Indigenous Teachings of Turtle Island (2nd Edition)

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One Approach to Reconciliation and Responsible Citizenship in Post-Secondary Education

DAVID D. VARIS

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Land and Peoples

I wish to first acknowledge that we are on Epekwitk, part of the ancestral, unceded, and unsurrendered territory of the Mi'kmaw Nation,

and on which this institution stands. This territory is covered by the Treaties of Peace and Friendship, which recognize

Mi'kmaw title and establish the ongoing relationship between the Mi'kmaw Nation and the Crown. We are all treaty people.

Msit No'kmaq ~ Wahkohtowin ~ All my Relations

David D. Varis

Contributions and Contributors

There are many who made contributions to this second edition OER (digital textbook). First, I would like to acknowledge the ancestors for without their journey and commitment to ensuring the cultural ways are preserved, none of this would be possible. I would like to personally thank my Elders, who have been numerous. They provided guidance and wisdom to a multitude of projects I've undertaken over the years. From each I took teachings that helped me bring these to fruition. My work is not perfect by any stretch; but, each project, like this student textbook has been meaningful. I trust it may, in a small way, keep us moving forward in our learning and reconciliation. I humbly thank all my teachers for their patience and support.

Within the UPEI community, I give thanks to the funders and supporters of this OER project including Robertson Library, the Teaching and Learning Centre, and my Faculty of Indigenous Knowledge, Education, Research, and Applied Studies. To my students, who poured over both the first and earlier second editions of this on-going manuscript and provided invaluable and honest feedback through the OER Student Feedback survey, I am forever grateful. I am most appreciative of UPEI professors, Dr. Josh MacFayden and Dr. Elizabeth (Libby) Osgood, and Holland College Journalism Learning Manager and Instructor, Lindsay Carroll, who took time to review this textbook and offer up their comments. I have had the good fortune to have two excellent and dedicated Student Assistants, Easton Power and Mary Busch, who supported textbook revisions and technical fixes of the manuscripts.

Lastly, I wish to extend a huge thank you to all those who graciously accepted to be part of this OER textbook journey from simple words of encouragement to allowing the photos, in which they appear, to be used. My community of support has been amazing, and this textbook would not have been possible without their full support in this writing and open access publishing journey.

Hai hai.

David

Relational Honouring in an Era of Reconciliation

I wish to honour all those who have worked tirelessly and continue to work within our post-secondary educational institutions in this *Nation to Nation, People to People* project called 'reconciliation.'

We must acknowledge that the work of Indigenizing, reconciliation, and decolonizing within higher education and, more broadly, Canadian society, continues to not be fully understood, despite clear direction from the 2015 Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Final Report and Calls to Action. Moreover, the means to advance these conceptualizations to meet the challenges of inclusion of Indigenous peoples, and their knowledges and scholarship across Canadian universities, are diffusely varied (Gaudry and Lorenz, 2018) and even troubling (Kempf et al., 2022). Mi'kmaq scholar and educator Marie Battiste, in addressing the work of decolonizing publicly, politically, and institutionally, offers:

". . . there is no magic bullet, but multiple ways to solve many issues, some by way of academic analyses and research; some political as related to activism, resistance, and lobbying for the merits of various programs, positions; and some by self-reflection and emerging from the chains of the oppressive situations one has been accustomed to" (Battiste, 2017, pp. 70-71).

What becomes evident, if one were to accept this multiplicity of approaches, is that the work of Indigenous and racialized scholars within rigid colonial structures is 'heavy' and at a cost (Henry et al., 2017). Arlie Russell Hochschild, in her 1983 seminal work on emotional labour, reminds us that "emotional labor is the silent work of evoking and suppressing feeling – in ourselves and in others" (Hochschild, 2022, p. 333). Yet, in a new era of reconciliation, in the safety of a like community, these emotional expressions can emerge. I would also like to think that this new chapter involves a new historic period that I coin *Nation to Nation, People to People*, in the spirit of reconciliation and the monumental work of the 1996 Royal Commission of Aboriginal Peoples (Dussault & Erasmus, 1996). We must honour the teachings and our teachers.

I have worked in post-secondary education since 1995, first with Saint Thomas University (1995-2000), then the University of Prince Edward Island (since 2002). I have worked alongside countless Indigenous Elders, scholars, Knowledge Keepers, student support staff, and students. I have also worked with many Indigenous communities, internal and external to the university. In all instances, as is our way, these selfless, higher education warriors have always expressed gratitude to family, community, and their Elders and teachers. These expressions are usually captured in the often-heard term, *all my relations*. This gratitude extends to the core sacred teachings and the medicines, which also include humour, compassion, and the fire within. It is this 'relational honouring' that embodies the desired outcome of Indigenization, reconciliation, and decolonization within higher education. A place where *Nation to Nation, People to People* relations transcend difference — conceptually and in practice.

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SECTION 1 : EASTERN DOOR ~ THE RISING SUN

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David D. Varis

Preface

There are several purposes for this *Indigenous Teachings of Turtle Island* Open Education Resource (OER) textbook.

First, it serves as a concise reading for students in conjunction with their IKE-1040 course. With twelve weeks of instruction during fall and winter semesters — and a substantial amount of material covered each week during instruction time — students can benefit from a summary of the topics, key concepts, important readings, related topics, supplemental resources, and cultural competency tutorials. Second, the OER can serve as a 'living record' of the course itself. It is expected that the course will evolve over time, especially as the TRC Calls to Action are brought to life and we start to see significant changes within Indigenous communities and Canada as a whole. Third, the OER is nimble, and it can be quickly updated to link students to valuable resources that are created and released daily. Fourth, the resources contained herein remain timeless, and we must honour the work of past Indigenous scholars, writers, and documentarians.

The author envisions this OER evolving accordingly to meet the needs of its users. This is the first edition, if you will, and a prototype of how it can be individualized by an instructor. A more generic OER reader is also envisioned.

Changing Landscape

To give context to the socio-political and cultural changing landscape, on October 18, 2023, the Honourable Wab Kinew, Fort Rouge, leader of the New Democratic Party, was elected as Manitoba's 25th and first Anishinaabe Premier, who also holds the portfolio of President of the Executive Council, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and International Relations, and Minister of Indigenous Reconciliation. On National Indigenous Peoples Day, June 21, 2024, I was in Winnipeg, my homeland, and it brought great joy and pride to see 'Wab' doing what he does best — engaging with his peoples and leading this new cultural shift in Indigenous and non-Indigenous relations in Canada (see Figure i below).

Figure i

Just Prior to the Grand Entry on National Indigenous Peoples Day at Forks, Wînipêk – Ȧ·σV` (Winnipeg), June 21, 2024

It wasn't long ago that Wab Kinew was a prominent musician, rapper, journalist, and University of Winnipeg Indigenous administrator before he entered politics. He hosted the highly successful 2012 CBC four-part miniseries, *8th Fire*, which still resonates as a ground-breaking educational resource that is still used in many post-secondary institutions across Canada, including my classroom. If you wish to read more about Wab Kinew (*Wabanakwut* is his Anishinaabe name), I would suggest reading his autobiography titled, *Wab Kinew: The Reason You Walk* (Kinew, 2017).

This text is also a direct attempt to provide a means for students, instructors, and others to engage with the TRC Calls to Action as it relates to education. There is a building of knowledge, but it also has students engaging in what is presented, applying the teachings, and being active in the world around them, through reconciliation. Moreover, Universities Canada (2023) released its comprehensive *Commitments to Truth and Reconciliation* document, and with it, I see a wider movement happening across Canada in the following commitment:

Teaching and learning: "Universities commit to supporting the Indigenization of curricula through things such as responsive academic programming, support programs, orientations, and pedagogies and to making room for Indigenous Knowledges and ways of knowing throughout diverse fields of study, including opportunities for Elders and Knowledge Keepers in university structures" (Universities Canada, 2023).

We now invite you to begin this journey of reconciliation.

David D. Varis

June 30, 2024

Introduction

Indigenous Teachings of Turtle Island: A Journey of Reconciliation began on September 28th, 2021. I remember the day well; I wore a traditional black and purple ribbon shirt, which I adorn on special occasions to honour the past, present, and future. This was a special event at the University of Prince Edward Island, in preparation for the first-ever National Day for Truth and Reconciliation — now a national public holiday, held each year on September 30th.

What I recall is 'truth' being spoken, witnessed, and coming to life. While the University had made good progress in addressing the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Final Report and Calls to Action* (2015), I never felt the spiritual presence or calls to action as profoundly as I did that day, September 28th. Chief and President of the Native Council of Prince Edward Island, Lisa Cooper (UPEI MEd Graduate) stated that true reconciliation will only come about if every student graduating from UPEI — those who will lead the next generation — understood the history of Indigenous peoples in Canada, and past Indigenous and non-Indigenous relations. Understanding the past will prepare them for the future reconciliation work and healing of Nations that lay ahead.

As if predestined, spiritual and Creator-given, in rapid succession, we witnessed the Senior Management, Senate, and Board of Governor's approval of a new Faculty of Indigenous Knowledge, Education, Research, and Applied Studies in November 2021, and then a mandatory Indigenous course — IKE-1040 — for all graduating students. And following was a suite of Indigenous Knowledge Education courses, which could lead students to a minor in Indigenous Studies, commencing in the fall of 2022.

The mandatory course, titled *Indigenous Teachings of Turtle Island,* was launched during the first summer session in May 2022. Its development began with two cohorts, each contributing to this historic moment in UPEI's and Canada's post-secondary history. With the assistance of Morgan E. Varis, Courtney Matthews, and Kim Mears, an Open Education Resource (OER) text was created — as there is no single text, at least of which I am aware, that can meet the needs of the diverse student population whom it must serve, nor would it capture the very dynamic and engaging delivery methodology that will bring education and responsible citizenship to the forefront. I hope this introductory OER creation will serve its purpose in the present-day and evolve over time.

Msit No'kmaq ~ Wahkohtowin ~ All my Relations

David D. Varis

Okiskinohamâkew / Kiskinwahamawâkan ~ Teacher / Learner

Assistant Professor
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Course Information

Let us begin by examining the course description, learning objectives, and sessions that comprise IKE-1040: *Indigenous Teachings of Turtle Island*. Instructors may introduce their own material, content, and approaches to the course, as is expected; yet, I trust what has been developed can be of assistance.

Course Description

With respect to the traditional and unceded territory of Epekwitk (PEI) and Mi'kma'ki, this course is an introduction to the three groups of Indigenous peoples recognized in Canada. Anchored in Indigenous knowledges, students will learn about ceremonies, protocols, traditions and cultures. This course further introduces Canada's history of colonization and cultural assimilation policies. These will help to begin fostering an understanding of Indigenous worldviews and fulfill the University of Prince Edward Island's commitment to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action.

Goal and Learning Outcomes

The goal of this course is to deepen a student's (future leaders) understanding about Indigenous peoples, their knowledge systems, histories, cultures, traditions, and resiliencies within the context prolonged and devastating colonial policies and practices that has led to Calls to Action so healing, truth and reconciliation can be realized. All UPEI students will require this course to be conferred a degree and is vital to all relations. Specific student learning outcomes include:

1. To define the key themes of important Indigenous and non-Indigenous relations historically and in contemporary society, including Indigenous Peoples' histories, pathways to healing, reclamation of culture, and contemporary contributions.
2. To develop and articulate one's own objective in reconciliation and decolonization based on an informed understanding of the TRC Calls to Action.
3. To explain Indigenous worldviews, and ways of knowing, being, and doing in comparison with Western worldviews.
4. To assess and cultivate personal and professional competence and confidence to become a responsible citizen in reconciliation and broader application.
5. To discuss issues of equity for Indigenous Peoples by analyzing historical and contemporary systemic policies of colonialism and assimilation.
6. To explain the significance and meaning of Indigenous practices relating to ceremony and relationships.
7. To explain major issues emanating from assimilation and genocidal practices.

Sessions (Chapters) at a Glance

- Session 1: Welcome and Traditional Opening of Circle
- Session 2: What is Canada? ~ What is Turtle Island? ~ Who are the Mi'kmaq Peoples? ~ What are Teachings?
- Session 3: Cultural Practices ~ Indigenous Ways of Knowing, Being, and Doing ~ Terms, Identity, and Meaning
- Session 4: History of Indigenous Peoples in Canada, United States, Mexico, and the Caribbean
- Session 5: Mi'kmaq Historians ~ Mi'kmaq Social Values and Economy ~ Treaties ~ Royal Proclamation Act of 1763 ~ Indian Act of 1876
- Session 6: Colonialism ~ Colonization Practices of the Indian Act ~ Indian Residential Schools ~ Genocide
- Session 7: Trauma and Intergenerational Trauma ~ Traditional Healing ~ Contemporary Health, Healing,

and Wellness

- Session 8: Land Dispossession ~ Systemic Racism ~ Right to Self-Determination
- Session 9: Indigenous Resilience ~ Reclamation ~ Resistance
- Session 10: Indigenous Peoples in the 21st Century
- Session 11: Truth and Reconciliation ~ Calls to Action ~ Responsible Citizenship
- Session 12: Honouring Msit No'kmaq ~ Wahkohtowin ~ All Our Relations and Closing of Circle

And now, let the learning begin...

Responsible Citizenship

Responsible Citizenship

Ever since the release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Final Report and Calls to Action in 2015, as well as listening to interviews with Commissioner Murray C. Sinclair (who has also served in the Senate of Canada and was the first Indigenous person to serve as judge on the Court of Queen's Bench of Manitoba), I have been thinking about the key action we are asking our citizenry. In a well-summarized quote, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission states:

"Together, Canadians must do more than just talk about reconciliation; we must learn how to practise reconciliation in our everyday lives—within ourselves and our families, and in our communities, governments, places of worship, schools, and workplaces. To do so constructively, Canadians must remain committed to the ongoing work of establishing and maintaining respectful relationships" (TRC, 2015, p. 21). In terms of newcomers to Canada, recommendation 94, the final call to action, states,

"We call upon the Government of Canada to replace the Oath of Citizenship with the following: I swear (or affirm) that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Queen of Canada, Her Heirs and Successors, and that I will faithfully observe the laws of Canada including Treaties with Indigenous Peoples, and fulfill my duties as a Canadian citizen" (TRC, 2015, p. 337).

It was after a guest lecture on Indigenous peoples and their cultures to a group of newcomers in 2020 that it dawned on me: what we are asking every citizen to do is demonstrate responsible citizenship in our day-to-day lives**.** As an educator, and in response to the TRC's Calls to Action, my job is to create a learning opportunity that educates our students about what responsible citizenship means and looks like through this period of reconciliation. I contend that we are quickly seeing our society and other societies in the world at a crossroads, as we see grave mistakes of the past being repeated. In one word — it's disrespect; disrespect for all our relations on Mother Earth, living and non-living.

Since the release of the TRC Report, sadly, we see that progress has been quite slow in the implementation of the recommendations across sectors and institutions identified as prime agents of change (Reconciliation Education, 2024; CBC, 2023). I do know that we cannot be complacent or become distracted. The UPEI Faculty of Indigenous Knowledge, Education, Research, and Applied Studies is committed to the Calls to Action and we will do its part. Yet, each of us needs to stay focused on reconciliation and responsible citizenship as a way to alter our future. What may seem isolated to Canada is not necessarily so. We must understand that colonization and colonizing behaviours, presenting as other ideologies and practices, are still in existence and have manifested themselves globally. We must consider the broader need to commit to responsible global citizenship in this period of reconciliation.

In his memoir, Who We Are: Four Questions For A Life And A Nation, Elder Sinclair reminds us that the four great questions of life include: where do I come from, where am I going, why am I here, and who am I? (Sinclair, 2024). These apply equally to individuals, communities, and nations. Canada could not be in more deep reflection about these very questions. On March 1, 2025, in a televised White House meeting, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy was publicly humiliated and berated by US President Donald Trump and Vice President JD Vance. During the month, Canadians awoke to daily threats of tariffs being levied by Trump on many sectors of the economy. Most disturbing of all, he has spoken incessantly about the annexation of Canada, making it the 51st state.

In a June 2021 CBC interview with Murray Sinclair, which focused on the further steps needing to be done

to move reconciliation forward in Canada, he presented a very chilling and ominous possibility. Please take a moment to view the first 4 minutes and 43 seconds of this interview.

