Who gets to be a human? Religion in colonial histories and Indigenous resistance

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Introduction

The global challenge of growing inequalities is intricately linked to the distinction made between those historically regarded as human and those not. You may wonder why the question 'Who gets to be a human?' matters. Historically, not all people were considered *fully* human. Some were considered rational, civilised, and intelligent, thus human, while others were labelled as barbarian, animal-like, or primitive, and therefore *not* fully human.

This division between 'civilised' and 'non-civilised' played a vital role in justifying the colonisation and enslavement of those who were deemed 'lesser human', 'other human', or 'non-human', along with the perception of their lands as empty and waiting to be exploited.

The 'Age of Discovery', a wave of European **colonisation** which took place between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries, marked the beginning of a new era in which European empires established control over so-called 'discovered' lands, framing them as *terra nullius* exploiting both the people and resources of these regions.

In this course, you will explore how some religions and religious categories were conceptualised and employed in ways that contributed to dehumanising colonised individuals and communities, many of whom organise and identify as **Indigenous** today. The capital 'I' in Indigenous indicates experiences of enduring shared colonial histories, as well as political initiatives for the recognition of collective rights.

This OpenLearn course is an adapted extract from the Open University course DA332 *Religion and global challenges in the past and present*.

Learning outcomes

After studying this course, you should be able to:

- understand the differences between colonisation, colonialism and coloniality
- recognise the role of religion and religious categories in the dehumanisation of colonised communities
- reflect on hierarchies of knowledge.

1 Colonisation and race: The making of 'us' and 'them'

People have long categorised themselves into 'us' and 'them'. It is common to make such distinctions as we navigate our lives. However, some 'us' and 'them' separations create far more powerful divisions, especially when supported by political, educational, and religious institutions.

Activity 1 Am I one of 'us' or one of 'them'?

⏱ *Allow approximately 10 minutes to complete this activity.*

Take a moment to reflect on who you include when you think of 'us' and who you imagine as 'them.' Consider your participation in these groups.

- Did you choose to be part of them, or were you included by default?
- Have you ever moved from one group to another?
- What factors define belonging in these groups?

Provide your answer...

....

Discussion

You might have come up with a wide range of different examples of groups here. This might have included groups of 'us' that you identify with and that you potentially can choose to join or leave, like groups of friends, team-mates or neighbours. However, membership of some groups can be more fixed, such as family or fellow citizens of the same nation-state, which are often determined by birth or external institutions. Inclusion in or exclusion from these groups can therefore often be harder, though not always impossible, to change, for example through marriage, or gaining an additional citizenship.

Many scholars argue that most inequalities are rooted in 'us' and 'them' divisions. The French philosopher Bruno Latour (1993, p. 97) calls this creation of polarities the **Great Divide** and traces it back to a conceptual division between humans and non-humans.

In the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the **Enlightenment** emerged as a major intellectual movement centred on human reason and scientific knowledge. Humans became not only the subjects and objects of knowledge but a classificatory category, giving rise to one of history's most divisive and destructive constructs – **race**.

According to a widely influential and celebrated Enlightenment philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), Native Americans were seen as the lowest of the four races ('incapable of being educated and too weak for work in the fields'); the 'Negroes' were placed above ('capable of being trained to be slaves but not in any other form of education'); the 'Hindus' as superior to 'Negroes' ('capable of being educated in the arts, but not in the sciences'); and the 'whites' as 'superior and the only non-defiant race' (Kleingeld, 2007, p. 576–577).

As a result, colonised peoples were judged and classified by their suitability for enslavement and exploitation and deliberately placed at the bottom of racial hierarchies to justify colonial domination.

1.1 Under the colonial gaze: dehumanising and demonising shamans

The Indigenous Māori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999, p. 28) argues that the categorisation of 'primitive peoples', based on colonial hierarchies of race, excluded Indigenous peoples not only from the realm of civilisation but from humanity itself. You will now learn how an example of a 'shaman' illustrates Tuhiwai Smith's observation.

