



The White Noise Podcast Episode 8: Education, future orientation, and theories of change with Professor Eve Tuck

Intro music – White Noise by John Wayne Parsons

JAYNAYA DWYER

Welcome to the White Noise podcast, the podcast of the Indigenous Law and Justice Hub at the Melbourne Law School. I'm speaking with you from Wurundjeri Country, the lands of the Kulin Nations.

I'm Jaynaya Dwyer. I'm so grateful to convene this project. Today's podcast is a live recording of a White Noise seminar held at the Melbourne Law School, between Dr Eddie Cubillo, the Director of the Hub and Professor Eve Tuck, who was visiting Melbourne from the University of Toronto. If you like these podcasts, you should join us for these events and keep an eye out on our website for when they are advertised. Come along to conversations and experience it all up close in real time. You are welcome to join us.

Professor Tuck is an Unangax education scholar who works in collaborative Indigenous research, Indigenous feminisms, making sense of social movements and land education. She writes about decolonisation and haunting in settler-colonial spaces.

In this conversation Professor Tuck and Dr Cubillo wander through themes from Professor Tuck's work including how the University might be put in service of Indigenous peoples' aspirations, what this might mean for the Indigenous scholars in the University now, and how to create enriching educational spaces. They model this last point for us in the session.

The conversation centres around Theories of Change – that is how we are intending for our actions, our labour, our research, our teaching and learning, and the way we relate to each other, to contribute to the type of futures we want to see. Thinking too much about that, as Professor Tuck says, can lead to explosive conversations but might make your head spin a little.

This conversation was recorded shortly before the Referendum last year and at some point, turns towards Professor Tuck's experience of traveling to Australia as an Indigenous woman from another part of the world at that very particular time– I wanted to bring that to your attention as I'm mindful not everyone feels ready to revisit those conversations at the moment.

Now over to Dr Cubillo.

Intro music – White Noise by John Wayne Parsons

EDDIE CUBILLO: First, I just want to kick off with an Acknowledgement of Country. We're on the lands of the Wurundjeri peoples of the Kulin Nation. I want to acknowledge all the Indigenous people in the room and online. I'd just like to welcome the rest of you and thank you for coming. It's really important that we have someone of Eve's ilk come here and speak to us.

For me, it's a real important time, not only in this Country, but I think for this University including the Melbourne Law School. So yeah, welcome to the White Noise of Settler Law Justice Talks. White Noise is an event and podcast series where we centre, amplify, and celebrate Indigenous voices and share matters of concern to us.

As you all know, and for those who don't, my name is Eddie Cubillo. I'm a Larrakia, Wadjigan and Central Arrente man from the Northern Territory. I've been a lawyer. I've been the Director of Indigenous Law and Justice at the current time in the Melbourne Law School, and I'm here, I'm joined by Professor Eve Tuck. Professor Eve Tuck is a Professor of Critical Race and Indigenous Studies at the Ontario Institute of Studies in Education at the University of Toronto. She is a Canada Research Chair of Indigenous Methodologies, Youth and Communities, and the founding Director of the...

EVE TUCK: Tkaronto

EDDIE CUBILLO: Tkaronto CIRCLE Lab.
Professor Tuck is Unanga

EVE TUCK: Unanga

EDDIE CUBILLO:
and an enrolled member of the Aleut Community of St. Paul Island, Alaska, and grew up in Pennsylvania and New York. Professor Tuck's work is on collaborative Indigenous research, Indigenous feminisms and land education. As a whole, her research focuses on how Indigenous social thought can be engaged to create more fair and just social policy, more meaningful social movements, and robust approaches to decolonization.

Today is the first White Noise seminar where you may consider where we are speaking internationally, though as Indigenous Australians know all our nations across this country are individualized and are nations within this one big nation. So, it technically is international.

EVE TUCK: Always international.

EDDIE CUBILLO: Yeah. So to clarify what will be happening today, there will be questions and then we will go to audience qanda.
Okay as always on the White Noise podcast.
Professor, who are you, who is your mob, and what are the values which drive you in your work?

EVE TUCK: Well, I do want to begin by saying my greetings and saying good morning to all of you. Thank you for attending in person. Thank you for attending online.

My name is Eve Tuck and I'm Unangaâ from St. Paul Island in Alaska. I am a member, my mum is a member and my children are members of the Aleut community of St. Paul Island, Alaska. My dad is a white guy, was a white guy from Hershey, Pennsylvania. I always say if you are what you eat, then I am chocolate and seals,

Audience laughter

EVE TUCK:

Because Hershey is a big chocolate place. Thanks for laughing so hard at that.

EDDIE CUBILLO: *chuckles*

EVE TUCK: Nobody else thinks that's funny but me, but thanks. So my dad was a white guy from Hershey, Pennsylvania. And I grew up near where his family is from in Pennsylvania. And then as fast as I could, I moved to New York City, that's where I did both my undergraduate and my PhD. And I worked for my first seven years as a Professor in New York State. And then moved in 2015 to the University of Toronto. And that's where I've been since then. I work there as a Canada Research Chair. Also, I founded something called the Tkaronto CIRCLE Lab. CIRCLE is an acronym for Collaborative Indigenous Research for Communities, Land and Education, and it's an Indigenous feminist research lab where we work with groups of young people that we bring together to pursue questions, research questions and also work with Indigenous and Black-led community organizations to pursue research questions that matter to them. And for those of you here in person, I've brought some swag for you - some stickers and some bookmarks from our lab.

