Choosing to Walk a Path:
Library Services with Indigenous Peoples on Purpose

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January 28, 2016
Welcome to Winnipeg: Where Canada’s racism problem is at its worst

How the death of Tina Fontaine has finally forced the city to face its festering race problem.

Nancy Macdonald
January 22, 2015
Red River Women

On the trail of the murdered and missing - why have so many of Winnipeg's Aboriginal women and girls been killed?
Globe Books 2013: A new chapter in aboriginal literature

SHELAGH ROGERS AND NIIGAANWEWIDAM JAMES SINCLAIR
Special to The Globe and Mail
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Asked why he is defending Joseph Boyden’s newest novel The Orenda in the upcoming Canada Reads 2014, Ojibway journalist Wab Kinew responded by saying: “Because reconciliation with Native People is still the most pressing social justice issue Canada faces.”

According to Kinew, reading Boyden’s vision of the complex ways Indigenous peoples and Canadians shaped one another during early contact has the ability to shake up abusive cycles of relationships, revisit history and examine the ways we are more connected than not.

MORE RELATED TO THIS STORY
• Globe Books 2013: How can you change what (and who) you read?
• Globe Books 2013: Long story short, it was a remarkable year for short fiction
• Globe Books 2013: A new chapter in aboriginal literature
Settler Colonialism

• Colonizing group ("settlers") displace an indigenous population from their land and settle permanently

• (vs the colonialism focused on exploiting labour – see colonial India, for example)
It’s still happening

A structure – not an event

Labeling our work
Decolonizing?

Purposeful engagement against multiple systems of oppression

a goal, a process…endpoint as unknown

“engages with imperialism and colonialism at every level” Eric Ritskes. “What is decolonization and why does it matter?” in *Intercontinental Cry*

September 21, 2012

“moving to a different and tangible place, somewhere out there, where no one has really ever been”

Mariolga Reyes Cruz “Ni con dios ni con el diablo: Tales of survival, resistance and rebellion from a reluctant academic.” in *Decolonization, Indigeneity, Education and Society*. Vol. 1, Issue 1, 2012
Indigenizing?

“To cause to have indigenous characteristics”
merriam-webster.com

“Bring (something) under the control, dominance, or influence of indigenous or local people”
oxforddictionaries.com

See current efforts to “indigenize the academy.”
Key perspectives & approaches
Diversity → Anti-racism
Diversity

• Focus is on *celebration* of difference and inclusion
• Doesn’t address material realities
• Doesn’t address power
• See: Folklarama, multi-cultural potlucks, including Indigenous content only on National Aboriginal Day, etc.
Taking a systemic view

“Institutional racism or systemic racism describes forms of racism which are structured into political and social institutions. It occurs when organisations, institutions or governments discriminate, either deliberately or indirectly, against certain groups of people to limit their rights.”

Anti-racism

• Anti-racism
  – acknowledges a difference in power exists
  – acknowledges privilege – unearned benefits

  – works to address specific injustices based on difference in power
  – works to change the difference in power
Outreach

- organization positioned as *expert*
- on a mission to deliver a message
- collaboration is minimal
- focus is on the “end”

the power stays put
Community Development

• organization positioned as *partner*...*possibly an ally*
• focus is on the means or the process
• much deeper collaboration...relationships
• Decision-making is shared or given over

*a power shift*
To indigenize

“Bring (something) under the control, dominance, or influence of indigenous or local people”

oxforddictionaries.com
“Believe that...”

“Believe that Indigenous peoples have the power to find solutions for ourselves. Support our efforts in ways that ensure the solutions we enact continue to happen.”

- Âpihtawikosisân (Chelsea Vowell)
Mainstream institution
Challenges - institutions

- Human Resources
  - Hiring, Staff training
- Competing priorities within environment of scarcity
- Working against/within multiple systems of oppression
- Past is present / ongoing
Potential - institutions

- **Training**
  - changing hearts and minds
  - skill development

- **Qualities of library staff**
  - Curious, open to learning
  - Desire to be helpful (just need direction)

- **Increasing number of Indigenous peoples reaching out – waiting to be reached out to**
Aboriginal Reading-in-the-Round, 2005

-art addition, 2010

-renamed Ah kha koo gheesh, 2015
Adult Aboriginal Resources Area 2013

-renamed Wii ghoss, 2015
Fabric art loaned by Manitoba Urban Inuit Association, 2014-2015
MOON VOICES:
What’s your story?