The drawing shown in Figure 1 is one of the first recorded accounts of shamans, depicted by the Dutch statesman Nicolaes Witsen (1641–1717). The word 'shaman' comes from the Evenki word *šaman* or *xaman*, which can loosely be translated into 'agitated', 'excited' or 'raised' (Znamenski, 2007, p. viii). Evenki are a Tungusic-speaking people of North Asia, whose lands currently stretch across the nation states of Russia, China and Mongolia.

Activity 2 Shaman and the colonial gaze

🕐 *Allow approximately 10 minutes to complete this activity.*

Take some time to examine Figure 1.

Figure 1 Tungus Shaman; or, the priest of the Devil. A drawing from Noord en Oost Tartarye [North and East Tartary] (1692) by Nicolaes Witsen. Courtesy of Tjeerd de Graaf, Nicolaas Witsen Project, Netherlands.

- Who or what do you think is depicted in this picture?
- Would you think that shamans were humans or some mythical creatures based on this image?

> *Provide your answer...*
>
> ....
>
> **Discussion**
>
> The presence of animal claws, furry skin and reindeer horns all suggest that shamans were not really humans. This depiction of an Evenki shaman was not produced with the Evenki audience in mind. It was made by Nikolaes Witsen for a European public, whom he likely hoped to impress with his travels in 'mysterious' lands previously not known to his audience. Coupled with the caption 'the priest of the Devil', this image represents an example of visual dehumanisation and the beginning of centuries-long demonisation of Indigenous religious practitioners categorised as shamans.

Witsen never personally encountered Evenki *šaman* and never visited Evenki lands during his brief travel to Russia between 1664 and 1665. His reports were largely based on stories he had heard from people he met during his travels.

Despite the questionable (indeed non-existent) evidence supporting Witsen's account, his depiction of an Evenki *šaman* marked the start of the West's ongoing fascination with shamans, who were believed to have abilities like being able to turn their bodies into animals, perform magic tricks and, most characteristically, leave their human bodies for spirit journeys, often with the use of drums. Stories about dark spirits tormenting shamans during their initiations, often defined as 'shaman illness', were of great interest to Europeans, who were keen to find a scientific explanation to such bodily experiences.

Most of the ethnographers studying Siberia came from Christian backgrounds and used Christian vocabularies to describe local practitioners and knowledge-holders, some of whom they described as shamans. Shamans were depicted as half-human, half-animal beings and as servants of the Devil, playing a significant role in feeding the colonial fantasies of European explorers eager to discover curiosities and wonders in the 'newly explored worlds.'

In his study of shamans, Swedish historian of religion Olle Sundström (2012, p. 356) argues that 'depicting foreign people's spiritual and political leaders as frauds, maniacs or devil-worshippers could be the only reason needed to motivate colonisation and the subjugation of the land and the peoples'. The Russian conquest of Siberia, began in the sixteenth century and was strongly driven by economic motives. In particular, there was a significant interest in Siberian fur, often referred to us 'soft gold,' which at that time functioned as an important global currency.

Over time, the term 'shaman' was applied not only to Evenki *šaman* but also to various Indigenous practitioners in Siberia and then across colonised regions worldwide. Their knowledges, practices and worldviews were collectively categorised as 'shamanism.' What these people shared was not necessarily similar practices or skills, but a common experience of being defined through a colonial gaze – one that, at best, objectified and exoticised them, and at worst, demonised, criminalised, and dehumanised them.