Murray Sinclair on moving reconciliation forward in Canada (2021)

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://pressbooks.library.upei.ca/ike1040indigenousteachings2ndedition/?p=36#oembed-1

While many Canadians would not be familiar with Sinclair's chilling analogy now playing out for Canada and requiring an answer to the four earlier questions, Justice Sinclair provided us with clear direction – education. In a further interview in 2021, after being installed as the 15th chancellor of Queen's University, he stated, "Education is what got us into this mess and education is key to getting us out of it" (National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, n.d.). Education provides a means to help us understand how power relations operated in colonial systems and continue to affect all citizens in this era of neo-colonialism and reconciliation.

SECTION 2 : SOUTHERN DOOR ~ LEARNING WITH OPEN HEART AND MIND

Chapter 1: Welcome and Traditional Opening of Circle

The Beginning of Indigenous Teachings

I would like to extend a huge welcome to each and every one of you as we enter into the beginning of *Indigenous Teachings*. As you may be aware if you've looked over the course syllabus, I have spent a significant portion of my years teaching both part-time and now full-time at the University of Prince Edward Island. In my full-time capacity, I not only teach an array of Indigenous courses, including IKE-1040, but I am also contributing to the IKE-1040 Course Development and Integrity Committee. There is a Cree word for this: it is *Okanawiskwahtawin*, which means 'fire-keeper' or 'guardian of something sacred,' like fire for survival of the peoples, or, in this instance, the compulsory UPEI course titled *Indigenous Teachings*, which is a concrete **Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action** to educate our students about Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada. You will learn much in this course, which I hope you may apply in your future careers and in life as a whole.

I welcome you to the first chapter (corresponding as close as possible to the in-person class session) and the twelve chapters of this Open Education Resource (OER) text. Herein, I highlight a significant amount of content that I deliver in the classroom; however, I use this text to also include other important information and links. Whether you are a student, instructor, or educational administrator, I hope this resource will complement your learning. Let's now begin by looking at the topics covered in this chapter.

Topics at a Glance

- Knowing, Being, and Doing as a Learning Process
- Traditional or Ceremonial Opening of the Circle
- Honouring the L'nu (Mi'kmaq) / Honour Song
- Sharing Circle
- UPEI's Commitment/Faculty of Indigenous Knowledge, Education, Research, and Applied Studies/ Minor in Indigenous Studies

Knowing, Being, and Doing as a Learning Process

Often times in my work, I have been given or have taken on a task to complete. It has always been a bit of a challenge when thinking about where to begin, but on reflection, it always starts with 'knowing.' I cannot recall a time when I just 'knew' something; we may think we know something instinctively, but we can always somehow trace it back to learning. So, with a task before me, I always think about what I already know. Questions that usually surface include: have I done this before? Can I apply what I know to this current task?

And, what else do I need to know before starting? More often than not, I conclude that I need to read, conduct further research, gather pertinent information, or, in some cases, take a course.

In terms of a process, '**knowing**' is a central outcome in one's journey of learning. We only begin to really know something after 'learning' about it, whether it's from textbooks, teachers, or independent exploration. After spending time reflecting upon and understanding the topic, we then work toward mastering this knowledge by applying it in some way. After feeling 'masterful,' we often move to embracing this knowledge to the point of **'being'** courageous and confident in its understanding. This may involve writing a paper, presenting in class, or taking an exam. It is then that we are **'doing'** what needs to be done. This process also applies to identity and becoming that identity — for example, being Indigenous. I had to learn Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing to become that Indigenous person — not as a child — but much later in life. There is learning in all my Indigenous courses, not just for students, but for me as well.

This course is about learning something new and not too familiar to most Canadians or anyone who has not been greatly exposed to Indigenous peoples and their cultures. Indigenous peoples comprise a rather small proportion of the Canadian population, and this may be one possible reason to account for this lack of information. We may also discover other reasons as well. Census data indicate that in 2021, five percent (5%) of the total Canadian population self-identify as being Indigenous (Statistics Canada, 2021). There are three main cultural groups that comprise **Indigenous peoples in Canada**, and they are legally recognized in Section 35(2) of the 1982 Canadian Constitution Act of Canada as the **Indian (First Nations), Métis, and Inuit peoples**. Approximately six percent of peoples globally identify as Indigenous (United Nations, 2024). I, too, am learning many facts, concepts, and teachings about Indigenous peoples as my trajectory of knowing about my own peoples' (Cree peoples – *Nehiyawak*) history, culture, practices, and ways only began two decades ago.

With that said, I cannot say that I 'know' fully, but I am learning; we are all constantly learning. This is a good thing, and I like the fact that I am a student or learner (*kiskinwahamâkan*). I am currently enrolled in the PhD Educational Studies program at the University of Prince Edward Island, and eventually, I will hopefully receive my doctorate; but that still doesn't mean that I will fully know everything. So, our Indigenous ways of knowing is to fully respect that knowing is learning through our ancestors, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and teachers (*okiskinohamâkew*) — through self-discovery.

When I embrace our **Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing**, I am learning about our histories, cultures, ceremonies, beliefs, values, languages, traditions, protocols, and practices. I am learning to be a Cree person (*nêhiyaw*). The Cree peoples are one of the largest Indigenous groups in Canada. I am of mixed heritage: Finnish ancestry on my paternal side, and Cree on my maternal side. When I identify where I am from, I trace my blood roots to St. Peters Reserve, Selkirk, Winnipeg, and include Peguis First Nation, Manitoba, which is the First Nation community on my Indian status card. So, in terms of learning for me, and I hope for you, it becomes a very fulfilling journey when learning to honour this concept of knowing, being, and doing. There is a very specific term we use as Indigenous peoples to identify our worldview and teachings; it is commonly referred to as *Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing*, which will be discussed later. One teacher, Elder Mary Lee, whose work I often turn to — especially in understanding Cree teachings — can be found at the Four Directions Website (Elder Mary Lee, Four Directions, 2012).

Traditional or Ceremonial Opening of the Circle

I always open my classes with a **traditional or ceremonial opening**. I first begin by creating a space that is welcoming, and into that space, I bring my sacred bundle which contains all the necessary elements, including the sacred medicines, medicine wheel altar, and eagle feather to conduct a sacred welcoming and

sharing ceremony. I try my best to create a circle, as Indigenous peoples see and do everything not in a linear or boxed fashion as contemporary Western classrooms are arranged, but in a circle, as you see in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Opening Circle of Learning

Once in the circle, we participate in a **sacred smudging ceremony**. The purpose of this sacred smudging, also known as a purification or cleansing ceremony, is best described by Mi'kmaq Elder Stephen Augustine, former Associate Vice President and Dean of Unama'ki College, Cape Breton University (Augustine, 2020). Before this ceremony commences, I explain the general process; at times, I will read either the Mi'kmaq or Cree smudging **prayer**, which incorporates the teachings associated with the ceremony as I light the **sacred medicines** in a smudge bowl, cleanse myself and any helpers (oskâpêwis) with the sacred smoke that is created and fanned by an **eagle feather**, acknowledge the seven sacred directions (east, south, west, north, up, down, and within), and then smudge the altar, students, and classroom — including windows and doorways. In this way, the space and people are cleansed, and all negative energies and troubling thoughts and anxieties are blended into the sacred smoke, which rises and are taken away. Our collective prayers and new energies are safe to rise up, also lifted by the motions of the eagle feather with the smoke created by our sacred medicines, and are taken to the **Creator, Giver of Life**. Through the power of prayer, we know that they will be heard and acted upon.

Honouring the L’nu

Before commencing a sharing circle and introducing ourselves, I always honour the ancestors and the peoples of this territory. The Mi’kmaq people are referred to as ***L’nu*** in their language. The traditional territory or district of the L’nu on Prince Edward Island and the North West part of Nova Scotia is known as *Epekwitk aq Piktuk*. To honour the L’nu, not only in this territory, but in all their seven districts, I play the **Honour Song** written by George Paul from the district of *Siknikt*, which in present day is known as New Brunswick (Paul, 2013). It is like one’s national anthem and is explained quite well in the CBC article entitled *Meet the Mi’kmaw elder whose song has become an anthem for his people* (Sweet, 2021). I cannot thank the Creator enough for this tremendous opportunity to be with the peoples of this territory, and to focus my work on Indigenous education at UPEI. Ceremony is how this journey began, and it is best depicted in Figure 2: it is a photograph taken on September 28, 2021, which was the beginning of our Faculty as mentioned earlier in this text.

Figure 2

Honouring the Children and Survivors

After prayer, while still very much in ceremony, I take the eagle feather and pass it to each student so they may introduce themselves to others.

Sharing Circle

The **sharing circle** is an extremely important part of the opening as we, as **Indigenous people, are highly relational**. We honour the seasons, the water, the air, Mother Earth, all living things — the two-legged, the four-legged, the fish, the birds, the insects, the trees, and plants, all non-living things –- the rocks, the mountains, the dust, sand and mud, and our ancestors, our children, our Elders, our cultures, our peoples, our gifts, our strengths, our weaknesses, our path, the path of others, the teachings, the sacredness of life, the ways of our peoples, the mysteries, our resilience, our humour, the giving to others, and the belief in the Creator — the one who has given us so much and everything we need to live the life that has been bestowed upon us (Varis, 2015).

Given this relational foundation as a peoples, and the importance we place on **relationality** and its practice, it should not come as any surprise then that nothing begins before getting to know one another, and the sharing circle is the perfect forum to get to know one another. We take time to hear each other's story and honour this connectedness as a way to open new relations and pathways, especially in this learning and self-discovery journey. I often use the sharing circle to explore different topics within class — each person sharing while they hold the sacred eagle feather, as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3

Students in a Sharing Circle

As I draw the ceremony of welcome and the introducing of each other to a close, I sometimes conclude with a prayer or special words. Most often, I turn to words from an Elder.

An **Elder** is a person who is highly respected for their wisdom, knowledge, and special skills. It is the community

who determines who should be given that status, not the person themselves. There are also **Knowledge Keepers**, who are bestowed with great responsibilities to keep certain knowledges alive, safe, and, when the time is right, pass these on to others who will take them into the next generation. I often quote Elder and Ojibway writer, Richard Wagamese (see Figure 4). I will have much more to say about Elder Wagamese, who sadly passed to the spirit world in 2017, at other points in the textbook. I will quickly say, however, that I had the great fortune to meet, dine with, and photograph Richard, who was on a book national tour and came to Charlottetown in 2014. In my mind, he is one of the greatest Indigenous writers and teachers of all time.

Figure 4

Richard at Confederation Centre of the Arts

Wagamese writes,

"Respect is not something you earn. It's not something you aspire to or ask of others. It isn't your right or what you expect of people. Respect, in the Ojibway world, is the ability to honour all of Creation. It is something that you offer and something that you carry within you. The spiritual blessing of respect is harmony and the spiritual byproduct is community. When you choose to honour all Creation and, in turn, allow yourself to express it in your actions, you live respectfully, and because all things move in a circle, you will become respected. But it starts with the giving. It starts with the recognition that all things exist on the Sacred Breath of Creation and that because of that we are all related, all kin, all essential to on-going energy, the external heartbeat, the one song on the one drum that is the story of our time here. When you choose to allow yourself to carry respect for all your relations, you choose to allow yourself to honour Creation and allow yourself to live honourably. Once you accomplish that, your life itself will have become a ceremony – and that is the point of the Seven Grandfather Teachings" (Wagamese, 2019, p.181).

I always take a few minutes to give thanks to the Creator for the teachings that life gives us, no matter how difficult it can be at times. Gratitude is a personal expression of respect for being alive and connected to all; this is the best time to take a pause to breathe and let gratitude come full circle.

UPEI's Commitment to Reconciliation/Faculty of Indigenous Knowledge, Education, Research, and Applied Studies/Minor in Indigenous Studies

The following section is something that I can speak directly to, as I have been at the University of Prince Edward

Island since 2002 and have been actively involved in Indigenous education since 2004. As the sole Indigenous sessional lecturer for years, it was a relief when other Indigenous scholars started to arrive in 2015, and to usher in a new era of reconciliation. My journey will be subject to a more in-depth exploration in the next couple of years in conjunction with my PhD in the Educational Studies program. I will simply say that the years following the release of the TRC Final Report and Calls to Action in December 2015 saw a lot of dialogue and discussion. Most Canadian post-secondary institutions present their commitments to reconciliation in high-level strategic plans; in 2023, Universities Canada released their commitments to truth and reconciliation, which focuses on 1) policies, strategic plans, and governance; 2) Indigenous student success; 3) teaching and learning; 4) research; 5) community engagement; and 6) supporting people. This is an important step for all universities in Canada to be directly engaged in reconciliation education.

The UPEI commitment, released in 2018, reads as follows:

"**UPEI is committed to advancing reconciliation through higher education**. As a community, we have started a journey of growth to realize the role we must play in promoting an understanding of Indigenous history and culture, and supporting respectful relationships. UPEI recognizes that discussions in this era of truth and reconciliation will unveil difficult facts within our country's history. However, in keeping with our institutional vision, we know that education is vital to understanding the history of colonialism and the forward looking process of reconciliation. Working together, we must use knowledge as a catalyst for meaningful change in communities here in Prince Edward Island and around our world" (UPEI Strategic Plan (2018-2023), p. 4).

It wasn't until September 2021 that 'things' changed dramatically. You have already read about how the Creator intervened to say that the time of talking was over, and more concrete action was required. With the approval of a new **Faculty of Indigenous Knowledge, Education, Research, and Applied Studies** in November 2021, the time had come for a small core circle of Dr. Gary Evans (Interim Dean), Dr. and Elder Judith Clark (Elder-in-Residence and Faculty Elder), Corinne Chappell (Advisor to Vice President, Academic and Research on Indigenous Affairs), and myself (appointed to Assistant Professor in July 2022) to enact all that was required to stand-up the Faculty (see article in NationTalk, 2022 for an overview of development). I invite you to the Faculty webpage where our foundational work resides (IKERAS, 2024). The site highlights the following: 1) IKERAS Mission Statement; 2) IKERAS Values; 3) Elders and Scholars; 4) News and Events; 5) Seven Sacred Teachings; and 6) **Minor in Indigenous Studies.**

The Minor in Indigenous Studies page describes the course requirements and gives an overview of the structure, including mandatory and elective courses. As of January 1, 2024, only 16 months after the launch of IKERAS's full academic year, about 30 students have declared a minor in Indigenous studies. This is an exceptionally positive beginning for Indigenous Teachings, reconciliation, and responsible citizenship at the University of Prince Edward Island.

Key Terms and Concepts from the Chapter

- Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action
- knowing, being, and doing as a learning process
- Indigenous peoples in Canada/Indian (First Nations), Métis, and Inuit
- Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing
- traditional or ceremonial opening

- sacred smudging ceremony
- prayer/sacred medicines/eagle feather
- Creator, Giver of Life
- L'nu (Mi'kmaq)
- The Honour Song
- sharing circle
- relational and relationality
- Elders/Knowledge Keepers
- reconciliation
- Faculty of Indigenous Knowledge, Education, Research, and Applied Studies
- Minor in Indigenous Studies

Important Readings/Viewings for Next Class

1. Please **read and view** all of the material in the chapter if you haven't already. For linked material, be aware of these important sources of information. If something intrigues you or catches your attention, please gather that 'knowledge' by exploring and taking a pathway to additional learning.
2. Please **read** the following: The Haudenosaunee Creation Story
3. Please **read** the following: The Creation Story

Special Topics

- IKERAS Topics and Resources

Cultural Competency Tutorials

- Meaning of the Eagle Feather in Mi'kmaq Culture | Aaron Prosper
- Talking Circles

Chapter 2: What is Canada? ~ What is Turtle Island? ~ Who are the Mi'kmaq Peoples? ~ What are Teachings?

In the Beginning

Let us begin by discussing 'in the beginning.' The two readings relating to the Creation Story are the best place to start. The first reading is the Haudenosaunee Creation Story, which is told by Keller George, Wolf Clan member of the Oneida Indian Nation's Council. While there are several versions of the **Sky Woman Creation Story**, including Basil Johnstone's version covered in the second reading, I chose George's recounting because I also have a story about the Oneida Indian Nation No. 41 — also known as Oneida Nation of the Thames. This nation is one of several original nations of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, which includes the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca peoples. My story, like that of Keller George's story, highlights the dual existence of **good and evil spirits**.

