Present*, 295.
  10. *Ibid.*
  11. Dennis H. McPherson and J. Douglas Rabb, *Indian from the Inside: Native American Philosophy and Cultural Renewal*, 3.
  12. Brian Burkhart, *Indigenizing Philosophy through the Land: A Trickster Methodology for Decolonizing Environmental Ethics and Indigenous Futures*, 228-229.

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