1.2 Indigenous mapping

In Figure 2, you see a map of Sábmi. You might not be able to place this region at first glance, but if you look closely, you may recognise the contours of Scandinavia. Sábmi, or

Sápmi, is the land inhabited by the Sámi people, stretching today across Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia.
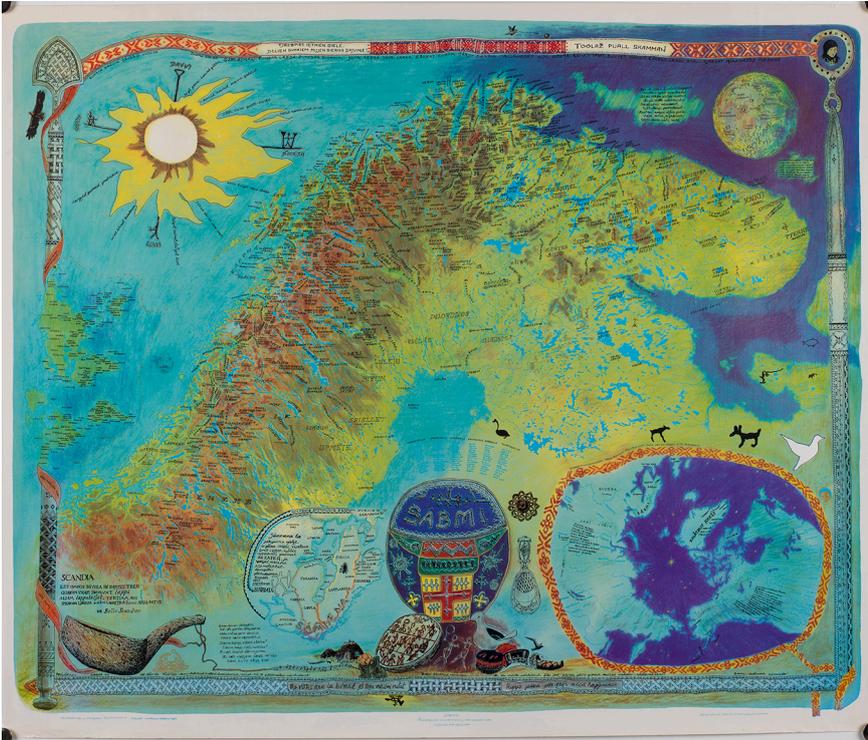
Figure 2 The Sábmi map of 1975 by Elle Hánsa/Keviselie/Hans Ragnar Mathisen

This map was created by Sámi artist Keviselie (also known by his Sámi name Elle Hánsa and Norwegian name Hans Ragnar Mathisen), celebrated for his cartographic artworks. Keviselie's map is not divided by the national borders and is filled with Sámi place names.

Sámi anthropologist Marit Myrvoll (2017, p. 107) notes how maps have been more effective tools of colonisation than weapons, commenting on the way many Sámi place names were lost by the turn of the twentieth century.

Activity 3 Putting Sápmi on the map

🕐 *Allow approximately 20 minutes to complete this activity.*

You will now listen to an excerpt from a podcast interview with Keviselie about the process of making the first map of Sápmi:

Audio content is not available in this format.

Audio 1: Putting Sápmi on the Map

After listening to the excerpt, answer the following questions:

1) What was the main reason Keviselie chose opaque plastic sheets to make the map of Sápmi instead of creating a lithograph? (Select one correct answer.)

○ Because plastic sheets had lower production costs.

○ Because Keviselie wanted the map to appear more modern.

○ Because the plastic sheets were easy to copy, making the map widely accessible rather than exclusive.

○ Because plastic sheets made the map waterproof.

2) What makes Keviselie's map meaningful for Sámi people? (Select three correct answers.)

☐   It challenges established maps made from a colonial non-Sámi gaze.

☐   The inclusion of Sámi place names reclaims a sense of connection and belonging to the land that colonial mapping erased.

☐   It is a primarily an artwork rather than a functional map.

☐   By removing national borders, the map challenges divisions imposed by nation-states.

3) What are the three meanings of Sápmi according to Keviselie? (Choose three correct answers.)

☐ Sámi language(s)

☐ Sámi knowledge(s)

☐ Sámi people(s)

☐ Homeland of the Sámi people(s)

2 Religion and colonialism

When European powers colonised North America, known as Turtle Island to many Native American peoples, Christian churches played a major role by operating government-funded residential schools in what today is known as Canada and the United States of America. In Canada, 60 per cent of residential schools were run by the Catholic Church, 30 per cent by the Anglican Church and the remaining 10 per cent were run by other Christian denominations (Feir, 2016).