I have a story about this territory; but, let's return to the readings about the origin or creation of humans.

- What did you think?
- What knowledge did you obtain?
- Do you have a similar story of creation in your culture?
- Lastly, how did it make you feel?

It is important to understand that, as pointed out in the second reading, creation stories exist through the oral tradition. Stories are passed on through each successive generation. It is the Elders and Knowledge Keepers who recount these important origin stories for the peoples so they know how they came to be. Often times, it is the Elder's '**helpers**' who are being mentored in the ways of knowing, being, and doing. They are **Elders-in-the-making,** or the next generation of Elders and Knowledge Keepers. Before we delve into the session, let us see what it comprises.

Topics at a Glance

- A very important question
- What is Canada?
- What is Turtle Island?
- Who are the Mi'kmaq Peoples?
- What are Indigenous Teachings?

A very important question

Before diving head-on into the material, let me say a few words about a very important question you should always have in the back of your mind. It comes from Richard Wagamese and his writing on wisdom. He writes,

"KNOWLEDGE IS NOT wisdom. But wisdom is knowledge in action. I have lived most of my years immersed in the culture of books. I command a lot of facts. I comprehend a lot of concepts. That does not make me wise or even intelligent. It just indicates what I have memorized. But when I activate those facts and concepts to find the greatest, grandest version of myself, and then use them to work toward that version, I begin the process of wisdom. The most essential question to ask myself is not "What do I think about this?" but rather "***How do I feel about this?***" In such simplicity is greatness made possible for an individual, a society and a human family." Richard Wagamese (2016)

- What is Wagamese speaking about?
- What is he getting us to do?
- Why?

As you read and gain knowledge, it is important to let your feelings and thoughts, armed with this question, propel you into reflection. With reflection and being able to articulate those feelings, you are engaging with the knowledge. You aren't just a vessel into which knowledge is poured; rather, Wagamese is suggesting that the process of wisdom is putting knowledge into action, which I will be reinforcing throughout.

So, how do I feel about this?

What is Canada?

According to the Government of Canada, "the name "**Canada**" likely comes from the Huron-Iroquois word "**Kanata**," meaning "village" or "settlement." In 1535, two Aboriginal youths told French explorer Jacques Cartier about the route to Kanata; they were actually referring to the village of Stadacona, the site of the present-day City of Québec" (Canada.ca, 2020). In Session 4, we will look more closely at the history of Canada.

So, what is Canada? Fast-forward to our contemporary lens, I present several videos that may provide an answer. They are:

- What is Canada?
- What is Canada famous for?
- The Canadian people

Question: Do these perspectives give you a good indication of what Canada is all about? What's missing? Is this the ideal time to tell my story?

Is this Canada? – A Different Type of Story of Truths

In the summer of 2023, I traveled to attend the *Building Reconciliation Forum: Education for Reconciliation: Rebuilding Stronger and with Intentionality* at Western University, London, Ontario, where I spoke about reconciliation within the academy, also known as university, and our journey to become a Faculty. During the conference, we had an opportunity to visit one of the local Indigenous communities. I chose to tour the Oneida Indian Nation, which is about 30 minutes southwest of London. There were other communities I could have

visited, including Six Nations of the Grand River, which includes all six nations of the Haudenosaunee nation, and is one of the largest reserves in Canada; however, I am glad I chose the community I did for what I learned.

As we got closer to the community, the large tour bus — carrying about 40 forum delegates — came to a stop on the side of the road. On the right side of the bus where I was sitting, I saw a hill, and in front of it by the road, a tree and a caution sign (see Figure 5).

Figure 5 *Good and Evil Spirits*

Looking at the photograph, one sees four distinct elements: one sees a sky filled with dark, ominous clouds over the top of a large hill; black on one side, and light brown on the other. Green grass appears midway down the hill and flows downward in the frame to and around a tree and the caution sign. So, what is the story here? What could this have to do with good and evil? The Oneida woman tour guide began by saying that this area is a landfill site, simply known as *Greenlane,* which borders on her community. On the other side of the bus, I saw a large, fenced-in compound with massive bulldozers, trucks, and equipment busily moving refuse (garbage) around and into distinct buildings where it would be sorted. There were other structures and lots of security.

My attention went back to the other side of the bus and the four elements — sky, earth, tree, and sign — which I couldn't resist admiring in some strange way. The tour guide explained that the site has been a place of contention for well over a decade and a half. She explained that this is where the garbage from Toronto, Canada's largest city, ends up (First Nation Drums, 2020). Given the unending stench, noxious gases, constant noise of the operation, and leakage of toxins and unsafe bio-matter into both the soil and, more grave, the ground water, it is safe to say this is where evil resides. Residents of Oneida Indian Nation, impacted by this environmental nightmare, are living with this evil, and no amount of money can rectify this dark side of humanity.

As I continued to contemplate how such good — represented here by nature — sky, Mother Earth, and tree, could be so tainted by such evil, I realized quite quickly that this practice cannot be sustained. These hills of garbage, stretching for miles and bordering on this First Nation reserve, are reminders of rapid population growth, environmental degradation, and, more disturbing, environmental racism. No amount of grass seed can hide the environmental racism that seeps into the community. As if this scene needed a more sickening twist, the tour guide added, "*yes, last week, they found a dead body in the garbage. It seemed to slow things down a bit; but, not for long. We don't know when this will end. And, our people are getting very sick. Cancer and respiratory disease are sky-rocketing.*"

My story ends on a realist note, and it may be the creation story of the 21st century: evil attacks the most

vulnerable, the marginalized, and our First peoples. Evil spirits are definitely in existence. We simply need to see the signs, such as foreboding storm clouds or the caution signs designed to help us avert danger. It's up to each of us to see that the good spirits rise up to take care of the evil ones, in order to ensure our survival as humans — the two-legged. I see signs that we are slowly beginning to realize that there is peril if not heeding the warning signs and our responsibility as citizens.

As we transition now into more of a historical examination, let us not forget that we need to pivot constantly in time. This course will have you, at times, in the past, present, and future. It is our way to honour our ancestors in the **past**, live in the **present** with our obligations of today, and continue to do so for the next seven generations in the **future**. I would like to present an excerpt that may not be well-known, but it may provide some further answers to the question, *what is Canada?* The writing is titled, *Treaty Six Territory – June 21st, 2036*.

Treaty Six Territory – June 21st, 2036

"Looking back on the past twenty years, I am ever-surprised at how far Canada has come. When I was a boy, growing up in a farming community in rural Saskatchewan, what I am doing now would have never happened. I am taking my two daughters to the local First Nations reserve – for the third day in a row – to attend the culture festival. Quickly becoming an annual tradition for everyone in the area, the culture festival is a week long event celebrating indigenous history and tradition in Canada. As a country-wide event, each reserve customizes it to reflect its own history and traditions. This has emerged as an extremely effective way to encourage us white folks – and other newcomers to Canada – to learn and grow not only in our own cultures and traditions, but to share in the rich traditions of Canada's First Peoples. The fact that it builds and strengthens intercultural communities is a side benefit. Yesterday there was a powwow, the day before that we partook in a feast and smudge, and today we are gathered for a re-commitment ceremony of the treaty promises that were made so long ago.

Events such as these are not new to me. Growing up in the Saskatoon inner city and attending an elementary school where my siblings and I were the only white students, I was exposed to many Cree traditions and cultural values as a youngster. For that I am forever grateful. It is now my profound joy that these rich teachings can be shared not only with my own children, but with all of the families who live around us. To see the grown-up children from what had been the most racist families in the area bringing their little ones to an event like this warms my heart in a way words can not adequately describe. That now – instead of something that a select few white people would attend for solidarity's sake – everyone in the community can gather together to smudge, feast, and dance.

I think that this is an almost magical shift from where things were at twenty years ago. When I look even further back into the past my awe only multiplies. For someone fifty years ago to imagine a future where farmers and people from the reserve could hold hands together and share in the beauty Canada has to offer would have been unheard of. There would, of course, have been people dreaming of a time like that, working for it, striving for it. But to imagine that an on-reserve culture festival would have become a mainstream tradition may have surpassed even their hopeful imaginations.

When I delve back even further into the past, into things that were already a subject of near legend during my childhood – despite their only recent eradication – I am blown away. To think that one hundred and fifty, even one hundred years ago, children were being forcibly removed from their families and traditions; thrust into an unfamiliar and hostile environment; stripped of their traditional clothing, teachings, and language; and abused, 'educated', and assimilated is unthinkable. Nowadays the residential schools and their legacy sound like a dystopian novel. This is Canada's history.

If I were to tell you that the legacy of the residential schools has completely faded I would be a liar. And is Truth

not the very basis of reconciliation? Without truth there can be no understanding, no reconciliation, no future. So, as I do not want to undermine how far we have come since Gordon Indian Residential school – a school run by my own church in my own province- closed its doors in 1996, I will not lie to you: the legacy of residential schools is still alive. Poverty, addiction, and a cultural disconnect are still present in Saskatchewan's cities and reserves. The difference now is how it is dealt with. There are countless functional support systems in place to guide people – young and old – on their journeys through life. Prisons are no longer filled with poor people and disillusioned youth. In fact, today we are as close to a traditional First Nations society as we have been since first contact. The young people are cared for and mentored by the elders, and likewise, the youth provide for elders and people in need. Cultures and traditions are taught in all schools; to white and aboriginal people alike. Day by day racism, poverty, and injustice are being replaced with love, understanding, and reconciliation. Every morning is a fresh page in the tome of Canada's history, and today's authors are geniuses". (Crowshire's Blog, 2016).

This short story was written by Christopher Sanford Beck, 15 years of age from Saskatchewan, who entered the *Imagine a Canada* contest, sponsored by the **National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation**. He was one of ten award recipients who entered the contest, which sought to have contestants "*envision what the future of Canada will look like through the lens of reconciliation"* in either art, poetry, film, or essay form (Office of the Treaty Commissioner, 2024). His winning piece embraces the very essence of what Canada is. Despite a dark past, this author believes that there can be a brighter, more rewarding and inclusive Canada.

I had the opportunity to meet some *Imagine a Canada* award winners from Prince Edward Island in 2017 (see Figure 6).

Figure 6

'Imagine a Canada' Visionaries and Artists (Charlottetown, PEI)

Behind our visionaries and artists, we have Lennox Island First Nation Chief Matilda Ramjattan, Lieutenant Governor Frank Lewis, Premier Wade McLaughlin, Abegweit First Nation Chief Brian Francis, and National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation Director Ry Moran. These individuals no longer occupy these positions; however, I do recall them as very dedicated individuals who advanced truth and reconciliation and continue to do so today. So, we find leaders and youth engaged in **identity seeking and making**, an important aspect of 'being' before action is taken, through this process of **reconciliation and nation-to-nation rebuilding**.

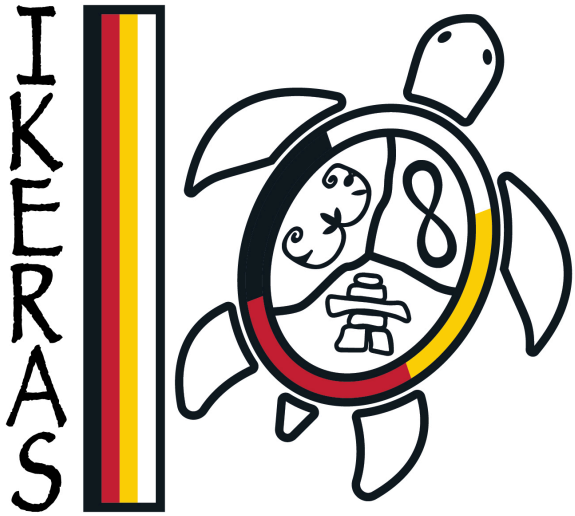
So, whether a youth, national, or provincially elected official, or First Nation, Inuit, or Métis leader, Canada has been trying to find its identity since its birth in 1867. This search also pre-dates Confederation, which we will examine later. We will now examine the next topic in this session more closely: *what is Turtle Island?*

What is Turtle Island?

There are a series of videos that best describe what **Turtle Island** is; however, there are two interesting pictorials we should look at as well. First, did you notice the IKERAS logo? What is it? Let's take a minute to review it together (see Figure 7).

Figure 7

IKERAS Faculty Logo



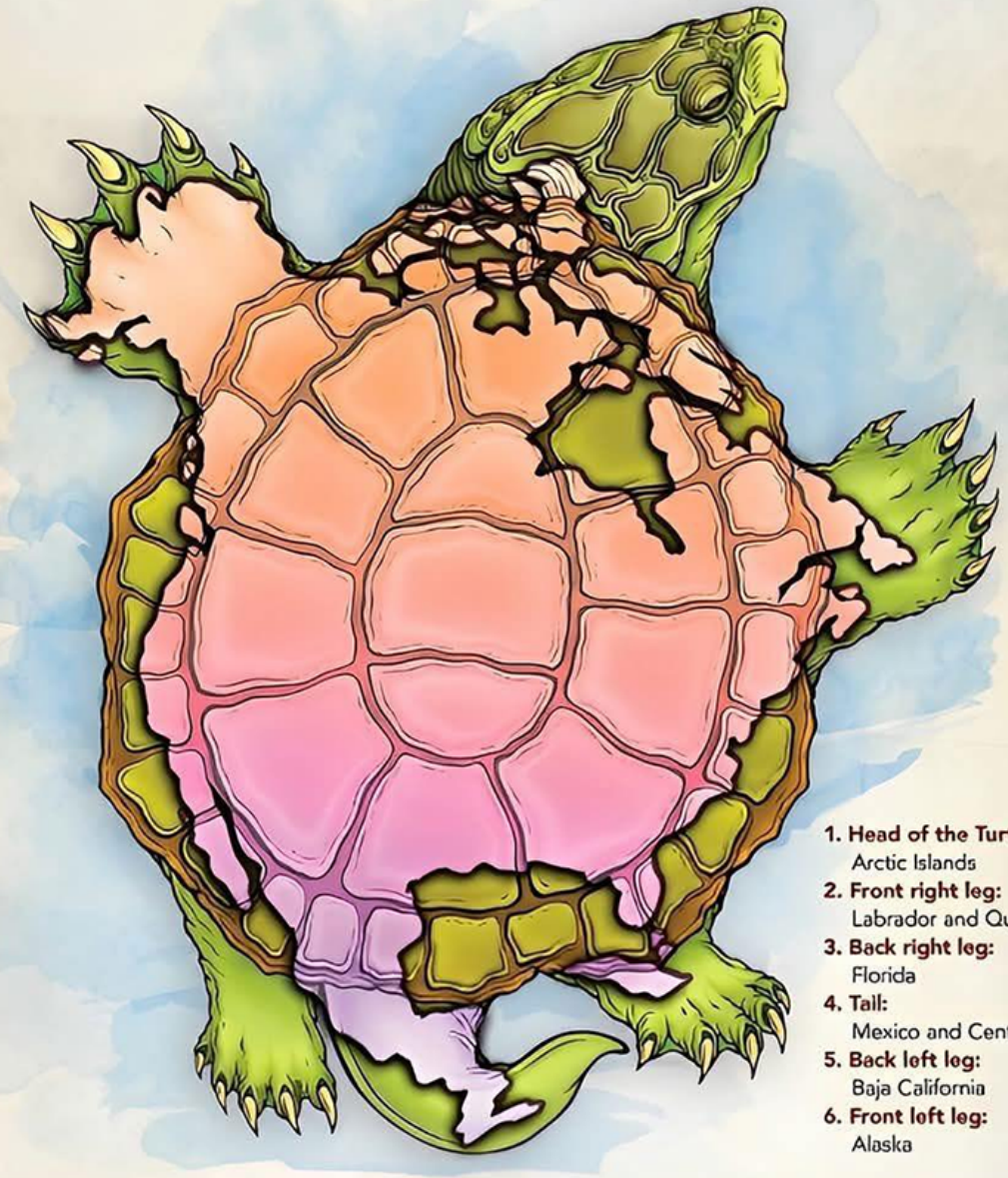
This logo was created by Dr. Corinne Chappell, Advisor to the Office of the Vice President, Academics and Research on Indigenous Initiatives. Recall that you were introduced to **the sacred creature, the turtle**, in the recounting of the Sky Woman Creation Story. Can you remember what was placed on the back of the turtle? What symbols are on the back of the IKERAS Faculty turtle? If you answered, *the three nations that comprise Indigenous peoples in Canada – First Nations (represented by the double-curve Mi'kmaq symbol), Métis Nation (represented by the infinity circle), and Inuit Nation (represented by the Inukshuk)*, then you are correct. IKERAS honours the knowledges from each of these distinct nations, and we are so fortunate to have each nation represented in our Faculty. You may wish to conduct additional research around the symbols themselves, as there is a much deeper meaning and a history to how these were created as well. What do you know about the teachings of the sacred four colours also represented on the turtle and the banner beside *IKERAS*? We may leave this for now; but, it will definitely surface in our learning journey.

