Introduction to a Critical Approach to Cartography

Case Study: The Cybercartographic Residential Schools Land Memory Atlas and its predecessor, the Lake Huron Treaty Atlas

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Overview

1. Reconciliation in a transitional justice framework
2. Critical cartography
3. Cybercartography
4. RSLMMP
   (i) background (GLSL, LHTA)
   (ii) current work, including
       (a) disciplinary intersections,
       (b) teaching and research intersections,
       (c) project intersections,
       (d) intersections with written narrative
       (e) ‘land memory’ component
       (f) two-pronged reflexive approach
       (g) theory and practice intersections
1. Reconciliation in a Transitional Justice Framework

David Crocker’s multilayered and holistic view of “reconciliation” in a transitional justice framework is useful for interpreting the reconciliation dimensions of the RSLMMP.


Transitional Justice

Eight multi-cultural goals of transitional justice based on comprehensive survey of “worldwide moral deliberation on transitional justice”:

1. Truth
2. Providing a public platform for victims
3. Accountability and punishment
4. Rule of law
5. Compensation to victims
6. Institutional reform
7. Long-term development
8. Reconciliation
Truth

Three types or dimensions of truth:

1) forensic truth, which relates to the facts of moral and legal rights violations;
2) emotional truth relating to psychological and physical impacts;
3) general truth concerning systemic injustices.

Reconciliation

“reconciliation” of relationships

Minimal requirement: “simple coexistence”

Moderate requirement: “people may continue to maintain different perspectives and understandings, although they must “hear each other out, enter into a give-and-take about matters of public policy, and build on areas of common concern […] to forge principled compromises with which all can live” (60).

Richest (most difficult) requirement: “forgiveness, mercy (rather than justice), a shared comprehensive vision, mutual healing, or harmony” (61).
Reconciliation

1. Argument that there have never been good relationships to reconcile

2. Reconciliation as a reflexive concept, especially insofar as it is both a means and an end, and has both forward and backward looking elements

3. Reconciliation as a set of iterative processes involving transformation, and not a static concept.

Reconciliation Dimensions

1. Epistemological: cultural turn, social justice, interpretation, performance

2. Intercultural: political and economic relationships, interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships, collective and individual dimensions

3. Environmental: ecological understanding, restorative approaches to land, water, animals and plants
“[W]e’ve had enough of your ‘conspicuous innocence’. We have been pathologised by Western research methods that have found us deficient either as genetically inferior or culturally deviant for generations (Sue and Sue, 1990).

We have been dismembered, objectified and problematised via Western scientific rationality and reason (Sinclair, 2003).

We have been politically, socially, and economically dominated by colonial forces and marginalised through armed struggle, biased legislation, and educational initiatives and policies that promote Western knowledge systems at the expense of our own (Bishop, 1997).

We know better now (2007, 131).
Issues

Indigenous priorities and the academic dilemma in the research process

Indigenous epistemologies and the knowledge economy

Transforming academic paradigms

Cultural identity, resistance and research

New frontiers of knowledge

Global economy, culture and the role of academic scholarship

Intellectual property rights of Indigenous knowledge (Louis, 131).
Epistemological Roots of Colonialism

Western European World View: Philosophy, Science and Religion separated

Scientific Rationality: Empiricism, Objectivity, Reductionism, Control

Rationality as self-interest: Denies holistic relationship between reason and emotion

Rene Descartes: I think, therefore I am; the father of dualism

The Late Grandfather, Elder and Dr. William Commanda, Algonquin Anishinaabe

Seven Fires Prophecy
Overcoming Colonialism:
Deconstruction and Reconstruction

Historically, scientific maps have been used by nation-state primarily to assert their territorial rights and reinforce their power over Indigenous and other communities. In contrast, various alternative maps have more recently become 'a vehicle of resistance, a language whereby rights to place may be asserted or through which non-dominatory representations might be cultivated” (Pickles 2004, 113).
2. Critical Approaches to Cartography

Critical approaches to cartography consider the political nature of maps and look at mapping as a process rather than simply a material object.

They seek to contribute to social, spatial, environmental and other forms of justice by including information that was previously excluded in conventional maps and participatory mapping with trained and untrained map makers.

Collaborative approaches to cartography have the potential to enhance reconciliation initiatives and provide a unique vehicle for storytelling and sharing.