Residential schools were a core part of **colonialism**, a system of domination that, in words of Tuhiwai Smith (1999, p. 31), 'brought complete disorder to colonised peoples, disconnecting them from their histories, their landscapes, their languages, their social relations and their own ways of thinking, feeling and interacting with the world.'

Regardless of the disruptive and dehumanising nature of colonialism, it was presented as something beneficial for the colonised peoples. The means by which this narrative was implemented was through the promises of salvation, modernisation and civilisation. For this to hold any kind of credibility, the colonised peoples had to be imagined as uncivilised and in need of such salvation, a perception effectively reinforced by the term 'primitive'.

Thousands of children passed through the schools, many of whom were forcibly removed from their families. Children in residential schools experienced widespread physical, mental, and sexual abuse. Many died, and those who survived continue to carry generational traumas. Residential schools actively operated until the 1970s, with the last ones closing in the United States in 1978 and in Canada as late as 1997.

2.1 'Save the man; kill the Indian'

In the residential schools, children were not allowed to speak their mother tongues and were forced to adopt Christianity. Christianity was taught as the only true knowledge system, while Indigenous ways of knowing and living were suppressed, stigmatised, and often prohibited. Children's names were replaced by European Christian names, and sometime even numbers (which in many cases were used more than the names). They were also required to wear uniforms and have their hair cut.

In other words, the schools were explicitly designed to erase everything 'Indian', driven by the slogan 'Save the Man, Kill the Indian'.

Figure 3 Photograph of Tom Torlino by John N. Choate, circa 1882. Before and after entering Carlisle Indian Industrial School.

2.2 Colonising hair

Cutting hair was a key part of assimilation processes and was often one of the first experiences children encountered when entering school. Cutting hair signified more than a mere physical change. For many communities, hair carries deep meaning, embodying and reflecting their values, experiences and relationships.

Watch the following video, where a survivor of a residential school, Fred, shares the impact that cutting hair had on him:

Video content is not available in this format.

Video 1: Fred recalls hair cutting in residential school as an attack on identity

Activity 4 Religion and colonialism

⏱ *Allow approximately 10 minutes to complete this activity.*

In this part of the course, you learned about Tuhiwai Smith's understanding of colonialism and residential schools for Indigenous children in North America. Complete the questions below based on what you have learned about the role of religious institutions in colonialism:

1) Who ran the residential schools for Indigenous children in Canada?

Catholic Church

Anglican Church

other Christian denominations

Match each of the items above to an item below.

60 per cent of residential schools were run by

30 per cent by the

and the remaining 10 per cent were run by

2) When did the last residential schools for Indigenous children close in the United States and Canada?

○ 1891 in US and 1917 in Canada

○ 1987 in US and 1990 in Canada

○ 1941 in US and 1945 in Canada

○ 1978 in US and 1997 in Canada

3) What was the role of Christianity in residential schools for Schools to assimilate Indigenous children in the USA and Canada? (Select two correct answers.)

☐ Christianity was taught as the only true religion.

☐ Children were introduced to Christianity but could continue to follow their Indigenous practices and knowledges.

☐ Children's names were changed to Christian names.

☐ Children could choose an additional Christian name while keeping their birthname in their mother tongue.

2.3 Decolonising hair

In the following video, Theland Kicknosway explains the importance of hair to Indigenous people from the Potawatomi and Cree Nations. He is a member of Walpole Island, Bkejwanong Territory. Watch the video and then complete Activity 5.

View at: youtube:k_HnMLG_jB4

Video 2: Theland Kicknosway: I wear these braids with pride

Activity 5 What is the meaning of your hair?

🕐 *Allow approximately 10 minutes to complete this activity.*

In the box below, reflect on the story of your hair, or perhaps hair loss.

- How much freedom do you have to express yourself through your hairstyle or facial hair?
- What values do you believe your approach to your hair represents?