The other picture is one that is getting closer to the meaning of Turtle Island (see Figure 8).

Figure 8

The Legend of Turtle Island Map

The Legend of Turtle Island



1. **Head of the Turtle:**
   Arctic Islands
2. **Front right leg:**
   Labrador and Quebec
3. **Back right leg:**
   Florida
4. **Tail:**
   Mexico and Central America
5. **Back left leg:**
   Baja California
6. **Front left leg:**
   Alaska

Long ago the world was covered with water, many creatures lived in the sea and the air above them. There came a time when Mother Earth was ready to give birth to her new children, but these new creatures were not water creatures and they needed somewhere new to live. The sea creature wanted to help Mother Earth. They had heard stories of earth far below the waters and the turtle agreed that if they could get some earth he would hold up the land for Mother Earth and her new children. Each animal took a turn trying to reach the bottom of the waters and each animal failed. Finally the brave little muskrat tried. He swam and swam until he saw the bottom, he knew that he couldn't make it there and back to the surface but he kept on swimming until he was able to grab some of the earth. The other animals waited and waited until they saw poor muskrat's body rise to the surface. All of the animals were sad but they saw that muskrat was able to do what none of they could; he had gathered some earth in his little paw. They took the earth and placed it on turtle's back and turtle began to grow and grow. Mother Earth now had a place for her children to live, she cast seed about and the land became beautiful and full of life. Turtle's back became a huge island that sits in the middle of the waters and is known today as America.

There are other maps that we will explore, and they are part of a PowerPoint presentation entitled *Turtle Island*

Maps. According to UPEI Indigenous scholar Dr. John Doran, former Faculty of Education professor, he stated, "Turtle Island is what we now call Canada, the US, and Mexico, including all the Islands in what we now call the Caribbean." Most of the literature respecting Turtle Island confirms this with the occasional variation. I've come across statements that only refer to North America. How far into Central America is also not totally defined? However, we know, and most important, that a significant portion of peoples live on Turtle Island, Indigenous and non-Indigenous.

According to Worldmeter, which tracks 'live' population data, there are over 1 billion people that live in North and Central America and the Caribbean. Of that number, according to several sources (Statistics Canada, United States Census Bureau, and The World Bank), they estimate that there are approximately 50 million peoples who self-identify as Indigenous in their jurisdiction. This equates to about 5% of the total population, approximately the same percentage number globally and in Canada. We will examine Indigenous and non-Indigenous relations in these countries more fully in later sessions. Recall the land and people acknowledgement that opened this textbook: can you remember whose land the University of Prince Edward Island is situated on? If you said, *the land of the Mi'kmaq (L'nu) peoples*, you are correct. We will now explore *who are the Mi'kmaq peoples?*

Who are the Mi'kmaq Peoples?

There are three prominent websites that one should visit to get a good sense of who the Mi'kmaq peoples of Epekwitk (Prince Edward Island) are; these include 1) L'nuey, t*he PEI Mi'kmaq Rights Initiative "that focuses on the advancement, implementation, and protection of the constitutionally entrenched rights of the Epekwitnewaq Mi'kmaq (Mi'kmaq of PEI). L'nuey means "belonging to the people" and it is the guiding principle behind the negotiations, consultation, and governance development work that will happen through the organization.";* 2) Lennox Island Mi'Kmaq First Nation, one of the two main First Nation communities located in the north-west part of PEI; and 3) Abegweit First Nation, the other large Mi'kmaq community, which is located in central PEI. An exploration of these sites will highlight important facts and information about the Mi'kmaq peoples. There are close to 1,500 Mi'kmaq peoples that call Epekwitk their home. One of the best ways to get to know the Mi'kmaq are to visit their communities when they have their annual Mawi'omi (gathering of the people), often referred to as a Powwow. I always try to make at least one of the communities' events each year. Here is an example of what you may see at a Mawi'omi (see Figure 9).

Figure 9

Charlottetown Mawi'omi hosted by Mi'kmaq Confederacy of PEI

We (UPEI's Mawi'omi Indigenous Student Centre and partners) have hosted numerous gatherings on the university's campus in past years. One of my true pleasures is taking photographs at these events. I am absolutely in awe of the **cultural performers, the regalia**, the atmosphere, all those who attend, and the opportunity to enjoy all that the Creator gives us, including food for the body, mind, and spirit (see Figure 10).

Figure 10

UPEI Cultural Connections Mawi'omi

It should be noted that, and this will add another layer of complexity with regards to Canada's policies respecting Indigenous peoples, many Mi'kmaq peoples live **off-reserve** as opposed to **on-reserve**. Reserves (now most often referred to the First Nation community by name — e.g.: Lennox Island) were specifically designated lands where legally registered Indians (First Nation peoples) were placed to make room for the growing number of settlers that came to Canada. These reserves are not the only locations that the Mi'kmaq reside; in actual fact, the Mi'kmaq reside in just about every community on PEI. These Mi'kmaq peoples are referred to as living 'off-reserve.'

One more complexity: there are close to 2,000 'off-reserve' Indigenous peoples living on Prince Edward Island, including the Mi'kmaq and countless other First Nation, Métis, and Inuit peoples. Many belong to the Native Council of Prince Edward Island, which "is a community of Indigenous people living off-reserve in traditional Mi'kmaq territory. NCPEI is the self-governing authority for all off-reserve Indigenous living on Epekwitk (PEI)." They also have their own community powwow, usually celebrated in August annually at Panmure Island (see Figure 11).

Figure 11

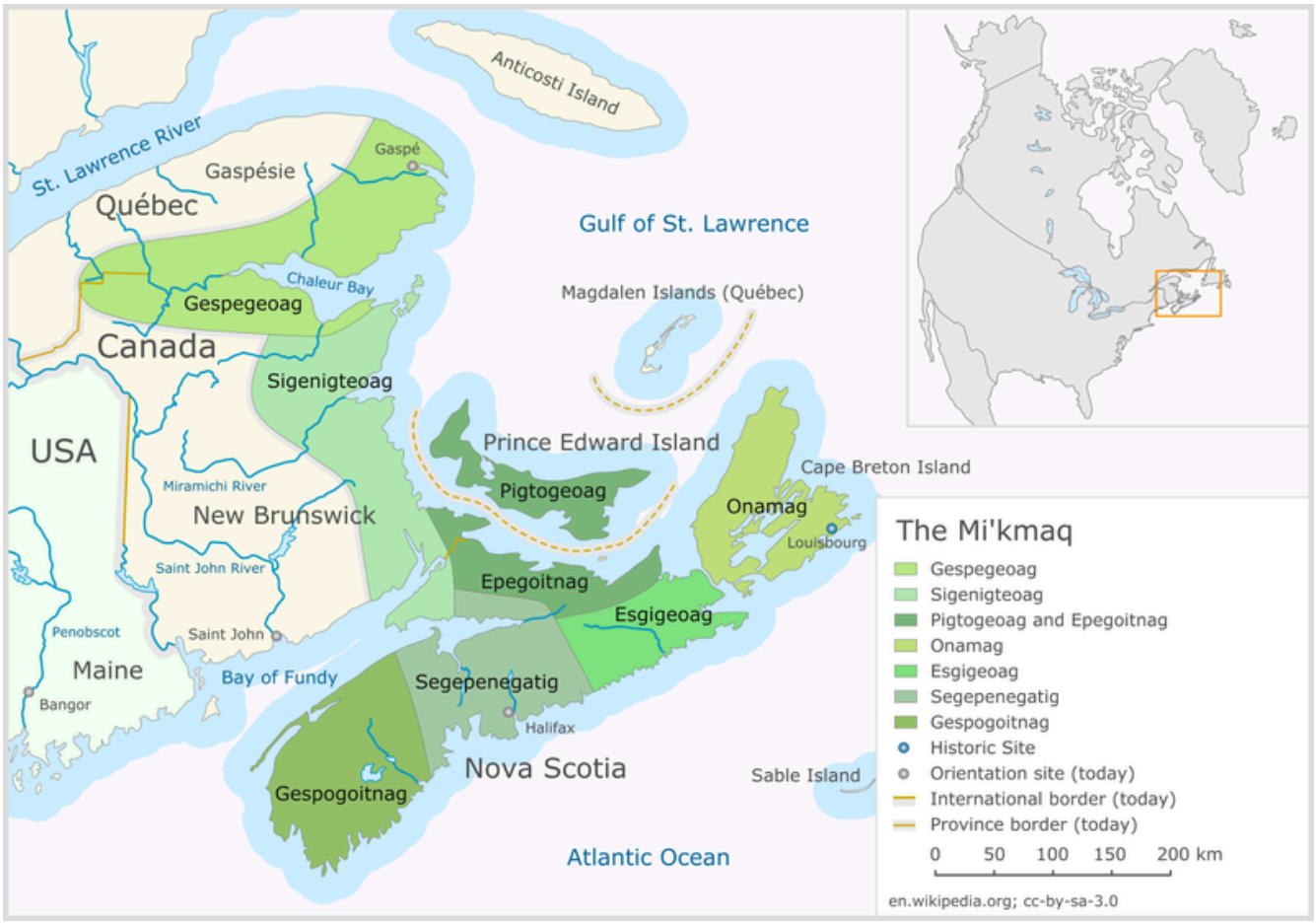
Young Cultural Perform at Panmure Island Powwow

The Panmure Island Powwow is the last gathering of the year. To me, it signals a time to enjoy the last bit of summer before school begins in September. I take time to express gratitude to the many individuals who work tirelessly and give their all to have such events happen. It's truly a cultural celebration and a time to see and speak to friends who you may not have seen all year.

Moving beyond Epekwitk, one of seven districts that comprise Mi'kmak'i, we find additional communities of Mi'kmaq peoples. The map below in Figure 12 shows the seven districts, the Canadian provinces where these traditional lands and peoples are situated, and its proximity to the Province of Quebec, Canada, and the state of Maine, United States, which both have Mi'kmaq peoples within their present-day jurisdictions.

Figure 12

Map of The Mi'kmaq



One of the more concise descriptions of the Mi'kmaq peoples and their lands is provided by The Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq in the 2007 publication titled, *Kekina'muek: Learning about the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia*. Figures 13 & 14 provide a very good overview of the Mi'kmaq peoples, past and in contemporary times.

Figure 13

Seven Districts and Traditional Territories of the Mi'kmaq

Chapter 2

Meet the Mi'kmaq of Yesterday and Today

As it Was ...

At the time of European contact (circa 1500), the Mi'kmaq occupied a large area known as Mi'kma'ki. This region included all of what is today Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, part of the Gaspé Peninsula, Newfoundland and most of New Brunswick.

Mi'kma'ki was divided into seven districts, each of which was led by a District Chief. This group of seven district chiefs made up the Mi'kmaw Grand Council, which governed over the Mi'kmaw people. There were many smaller communities in each district. These communities were led by a local chief.

The Mi'kmaw names for the seven districts came from the geographical characteristics of the areas:

- Unama'kik aq Ktaqmkuk ("foggy lands" and "land across the water")–Cape Breton Island and Newfoundland
- Epekwitk aq Piktuk ("lying in the water" and "the explosive place")–Pictou County and Prince Edward Island
- Eskikewa'kik ("skin-dresser's territory")–the area stretching from Guysborough to Halifax County
- Sipekni'katik ("wild potato area")–the counties of Halifax, Lunenburg, Kings, Hants and Colchester
- Kespukwik ("last flow")–the counties of Queens, Shelburne, Yarmouth, Digby and Annapolis
- Siknikt ("drainage area")–including Cumberland County in Nova Scotia, and the New Brunswick counties of Westmorland, Albert, Kent, Saint John, Kings and Queens
- Kespek ("last land")–the area north of the Richibucto, including its rivers and parts of Gaspé

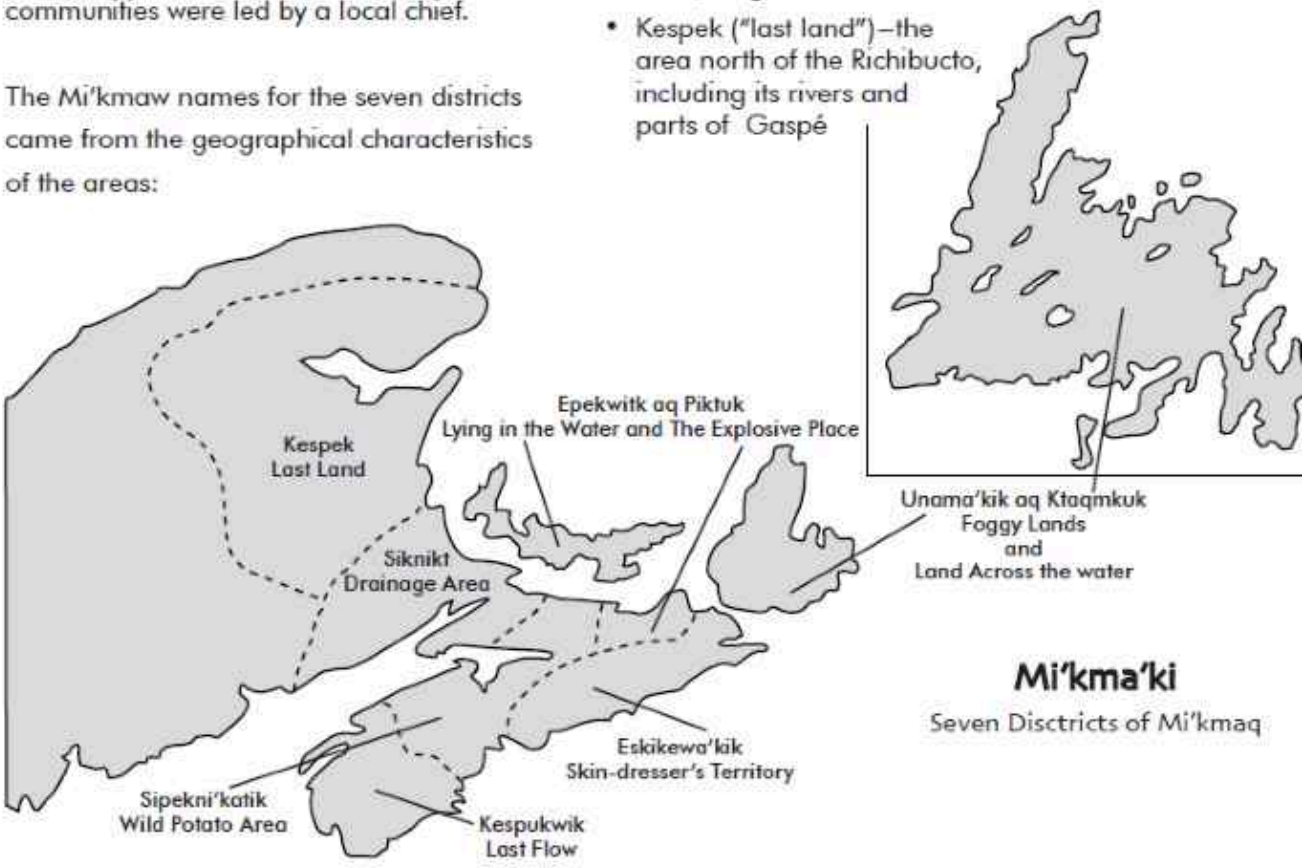


Figure 14

Contemporary Facts respecting the Mi'kmaq peoples

other parts of the animal such as claws, bones or antlers. Shells, quills and feathers were also used for decoration. The Mi'kmaq used natural dyes from plants and animals for color. They were a creative and artistic people.