And if I think about the ideas from my community in Alaska that drive my work - one of those that I think makes me and those of you who are also from future-oriented communities - our community and the ideas at the heart of Unangaâ philosophy are really future focused, thinking not only about being in our homelands for millennia, but being in our homelands for many future millennia and thinking about our responsibility to our children and our children's children. So that makes me different - that idea of being really focused on the future and what we're doing now in order to bring about the kinds of futures that we desire is a through line of all of the work that I do. And that's certainly from teachings in my community.

EDDIE CUBILLO: Thanks Eve - that's full on!

EVE TUCK: *laughs*

EDDIE CUBILLO: I just started in academia and I'm looking at the back door already. So, in reading your work and preparing for this, the Hub...

EVE TUCK: I have to say your questions are, thorough - really beautifully prepared. So, these questions are intense that are coming.

EDDIE CUBILLO: Well I gotta be honest, they're not all from me, right? So,

EVE TUCK: *Laughs*

EDDIE CUBILLO: So, I was going to say in preparing for this, the Hub came across a speech with a wonderful title.

EVE TUCK: Yeah, biting the University that feeds you.

EDDIE CUBILLO: You say that pressure on Indigenous people and people of colour to get into and stay in the academy is immense, and also questioning whether we need to be here, asking whether we as Indigenous people need research or whether we need organising instead. So, I just wanted to speak to you about, what brought you to an academic institution and what keeps you putting up with all of this? I mean, it's confronting right and it's continuous.

EVE TUCK: Yeah, it's relentless. The University is relentless in its horribleness. So, I will note that there is an important theory of change, that in changing society, changing universities, and changing what it is to do study in higher education there do need to be more Indigenous people in the university, and we have to make it easier for Indigenous young people to imagine themselves in the university, we have to make it more sustaining for those of us who decide to make careers in the university, to stay in ways that allow us to keep ourselves whole. But that theory of change, of investing in the university is one that puts huge amounts of pressure on those few of us who are in the university. So many of us are straddling what we know is good at a bigger scale and then what's good for us as people and whether we can stand it anymore.

So I think we're being more open with one another about that, about how we can move in and out of our motivation to be able to continue to do that, or our energy, or our ability, to continue to do that.

Some of you have heard me say perhaps that I'm in the University because it has been a way for me to have a writing life. It's been a way for me to have a creative non-fiction writing life - and it's a way for me to be a writer and have an income. When there have been personal emergencies in my family, I have been able to cancel my class and I don't get in trouble; nothing bad happens to me. If I need to rearrange a meeting in order to go pick up my children from school...and so there are parts of this flexibility that do allow for me to be more present as a daughter, and as a sister, and as a community member. So I think that's how I negotiate that as an individual.

In terms of thinking about what our research does, and that second part of the quote that you shared, I do think that we as Indigenous people are always doing research, so I'm differentiating there about research that is led through the university or initiated by the university. And sometimes university researchers, who may or may not be Indigenous people, are asking questions that have already been answered or that community members already know.

My earring is hitting the mic, my earrings are always going to be hitting the mic. Lapel mic are anti-Indigenous. Is that better? Okay. I apologize to those of you who were hearing my clanking of the beautiful earrings that my mum made for me.

So, we are always doing research. The university wants to do research on stuff that feels at the periphery and is not always what would be the most important or most productive question that communities want to have answered, and so in those instances where it's that some people already know this, the community already knows this, it's just that the white people don't know it - in that instance, I don't think we should call that research, we should call that organising, or like should we spend all of our time making all the kuka'xs, making all the grandmothers participate in this thing that everybody already knows? Let's get a billboard- let's find another way to communicate what we already know!

And so, in that sense, I'm actually being a little bit traditional about what I think is at the heart of research and that's that we're trying to answer questions in a systematic way and the answers are not already known. When it's already known, then perhaps we need something else rather than calling that research is, I think, a piece of that idea.

EDDIE CUBILLO: Then what sort of tools then do you use...

EVE TUCK: Having one foot out the door, I think that's the way to do it, man.

EDDIE CUBILLO: *Laughing*

EVE TUCK: Just to have one foot out the door all the time, and in a self-protective way to know that this University does not love me; this is not where I get my sense of self; this is not where I get my sense of value, and I can go any time! And to have those backup plans to know exactly what you would be doing if you weren't doing this, I think is a way to keep the despair at bay, and feeling like we're here in order to, as an individual person, to change these university spaces, that are so toxic. Not all of them are toxic though, and that's the other piece of it. In so many ways, the word university or academia is a cover for all sorts of things to be able to do, and what we think we're doing is really different than what they think we're doing. And so sure, like, I've created a lab, but what I've created is the kind of space that has otherwise been denied to me in the university, and I've created the kinds of learning conditions that I think work well for Indigenous students and for Black students, to be working and thinking together. And so, yeah, understanding that what we think we're doing in the university is different than what they think we're doing. That we can always leave and should have some really cool exit plans. And that who loves us is outside of the university and wouldn't want for us to be suffering just to stay in a job like this.

EDDIE CUBILLO: Yeah, that's pretty deep and I actually hear what you're saying, I think of some 150 academics, I'm the only Indigenous identifying academic in the building.