Provide your answer...

3 Religion and coloniality

So far you have been introduced to the notions of colonisation and colonialism. The next key term that you will explore is 'coloniality'. The term **coloniality** was introduced by the Peruvian scholar Aníbal Quijano as a response to academic Eurocentrism in order to address the coloniality of academic knowledge.

There are important distinctions between colonisation, colonialism and coloniality. While 'colonisation' broadly refers to the process of physically establishing colonies in 'new' territories, and 'colonialism' refers to entire systems of influence and exploitation, coloniality refers specifically to the control and management of knowledge by the 'universals' of Western modernity, Eurocentrism and global capitalism (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018).

It might be difficult to follow this rather dense definition of coloniality and what 'universals' mean in this context, but do not be discouraged. You will now learn how religion can be considered a 'universal' within colonial thought. To explore this, you will be guided through an example of the Sámi practice of *joik*, which shows how Indigenous ways of knowing and being were positioned within a hierarchical order of religion.

3.1 Reclaiming *joik*

Tyler Tully (2022, p. 9), an American religious studies scholar, argues that what English-speaking people refer to as 'religion' has no equivalent term in many other cultures and languages. Tisa Wenger (2022, p. 3), an American historian of religion, also argues that the word 'religion' is a product of specific European histories and has never been a comfortable fit for Indigenous knowledges and traditions.

You might be wondering, then, what the appropriate term is to describe the knowledges and practices of Indigenous peoples. The short answer to this is to use vernacular terms, meaning the terms that Indigenous people use themselves. You will now be introduced to the Sámi practice of *joik* and learn how it has been described using religious terminology and the impact of such translation.

Joik is a Sámi oral tradition that resembles singing. It was forbidden for generations, especially in Christian churches, where it was viewed as the work of 'the devil' (Kraft, 2015, p. 235). Today, *joik* has emerged as a key symbol of Sámi resilience. Historically, it has been linked to *noaidi*, often categorised as a 'shamanic chant' (Anderson, 2005).

However, *joik* is no longer prohibited or regarded exclusively as an expression of shamanism or even Sámi religion. Relocating *joik* away from 'religion' cuts the link to the categories that Sámi knowledges, worldviews and relations were historically classified into (such as 'shamanism,' 'animism,' 'paganism,' and even 'devil-worship'). Presenting *joik* as it is, liberates it from being confined to hierarchical order of religions, which you will learn more about in the following section. This reclaiming of *joik* can be seen as an example of anticolonial or decolonial Indigenous resistance.

Today, many Sámi, including those who are not *noaidi*, perform *joik* to express their Sámi identity, as well as to advocate for political, social, and environmental causes that are important to them.

Activity 6 Reclaiming *joik*

🕐 *Allow approximately 45 minutes to complete this activity.*

You will now watch a talk by Mari Boine, a Sámi singer, musician, activist, and one of the most renowned performers of *joik*. As you watch, pay attention to how she

presents herself and her homeland, Sápmi, and how she describes *joik* as a 'way of remembering.' Notice also how she discusses Sámi practices being labelled as 'devil-worship,' the effects this had on her and her community, and her journey of healing from colonial traumas.

Part 1

Start with watching first part of the video (00:00–06:30 mins) and then answer the following question.

Video content is not available in this format.
Video 3: Mari Boine: Unshaming my Indigenous Heritage

In this part of the video, Mari Boine introduces herself and her homeland Sápmi. She lists several names that were given by colonisers to her homeland. Select **all** the correct answers:

☐ Lapland
☐ Northern Norway
☐ Greenland
☐ Northern Scandinavia
☐ Arctic
☐ Finnmark

Part 2

Now watch the next section of the video (06:30–08:40 mins) and then answer the following question.

In this part of the video, Mari Boine explains that berry picking was something elders taught in order to survive long winters, along with an unspoken message. What was that message? Select **all** the correct answers:

□   Never take more than nature can tolerate.

□   Nature exists primarily for human use.