As It Is ...

Today, in the 21st century, the Mi'kmaq live very differently. Divided by provincial borders, confined to smaller land areas and restricted by the Indian Act and federal laws, Mi'kmaw communities at first glance look like any small rural community in Canada.

In Nova Scotia, Mi'kmaq are divided into 13 Bands. Each band is led by a Chief and Council elected by community members. The 13 bands occupy specific areas of land known as Indian Reserves. These reserves are located throughout the province.

First Nation Communities in Nova Scotia

Hierarchy of Mi'kmaw Leadership Today

Government of Canada/Provincial Government

Chief and Council of the Mi'kmaw Community

Community Members

Hierarchy of Mi'kmaw Leadership Today

The Mi'kmaw hierarchy of today reflects the impact of the Europeans over the last 400 years. Rather than the Mi'kmaq themselves, the Canadian government is the highest authority in the hierarchy.

According to Statistics Canada (2006 census), there are 24,175 Aboriginal people living in Nova Scotia. Of these, 7978 are living in Reserve communities and 16,197 are living off-Reserve. The Mi'kmaq share the province with many other cultures. Aboriginal people make up 2.7 percent of Nova Scotia's population. Although the Mi'kmaq have a higher birthrate than other Nova Scotians, they also have a higher suicide rate and shorter life span.

Most Mi'kmaq in Nova Scotia go to public school because few communities have on-Reserve schools. Although staying in school is still a concern in many communities, more and more Mi'kmaq are graduating from high

Another important source is *Mi'kmawe'l Tan Teli-kina'muemk ~ Teaching About the Mi'kmaq* (Eds. Tim Bernard, Leah Morine Rosenmeier, and Sharon L. Farrell), published in 2015 by the The Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq, Truro, Nova Scotia. We will discuss the Mi'kmaq peoples further and also explore the writings of Mi'kmaq historians Daniel N. Paul (Indian Brook Indian Reserve No. 14, Nova Scotia) and John Joe Sark (Lennox Island First Nation, Prince Edward Island). Sadly, we lost both of these wonderful Elders — gifted Knowledge Keepers — in 2023. These Mi'kmaq historians spent a lifetime educating several generations about the lives of the Mi'kmaq peoples. They are truly missed. Given their contributions, and in honour of their teachings, it would be a good time to discuss the last topic in the chapter: *what are Indigenous teachings*?

What are Indigenous Teachings?

There are two websites that offer a wealth of information regarding Indigenous teachings. However, before visiting them, it would be good to define what Indigenous teachings are. Do you recall the earlier discussion on Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing? What did this refer to? If you said, *it's a particular worldview that Indigenous peoples embrace to make sense of the world and their enacted relationship with all living and non-living entities*, you are most correct. We will spend time in the next chapter diving deeper into this concept. However, the connection to Indigenous teachings is significant. Remember that it is the learning process that becomes the method by which we gain knowledge. We learn from those who have a mastery of specific knowledges. I've mentioned a few times that these individuals are our **Elders** and **Knowledge Keepers**. One site to which I referred to earlier was the Four Directions Teachings website, which profiles the work of such Elders as Mi'kmaq Elder Stephen Augustine and Cree Elder Mary Lee. Four other cultural teachers are highlighted, including Mohawk Elder Tom Porter, Ojibwe Elder Lillian Pitawanakwat, and Blackfoot Elders Dr. Reg Crowshoe and Geoff Crow Eagle.

Another website that I recently discovered is one created by the College of Alberta School Superintendents. In describing Indigenous teachings, the authors state,

"Indigenous teachings encompass ways of knowing, being, and doing that are actively practiced or learned. Teachings is the English word used to describe the process of sharing knowledge or original Indigenous methods of educating. Original practices and teachings are distinct to each diverse Indigenous group and continue despite centuries of legal and extralegal oppression and demonizing such as forced assimilation laws, policies, attitudes, beliefs and practices rooted in genocide that are inflicted on Indigenous Peoples. The more one understands Indigenous Peoples through our relationships with each other, language, and the land the more it is evident that Indigenous knowledge systems and methods of educating are rich and necessary. Lifelong learning is continual and includes many kinds of teachers that extend beyond the walls and halls of schools which includes learning from the land" (CASS, 2024).

As students who seek to expand their knowledges, professional skills, and competencies, Indigenous teachings can provide the ideal pathway of challenging the dominate culture worldview and mindset, which lacks an important feature — **relational accountability**. Cree researcher Shawn Wilson (2008) reminds us that "Indigenous epistemology (knowing) and ontology (being) is based upon relationships, and axiology (doing) is based on relational accountability." It is relational accountability, the central theme in the teachings, that allows us to survive and thrive. I will discuss this more in the next chapter. For now, know that it is the Elders and Knowledge Keepers, who pass on the traditional teachings. **Indigenous scholars,** as they are known, teach in our public K-12 schools and post-secondary institutions, and they pass on both traditional and contemporary knowledge (see Figure 15).

Figure 15

Teachings from Elder. UPEI IKE 2042: Indigenous Music, Film, and Art Class

Indigenous teachers, whether traditional or contemporary, present on any number of topics. For example, if one were to 'google' the term *Indigenous teachings*, here are just a few of the 'hits' on Indigenous teachings:

- values
- humility
- about trees
- sacred ceremonies
- water
- for a sustainable future
- protocols
- medicine wheel
- health

So, I will conclude this chapter by saying that you are now, no doubt, starting to see that the world of Indigenous peoples is unique. The next chapter will really highlight how distinct by examining their respective cultures. I highlight a number of important terms that will also be important in building your language and knowledge repertoire relating to Indigenous peoples.

Key Terms and Concepts from the Chapter

- Sky Woman Creation Story
- good and evil spirits
- 'helpers' and Elders-in-the-making
- asking, "How do I feel about this?"
- Canada and Kanata
- past, present, and future
- identity seeking and making
- reconciliation and nation-to-nation rebuilding
- the sacred creature, the turtle
- Turtle Island
- Elders and Knowledge Keepers
- cultural performers, the regalia
- off-reserve/on-reserve
- relational accountability
- Indigenous scholars

Important Readings/Viewings for Next Class

1. Chapter 3: *Indigenous Ways of Knowing (pp. 44-59)* in **Frideres**, J. S. (2020). Indigenous peoples in the twenty-first century. Oxford University Press.
2. Chapter 1: *Just Don't Call Us Late for Supper: Names for Indigenous Peoples (pp. 7-13) in* **Vowel**, C. (2016). Indigenous writes: a guide to First Nations, Metis, & Inuit issues in Canada. Portage & Main Press.

Special Topics

- Life in the Beginning – Elder Stephen Augustine (Start viewing at 12:30 to 30:00 minutes)

Cultural Competency Tutorials

- How to talk about Indigenous people

References

Wagamese, R. (2016). Embers: One Ojibway's Meditations. D & M Publishers.

Chapter 3: Cultural Practices ~ Indigenous Ways of Knowing, Being, and Doing ~ Terms, Identity and Meaning

Introduction

I have been teaching Indigenous courses at the post-secondary level since 2004. Prior to that, I taught at Saint Thomas University in New Brunswick for five years (1995-2000), and I started at UPEI in 2002. While at Saint Thomas University with the Department of Sociology, I taught *Introduction to Sociology* and *Social Problems I* & *II*. As a class project in 1997 for *Social Problems*, we invited the **National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations**, Ovide Mercredi, to give a guest lecture. He accepted our invitation to the event, which was open to the public as well. It quickly turned into a very special academic address with well over 300 people attending, including many First Nation peoples from one of the five communities and my class of about 20 students. Chief Ovide Mercredi began by saying, "I have been invited here to talk about social problems. I think the official title of the course is *Social Problems I,* which I know something about, given my role; but, let's talk about *Social Problems II* if you don't mind."

The National Chief spoke for three hours without pause, and he provided everyone with a most in-depth and profound education respecting Indigenous peoples and the 'Crown.' There was no topic not covered; Chief Mercredi spoke about cultural practices, ways of knowing, being, and doing, and the importance of land as the way forward for Indigenous peoples and Canada as a country. He stressed that this latter issue was behind the social problems that plagued the First peoples of this land since signing the 'Treaties.' This was my introduction to Indigenous education and a national Indigenous leader of such intelligence, presence, and reconciliatory vision (see Figure 16).

Figure 16

National Chief Ovide Mercredi, Special Academic Address, Chatham, NB (1997)

There have been four National Presidents with the **National Indian Brotherhood:**

1968–1970: Walter Dieter;
1970–1976: George Manuel;
1976-1980: Noel Starblanket;
1980-1982: Delbert Riley

And there have been twelve National Chiefs with the **Assembly of First Nations:**

1982-1985: David Ahenakew;
1985-1991: Georges Erasmus;
1991-1997: Ovide Mercredi;
1997-2000: Phil Fontaine;
2000-2003: Matthew Coon Come;
2003-2009: Phil Fontaine;
2009-2014: Shawn Atleo;
2014: Ghislain Picard (interim);
2014-2021: Perry Bellegarde;
2021-2023: RoseAnne Archibald;
2023: Joanna Bernard (interim);
2023-present: Cindy Woodhouse

Without going into exhaustive detail regarding their respective agendas, it is safe to say that greater access to land and land claims have been high on each of their priorities as they advocate for the **630 First Nations in Canada** (The Canadian Encyclopedia, 2023). As Wab Kinew, now Premier of the Province of Manitoba, wrote in the Huffington Post, "The Assembly, and its forerunner the National Indian Brotherhood, has been instrumental in seeking **justice for Residential School Survivors** and **fighting for Aboriginal and Treaty Rights**. That is not a legacy to be discarded" (Kinew, 2014).

I have taught many Indigenous courses. In 2004, I began teaching a special topics course entitled *SAN 359: Contemporary Aboriginal Issues and Perspective*s during the summer session until 2013. Students recommended that the course be available during the regular academic calendar year so that it could reach as many students as possible. In January 2015, following full Departmental and Faculty of Arts support, I began teaching *SAN 2220: Aboriginal Peoples in Canada*, and I continue to teach this foundational area course for the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, primarily in the fall semester. Since the release of the *TRC Final Report and Calls to Action* in 2015, I have introduced many Indigenous courses, including *IKE 1040: Indigenous Teachings,* after our Faculty was created. My introductory and upper-level Indigenous courses contribute to the on-going work of **reconciliation, decolonization, and Indigenizing the Academy (University)** — in full support of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's *Calls to Action*.

I provide this context as a way to introduce my academic work; however, it is my public service work with Correctional Services Canada that helped me better understand Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing. It was this work that brought me in direct contact with many prominent Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers who taught me about the ways of Indigenous peoples, and in particular, **healing work**. These Elders and Knowledge Keepers were from many diverse Indigenous communities across Canada: some were distinguished Indigenous scholars themselves who successfully navigated **two worlds — the Western dominant society world** and **the Indigenous world**. I like to honour these Elders and do so via a presentation I titled *Elders I Have Known,* which was also a photography installation I exhibited at 'the wall,' University of Prince Edward Island in 2015 (see Figure 17).

Figure 17

'Elders I Have Known' exhibit at 'the wall,' University of PEI (2015)

I have mentioned throughout the opening chapters that it is our **Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and Indigenous scholars who pass on key knowledges**. Since I began teaching Indigenous content in 2004, I have relied on one Indigenous author more than any other: **Dr. James S. Frideres, Professor Emeritus of Sociology, University of Calgary.** Dr. Frideres "grew up on the Fort Peck Reservation in Montana. He received his BSc degree from Montana State University. He then attended Washington State University where he obtained his MA and PhD in Sociology and Social Psychology, going on to teach at the University of Manitoba from 1969-1971 before moving to the University of Calgary. At Calgary, he has held a number of senior administrative positions. He has also been a visiting professor at a number of universities such as McQuarrie University, Dalhousie University, University of Hawaii (Manoa) and Hanoi University" (Working Better Together: A Conference on Indigenous Research Ethics, 2015).

I first started using his 2001 co-authored text, *Aboriginal Peoples in Canada*, written by himself and René Gadacz. If you would like to know more about his work, I would suggest listening to an interview he gave in 2013 that profiles the Oxford University Press release titled *First Nations in the Twenty-First Century*. Eventually, this text was transformed into *Indigenous Peoples in the Twenty-First Century*, which I continue to use primarily in my 2000-level course (*Indigenous Peoples in Canada*). I reviewed the manuscript for both, his 3rd (2020) and 4th (2024) edition textbook.

I introduce you to the work of Dr. Frideres as I include two readings for this book: the first reading is his chapter titled *Indigenous Ways of Knowing*; the second reading will be found in next chapter, which looks at the history

of Canada in relation to Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. His written work continues to be a source of significant knowledge for many audiences, including our students. I now turn to the main topics of this chapter.

Topics at a Glance

- Cultural Practices and Worldviews
- Indigenous Ways of Knowing
- Blending Western and Indigenous Knowledges
- Terms, Identity, and Meaning

Let us now delve into Indigenous peoples' cultural practices and worldviews.

Cultural Practices and Worldviews

I want to begin by saying that Indigenous peoples are not a homogeneous people. You will have already noted that 'people' is almost always written in its plural form, in recognition of the diverse nature of Indigenous peoples in Canada and across Turtle Island. This, therefore, means that for every distinct people or cultural group, there is a corresponding unique culture and its related practices. In this regard, **Indigenous peoples are a heterogeneous population**.

I think that a quick tour of the Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada (Canadian Geographic, 2018) will immediately reveal the distinct nature of the **three main cultural groups of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit that comprise Indigenous peoples in Canada**. This source (physical copy, located at the Robertson Library) will give you an excellent overview of all aspects of these cultures and practices, including such aspects as connection to the land, arts and culture, traditional ways, ceremonial spaces, language, and so forth. Former National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), Harry Bellegarde, who provided the Introduction to the Atlas, writes,

"**Culture is not static**, and our challenge is to navigate our worlds in ways that **respect and honour traditions** but also make room for **growth and evolution**. The **balance of blending modern and traditional worldviews** is reflected in a variety of captivating stories that include Dene music and drumming and the traditional Haudenosaunee game of lacrosse. We also provide a glimpse into the challenges of maintaining our **connections to the land and culture** as part of the urban experience in Treaty 1 territory" (Canadian Geographic, 2018).

I will then say that there is no way in one chapter, one session, or one course that anyone will master or even remember all of the information as it relates to cultural practices or worldviews; however, since we have to start somewhere, I begin with several 'warm-up' videos. They are:

Indigenous Culture | Spectacular NWT, Canada

Canada History Week 2021 – Indigenous Culture

Learning Indigenous Culture in Canada

I welcome you to explore the following videos that profile Indigenous peoples in the United States. The first video is short, but the second is much longer. Regardless, they are exceptionally well done.

A Brief But Spectacular take on Indigenous cultures and struggles (United States)

Against the Current | A Short Documentary About the Culture of Indigenous People (United States)

You will learn much more about Indigenous peoples and their respective cultures throughout this course, as this is only the beginning. Let us now examine another aspect of Indigenous peoples and their ways of knowing.

Indigenous Ways of Knowing

You will have read James Frideres' chapter on Indigenous ways of knowing by now. Although there is a significant amount of information respecting the **Western ways of knowing** — primarily founded in the **scientific method** — and that scientific truths and theories are outside the knower, there is a commitment, rightly or wrongly, to **empirical evidence**, a **necessity for reductionism**, **adherence to the laws of cause and effect**, the **subservience of nature** where nature is assumed to be capable of **manipulation by humans**, and a **commitment to a realistic or "objective" quantifying view** (Frideres, 2020, pp. 44-59).