EVE TUCK: Yeah.

EDDIE CUBILLO: At times it can be really stressful. Yeah. The ongoing educating of individuals is constant.

To go on to the next question. We meet at a time where the community at the Melbourne Law School, we've had students standing up calling for decolonization of this institution, most visibly through protests and persistent postering with many specific calls for change.

We just wanted to take this space to think more deeply about what we meant when we say decolonization and what type of different future we want to create. Could you elaborate or share a bit more about what you and Professor Wayne Yang meant when you wrote, 'decolonization is not a metaphor.' What were you noticing in education spaces which drove you to write this essay?

EVE TUCK: I think I've told the story in a few different places before that decolonization is not a metaphor, is actually something that I called out at the end of a conference session over a microphone, because I was so disappointed with how the conversation of that conference presentation had gone there in the presentation, which I had helped to co-convene, so it just goes to show that just because you plan something, doesn't mean it will go the way you think it will. But I had asked for Indigenous educators and for African-American educators to present on some of their work that they had been doing in schools. Then at the end, the moderator who was a person that I know and trusted got up and started using decolonization in a way that was very self-congratulatory and very pleased with themselves about what had happened here and what was now possible. And I think there was several hundred people in the audience, and then they all got up to leave and I called into the microphone that decolonization is not a metaphor. Then Wayne Yang and I went out to lunch right after, who is my dear collaborator and close friend, we went up to lunch afterwards with our families, and we were just laughing about me having in a moment of frustration, called that into a microphone. We had been asked to write an introductory essay to a new journal that was being founded on decolonization in education. And I had teased Wayne saying that I was just going to send in an article with one sentence, 'decolonization is not a metaphor', and there I think we were definitely responding to what felt like a very superficial take up of decolonization as a term within the field of education, within the context of North America, and especially in the context of just adding it as a comma in the list of a whole bunch of other really important good things that we also want to do to schools and on behalf of communities.

So, it's interesting that something written very precisely for that context has had this global uptake; We didn't ever know that it would be something I would be talking about with you more than ten years later, or you just never know which parts of your work will be taken up by others. But in that context we were seeing people talk about decolonisation without ever acknowledging the Indigenous people in the room, or the Indigenous people whose lands we were on, or they were talking about decolonisation as something which was an easy thing to do, and were definitely stepping over land or stepping over Country in their way of thinking what that means in a settler- colonial context, so trying to assert in a particular contexts of settler-colonialism, that decolonisation must include the rematriation of Indigenous lands and waters. That felt like a very simple axiom to offer, but its so disruptive to societies who have built themselves on stolen land and want that part of it to go away, want that reality to just go away.

EDDIE CUBILLO: Well, that's a good point. We know where Australia is right - white settler law is on shaky ground on how it's implemented in this country and continues to do what it was implemented to do. Thank you for that.

I just wanted to go back to - our students' movement has been about identifying the university as a racist institution. And a theme through a lot of your work is exploring how

different people experienced racism in different and interrelated ways. And also, how Indigenous people and people of colour can collaborate generously. Could you share a bit about what led you to do a podcast on this topic and what have been some of the most surprising or thought-provoking moments for you on that project?

EVE TUCK: So perhaps, I don't know how useful it is to make a note that when I'm referring to Black people from the North American context, I'm referring in a different way to the ways that Indigenous people have been racialized as Black in Australia. But I don't know how different - I am talking about the African diaspora and those who even think of themselves as having a connecting line, of experiencing global anti-Blackness, but in extremely precise ways, alongside the genocide of Indigenous people in various settler-colonial contexts, so in Canada and in the United States where I'm working, we talk about those communities as being Indigenous communities and Black communities. We created *the Henceforward*, which is a podcast. We created this podcast a number of years ago and that's why I was so excited to have the chance to come and speak with you in this podcast here. Because I think that podcasting is a really important site for theorising, because as I'm speaking, you can hear me sort of hesitate and try to find the right word. You can hear me to try to say one way and then correct myself and in my own human voice, try to find the right way of phrasing something. You're not forgetting that I'm thinking through this in real time in front of you, in front of a microphone. And then at the same time, a podcast and what's shared is edited and it's mediated. It's not just exactly as it came out, but it can be reorganized so that it's better met by the people who listen to it, and so I see this as a really important place to think about the relations between Black and Indigenous communities, because those relations have some hurt in them, those relations have some sometimes tenderness or misunderstanding in them and I feel like podcasting or thinking through recordings about these relations has been a way to think about these ideas with as much humility and as much openness as possible so that the hesitation and the trying to find the correct word is not edited out in the way that it can be in a manuscript.

Wayne Yang and I also have theorized about the idea of contingent collaborations, which we differentiate from solidarity because solidarity, especially as it's practiced by white people, Mikki Kendall, a few years ago, I mean a long time ago now, ten years ago had a hash tag like solidarity is for white women. I feel like that's such an electric way of communicating exactly what can be the downsides of solidarity.

That's asking for a promise to stay together no matter what at the beginning before you know about the "what" that's going to happen and what that will demand of our relationships. Contingent collaborations for me is a way of saying, yeah, we'll work together for as long as we can on this; Let's see what happens and what becomes the new vantage point or the new set of responsibilities and possibilities once we've taken this road together for a little while. We don't know all the parts of this road. To focus not on demanding solidarity in order for us to have this question, but instead to try to go in a way that is mutually beneficial for as long as we can stay in that conversation.