□   Never take more than you need.

□   Take as much as you can while you can.

□   Leave a place as it was before you arrived.

□   Make sure you mark the places you go, so you and others know that it is your territory.

Part 3

Continue watching the video (08:40–13:47 mins) and then answer the following question.

In this part of the video, Boine shares her understanding of *joik* as a way of remembering, as well as the impact of priests and missionaries. What did they do in Sápmi? Select **all** the correct answers:

□   Banned and burned Sámi drums.

□   Purge what they described as paganism.

□   Punished Sámi *noaidis*.

□   Respected *noaidies* as Sámi spiritual leaders in the same way as Christian priests.

□   Instil feelings of shame and self-hatred among Sámi people.

□   Affirm Sámi people' sense of pride and self-worth.

□   Convince Sámi communities that their worldview was a devil worship.

□   Recognised Sámi ways of knowing as legitimate and equal to the Christian worldview.

Part 4

Now watch the video to the end (13:47–26:52) and then answer the following question.

In this last part of the video (13:47–26:52), Boine talks about her experiences of performing around the world. She reflects on meeting Indigenous peoples from many regions and learning that the Sámi were not alone in being subjected to colonial violence. According to Boine, what experiences do Indigenous peoples worldwide share? Select **all** that apply:

□   People who have inherited myths, stories, songs, rituals, and strategies for survival.

□   Communities that voluntarily abandoned their ways of living, being and knowing.

□   Peoples who live in close relationship with their land and the Earth.

□   Communities that benefited equally from colonial economic development.

□   Subjected to colonial powers that attempted to demonise, displace, and erase Indigenous peoples and their collective knowledge.

3.2 Religion as a 'universal'

It was during the Enlightenment that the idea of religion as a universal aspect of human existence became firmly established. The assumption that religion exists in all societies led to the interpretation of a wide range of diverse and complex practices as 'religions,' even when people did not identify them as religious. This also gave rise to the classificatory category of 'world religions,' which typically include Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism and Buddhism. (For a critique of the 'world religions paradigm', see: Smith, 1993; Masuzawa, 2005; Fitzgerald, 2007; Cotter and Robertson, 2016).

Knowledges and practices of colonised Indigenous peoples were often described as either 'devil-worship,' as you learned from the example of Sámi *joik*, or placed into the categories 'primitive religions', 'totemism', 'fetishism', 'tribal religions', 'primal religions', 'aboriginal religions' and 'shamanism.' The notion of 'devil-worship' is a Christian-centric category, as it is rooted in Christian teachings that include the figure of the devil.

These so-called 'smaller religions' were juxtaposed against the religions of 'civilised' people, such as Christianity. In contrast, the religions of colonised Indigenous peoples, much like the people themselves, were positioned at the bottom of a hierarchy. Notably, these categories were imposed from the outside, rather than chosen by the people themselves, unlike Christianity or Islam, where followers commonly identify as Christian or Muslim.

The categorisation of diverse practices of colonised people, such as Sámi *joik*, into pre-defined religious categories illustrates how frameworks, predominantly rooted in European Christian perspectives, have shaped what counts as 'religion'. A relatively limited, narrow understanding of religion was treated as a 'universal' and used to define, organise, and rank knowledges and the people who carry them.

Conclusion

In this course, you have explored how religion, religious institutions and religious categorisations have played a role in colonising projects. You were introduced to three important concepts – colonisation, colonialism and coloniality. You learnt that although related, each of them describes a different set of processes.

In reflecting on colonial histories, you have been introduced to the formative role of binaries like 'civilised' versus 'primitive' and 'us' versus 'them' in justifying colonising and civilising missions imposed on colonised peoples. You learnt about the processes and consequences of classifying 'humans' and 'religions' into hierarchies. You learned the impact of defining Christianity as a religion of 'civilised people' and shamanism as a religion of 'primitive people'. Thus, you now have the skills to critically approach other concepts and binaries that you may have been taking for granted.