What is it about? What are the main takeaways? Did any of this come as a surprise? How do you relate to the worldviews as summarized from the reading? See below:

- Comprised of a **complex set of technologies** sustained by Indigenous people
- Embedded in the **accumulative experiences and teachings** of the people
- Based on people's skills and adaptable to problem-solving and change over time
- Features unique, internal consistency and postulates
- Knowledge pertains to **particular people and a territory**
- Indigenous ontology is distinct with equally distinct epistemological validation of the knowledge found in the culture
- Indigenous knowledge is **subjective experience and forms the basis of an objective explanation of the world**
- **All animate and inanimate beings have a life force and a spirit**, which are an essential part of balance
- Indigenous ways of knowing are based on the **local environment**
- **Language, space, and the relationship** evolve over time to reflect interactions with the environment
- **The Land is recognized as the source of life**
- **Severing cultural connections also destroys** the meaning of the behaviour and the understanding of the context
- The **ceremonial context is essential** to accessing or knowing Indigenous ways of being
- **Everything is animate** and has a spirit in the Indigenous worldviews
- **All things are in relationship**
- An ontological belief is that people travel through life in a relational existence, focusing on knowledge, animate and inanimate objects, participating fully and responsibly in relationships which are more important than reality
- When a person comes into a relationship with certain knowledge, **he or she must assume responsibility for it**
- **Ceremony** is the one way in which the relationship is carried out with respect
- To live properly, one must stay in **harmony and balance with nature** for the sake of the community's survival

- **Inner space** is the reality of being in harmony with the self and the environment; knowing one's place in the universe
- **All the elements of the universe are in balance:** balance and connectedness give meaning to existence
- Indigenous ways of knowing are grounded in the idea that a **continuum of change and events take place in cyclical fashion**
- This idea has become the **foundation of the philosophy strategy for surviving and Indigenous ways of knowing**
- We are **connected to the world around us with the animals, plants, mother earth, and the cosmos**
- The **key to Indigenous knowledge** is **to understand change as a whole**
- **Indigenous culture** is rooted in the place, and the nature of the place is embedded in their language
- **Language allows the physical, cognitive, and emotional orientation of a people**
- **Language provides an intergenerational map of the world**

On Elders, Frideres reminds us that:

- An Elder is someone who has a deep understanding of Indigenous ways of knowing and understands the spirituality that embodies all their actions
- Elders understand the importance of respecting the natural world
- Elders share the teachings through ceremonies, e.g.: sweat lodges, healing circles
- Elders **teach others about the culture and traditional ways, vision of life, and validated knowledge within their local environment**

Frideres sums up the chapter this way:

- Indigenous people must create a different equilibrium that balances their beliefs in creation and ceremony
- Their axioms and postulates are different from the Western worldviews
- Indigenous knowledge is based on relational reality
- The Indigenous way of knowing is thousands of years old
- Indigenous ways of knowing increases awareness and a better understanding of the culture
- **It is being accountable to your relations**

After reading Frideres, were you somewhat conflicted? Were you trying to gauge which paradigm or worldview (Western or Indigenous) is correct or had more explanatory power than the other? What about other world peoples and their respective worldviews? Does one worldview have to be dominant and/or adopted as the only way of knowing, being, and doing? Maybe we need to explore this further in the next section.

Blending Western and Indigenous Knowledges

There is a concept that I was introduced to when I was doing my Correctional Services Canada work, as it related to creating a substance abuse treatment program for federally-incarcerated Indigenous men. I would like to discuss the concept of **"Using Medicines on Both Sides of the River**," coined by my mentor, Dr. Joseph Couture (see Figure 18).

Figure 18

Dr. Joesph Couture, Willow Cree Healing Lodge, SK (2003)

Dr. Joseph Couture, Maskwacis (Hobbema) First Nation, Alberta, was the First Indigenous recipient of a Ph.D. in Psychology in Canada. Dr. Joe, as he was known, was a well-known author, healer, academic (former Chairperson at Trent University's Department of Indigenous Studies), and the *National Aboriginal Achievement Award Recipient in Health* in 2007. He passed to the spirit world shortly after having received this national award, and after I dedicated the **Aboriginal Offender Substance Abuse Program** (AOSAP) to him and all the Elders who helped me bring this important national work of healing to fruition. I was honoured to know him, and he was one of the many *Elders I Have Known*. Sometimes I take a minute to listen to him in my heart and mind — and occasionally his words, which were recorded by Indspire for the Award ceremony.

We will look at his legacy later in this textbook, as I had the opportunity to put 'Using Medicines on Both Sides of the River' into practice.

In Mi'kmak'i, we have another concept that has been frequently used, and it has gained national and international recognition. The term ***"Etuaptmumk — Two-Eyed Seeing"*** was coined by Dr. and Elder Albert Marshall; it is a term similar to that expressed by Dr. Joe. I provide several links below where you can learn more about "Two-Eyed Seeing". The first is an interview with Dr. Albert Marshall; the others allow you to explore other aspects of the concept. Dr. Marshall's work at the Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources, Cape Breton University, has been highly acknowledged as advancing Indigenous ways of knowing in the scientific domains of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM), and especially attracting Indigenous students' enrolment in these fields.

Albert Marshall Interview with Chris Beckett (2018)

Albert Marshall | Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources

Etuaptmumk: Two-Eyed Seeing | Rebecca Thomas | TEDxNSCCWaterfront

I trust that you have a good sense of the importance of blending, integrating, and using multiple perspectives. To coin the *Truth and Reconciliation of Canada*, it's about 'working together.' We shouldn't have to be reminded of this, but we occasionally do. The last section in this chapter examines terms, identity, and meaning.

Terms, Identity, and Meaning

Like most of the content in this course, there is so much information to review and consider. You will have already read "Chapter 1: Just Don't Call Us Late for Supper" (pp. 7-13) from Chelsea Vowel's 2016 *Indigenous Writes: A Guide to First Nations, Metis, and Inuit Issues in Canada*. If you wish to hear more about Chelsea Vowel and how she developed her text, you can listen to an audio recording of her at Indigenous Writes: One

Indigenous Person's Journey. There are many takeaways from her easy-to-follow offering: what were they? Navigating terms, examining issues of identity, and understanding the meaning(s) behind words, concepts, and the language, and thinking of Indigenous peoples are monumental. Again, it's not an easy task, but there are many resources from which to make sense of all of this.

You may recall, I provided a link to access the following document: UBC's Indigenous Peoples: Language Guidelines (2024). This 19-page document is exceptionally well done, very thorough, and should give you some important information respecting terms and terminology. There are other links I provide below, which can be accessed as well.

What does it mean to be Indigenous? | National Indigenous Peoples Day (2022)

What does being Indigenous mean?

I will introduce my own story of being Indigenous during the lecture portion of the course. It's from that which I hope you will start to make connections about terms, identity, and meaning. Below, you will find the key terms and concepts from the chapter.

Key Terms and Concepts from the Chapter

- Assembly of First Nations
- National Indian Brotherhood
- reconciliation, decolonization, and Indigenizing the academy (university)
- two worlds — the Western dominant society world and the Indigenous world
- Elders, Knowledge Keepers, Indigenous Scholars
- the work of Dr. James S. Frideres
- Indigenous and Western ways of knowing
- "Using Medicines on Both Sides of the River"
- "Etuaptmumk — Two-Eyed Seeing"
- navigating terms
- examining issues of identity
- understanding the meaning(s) behind words, concepts, and the language

Important Readings/Viewings for Next Class

1. *Chapter 1: Knowing Your History* (pp. 1-24) in **Frideres**, J. S. (2020). Indigenous peoples in the twenty-first century. Oxford University Press.
2. *Chapter 2: Mi'kmaq Social Values and Economy* (pp. 23-43) in **Paul**, D. N. (2000). We were not the savages: A Mi'kmaq perspective on the collision between European and Native American

civilizations. Halifax, NS: Fernwood.

Special Topics

- Indigenous Ways of Knowing & Doing Across the Academy

Cultural Competency Tutorials

- Our 7 Ojibway Teachings
- Interviewing Elders – National Aboriginal Health Organization, UVic, 2013

Chapter 4: History of Indigenous Peoples in Canada, United States, Mexico, and the Carribean

Introduction

As I previously stated, I am not a historian; however, I do appreciate learning about the historical accounts of nation-states. I find myself drawn to history to gain a deeper insight into peoples, both collectively as a society and individually.

Over the span of five decades, I have visited and worked in the far reaches of Turtle Island. These locations have included Cambridge Bay, Victoria Island in the Kitikmeot Region of Nunavut (formerly Northwest Territories); Iqaluit, capital of Nunavut, Coast Salish Territories, British Columbia (representing the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh peoples); Siksikaitsitapi (Blackfoot Confederacy) of Siksika Nation, Alberta; Beardy's and Okemasis' Cree Nation, Saskatchewan; St. Peters Reserve and Peguis First Nation, Manitoba; Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory, Bay of Quinte, Ontario; Waseskun Healing Centre, St. Alphonse Rodriguez, Quebec; and countless First Nation communities in Wolastoqey and Mi'kmak'i.

My travels have also included places in the southwest United States (lands of the Navajo Nation), western Mexico (lands of the Aztatlán and Huicholes Nations), southeast Mexico (lands of the Yucatec, Mopan, and Q'eqchi' Maya Nations), and Cuba and Dominican Republic (lands of the Taínos, the Ciboneys, and the Guanajatabeye Nations). I only state this because, in my mind, understanding Indigenous peoples' lives, cultures, and histories is easier if one can stand on the lands on which these peoples stand, and where their ancestors stood in their time. I honour all those who have contributed to where we are today. Figure 19 presents a cultural performer on the Pacific coast of Mexico in Puerto Varatta in Jalisco state.

Figure 19

Cultural performer on Pacific coast of Mexico

I have been fascinated by the evolutionary advances of humanity; and I have been even more intrigued by how culture continues to be the single most powerful agent to bind peoples together, educate future generations, solve highly complex problems, and provide meaning to our lives. While equally absorbed in tracing the political, economic, and social trajectories of nations, in teaching the history of Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island (Canada, United States, Mexico, and the Caribbean), it has become evident that history has dramatically shaped the lives of Indigenous peoples in these territories.

While it may seem like a straight-forward story of colonizing nations overpowering First peoples for their own benefit, it is far from that. It is messy, complicated, disturbing, and for all intents and purposes, a highly charged matter. Many past accounts, when written from a dominant culture perspective, failed to describe the full nature of what occurred.

I am not a historian, nor would I do a good job in summarizing all the key milestones in Canadian history as it pertains to Indigenous and non-Indigenous relations. With that said, this is where I will highlight several readings and videos for viewing so that you will have sufficient knowledge about these historical relations. James S. Frideres, Professor Emeritus of Sociology at the University of Calgary, has published countless texts relating to Indigenous peoples in Canada. His chapter, "Knowing Your History," in the third edition *Indigenous Peoples in the Twenty-First Century* (2020) is the most concise accounting of the 500-year relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada. Before examining this account, therefore, I will simply facilitate a learning pathway based on writings and perspectives that I feel should provide a clearer picture of what this history entails — including all the complexities, realities, and relational impacts.

Topics at a Glance

- History of Canada
- History of Indigenous Peoples in Canada, United States, Mexico, and the Caribbean
- James Frideres and his Historical Review: Chapter 1: "Knowing Your History" in *Indigenous Peoples in the 21st Century*
- Five Colonizing Nations: Britain, France, Portugal, Netherlands, and Spain
- Examples of Mainstream Rewriting of History

To begin this learning pathway, let us examine some historical accounts with a critical lens. I trust that this course will contribute to broader academic outcomes than just certain knowledge respecting Indigenous and non-Indigenous relations. I hope one outcome, principally skills-based, will be for you to 1) gain critical thinking skills; 2) identify and understand potential biases about identities and groups of people, including Indigenous peoples; and 3) effectively engage with multiple cultural groups (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit) to the extent of gaining certain cultural competencies that one can utilize in a future career.

History of Canada

You will find identified some prominent views about Canada in some links below. I would like to know if these are correct or not? Please assess each, taking careful note of what is presented, and be able to respond if it is correct or not. If not, why?

Discover Canada – Canada's History (Government of Canada)

Early History of Canada

History of Prince Edward Island

The Writing of History

What did you discover? What questions were on the top of your mind when reviewing these sites? Did you consider applying the typical five W questions:

- **W**ho prepared this?
- **W**hen was it created?
- **W**here was it created?
- **W**hat was stated?
- **W**hy was it created in the manner it was?
- And **how** (a sixth W question) was it created?

You will recall that Frideres, in his chapter titled "Knowing Your History," emphases the importance of 'who writes history.' More directly, Frideres (2020) stated,

"In the case of Canada's Indigenous peoples, their written histories for much of the past 500 years can hardly be called "theirs" because they were produced by non-Indigenous people" (p. 4).

He further stated,

"Individuals writing a history will find that it is difficult to represent a culture outside of their own cultural bias. In the end, such restrictions will bear heavily on your reconstructed history, and even with the best of intentions it is likely you will get some things wrong" (p. 5).

Let us examine additional sites of writings about Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island.

History of Indigenous Peoples in Canada, United States, Mexico, and the Caribbean

Using the same critical lens, let us see if we are uncovering anything different. In your mind, are these correct or not? Please assess each and be able to respond if 1) they're correct or not; and 2) why?

2 Minute History Lesson

Native America: A Documentary Exploring the World of America's First Peoples (Trailer)

Native Tongues Struggle to Stay Alive

Indigenous peoples in the Caribbean

Effects of European colonialism in the Caribbean | Britannica

Even if you performed a cursory examination, as some of the material is lengthy, what was uncovered? Are you feeling more confident on the historical accounting and writings? And if so, why?

Before entering a broader discussion of **colonialism** across **Turtle Island**, let's take some time to review the reading of Indigenous scholar, James Frideres, in his chapter titled "Knowing Your History," which examines the history of Canada in relation to Indigenous peoples.

James Frideres and his Historical Review: Chapter 1: "Knowing Your History" in *Indigenous Peoples in the 21st Century*

I will highlight the author's main points in bullet form under the following the main headings as they appear in his textbook.

Introduction

- Historical foundation of Canada's policy and framework regarding Indigenous peoples (Searle & Mulholland, 2018): **denial of Indigenous sovereignty** + imposition of **patriarchal** European sovereignty
- Two ways to approach this injustice are to: help the victim + convince ourselves that no injustice occurred
- Institutions reinforce built-in perspectives of "the way things are," which deflate the "other"
- Settlers have **settler imaginary:** it represents their views of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis. This settler imaginary is a set of assumptions that allow us to carry out collective practices

Privilege and Responsibility

- **Privilege** is an institutional (not personal) set of benefits granted to some people who dominate powerful positions in our institutions
- **White privilege** is the ability to make decisions for all without having to take others into consideration
- White elite sets standards for all, not maliciously, but because it was their "destiny"; e.g. British North America Act (1867)

Most Canadians Today

- Distance themselves from the responsibilities of previous generations
- Argue that Indigenous are an uncaused tragedy; refute the relationship of whiteness and Indigeneity
- Argue that people today cannot be responsible for actions in the past
- Are so disconnected with the past that they have no feeling of responsibility and reject seeing themselves as the benefactors

Key Points from the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission* (TRC, 2015)

- Indigenous people argue that norms of fair treatment and equality of opportunity are not met
- Canadians are reluctant to see any "bias" within social structures; they see the status quo as legitimate
- Most Canadians reject the references to genocide (physical, social, and cultural); it's considered too harsh and that actions taken were in the sense of righteousness and justified
- Individuals who created laws and policies rarely showed guilt or remorse; settlers did not view the actions as criminal
- **Dominant** group engaged in the erasure of truths, removal of knowledge to legitimatize Western ideology and history, which continues to hide Western imperialism while simultaneously maintaining superiority over Indigenous people

Who Writes History?

- Historical content keeps points of view or documents of events in some form to be transmitted to the next generation
- The written history of First Nations, for the most part, has not been written by them. So, does it capture the essence of Indigenous life accurately?
- Between 1850–1950, most items made by Indigenous people would be owned by others
- Literature homogenizes the Indigenous Nations under the category of "Indian"
- Writing reflects the cultural ethos and perspective of the writer(s)
- How accurate would your history be if it were written by people from another culture?