For me, that has meant not starting with the absolute hardest aspects of it, and so this is a different choice than others might make. Some others might want to begin at the ways that some communities have been anti-Indigenous and others might want to begin with the ways that some Indigenous communities have been anti-Black. That's not the choice that

I've made in creating this podcast with graduate students. Instead, we've started with other conversations that allow us to build trust in order to get to those harder conversations.

EDDIE CUBILLO: Good segue to the next question. In Australia, there's been no treaties – you visit these Indigenous lands at a very important time where we're going to a referendum and where the nation will decide whether we should be allowed to have an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisory body to government in our Constitution and as a former elected member of the previous commission, which was abolished, I know we need a Voice, but the pain communities are going through with the campaign is immense. What do you recognize of what you've seen here and feels different?

EVE TUCK: See, I told you these are hard questions. I have tried to learn as much about the referendum and the yes vote in particular, but also the larger context of the Voice as a person living in Canada prior to coming to Australia. I just have to say, even as a person actively trying to seek out really good media coverage and really great discussions by Indigenous people, those media messages are not getting to other places in the world. That's our fault as being other places in the world. It's not your fault. It's just like we're operating in a media context that means that some stories are picked up and others are not. But it kind of gives me, it breaks my heart a little if you're feeling lonely in this experience from other people, other Indigenous communities around the world.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: But if you had to vote, which way would you vote?

EVE TUCK: I've just shared with you that I'm not a person who is informed enough to speak to that. I've just shared exactly why.

So, I can say that I have spent time with Indigenous people here who are bracing for October 14th - they are talking about how they're going to spend that day and the kind of care taking practices that they'll take for that day.

EDDIE CUBILLO: I've got family who are talking about what they do the next day. Yeah. And getting together and really, if it's a no or yes vote, where they're going. It's really playing on Indigenous people's communities as well as individuals.

EVE TUCK: Yeah, well, I've been here, and I've tried to read as much as I can. It's just really different on what I can read here, and definitely having this week to talk to people here has been an education of a lifetime. So, I'm so grateful to everybody who has been talking with me understand that this has come out of a process, a process that people feel like has been a good process. Again, I'll just raise that idea that sometimes what we know that we are doing as Indigenous people is really different than what they think we are doing. I think about my own community's treaty with the US Federal Government, which is called ANCSA, the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. That's from 1971, from before I was born. I, as a scholar, have written things that question the terms of that Act. And that's hard to do as a younger person from my community to ask questions about the decisions that were made in order to come to a settlement with the federal government. I see that as maybe a helpful story to offer those of you who perhaps prefer for treaties to be made prior to the Voice or wish that things had happened in a different order. And understand that there is no settler government that has ever kept any of its promises to Indigenous people, and so all of

this heartache, all of this work for a potential no, just to learn that Australia is racist, is what you're opening, you're putting yourselves out there, putting your hearts on the line for. And for creating even some potential hard conversations or divides within families, among Indigenous families. So, you're in a tough spot. It's tough to have what feels like your future be determined by white people in Australia who've never met an Indigenous person and are very unlikely to feel like a Voice is urgent. But what I can say is I'm so heartened by this idea from Scott Lyons about an X mark. He writes, in the context of the mark that ancestors made in order to make treaties with various governments, and that for settler governments, that an Indigenous person is making in a treaty, in order to settle something - It's in order to say this is the permanent agreement, and then they break it anyway. We know that that's true. But for Indigenous people, an X mark, a yes vote is a way of keeping a future alive. While we're working on all the other things, the 'yes' vote is about the legitimacy of a settler government. This is about that government. But Indigenous futurities and Indigenous governance and Indigenous relations to Country - those are permanent, those are abiding, those are not changed by whatever the outcome of this vote is. Those are not changed by that.

EDDIE CUBILLO: Can I just say, first of all, thanks for going outside your parameters to get more info than just mainstream media. As we all know in this country, Indigenous content doesn't really make the front page unless it is to put us down. And also thank you for sharing things that are real sensitive that most Indigenous people share with each other on those experience of our lands and how they were taken and our continued fight to regain that and regain the respect that we are the first peoples of our countries. I just want to really thank you for that. Hopefully our audience here can get something out of that, because as you said before, in regards to how you speak and I can hear through your voice and that, it was real sensitive and something that all Indigenous people can relate to and we can feel that. I really appreciate that. Thank you.

Just go to the next question. It's around teaching and we've been taught a lot here today, so I hope people have taken that on board.

You wrote about theories of change, powerfully questioning the theory of change underpinning education institutions that raising awareness of injustices will lead to justice. How do you feel about this now? And what theories of change resonate for you at the moment?