There is potential for critical cartographic approaches such as Cybercartography to bridge Indigenous perspectives and knowledge with other approaches.
Aspects of Critical Cartography

Deconstruction
Reflexivity
Positionality
Experience
Community

Relational Space
Inclusion
Performance
Mapping Practices
Reconstruction
3. Cybercartography

Dr. Fraser Taylor (Director, Geomatics and Cartographic Research Centre – GCRC - Carleton University) introduced the concept and practice of Cybercartography.

- Multisensory (vision, hearing, touch, and eventually, smell and taste)
- Uses multimedia formats and new telecommunications technologies
- Highly interactive and engages the user in new ways
- Applied to a wide range of topics of interest to the society, not only to location finding and the physical environment
- Not a stand-alone product like the traditional map, but part of an information/analytical package
- Compiled by teams of individuals from different disciplines
- Involves new research partnerships among academia, government, civil society, and the private sector

Since its introduction in the later twentieth century, Cybercartography has involved more and more people, a greater focus on Indigenous issues and improvements at the intersection of people, technology and content.
Examples
Clyde River Atlas

http://clyderiveratlas.ca
Examples

Thule Atlas

http://thuleatlas.org
4. RSLMMP and Background – Concepts and Approaches

1. Geo-transcription and Geo-archiving
2. Mapping epiphany
3. Spatializing History
4. Two-pronged and Braided Approach
5. Transdisciplinarity
6. Iterative Processes
7. Reflexivity
8. Emergence
Changing Attitudes – Spatializing History

According to Brenna Bhandar (2004), such change involves letting go of the linear, teleological attitudes toward history, which she claims underlie Canadian constitutional jurisprudence, and replacing these attitudes with non-linear, non-teleological attitudes.

In order to adopt a non-linear (or holistic) and non-teleological (or balance-oriented) approach to history, it is necessary to approach knowledge in a way that dispenses with many of the binary distinctions associated with the western worldview underlying colonialism.

Important examples include the tendency in western thought to categorically separate reason and emotion, man and nature, space and place, and materiality and process (Pyne, 2013, 19-20).
Deconstruction and Reconstruction
“The performative turn in cartography includes an emphasis on emergent knowledge, on rethinking and re-doing mapping, often with a focus on journeys and experience” (Pyne 2013, 68).
The Residential Schools Land Memory Mapping Project (SSHRC Insight Grant, 2015-2020) participates in reconciliation processes by bringing together a variety of participants across Canada to collaborate in the design and development of the cybercartographic Residential Schools Land Memory Atlas via a series of critical and awareness enhancing mapping exercises.
Archival and historical information
Participatory Aspect including fieldwork
Knowledge Dissemination
Education (including RA training)
Residential Schools Module
Exhibit Module
Shingwauk Industrial Home Module
Shingwauk Industrial Home Module
Assiniboia School Map Module
Point One: Regina Industrial Home (Orlandini Coord)

Why were children like Moore sent to residential schools?

A clue may be found in the government annual reports themselves, which open a window onto the 19th century rhetoric that the government and churches used to justify their social engineering project to “civilize” the indigenous people. In 1883, as industrial schools were being established, Edgar Dewdney (Indian Commissioner for the Department of Indian Affairs) wrote:

Edward Dewdney on the desire to civilize:

Experience has taught that little can be done which will have a permanent effect with the adult Indian, consequently, to create a lasting impression and elevate him above his brethren, we must take charge of the youth and keep him constantly within the circle of civilization. I am confident that the Industrial School now about to be established will be a principal feature in the civilization of the Indian mind.

By the children being separated from their parents and properly and regularly instructed not only in the rudiments of the English
I Have A Right To Be Heard Map Module

Entering Thomas Moore's World at the Glenbow Museum

The before and after photographs of Thomas Moore open the exhibition Where are the Children? Healing the Legacy of the Residential Schools. Blown up into mural size prints and flanking the entrance, they invite the visitor to enter Moore's world. They invited viewers to imagine themselves as a child walking into those schools. Shirley (Pheasant) Williams was such a child. She was 10 years old when she entered the St. Joseph's Residential School at Spanish River, Ontario in 1949, having had a traditional Ojibway education in early life and speaking only her native language.
Where Are The Children Exhibition Venues Map Module
Residential Schools In the News Map Module
Residential Schools In the News Map Module
Jeff Thomas Travels Map Module

Residential Schools - Planning

Place: MacLaren Art Centre, Barrie, Ontario
25 November 2008 - 15 February 2009

Place: MacLaren Art Centre, Barrie, Ontario
29 November 2008 - 15
Jeff Thomas Travels Map Module
Cybercartography in a Reconciliation Community

Engaging Intersecting Perspectives

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