Millennium Library
Aboriginal Rooming Area, 2nd Floor
251 Chalmers Street
Saturday, October 26 at 11 a.m.
Indigenous Writers’ Collective of Manitoba
“New Voices” launch, Millennium Library, 2013

Credit: Saffron Scott
Elder-in-Residence
2010-2011
“The Last Word on First Words”

contest in May – June, 2012
eyes. May it also bring you blue butterfly smiles. Blue Marrow sings of the resilience of life even through pain and injustice. It is a deeply moving tribute to the poet’s own grandmothers.

**Youth category**

![Image of Dakota B. holding a book]

**Name:** Dakota B.  
**Entry:** fareWel by Ian Ross

The play fareWel by Ian Ross is very funny. The characters are very interesting and stuff they do is pretty crazy. They talk, fight and try to borrow money from each other while they wait for their welfare cheque.

I really liked the character of Sheldon Traverse. His story is intense because he has been through so much. He has been cut by a chainsaw, bit by a dog, hit by a police car and been punched in the mouth to remove a bad tooth.

I think the language used in the play is really funny. All the characters laugh at each other and all the ridiculous stuff they end up doing. I think this play is very good and people should read it. The characters encourage the reader. Even though they are in a bad situation, they keep laughing and trying.

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**Other suggested titles**

- *The Seven Teachings*
  by David Courchene

- *In Search of April Raintree*
  by Beatrice Maisonneuve (Culleton)

- *Bear bones & feathers*

- *Midnight Sweatlodge*
North End Love Songs

Katherena Vermette

ON THE SAME PAGE
Celebrate the 2014-2015 Selection

North End Love Songs
by Katherena Vermette

READ MANITOBA!

Join Manitoba’s biggest book club, now in its seventh year!

OnTheSamePage.ca
The sure-footed Danielle, our @wpgilibrary host, hands out bannock on a moving bus!
Sean Ledwich

The lovely AltheaL8r (aka Bannock Lady) has joined us, which prompted applause.
Mister Boulette @MisterBoulette · Mar 21
Just a quick stop at the North End Love Songs tour @katherenav
@wplibrary @SeanLedwich @WCDAnyting
Sean Ledwich
It's like Oprah! @katherenav has a copy of North End Love Songs for all on @wpglibrary bus tour.
You voted and The Evolution of Alice was chosen as the book all Manitobans should read. Read the book – in print or the eBook – and get ready to join us for special events coming in January and February, 2016!

"While this is a book rooted firmly in life on a reservation, it is universal in its message of forgiveness, of grace, of growth. Robertson has a profound and thought-provoking ability to take big issues and make them intimate."

- Joanne Kelly for CBC News

Join Manitoba's biggest book club, now in its eighth year!

The Evolution of Alice by David Robertson

OnTheSamePage.ca

David Robertson
4 Tips
Grow relationships.

How?

Show up.

And again.

And again.
Give it over.

Whenever, wherever, however…
Change (a lot)

• the challenges are systemic – the solutions need to be too
  – hiring, training, facilities, selecting and sourcing materials, programs’ content and facilitators, hours of operation, levels of off-site services, marketing, website content, technology access…
"Activists, however, continue to demonstrate. And how? Round dances mostly. In other words, they're giving gifts."

"I mean a presentation that illustrates something about an individual or community. This could be history, experiences, or knowledge about the universe. Anything."

Niigaanwewidam James Sinclair
“I don't believe in charity. I believe in solidarity. Charity is so vertical. It goes from the top to the bottom.

Solidarity is horizontal. It respects the other person. I have a lot to learn from other people.”


Eduardo Galeano (1940-2015)
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