EVE TUCK: Well, I love to talk about theories of change. It's just like in the same way that people talk about astrological signs like, hey baby, what's your sign? I'm like, hey baby, what's your theory of change? I love to talk about that, because I feel like we do this stuff and then we can catch ourselves and it's a reflection that we can invite for ourselves to say, wait a second, why am I doing that? I think the part that has felt like from the Indigenous people and primarily indigenous young people, but also some elders that I have met about what this and I'm going to stay with the referendum and the campaign for 'yes', what it's taken, is an approach to getting the 'yes' that has meant saying say yes in order to save us, say 'yes' in order to rescue us. That's the part that I think feels awful. Feels already like a bad hangover where people appeal, on the basis of morality, for white people to give up power is a gross thing to have to do when you know exactly where your power comes from. And that's from your cosmologies, that's from your understanding and relation, that's from songlines, that's your understanding from your community of the way that the world works,

not from this outcome of this vote. That is, I think, a conversation about what is the theory of change of this yes vote campaign, and how it is like rubbing your head and patting your stomach - how there are potentially multiple theories of change going on at once? We're doing this because this is what appeals to this audience, but we know that we're doing this all along.

I guess that's the theme of everything I'm offering. What we think we are doing is different than what they think they are doing. We can make sense of what we're doing because it is aligned with our theories of change. It's aligned with how we're trying to – maybe this isn't a theory of change that results in direct change, but it's the theory of change that keeps another couple of possibilities going for a while. It doesn't foreclose anything. Yeah, why not go for it thinking about theories of change, that's my favourite question to ask students when we've already spent days and days, hours and hours, weeks and weeks planning their whole dissertation. And then it's like, okay, well what's the theory of change of that dissertation? And it's like, it's an explosive conversation to have, and it is not in order to have the theory of change that I want you to have. I don't have a secret answer behind my back that I'm hoping that you get to. It's a question, that is a pedagogical question. There's not a right answer, the one right theory of change. There's not only 'the one' theory of change. Yes, I am aware that there are times that, again, everybody knows something except for the people who have power, and so it can feel like an important theory of change. I learned so much from Saidiya Hartman and from other scholars who have thought so much about empathy and the limits of empathy, and getting others to feel empathetic in order to change the way that they behave. I guess I've offered some ideas around awareness. I'm aware the community members that I'm working with, or that I'm in relation to, are aware. It's the people in power who don't seem aware of this. And so I'm going to do all these things in order to prove my humanity and make them aware. But they're very, very unlikely, even with that awareness, to say, 'oh, all right, well, here you go - here's a treaty that actually acknowledges your 60,000 year presence and relations to these lands and waters'. And so, how much of my own energy am I willing to spend in making somebody who is structurally opposed to learning to become aware? What could I be doing otherwise with that time? And so that does make the question of the practice of education as we know it, to be – that's like a thread of a sweater or that I don't really want to pull all the way out.

EDDIE CUBILLO: *Laughter*

EVE TUCK: I do think that learning is important, and I do think that telling stories that are compelling is important, but if those stories are all hinged on us portraying ourselves, for people who will never recognize us, only about our pain, then that's not a theory of change that I can invest in. I refuse to do it.

EDDIE CUBILLO: Thank you. Just like a friend of mine from the Anishinaabe people told me that her elder told her when she's going University, like don't let your studies get in the way of your education. I think that depicts what you're trying to say. What I get from what you were saying. I'm sorry sis, but we're going to go continually going back to things you've previously said.

EVE TUCK: This feels like a defence. Really going back to my prior work, like really testing whether I wrote those things.

EDDIE CUBILLO: No. It's more a test of time. I think more to it.

EVE TUCK: Yes, do I still think that, do I still think those things.

EDDIE CUBILLO: Yeah, you wrote with colleagues as an early career scholar about being under represented faculty required to teach diversity courses and student resistance to faculty of colour, teaching about race and racism. As you progress in seniority as a scholar, how have your experiences of and responses to student's resistance developed?

EVE TUCK: Yeah, I think early on in my career, especially in the US and in Canada, still, they do student evaluations of teaching. Those are written documents that students are filling out towards the end of a course. Is that a thing here?

EDDIE CUBILLO: Yeah. *laughs*

EVE TUCK: Okay, so listen, as a pedagogical person, I would love, I believe very much in the idea of talking with students about what they have learned in a course, but that's what I've been doing all course. And so, a student evaluation of teaching very early on in my career often was about students reacting to having met their first Indigenous person ever. Or, students reacting to me as an Indigenous person with a body in front of them, or the ideas that I shared with them that they were potentially suspicious of because I was an Indigenous woman.

Yeah, over the years, that has not happened as much and I do think that that is in part from becoming a scholar, that maybe, I don't know. Of course, a part of it is that they feel like I'm more senior and shouldn't be having those reactions. Maybe they're kind of keeping themselves from saying those things - that I have more institutional backing or something. I'm not just an Assistant Professor who is new to this or something.

I also head it off, and so in my teaching, I say 'this is the part where when I say this, white people think that I'm being racist. Let me assure you I'm describing something structural here' or 'let me assure you that I like you, and I'm so happy you're here in my class to learn.' I've also, in my classes, learn to anticipate the parts that create that reaction, which is work for me to do, in order to anticipate the needs of the white students in the class. But I'm their teacher, I'm willing to do that. I have also agreed, I have consented to being their teacher for the duration of that class.

I also think I've gotten better at teaching this stuff then maybe that very raw version of Eve that was very focused on telling the truth. I still tell the truth, I just am good at anticipating what peoples' experience of the head spin that it can create in learning that truth, and then the consequences for white students for beginning to see and notice the racism in their families and communities. I can hold space for those white students' experiences in the context of my class when I have consented to being their teacher. I can't do that for all of the white people that I meet. It's just for the students that I work with.

