



RESOURCE GUIDE

THIS WAS THE WORLD

BY
ELLIE MOON

JAN 28 – MAR 1, 2020

For more info visit
www.tarragontheatre.com

Photo Featuring Ellie Moon
by Jim Ryce

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 2** ABOUT THE PLAY
- 6** DECOLONIZATION IN ACADEMIA
- 8** WHITE FRAGILITY AND
UNCOMFORTABLE CONVERSATIONS
- 10** CONVERSATION STARTERS

ABOUT THE PLAY

SYNOPSIS

"I'm no longer sure what's allowed."

John, a 60-something white professor of Constitutional Law and Indigenous Rights is unhappy with a new faculty hire. He seeks to draw a student into his conflict with the Dean's office, which leads to a complaint, which leads to a reprimand, which leads to a breakdown of the man, his daughter, and their understanding of the world.

A play about old power and new ideas, academia and decolonization, language and authority.



ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT



Theatre Writing: Ellie's other plays include *Asking For It* – which premiered as both *Crow's* and *Nightwood's* 2017-18 season opener, was recently produced by Thousand Islands Playhouse in their 2019 season, and also had productions at The Corbett Theatre, UK, and in Banff, as part of the Canadian Provincial Judges conference – and *What I Call Her*, which premiered as part of *Crow's* 2018-19 season. An anthology with all three of Ellie's produced plays (including *This Was the World*), is forthcoming with Talonbooks, Fall 2020.

Selected Theatre Acting: *Asking For It* (Thousand Islands Playhouse, *Crow's/Nightwood*), *A Doll's House, Part 2* (Segal Centre), *It's A Wonderful Life* (Soulpepper), *The Winter's Tale* (The Bush/UK Tour).

Other: Ellie is currently developing another play here at the Tarragon. Her feature film (written/starring), *Adult Adoption*, is in pre-production, as well as a film adaptation of *What I Call Her* with D.W. Waterson and Kawennáhere Devery Jacobs. Ellie is on Instagram at @elliemooner.

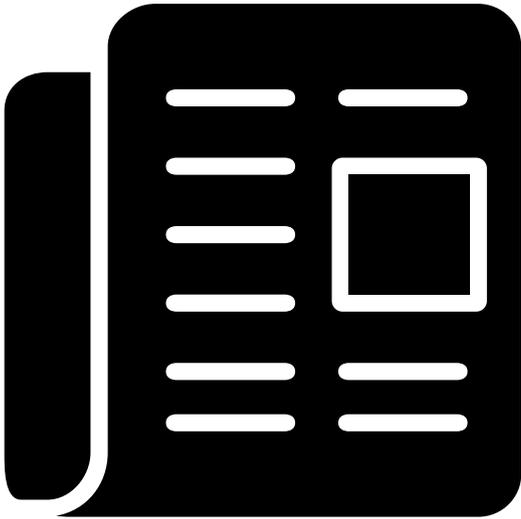
PLAYWRIGHT'S NOTE

This play is about how its characters deal with change and loss of status or privilege (or what is sometimes called white fragility). It seeks to explore the implicit and explicit violence that manifests in that struggle, and the way in which the collective colonial unconscious enables violence. I do not take for granted the structural or personal circumstances that have conferred on me the privilege of this platform. I believe that it is worth exploring the ordinariness and the consequences of white fragility, and that the burden of this exploration should not fall entirely on racialized artists.

I am grateful for the help of many, many people when writing this play. I'd particularly like to thank Kawennáhere Devery Jacobs, Wally Wapachee, Yolanda Bonnell, Brefny Caribou, John Burrows, Karen Drake, Richard Rose, Jason Sherman, Joanna Falck, Nicole Joy-Fraser, Audrey Dwyer, David Bradford, Liisa Repo-Martell, Rose Tuong and Laurence and Judy Siegel.

