

I have been asked to write a land acknowledgement and while TMU has one, I have read that the original author, Hayden King, has expressed regret based on how obligatory land acknowledgements have become and has instead encouraged folks to write their own.

I am a white, queer, Jewish, disabled, community builder and student. My family came to this land from Galicia, Germany, and Austria. They came to escape pogroms and war, starting from the late 1800s until the 1940s. I am the descendant of settlers, colonially referred to as immigrants. My family, in search of better lives for themselves, were able to live better lives on this land, but at whose expense?

This week marks the days of awe between the Jewish holidays of Rosh Hashana, the day of Judgement, and Yom Kippur, the day of atonement. Rosh Hashana has a theme of *teshuva*, of reconciliation and repentance and thinking about our future actions and how they affect those around us for the following year. The text of the *Unetaneh Tokef* asks:

Who shall live

Who shall die

Who in good time

Who by an untimely death

Who by water

Who by fire

Who by sword

Who by wild beast

Who by famine

Who by thirst

Who by earthquake

Who by plague

Who shall have rest

Who shall wander

Who shall be at peace

Who shall be pursued

Who shall be serene

Who shall be tormented

Who shall become impoverished

Who shall become wealthy

Who shall be degraded

Who shall be exalted

As Jews, we are called to hear the rams horn, the *shofar*, as it makes three types of blasts: *tekiyah*, a blast of vitality. Then we hear three broken blasts: *shevarim*, sobs to mark brokenness. Then we hear nine blasts: *tru'ah*, a call to action.

The action of *teshuva* requires knowledge of the harm before one can repair it.

I was raised on the unceded and traditional territory of the x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), Sk̓wxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səliłwətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh) peoples on the west coast. I now live, and study at an institution on the land of the Huron-Wendat, Anishinaabe, Seneca, Haudenosaunee, and Mississauga nations.

The city name Tkaronto comes from the Mohawk language meaning "the place in the water where the trees are standing", referring to wooden stakes used in fishing. People have lived here for over 10,000 years, and it is through the violent act of colonialism that we've come to call this city Toronto.

The land we are on is referred to as the Dish with One Spoon, which refers to a 1,000 year old Great Law of Peace, a founding document of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. It is the signifier of a shared relationship, a shared responsibility to take care of the land, to ensure that the "dish" is never empty: limit what you take and leave enough for others. There is to be "no knife near our dish", sharing without shedding blood.

I acknowledge that our institution was named after a colonizer who was instrumental in the design and implementation of industrial schools, later becoming residential schools. These schools were operated from the 1870s up until 1996. In the past few years, thousands of bodies have been found at the sites of some of these schools, uncovering stores of torture, rape, forcible confinement, and exposure to extreme conditions. This is the legacy of our university's namesake, and this is the land we are on.

When I reflect on my position and privilege on this land and the brutal history towards Indigenous people, I recognize my responsibility to not just recite placeholder text, but to do the work to contribute to the dish and to share in the land. It is my responsibility to acknowledge the land, my relationship to it, and its history. It is also my responsibility to participate in *teshuva*, in reconciliation. For me, that looks like monetary donations, resource sharing, voting, and advocacy through actions and conversations like this one.

Teshuva is a process, and it takes a conscious effort.

Anyone who is capable of protesting injustice in their home and does not, is responsible for the outcomes of their neglect. For the people of his city, he is responsible for the people of his city. For the whole world, he is responsible for the whole world.

- Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 54b

And from the Pirkei Avot, the book of ethics:

It is not your duty to finish the work, but neither are you at liberty to neglect it..

- Pirkei Avot 2:16

I invite you all to think about your own history and connection to this land, how you can contribute to the dish, and your role as members of this school.