Indigenous History

- The view that Indigenous people did not contribute to Canada's history was written into Canadian texts by elites who benefitted by representing the Indigenous people in a negative light

Primary Views:

- Indigenous peoples did not contribute to Canada's development
- They have lost cultural vibrancy
- They are headed for extinction

- Covered up the physical, psychological, and cultural violence, reduced to wardship, neo-liberal philosophy
- Forgotten are Indigenous technologies, social organization, ecological knowledge, and the direct assistance and adaptation to the settler people

First Nations and Inuit People Before 1500

- An estimated 500,000 Indigenous people inhabited what is now Canada
- Semi-nomadic and sedentary by Great Lakes and West Coast, kinship units, extended family and clans
- Little separation of social, economic, and spiritual dimensions of people's lives
- Some societies were **matrilineal** and inclusive of women in the political sphere, while others viewed **women as sacred**
- Life organized around annual cycles
- Sense of family and community
- Pre-contact conflict focused on control over trade routes, obtaining slaves, and political organization and control
- Across Canada, there are seven major cultural areas with over 50 languages in 12 language groups, each with their own political and social structure tied to the ecological niche in which they lived

Contact and European Settlement

- About 1000 BC, vikings sailed across the Atlantic and settled for several years
- **Jacques Cartier, 1534** — near present-day Quebec City: returned to France with two sons of Donnacona
- Samuel de Champlain, 1603 — encountered Inuu, Kanienkehaka: founded Quebec City in 1608
- Brought with them the concept of the patriarchal family and the idea that the white man's burden was to "civilize" and reorganize based on their concepts
- Brought about the **displacement** of women's roles in government and leadership and reorganized the family
- Men were brought into line with a patrilineal system using punitive measures against the women
- **1876 *Indian Act*** cemented the new social system dispossessing women from all power, denied votes, and forced into the reshaped version of family
- Interface with Indigenous people can be described in phases

Phase 1 (1610–1680)

- French and English made inroads with considerable conflict
- First Nations are allies
- First Nations and Inuit were essential to settler survival; taught settlers about land and survival about foods, clothing to wear, travel, and routes
- Symbiotic relationship
- Europeans supplies metal tools, firearms, and other material objects

Phase 2 (1680–1815)

- **Royal Proclamation, 1763** — recognized Indigenous interest and common use of ancestral lands
- **Resistance** by First Nations Iroquois (1609–1701), Fox (1710–38), and Mi'kmaq (1613–1761) wars
- **Peace and Friendship Treaties**
- First Nations drawn deeper into economy of the settlers through trade
- Become **dependent** on trade goods
- Devastation by diseases began to have an impact

- Pre-contact First Nations numbers reduced to barely 100,000 by the end of the 19th century
- French fur trade in its infancy was controlled by the Compagnie des Indes occidentals
- Company first dealt with fur and moose hide trade, then changed to timber, minerals, and food stuffs
- Fur trade was profitable and allowed the French to control the settlers
- Local animal populations declined
- 1860, Hudson Bay Company established
- Defeat of French (1759) and Montreal (1760) and Treaty of Paris (1763)
- War of 1812: First Nations as allies; promises made are ignored; First Nations now viewed as impediments to progress

Phase 3 (1815–1860)

- Colonization seriously impacts the way of life for First Nations
- Settlement, disease, First Nations doomed to extinction
- Beothuk did become extinct; last known died in 1829
- First Nations numbers decline
- Epidemics decimate First Nations populations: no resistance to typhoid, smallpox, common maladies

Phase 4 (1860–1920)

- Canada moved the jurisdiction of First Nations from military to civil society
- Provided some degree of self government with limited power
- Creation of the reserves
- ***Indian Act* established in 1876**
- Canadian government denies citizenship rights to First Nations people, including the right to vote
- **Métis and Inuit are not recognized under the *Indian Act* at the time**
- Assumption that First Nations are incapable of making adult decisions and need special protection of the Crown
- Creation of residential schools
- Enfranchisement legislation put into place
- Riel Resistance: reminded the government that Indigenous people still pose a threat and needed to be extinguished forever; made subservient or dependent (embedded link that describes a significant part of Canadian history and the **Métis Peoples in Canada**)
- By 1867, more than 100 treaties and land surrenders negotiated; today there are more then 500
- 1850–1923, 66 treaties were negotiated and signed between the government and First Nations people to extinguish First Nations and Métis land rights for expansion of the railway and settlement
- 1850 Robinson Huron (Ontario) treaties became the template for future treaties; changes to the template only occurred if more concessions were made by the First Nations
- Numbered treaties open the west; notable concession of the Medicine Chest in Number 6
- Implementation of treaty agreements were not fulfilled and if challenged by First Nations, they would be threatened or ignored or defrauded
- Results in Ottawa taking over lands and natural resources in less then a century
- Once treaties were signed, the government deemed their responsibility resolved; period of benign neglect
- Widespread settlement
- Government dominates over the First Nations, seen as superior race; manifest destiny added to the belief of superiority
- If First Nations resisted, starvation policies would ensure the First Nations capitulated
- Over time, lands would be removed from reserves as cut-off lands and deemed not needed by the First

Nations
- Government action and inaction
- Reserves established and Indian agents ensured rules were followed
- First Nations communities were systematically denied provisions to develop land; provisions of farm implements, animals, and agricultural equipment largely ignored
- Indian agents were instructed to discourage farming and encouraged small gardens, and in some cases, government refused to supply equipment
- Social barriers put into place with the pass system, which continued in some areas up to the 1940s

Phase 5 (1920–1970)

- The democratic phase when government shifted its philosophy of **assimilation**; centered on the residential schools and changed to a policy of integration
- Revisions to the *Indian Act* (1951) repealed laws against ceremonies, potlatches, sun dances; allowed First Nations to exercise some control over their lives
- **White Paper 1969** outlined a plan whereby the First Nations would be legally terminated and treaties would cease to be living documents
- Responsibility of health and education would be turned over to the provinces
- Government intended to do away with all legally recognized "Indian" people
- Protests by First Nations and political, social, and religious groups would eventually cause the withdrawal of the Paper

Current State of Affairs: From 1970 to Today

- Since the 1970s, the courts have been filled with challenges to the moral status of land claims on the grounds that Indigenous peoples' rights had been systematically ignored
- 1970 Supreme Court case that won the right for Indigenous people to drink
- **1982 Constitutional s.35 protection of "existing" rights**
- Establishment of rights has been growing to include additional rights
- Indian Land Claims Commission formed 1991
- Since 1970, the government has embarked on a devolution of political and economic control over Bands
- Self-government or sovereignty is minimal at this point

Royal Commission on Indigenous People, 1996

- Researched for five years
- Findings and recommendations on how the federal government can change its relationship with the First Nations people of Canada

Resistance and Indigenous Place in Canada

- The Indigenous experience has not been part of the written history of Canadians; assumption that Indigenous people did not contribute to the development of society
- First Nations communities, due to their remote locations, had little interaction with Canadians; however, their contributions to society were major. As settlers moved into the territories, there was a melding of cultures, and Indigenous people were pivotal to growth in the early economy of Canada
- A philosophy of displacement and assimilation were the underlying factors and goals in policies and programming for Indigenous peoples
- Policies, which assumed Indigenous peoples are inferior and incapable of governing themselves, were

designed to destroy Indigenous institutions, undermine cultural values, and damage identity
- There are many forms of resistance: overt, implicit, symbolic

Conclusion

- Indigenous cultures have changed considerably over the past few centuries
- Many elements of the culture continue to have a powerful influence on the lives of Indigenous people
- Federal government has not fully accepted the fact that First Nations have special rights — considerable denial, reluctance, and equivocation still exist
- Historical and contemporary strategies to curtail rights have resulted in passing legislation to keep Indigenous people from pursuing litigation

I know of very few Indigenous scholars who have been able to provide a comprehensive summary of 500 years plus on the history of Canada in relation to Indigenous peoples like Dr. James Frideres does. At the time of myself writing this OER, a fourth edition of his text is fully available. Yet, I presented his third version, published in 2020, summary here.

Let us now turn our attention to the topic of colonization.

Five Colonizing Nations: Britain, France, Portugal, Netherlands, and Spain

As has been the approach for this chapter, I present several sources of information which should give the reader a broad view of the colonization of Turtle Island from the historical lens.

History of the Colonization of America

European Exploration, Industrialization, and Colonization (Quam, J., & Campbell, S. (2020). The Western World: Daily Readings on Geography. College of DuPage Digital Press)

Colonization Map

At times, it is easier to present an image that makes a specific point. In this case, I present a map in Figure 20 which clearly shows the five **colonizing Nations** of Britain, France, Portugal, Netherlands, and Spain in 1763.

Figure 20

Map of the Five Colonizing Nations of Britain, France, Portugal, Netherlands, and Spain (1763)


Hudson Bay Company
Disputed Territory
Newfoundland
Acadia
Quebec
Montreal
Nova Scotia
French Posessions
Boston
New York
Baltimore
Philadelphia
Louisiana
Disputed Territory
Thirteen Colonies
Atlantic Ocean
Charleston
New Spain
Florida
New Orleans
European Colonies 1763
Bahamas
Dominican
Cuba
Rep.
Haiti
Mexico City
British
Disputed
Dutch
French
Portugese
Spanish
British Honduras
Jamaica
Pacific Ocean
Guatemala
New Granada
0 250 500 1,000 Miles
0 500 1,000 2,000 Kilometers

Lastly, I end this chapter with one example of mainstream rewriting of history which I believe encompasses the 'working together' concept of reconciliation. Here, the contributors, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars and experts, bring together their skills and talents to produce a historical account that is reflective of the standards and expectations of the 21st century — and the true historical account.

Examples of Mainstream Rewriting of History

Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada (Canadian Geographic)

Key Terms and Concepts from the Chapter

Terms:

- colonialism/colonization
- Turtle Island
- Indigenous sovereignty
- assimilation/displacement
- dominant
- patriarchal
- matrilineal/women as sacred
- dependency
- colonizing nations

Key Historical Events:

- 1534 Jacques Cartier's arrival to the New World
- Royal Proclamation of 1763
- Peace and Friendship Treaties
- *Indian Act* 1876
- White Paper of 1969
- 1982 Constitution Act and s.35 protection of "existing" rights
- 1996 Royal Commission on Indigenous Peoples

Important Readings/Viewings for Next Class

1. L'nuey: Treaties of Peace and Friendship at: https://lnuey.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/lnuey_4291_treatyday_ResearchPaper_V01_lowres.pdf
2. We Were Not the Savages (Paul, 2000): pp. 23-43 (Mi'kmaq Social Values and Economy)

Special Topics of Interest

- The Entire History of North America – Every Year [4000 BCE – 2019 AD]
- From Caves to Cosmos – Native America | PBS (Episode 1)
- Nature to Nations – Native America | PBS (Episode 2)

Cultural Competency Supplementary Tutorials

- The Four Sacred Medicines – Teachings

Chapter 5: Mi’kmaq Historians ~ Mi'kmaq Social Values and Economy ~ Treaties ~ Royal Proclamation Act of 1763 ~ Indian Act of 1876

Introduction

Continuing with our historical accounts, we now shift to more of a regional perspective — to Mi’kmak’i, the land of the L’nu or Mi’kmaq peoples. I have had the great privilege and honour to have personally met all four of the Mi’kmaq historians who I would like to acknowledge here for their insightful knowledge respecting the Mi’kmaq peoples. There are, no doubt, other Mi’kmaq historians who have made contributions to the field, and I hope that I will be introduced to their works in time.

Topics at a Glance

- Mi’kmaq Historians: S. Augustine, P. Augustine, Paul, and Sark
- Mi’kmaq Social Values and Economy/Pituamkek – A Mi’kmaq Heritage Landscape?
- Treaties & the *Royal Proclamation Act* of 1763
- A Further Perspective on Treaties
- Treaties Today
- *Indian Act* of 1876

Mi’kmaq Historians: S. Augustine, P. Augustine, Paul, and Sark

The four Mi’kmaq Elders, historians, and scholars and their prominent historical works from which I have drawn local and regional knowledge are:

Dr. Stephen J. Augustine, Executive Director of the Marshall Institute and the former Associate Vice-President of Indigenous Affairs and Dean at Unama’ki College, Cape Breton University, Nova Scotia.

Dr. Augustine is a Hereditary Chief on the Mi’kmaq Grand Council; previously, he was the Curator of Ethnology for Eastern Maritimes at the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Gatineau/Ottawa. He holds a Masters degree in Canadian Studies from Carleton University, focusing on traditional knowledge curriculum development in the context of the education system; and he holds a Bachelor of Arts in Anthropology and Political Science from St. Thomas University. Stephen was recently appointed to the Order of Canada, C.M., for advancing Mi’kmaq studies and for sharing his scholarly expertise and traditional knowledge with private and public organizations across

Canada. In 2022, Stephen was awarded an Honorary doctor of letters from the University of New Brunswick (University of Cape Breton Website, 2024).

I first met Stephen in 2005 at the Canadian Museum of Civilization where he was curator, and later, we, along with another academic colleague, collaborated on a 2017 presentation at the Atlantic Region Philosophy Association Annual Conference in Halifax, N.S. at Saint Mary's University. I have referenced some of his works in this OER already (see Chapter 1, *Sacred Smudging Ceremony*, and Chapter 2, Special Topic relating to *Life in the Beginning*).

Published Works

Augustine, S. J. (2005). Mi'kmaq and Maliseet cultural ancestral material: National collections from the Canadian Museum of Civilization. University of Ottawa Press.

Root, E., Augustine, S., Snow, K., & Doucette, M. (2019). Evidence of Co-Learning through a Relational Pedagogy: Indigenizing the Curriculum through MIKM 2701. Canadian Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, 10(1), n1.

Dr. Patrick J. Augustine, Assistant Professor (Elder), Faculty of Indigenous Knowledge, Education, Research, and Applied Studies, University of Prince Edward Island.

Dr. Augustine is a Mikmaw from Elsipogtog First Nation. His doctoral research was on the dispossession of the Mi'kmaq from their traditional district of Sikniktuk, often called Chignecto. He wrote about his First Nation's relationship to their traditional lands as a determinant of health. Patrick's maternal ancestry — Simon, Levi, and Augustine Families — are from the Sikniktuk district in Southeastern New Brunswick. His paternal ancestry — Augustine, Thomas, Bernard, and Paul Families — are also from Sikniktuk and Epikwitk aq Piktuk districts of Prince Edward Island and the Northern Shore of Nova Scotia.

Dr. Augustine's academic research centers on the supplementary texts to treaty negotiations, examining the spirit and intent of the Maritime Treaties between the Wabanaki and the British Crown (University of Prince Edward Island).

I have known Patrick for about 20 years, and, although I am much older than him, I consider him my 'Elder.' He has taught me so much over the years, and it was a great honour when Patrick and I became colleagues in the newly created Faculty of IKERAS in 2022. There is a wealth of historical information contained in Dr. Augustine's doctoral and graduate studies dissertations: links are provided for each of his works. I also enjoyed collaborating with Patrick on a number of projects over the years, and, as was always the case, he shared his traditional knowledges with pride. Figure 21 presents two wonderful photos of Patrick and his **traditional regalia**, which he would wear on special occasions like a **Maw'omi, gathering of the people**, or Powwow.

Figure 21

Elder Patrick Augustine displaying his traditional regalia

Published Works

Augustine, P. (2021). The Dispossession of the Míkmaq Indians from Chignecto to Elsipogtog: A Case Study Analysis of the Health Determinants of the Physical Environment (Doctoral dissertation, Carleton University). https://repository.library.carleton.ca/concern/etds/2j62s5711

Augustine, P. J. (2010). The Significance of Place in Textual and Graphical Representation: The Mi'kmaq on Lennox Island, Prince Edward Island, and the Penobscot on Indian Island, Maine. Charlottetown, PEI: University of Prince Edward Island. https://islandscholar.ca/islandora/object/ir%3A21763/datastream/PDF/view

Dr. Daniel N. Paul

"Daniel N. Paul was born in 1938 on the Indian Brook Reserve, Nova Scotia, and resided in Halifax with his wife, Patricia. Paul, a freelance lecturer and journalist, was an ardent activist for human rights. He was a former justice of the peace and a former member of the NS Police Commission and had served on several other provincial commissions, including the Human Rights Commission and the Nova Scotia Department of Justice's Court Re-structuring Task Force. He holds, among many awards, honorary degrees from the University of Sainte Anne and Dalhousie University and is a member of both the Order of Canada and the Order of Nova Scotia. Previously, Paul was employed by the Department of Indian Affairs and was the founding executive director of the Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq (CMM). His writing career includes a novel, Chief Lightning Bolt, several booklets, magazine articles, hundreds of newspaper columns, chapters for a dozen or so edited books" (Fernwood Publishing, 2024).