Decolonization in Academia

1  [Click here](#)



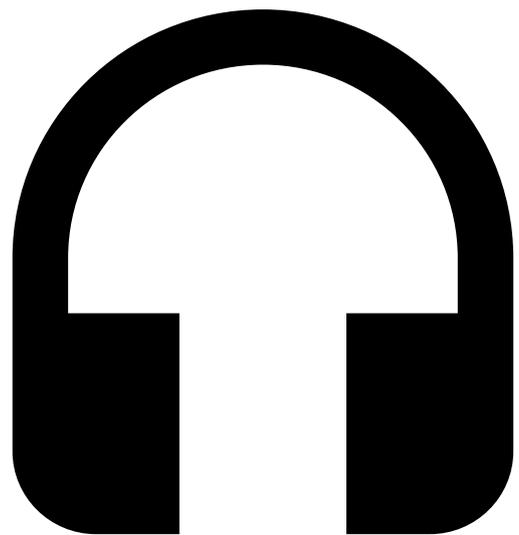
Decolonizing the Classroom

This is an interview with a University of Toronto associate professor that looks at methods/practices for recognizing and dismantling the colonial practices within education. It even has an activity for educators to do with their students.

2

masinahikan iskwêwak - episode 11 with Chris Andersen

This is an episode of a podcast from the Writer's Guild of Alberta about his experience in publishing, but also about his work in academia and what a career in the academy means for many first generation Indigenous scholars. A great insight into one of the characters from this play and their experience of academia.



3

Decolonizing Academia: Poverty, Oppression and Pain

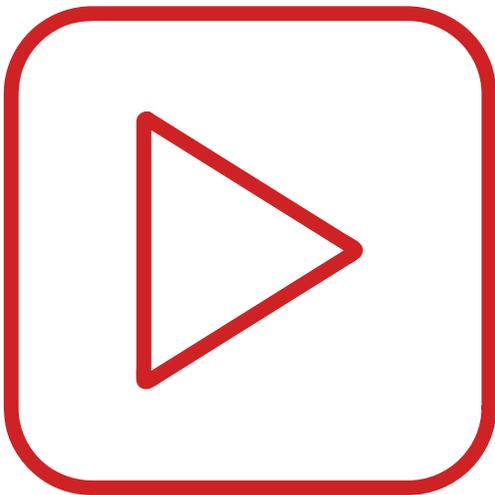
A book where Clelia O. Rodríguez explains for future academics on how to survive the world of academia and dismantle the oppressive systems at play.



4

Creating Environments for Indigenous Youth to Live & Succeed

A TED Talk by Tunchai Redvers about how we can work to listen to and support Indigenous youth better after her work on We Matter.



White Fragility and Uncomfortable Conversations

1

White People on Race

The *New York Times* did this fantastic short documentary where they interviewed white people about race.

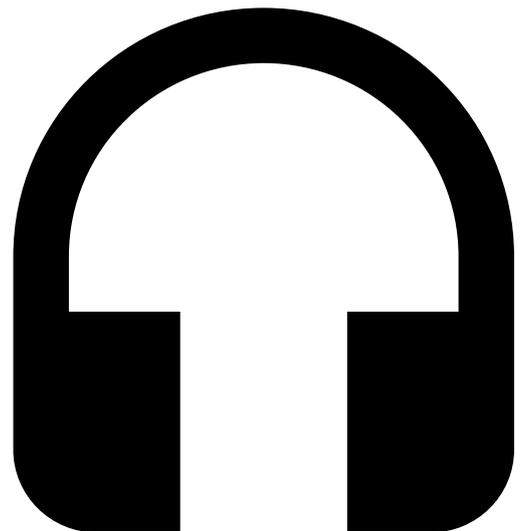
Framed by the directors as an opportunity to ask people to look at how/why it makes us uncomfortable and encourage self-reflection.



2

About Race with Renni Eddo- Lodge - ep. 9 "The Big Question"

Author of the book, *Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People About Race*, talks on her podcast about the question she gets a lot, 'As a white person, what can i do to help race relations?'





3

Why 'I'm Not Racist' is Only Half the Story

Robin DiAngelo explains the concept of white fragility and why it's tied to the undercurrent of systemic racism in the world.

4

So You Want to Talk About Race - Ijeoma Oluo

A book that offers insights and information on a variety of topics, including: privilege, micro-agressions, and intersectionality. A resource to help you start having difficult/uncomfortable conversations about race.



Conversation Starters

Pre-Show

What is white fragility?

How might universities/law programs be impacted by systemic racism/colonialism?

Post Show

How did the set design reflect the themes of the play?

It's been said that in this play no one "wins". Do you agree/disagree with that? How does that impact you as an audience member?

What do you think comes next for each of the characters? How do they move forward from here?