Isabel Wilson

Julie Machnaik, ECS 100

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My Journey to Reconciliation

My journey to reconciliation is one that is not finished yet. I think that my reconciliation journey will be something that will continue to develop over time. When I was younger, I never had the opportunity to learn very much about the First Nations people. We were always supposed to learn about it, but it never really worked out too well. We watched one movie in grade nine but never got any explanation. Then, in grade twelve we had some minor discussion about Indigenous people and their culture, but it quickly got brushed off by a couple of my classmates and their strong opinions. This has made me have to play a game of “catch up” in university because there was so many things I do not know. Therefore, my journey towards reconciliation has just started in a way.

My aesthetic representation of my journey is through dance. Dance has always been a way for me to express myself and how I am feeling so it seemed fitting that it be the medium for my journey to reconciliation. I was very fortunate to perform my journey of reconciliation to the people of my hometown. This past weekend there was an arts festival in my hometown to showcase the artists we have in our town and area. I was lucky enough to share this dance at the festival. My friend Zoe Dubois is a singer and song writer who is going to university for music in British Columbia. She is the one who wrote the song I am dancing to called “Sinking Feeling”. She did not necessarily write this song with the idea of reconciliation, but this was how I interpreted it. When I proposed the idea of creating a dance to her song for this reason she felt really honoured.

The dance embodies the emotions that the First Nations people are feeling while trying to get past the abuse from residential schools and discrimination in general. I tried my best to make my movements match the lyrics of the song. Right at the beginning of the song Zoe sings “Every tide, that we tame always rushes back again”. I took this as a metaphor for the treaties. The treaties were put in place to make healthy, and happy relationships between the settlers and the Indigenous people. Even though these treaties were put in place, the relationship between the settlers and the Indigenous people has become very grim. This is exactly how I related the words of the song to parts of the dance and parts in our history with discrimination and racism. My goal for this piece was to embody the pain and the fight the First Nations people have put up in order to be considered as equals.

Reconciliation is something that should be important for all teachers. If the new teachers are not educated, then we risk having another residential school situation. We learn in class about new and old teaching methods. Learning about residential schools, discrimination, and racism, makes me want to be a teacher against it. This content has made me realize the multiculturalism in the classroom as well as key ties to the environment. I do not have concrete examples as these are things, I am just paying attention to and noticing more. I think that this is where my journey starts and will ultimately continue.

Zoe’s Lyrics

Every breath, and every taste

Has drowned me like the ocean waste

And every tide, that we tame

Always rushes back again

Under the surface of a stormy ocean wave

Who will watch the strides you take

To stay afloat, in the years you try

To tread water cause you, won’t, cry

It’s the sinking feeling that you get

The sinking feeling

Don’t believe what you see

Or you’ll let yourself down

Don’t walk into the sea

Or you’ll let yourself drown

You’ll go down

(I quickly talked to Zoe and because it is mostly an instrumental, she wanted me to add that the tone she was going for was gloomy, and had hardship in it)