EDDIE CUBILLO: Just from that, I get from the students that they're up for the change.

EVE TUCK: Yeah.

EDDIE CUBILLO: But I don't always get that from my colleagues at times.

EVE TUCK: Then the other thing is this question of required courses, and I feel like universities all over are grappling with, 'okay, so everybody should know about Indigenous history, everybody should know the history of colonialism from the perspective of Indigenous people, everybody should know about Indigenous resistance to said colonial violence, and everybody should know that Indigenous people resisted it from the very beginning and resist it all the way now, and everybody should know that Indigenous people have long histories and even longer futures in these homelands. Everybody should know that.' So what's the theory of change? 'Okay. A required course'. Well, who should teach that course? 'Well, probably an Indigenous professor', but once you make it required, that Indigenous professor gets the brunt of everybody's reaction to a life-long of learning to the contrary, and that's a pretty awful experience for my colleagues who are teaching those courses. And so, then it's like, well, 'let's get a white person who is able to make those cases and knows this content well', to be the person teaching this course, then there's a lot of jobs for white people because we're like, we're making institutional commitments to Indigenous studies. So the theory of change that one course is going to do it creates another cascade of issues. I haven't figured my way out of that. Just naming that it's similar story in other places.

EDDIE CUBILLO: Thanks for that. I think we'll note that and bring that up every time we have discussions at Executive and elsewhere. Preparing for this we came across a Twitter which now has, is X, a thread which outlined in some depth what Indigenous feminist practices you put in place for a QandA section of panels, which opened up so many possibilities for myself and others in the Hub. Could you share with our audience some of the Indigenous feminist practices you bring to their classroom learning spaces like these?

EVE TUCK: Hm, yeah. So to speak to that Twitter thread that was - I have some practices about audience QandA, at the end of a something that I have found to be very generative and protective of the work that has already happened. Lots of times I get the opportunity to be the chair of a session where it is Indigenous scholars presenting their work for the very first time. Or I get to be a person who is hosting a conversation for a scholar who has travelled a really long way to be there. As academics, we often treat QandA as though we all already know how to do it. But actually, it's like can be the biggest gamble, and you can do so much planning to create a beautiful space and conversation, and then you're just like, alright, random stranger, come and burst this bubble, come and just cause chaos. Or come and take up too much space. One of the things that I think is really important to do is to give people a little chat break after a session. And maybe we should plan to do that today. because you've been listening for a long time and you have a lot of stuff that you want to talk about. But that doesn't mean that you want to talk about it with me and Eddie. You need to talk about it with your neighbour. Talking is important, but it doesn't necessarily mean that your first reaction is the reaction that should be the public reaction that we're all

now having to, because we have good manners listen to you play out, so take a little break. Also, sometimes people have to go to the bathroom and drink some water. So, it's also good to shift the energy a bit.

The next thing is that I encourage, especially in those sessions where it's early career scholars, I encourage people to peer review their questions, so turn to a neighbour and say, I'm thinking of asking this question. Then the neighbour can say, 'that's not a question'. The neighbour can say, 'that doesn't need to be asked in front of everybody - that's a more one-on-one thing.' In peer reviewing – we peer review everything else, might as well peer review our audience questions – we can say, 'is this question worth asking in front of everyone?' 'Does this question ask Eve and Eddie to do more work when they've already done so much work today?' Or 'is this actually something about me and the work I need to do?' 'Is this question a question?' Or is it that I'm just feeling like I haven't gotten enough attention in this conversation so far and I'd like to have some attention. There's probably some other things in there. But then when I facilitate and a person puts their hand up immediately, then I'm like, okay, did you peer review their question? And I look at their neighbours and their neighbours are like, their neighbours are saying 'nooo' podcast listeners. The neighbours are shaking their head, 'no' – so, they think I'm kidding! But I'm not going to all of a sudden cede the space to a person who won't attend to the protocols that we're trying to establish, which is that we're trying to keep the good vibes going, we're trying to the questions aligned with the intention of what the speakers have offered.

Then the last piece of it is that I will often ask for that first question to come from an Indigenous person in the room, or come from a person from this territory, from this, from this place.

EDDIE CUBILLO: Yeah, awesome

EVE TUCK: So, being super protective over the kinds of conversation, like curating and facilitating the QandA as much as possible is also part of how I attend in my classrooms – to try to tie that back to the question you initially offered.

EDDIE CUBILLO: Yeah. Well, everyone laughed, so they obviously knew - they had been at a lot of forums where statements were made.

EVE TUCK: Oh, yeah. It's like the worst part. Yeah, I thought I didn't like speaking in public, but I just didn't like the QandA. And we can change that. We can do that in a generation, for sure! Yeah. It doesn't have to be the worst part.

EDDIE CUBILLO: So we are going to run out of time. I've got a couple more questions, one about me, so. Okay. Yeah, I increasingly want to teach outside this building. I actually don't like this building, and I'm exploring teaching On Country. This year I ran a course where I took students to Darwin, to my Country, Larrakia land and to speak with people I know and grew up with about how they use their legal services and how the community defines justice. In this course, we read your paper, Visiting as an Indigenous Feminist Practice as it articulates ideas of community care and relationality and impermanence of visiting a way which feel perfectly crafted for our course. How did you come to this article?