You were introduced to various examples of colonising projects and initiatives, from the conquest of lands deemed empty or wild to economic exploitation and the control of colonised communities and their knowledges. At the same time, you explored how Indigenous peoples resisted these processes. Practices such as mapping, residential schools, and *joik* illustrate both the imposition of colonial power and the forms of anti-colonial resistance that emerged in response. These topics are explored in greater depth and detail in the Open University course
DA332, *Religion and global challenges in the past and present*.

Activity 7 Key terms

🕐 *Allow approximately 10 minutes to complete this activity.*

Match the following terms with their definitions based on what you learned in the course.

Coloniality

Colonialism

Colonisation

Match each of the items above to an item below.

Process of controlling and management of knowledge by universals of Western modernity and Eurocentrism.

Process of establishment of entire systems of control and exploitation of colonised communities.

Process of imperial conquest, 'discovery' and physical establishment of colonies in 'new' lands.

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Figure 1 (Tungus Shaman): The earliest known depiction of Tungus Shaman; or, the priest of the Devil. A drawing from Noord en Oost Tartarye [North and East Tartary] (1692) by Nicolaes Witsen, Nicolaas Witsen Project, Netherlands. British Library archive/ Bridgeman Images

Figure 2 (The Sábmi map of 1975): Included in the exhibition *Kiruna Forever* at ArkDes; photo by Björn Strömfeldt. [ArkDes]

Figure 3 (Tom Torlino): Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Call Number WA MSS S-1175. Gift of Walter McClintock (Yale 1891, 1911 MAH), 1927-1949. Water McClintock Papers. Yale Collection of Western Americana, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library. Photo: Yale University Library

Audio / Visual

Video 1 (Fred recalls hair cutting in residential school as an attack on identity): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jh-DGJj1FaM Media One and the Canadian Museum for Human Rights.

Video 3 (Unshaming my indigenous heritage | Mari Boine): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eDYZRGWMacM TED; https://www.ted.com; CC BY–NC–ND 4.0

Audio 1 (Putting Sápmi on the Map. Sámi Activism through Art with Elle-Hánsa/ Hans Ragnar Mathisen): courtesy of Professor Siv Ellen Kraft; Kraft, S.E. and Tafjord, B.O. (2021) 'Episode 2: Putting Sápmi on the Map. Sámi Activism through Art with Elle-Hánsa/ Hans Ragnar Mathisen', Thinking About Indigenous Religions [podcast], 11 January.: https://open.spotify.com/episode/13BPGOrDu9cRFDRgGqAqig

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Glossary

Enlightenment

A European intellectual movement in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that emphasised reason and science, rather than tradition and religion.

Colonialism

Process of establishment of entire systems of control and exploitation of colonised communities.

Coloniality

Process of controlling and management of knowledge by universals of Western modernity and Eurocentrism.

Colonisation

Process of imperial conquest, 'discovery' and physical establishment of colonies in 'new' lands.

Great Divide

A concept used to refer to the creation of hierarchical polarities that establish divisions such as 'humans' and 'non-humans', or 'Us' and 'Them'.

Indigenous

The term indigenous (with a lower case 'i') means 'native, original inhabitant', from the Latin indigen(a). Indigenous (with a capital 'I') refers to people with experiences of enduring shared colonial histories, as well as political initiatives for the recognition of collective rights.

Race

A pseudo-scientific belief, originating in the European Enlightenment, that humans can be divided into distinct groups characterised by physical and/or genetic differences that result in a group having physical, intellectual and moral advantages or disadvantages relative to other groups.

Shaman

A concept that originates from the Evenki term šaman or xaman used to describe an Evenki practitioner. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, it evolved into a comparative concept often used to describe the practitioners and knowledge holders of colonised peoples. In the twentieth century, shaman became a term that some religious and spiritual practitioners worldwide began to self-identify.

Terra nullius

Latin: 'land belonging to no one'

Wilderness

A concept similar to the term *terra nullius* that was used to describe colonised lands, particularly in the Arctic region, and to justify colonisation.