EVE TUCK: I was invited to submit an article for a special issue on gender and ontology, and thinking especially about our cosmologies and how our cosmologies and how our cosmologies inform our practice. I took that as an opportunity to think with three other scholars, early career scholars, Jo Billows, Haliehana Stepetin, who is another Unanga scholar. It gives me so much pleasure when there's other Unanga scholars who are finishing their PhDs, and Rebecca Beaulne-Stuebing. All of them have been doing work in various ways to think through the practice of visiting and what we come to know through visiting. How practices of visiting are actually very small ways of practicing what we know about how the way the world works in our relating to one another in real time, in a real space. I invited them to write with me. The decision that we made was to not directly address the cosmologies that we're referring to. We don't say 'here's the story that informs these sets of relations, here's the teaching that informs the set of relations', but instead we say 'this is the visiting practice. This is visiting with lands and waters, visiting with others, this is visiting with traditional medicines', and what I think is helpful to others, hopefully is that visiting as a framework for thinking about – we don't go so far as to call it a method or methodology, we just saying this is part of what we're doing when we're doing our work, and how we come to know is through visiting, and our visiting practices come from the teachings from our communities, but we're not going to tell you those teachings. That act of refusal that's built inside that I hope is productive for others to not feel like you need to necessarily share the teachings that are meant to be for your community in order to talk about the things that you learn from that, and learn some strategies for holding some things offstage and not talking about them in public.

EDDIE CUBILLO: Last question, and we'll go to QandA - Academic Freedom. It's a big topic here, and is crucial to protect the work of First Nation scholars, yet also it's mobilised to protect research practices which are contrary to Indigenous research ethics. How do you understand the limits of academic freedom? Can you explain it to me?

EVE TUCK: I think academic freedom can be weaponized against Indigenous people, not just for the Indigenous scholars at an institution, but also against what Indigenous communities are saying is important for our sovereignty.

I think academic freedom is an important thing for us as Indigenous people to be able to insist upon for ourselves. In part because, as I understand it, an important kernel of how this concept of academic freedom emerged was in order for people to be able to speak against the State, even as they're employed by public institutions, to be able to have research that concludes that the State has been violent or that the State has done things wrong. That feels important for us as Indigenous people to be able to maintain, and claim for ourselves. I hope that our unions are always having our backs, as we're trying to insist upon the need for research, that when our research – and it always will – indicate that there's violence done to us by the State. So, I don't want to discard that concept, but I also understand that it is weaponized against us in these very individual ways in order to make assertions that are aligned with that colonial violence that academic freedom is meant to protect us from. To point out the contradiction of that I think is helpful – to understand that there's actually many more freedoms operating and many more rights and many more frameworks of what it means to speak truth that are operating in a university context alongside academic

freedom. So sure, you have the academic freedom to do that, but you're still an asshole. Sure, you have the academic freedom to do that, but that means that your research is bad. Sure, you have the academic freedom to say that, but we're not going to listen to you. It actually reveals more about your faulty thinking than it does about the claim that you're trying to make. So, I don't know if that's helpful or not.

EDDIE CUBILLO: Very helpful. It is – make sure that recording is working.

EVE TUCK: I'm just I'm speaking from my own context, and sometimes that has a poetic fit with other contexts.

EDDIE CUBILLO: All right, first question

EVE TUCK: Are they good ones?

EDDIE CUBILLO: Yeah, this is from this is from Debbie Kilroy, who's an abolitionist in this country, and non-Indigenous woman and a very strong ally of Indigenous people. She says 'Can a white settler employed by the Academy be a real ally with Aboriginal people in the Academy? The Academy being an ongoing colonial racist institution.'

EVE TUCK: Thanks for that question. Truly, thank you for that question.

I'm suspicious of anybody who wants for their identity to be an ally. An ally, and I'm not the first person to say this, but an ally is an attribute that somebody else should notice about you, rather than you proclaiming about yourself.

If the question is, can you be a self-proclaimed white settler ally, then the question answers itself. But can there be people who work alongside Indigenous people in the university in order to take off some of the heavy fire, to shield and protect some of the intense scrutiny and also intense backlash. Sure, part of that is to have a long view for the possible future of the university to work towards Indigenous futurities means opening yourself up to the idea that some of these institutions are not going to exist or won't exist in the way that they do - that the labor practices that are relations to each other and to the lands and waters under capitalism will be transformed by working towards Indigenous futurities. It's being open to the fact that what you are working so hard to establish here will come to an end. But not in a way that is apocalyptic, but in a way that is world building in a way that allows for people to continue to live here for millennia, rather than be continuously threatened by climate disaster, rather than continuously being threatened by violence and all the effort that it takes to maintain a settler state on stolen lands. So - Yes, and that work needs to have a long view towards Indigenous futurities.

EDDIE CUBILLO: Next question. Are you interested in questions about if universities can be decolonized, or is it better to ask how Universities can be used to support decolonization elsewhere?

EVE TUCK: I don't know. I think that there are so many different kinds of universities that it's hard to talk about them in a group. I'm not trying to evade the question, but I think that there's so many different kinds of universities. If I think of the university as a place where we get to choose our learning paths, we get matched up or find our ways to mentors. We

get to spend time and study and learn different ways of considering the world. And then also systematically creating inquiry practices that are beneficial to us and others. Like a university sounds like a pretty great place. I hope that there are ones that can find themselves into better relation with Indigenous communities and to Country. Yeah, I'm not foreclosing that there's universities that can do this work.

Parts of universities, probably much more often than entire universities that can do this work. Yeah.

EDDIE CUBILLO: This person wants your thoughts on co-production where academics make claims about working with community and with people with lived and living experience.

EVE TUCK: I work a lot within a framework, a name for a set of practices that I call Collaborative Indigenous research. Over the last five years, I've worked with members of our lab and then with an advisory board to create something called the Collaborative Indigenous Research Digital Garden, which you can visit online, which has more than 200 examples of Indigenous led inquiry. Some that are teaming with university researchers and some that are not, that are asking and answering questions that really matter to Indigenous communities. All of those are collaborative projects. That's a place to go for some additional thinking and process which help us to identify that this is a practice that many people are doing.

EDDIE CUBILLO: It says someone's asking here, can you give some advice to Indigenous PhD candidates who are in their final year of their candidature?

EVE TUCK: Advice is really hard when you don't know a person. My first piece of advice would be to seek advice from very specific people. My advice about advice is, decide who you would accept advice from. Lots of times we get bombarded by different people's opinions on what we should do. One way of screening that out is like, would I accept advice from this person? Do I consent? Do I want to receive advice from them? Being really clear at this stage in your studies about who you want to seek advice from, I think is a piece of that advice. So maybe that's not me, so maybe you don't want to hear the rest of this. But what I can say is your committee members or those who are your supervisor, that's a person that you've accepted advice from. There could be other people, but they need to know you well enough to be able to offer that very situated advice about what to do after PhD or which ways to work in the university. But again, be very intentional about who you were seeking, who you can make a list - these are the people who I accept advice from. That's like a very helpful thing to do because then the other stuff that's coming your direction, it's like, my sister and I have a code. I'll teach you our secret code, it's called 'thanks for your input.'

Audience laughter

Somebody who's not on that advice list offers you advice, 'thanks for your input', and then keep it moving.

EDDIE CUBILLO: Your insights on differentiating decolonial pedagogy and anti-colonial pedagogy.

EVE TUCK: Yeah, it's interesting because I think that some of the people who have read and thought with 'Decolonization is not a metaphor', have thought for that to mean that it's really important to me to differentiate between decolonial and anti-colonial. Again, I'll just note that that paper was written in a particular context, which was the context of the field of education, the context of North-America, and the context of wanting for land to be centred in any conversations about decolonization, so if those other things match for you then okay, take it up. Otherwise, 'thanks for your input'. No, just kidding. But I do know that, people who are doing incredible work under the banner of anti-colonial, and I appreciate the ways that they've thought about why that banner works for them and why they're using it, and why they're not using it in relation to decolonial thought. But I certainly, I don't feel like I ever set out to create a taxonomy that becomes a dichotomous key if you're doing this kind of work or not. Believe it or not, I'm not that interested in figuring out precisely what everybody else is doing in the world. I am interested in finding ways, for those of us who can have the conversations that are generative for our communities to find each other. And the rest of it, I think if it's productive for you, then go for it. I hope that's a fair answer.

EDDIE CUBILLO: Yeah, last question, and we'll start to wrap up. What are the relational and contextual characteristics that lead to the type of learning that then become a conduit for contingent collaboration?

EVE TUCK: I think that this is true about any kind of time that you are meeting someone else, but in multiple someone's meeting another big multiple someone. Is that what we know? This is true about interdisciplinary study. It's true about what gets called comparative work or it's to me being a person who is an Indigenous person, who's very open and wanting to learn about Indigenous life here on Country but can't get that information from my own place. It was hard for me to come here by airplane, not easy for me to leave my life, I actually brought my children with me, and so just to know that what you first know about another field or another community or another lived experience is often the most famous stuff, and the famous stuff is not always the best stuff. The famous stuff is sometimes the most abusive people who wrote that stuff, or sometimes the people who have written and brought together a whole bunch of things that is a composite of what so many other people have said, but without crediting them. So I guess it takes a stance of humility or a stance of creating the conditions in which people can be vulnerable enough to not have to know right away, but can kind of suspend in the not knowing or not being sure, because what you might find initially might be, just like those media reports that I was getting about the Referendum while I was still in Canada prior to coming here. Sure, some people's opinion, but not the realities of people living in relation to Country here. And so, to know that there's always something more real just outside of that boundary and what initially appears to be the thing is often the thing that everybody inside that space wishes was not the main way that people got to know about the something. So, creating the conditions in our learning spaces to not rush to know, to really come into relation, and to not feel like the goal is to have a kind of extractive or transactional relation, but to be pretty open to the different pathways that something might take.

EDDIE CUBILLO:

Can we just, again, thank Eve for coming and speaking to us and really exploring those issues that are really confronting not only the Melbourne Law School, but the University of

Melbourne. It's good sometimes to get someone from outside who's seen it and experienced, but also written so much on it, really want to say thank you for giving us your time. It's been wonderful for myself, and for the rest of us here. Thank you.

Outro music – White Noise by John Wayne Parsons

JAYNAYA DWYER: Thank you for listening to White Noise. You can find more information about this conversation including show notes and a full transcript on the Indigenous Law and Justice Hub's website. Take care until next time and thanks for listening.

Outro music – White Noise by John Wayne Parsons