“Born in a log cabin during a raging blizzard on Indian Brook Reserve in 1938, Mi’kmaw elder Daniel N. Paul rose to the top of a Canadian society that denied his people’s civilization.”

When he was named to the Order of Canada, his citation called him a “powerful and passionate advocate for social justice and the eradication of racial discrimination.” His Order of Nova Scotia honour said he “gives a voice to his people by revealing a past that the standard histories have chosen to ignore.”

“But long before the acclaim, there was the Indian Agent denying food to his begging mother. There was the education system that taught him his people were savages. There was the Department of Indian Affairs that frustrated his work to bring justice to his people. His landmark book *We Were Not the Savages* exposed the brutalities of the collision between European and Native American civilizations from a Mi’kmaq perspective. The book sold tens of thousands of copies around the world and inspired others to learn history from an indigenous point of view” (Tattrie, 2017 from *Daniel Paul: Mi’kmaw Elder*. Lawrencetown Beach, NS: Pottersfield Press, back cover).

I met Daniel Paul in 2002 when he came to Prince Edward Island to promote his critically acclaimed book, *We Were Not the Savages*. I still have the signed copy and draw heavily on its detailed content in several of my Indigenous-focused courses including IKE-1040: *Indigenous Teachings of Turtle Island*. We will review his discussion on Mi’kmaq social values and economy in this chapter. Sadly, Dr. Paul passed into the spirit world in June 2022.

Published Works

Paul, D. N. (2022). We Were Not the Savages, First Nations History: Collision Between European and Native American Civilizations. (4th ed.). Fernwood publishing.

Also see http://www.danielnpaul.com/**.**

Dr. John Joe Sark

I provide the following special article in relation to John Joe Sark, which highlights not only my personal connection to him, but also the deep loss that the University felt on his passing in January 2023.

“The University community was deeply saddened to learn of the passing of Keptin John Joe Sark, LLD, on January 8. He was the first Mi’kmaq graduate student from the University of Prince Edward Island with a BA in Political Science (1979), and in 2005 was the first Mi’kmaq to be awarded an honorary Doctor of Laws. A spiritual leader and Keptin of the Mi’kmaq Grand Council, Dr. Sark remained committed to UPEI and was involved in many ways over the years.

In a message to students, faculty, and staff, Dr. Greg Keefe, UPEI President and Vice-Chancellor (interim) said, ‘The passing of UPEI alumnus and honorary degree recipient, Keptin John Joe Sark, has touched many in Epekwitk, Mi’kmaki, Turtle Island, and beyond. On behalf of the entire University community, I extend my deepest condolences to his family, friends, and colleagues, especially those here at UPEI.’

The members of the Faculty of Indigenous Knowledge, Education, Research, and Applied Studies (IKERAS) were especially saddened to learn of Dr. Sark’s passing. Interim Dean Dr. Gary Evans indicated that they had been engaged with him very recently on potential initiatives, including discussions about him being a guest lecturer for the faculty.

‘It was with sad hearts that the Faculty of Indigenous Knowledge, Education, Research, and Applied Studies pay tribute to Dr. Sark,’ said Dr. Evans. ‘John Joe had a keen interest in guest lecturing given his breadth of cultural knowledge in many fields. It was his drive and tireless work that defined him. He was a defender of Treaty

Rights, social justice activist, and a true ambassador for Truth and Reconciliation long before it was introduced to the Canadian public.'

David Varis, IKERAS assistant professor, recalls meeting Dr. Sark. 'I remember well the first time getting to know Dr. Sark. It was when I took my summer *Aboriginal Contemporary Issues and Perspectives* class to his home in Johnston's River to experience a sacred sharing circle. John Joe, as he was known, welcomed us warmly and we just chatted. It was a nice way to begin as any apprehensiveness students may have had melted away instantaneously as John Joe simply put them at ease. We then went onto his well-cared property, which overlooked the river. He talked about the traditions as we walked toward his sweat lodge, and then the **birchbark wigwam (Mi'kmaq structure used for shelter and living)**, where he conducted a sacred sharing circle for the class. For quite a few summers I took students there, and no one was disappointed. We all got to know John Joe well, and that infectious laugh, sharp wit, and the teachings remain as vivid today as they did many years ago.'

Varis also recounted fondly going to the ceremony in 2005 when John Joe received his honorary Doctor of Laws degree. He was with family that day, his own and the University community; he remained committed to both right up until his passing, stated Varis. 'He personified commitment to his peoples, principles of justice, and teaching others. His spirit will be with us forever through his lifelong work'" (University of Prince Edward Island, 2023).

I will always remember John Joe and the teachings he gave my students when visiting him at his home (see Figure 22).

Figure 22

John Joe Sark and UPEI Summer Class

Published Works

Sark, J. J. (1988). Micmac Legends of Prince Edward Island. Lennox Island Band Council/Ragweed, Prince Edward Island.

Sark, J. J., Barash, R. L., Marlor, C. P., & Christmas, D. (Eds.). (2000). *Mi'kmaq and the Crown: understanding treaties in Maritime Canadian history: with special reference to Prince Edward Island* (First edition-June 2000.). Sark.

Sark, J. J. (2022). Epekwitk: Stories and Histories of the Mi'kmaq Nation. Charlottetown, PEI: Island Studies Press.

Dr. Sark's work around **Treaties** is well-documented, and it will be examined after we look first at Daniel N. Paul's work and what life was like for the Mi'kmaq peoples prior to European contact.

Mi'kmaq Social Values and Economy

What did you take away from the chapter reading, "**Mi'kmaq Social Values and Economy**," by Daniel N. Paul (2000)?

- Where did they live? Were they nomadic, semi-nomadic, or anchored to one place?
- What characterized their lifestyle?
- Did they know poverty, starvation, or unhealthy ways?
- What did they eat? What was daily life like?

- How did they treat their Elderly?

The answers can be found on page 23 of Paul's chapter. Throughout this chapter, the author's descriptions present a society that is the complete opposite to the term 'savages' that had been falsely applied to these First Peoples and most Amerindians by past historians, clergy, authorities, and settlers. The Mi'kmaq are highly evolved in terms of social values and relationships.

Respecting **gender roles**, Paul writes,

"...both genders were involved in setting the agenda and dispersing responsibilities for the orderly conduct of the Nation's livelihood. The men were responsible for providing food for their communities by hunting and fishing and for carrying out chores involving heavy work. The women and older children were responsible for such chores as the limited farming the community indulged in, and for collecting, cleaning and preserving produce, game and fish. No demeaning connotations were associated with the assignment of different community responsibilities to each gender. The division of duties was pragmatically based on which gender was most suitable to the requirements of each job" (Paul, 2002, p. 24).

Paul (2000) also explained on the importance of education:

"The involvement of older children in survival duties was an educational regime that began at an early age at the knees of their parents, grandparents and Elders. This education was designed to instill in them a desire to grow into caring and honourable adults. The Keepers taught the children the Nation's history and its legends. All adult members of the community participated in teaching the basic skills and knowledge deemed necessary to ensure the Nation's survival" (pp. 24-25).

There are other important features of Mi'kmaq society on which Paul wrote, including advanced child-rearing practices, socially beneficial laws, protocols and practices, inclusive social activities and functions, constant attention to recreational and entertainment needs, progressive health care, forward-thinking trade and commerce, and enacted values that are foundational to any sophisticated civilization. On the latter, as an example, Paul stated,

"Civility and generosity were so engrained in Mi'kmaq society that to be rude or mean was unthinkable. If pressed to the contrary, they would respond: "How could one refuse to treat all people with kindness and not share with them the bounties of Mother Earth?" A modified version of this trait still survives in many Mi'kmaq homes today" (p. 29).

What points can be made after reading Paul's chapter?

For me, the one thing that emanates from Paul's writing, particularly on Epekwitk (Prince Edward Island), are recent attempts by Mi'kmaq leadership and citizenry to reclaim, reimagine, and reintroduce their proud culture to the rest of us who may not really understand or appreciate the life and practices of the Mi'kmaq peoples.

I introduced you to L'nuey already, and in navigating their website, one will instantly see the efforts that the organization has made to bring all aspects of the Mi'kmaq peoples to mainstream Prince Edward Island. A couple of years ago, I discovered a highly impactful video called Pituamkek – A Mi'kmaq Heritage Landscape.

I know the non-Indigenous Film Director, John Hopkins, whose critically acclaimed works are simply outstanding (e.g.: Bluefin). With a highly professional and culturally-based approach, this 2021 documentary production is a must-watch, as it details both the historic and contemporary worlds of the Mi'kmaq. Please take time to view this, and afterward, let's discuss the main points of the documentary.

- What were the main points made in Pituamkek – A Mi'kmaq Heritage Landscape?

- How do these correspond to what you read in Daniel N. Paul's chapter on Mi'kmaq Social Values and Economy?
- Do you have a better understanding of the Mi'kmaq peoples in Prince Edward Island as a result?

Treaties and the Royal Proclamation Act of 1763

Before we discuss treaties, let us take a minute to reflect on land acknowledgements, which we often hear. Those giving the acknowledgement say something along the following lines: "We wish to first acknowledge we are on Epekwitk, part of the ancestral, unceded, and unsurrendered territory of the Mi'kmaw Nation, and on which this institution stands. This territory is covered by the Treaties of Peace and Friendship, which recognize Mi'kmaw title and establish the ongoing relationship between the Mi'kmaw Nation and the Crown. We are all treaty people." As can be gleaned from the acknowledgement, there is direct mention to treaties.

In his historical review titled *Mi'kmaq and the Crown: understanding treaties in Maritime Canadian history: with special reference to Prince Edward Island,* Mi'kmaq Historian Keptin John Joe Sark traces the foundations of the Treaties in Part III of his 2000 publication. Keptin Sark highlighted several key treaties and legal documents which have a direct impact on the Mi'kmaq; they include:

- The First Wabanaki Treaty with the Crown, 1725
- The Treaty of Halifax, 1752
- Governor Belcher's Guarantees to the Mi'kmaq, 1761
- Royal Instructions to British Governors, 1761
- Royal Proclamation of 1763

In addition to the works of John J. Sark, the Treaty Education information prepared by **L'nuey** provides a good foundation. L'nuey is an Indigenous organizational "initiative that focuses on the advancement, implementation, and protection of the constitutionally entrenched rights of the Epekwitnewaq Mi'kmaq" (Mi'kmaq of PEI). They state, "Prior to European contact, it is thought that the Mi'kmaq engaged in agreements and treaties with other First Nations. Mi'kmaq oral history mentions treaties of friendship and treaties involving hunting areas prior to the coming of the Europeans to this region." The Mi'kmaq relationship with the French and the Acadians, starting when they first arrived on these shores, was one of mutual respect and military alliance — not one defined by formalized treaties. The military alliance was believed to be necessary because of the long-standing pattern of peace and conflict between their French allies and the British. Contrary to the Mi'kmaq alliance with the French, the British viewed their relationship with the Mi'kmaq as one that needed a more formal approach. Beginning in 1725, a series of Peace and Friendship Treaties were signed between the British and the Mi'kmaq. They are referred to as 'Peace and Friendship' Treaties, as that was the cornerstone of the agreements.

These early Treaties (signed 1725-26, 1749, and 1752) were to ensure the Mi'kmaq would cease hostilities towards British settlers. Additionally, the Indians "shall not be molested by any of His Majesties subjects or their Dependents" (Treaty of 1725). The British would not interfere with Mi'kmaq hunting, fishing, and harvesting throughout Mi'kma'ki. ". . . It is agreed that the said Tribe of Indians shall not be hindered from, but have free liberty of Hunting and Fishing as usual . . ." (Treaty of 1752).

Besides referencing the few places where British settlers were living, the surrendering of land by the Mi'kmaq was not mentioned; the focus was on maintaining peace between the two nations. The Mi'kmaq, as did other First Nations, had, and continue to have, an intertwined connection to the land and its resources.

But the peace alluded to in the early Treaties was short-lived, as conflict between the French and the British and their Indigenous allies continued until 1760 with the loss of Québec and other key French areas to the British, and the beginning of the end of the Seven Years' War. This also meant the role of France as a military power in this region was coming to an end. Acadian settlers and Indigenous leaders began trickling into British held Forts, including Fort Cumberland, to declare their submissions for peace.

The Peace and Friendship Treaties signed in 1760-61 guaranteed Mi'kmaq the right to hunt, fish, gather, and earn a reasonable living without British interference.

To solidify our knowledge around the importance of the Treaties of Peace and Friendship, two videos are presented. The first is produced in conjunction with Treaty Education and highlights the Mi'kmaq in Nova Scotia.

The next video, Treaties of Peace and Friendship, was produced by L'nuey and captures the key milestones leading up to its signing.

Sark (2000) wrote of the **Royal Proclamation of 1763**,

"The Treaty of Paris (1763) between France and Great Britain ended their power struggle in North America, leaving Britain in full control of Acadia and Quebec. Like the Treaty of Utrecht, however, the treaty of Paris reserved all of the rights that France's 'Indian allies' had enjoyed previously. British governors were accordingly instructed to make or renew treaties with Indian nations, and to protect the Indians 'connected' with the British Crown from encroachment on their lands" (p. 38).

Sark further added,

"The 1763 Royal Proclamation forbid British Governors from granting the right to survey or settle any lands which has not already been sold to the Crown, or might be sold by treaty in the future. It also ordered British subjects to give up any Indian lands they had settled without proper authority. The 1725 Boston Tea Party had allowed Englishmen to keep the lands in New England and Nova Scotia they had already settled; after 1725, no more Mi'kmaq lands were ever sold by treaty" (p. 38).

Another important source of information on the Royal Proclamation of 1763 can be gleaned from the following site under the title, Royal Proclamation of 1763: Relationships, Rights and Treaties.

A Further Perspective on Treaties

Sometimes when Indigenous peoples introduce themselves, they may also include the numbered Treaty territory on which they are situated. The treaty is a way, formally and informally, to anchor the nature of the treaty relationship and commitments, under which the parties agree to live to live together and preserve a harmonious co-existence. I identify as Treaty 1 person. This treaty was between the Crown (Canada) and the Anishinabek and Swampy Cree of southern Manitoba. If you wish to understand more about the history and nature of Treaties 1 and 2, a quick read of an article by the same name in the Canadian Encyclopedia by Gretchen Albers (2015) would be in order. But, if you are still uncertain about the foundations of treaties, I provide the following link to great video by Dr. Niigaanwewidam (Nigaan) James Sinclair, University of Manitoba, who describes the essence of a treaty-making from a place I know well — Wînipêk (Winnipeg) — the city where I was born. Let's join Dr. Sinclair and his perspective on Understanding Treaties.

Treaties Today

Treaties have been cited in numerous challenges and legal cases. Several petitions and complaints, both written and in person around the time of Confederation, also mentioned the Treaties' and Confederation's suspected impact on the Mi'kmaq peoples (L'nuey, 2024).

The Sylliboy court case, R. v. Sylliboy (1928), is believed to be the first to use the 1752 Treaty of Peace and Friendship to argue that the right to hunt on traditional territories was covered by the treaty. While the case was lost, Sylliboy received a posthumous pardon and apology from the government of Nova Scotia in 2017. In 1999, in what is now known as the Marshall Decision, the Supreme Court of Canada recognized and affirmed a treaty right to hunt, fish, and gather in pursuit of a 'moderate livelihood,' arising from the 1760-61 Treaty of Peace and Friendship. In his trial, Donald Marshall Jr. used the Treaty to argue that he was catching and trading fish, just as the Mi'kmaq had done since the Europeans first appeared in the region. In Epekwitk Mi'kmaq oral stories and in other parts of Mi'kma'ki, we are told that parents and Elders, while passing down traditional resource gathering methods, also shared their knowledge of the Treaties. This was, and is, a way to ensure the Peace and Friendship Treaties and their importance in the protection of Mi'kmaq rights is never forgotten in Mi'kma'ki. One final note: it must be remembered that while these Peace and Friendship Treaties were entered into, the Mi'kmaq were never conquered, never surrendered, and never gave up or ceded their land. Mi'kma'ki is still Mi'kmaq territory, and the Peace and Friendship Treaties serve as a foundation for the relationship of the Mi'kmaq and all citizens of the region.

The *Indian Act*

As a final part of this chapter, we will focus attention on a legal document, alluded to earlier, that has had a profound impact and lasting impact on the lives of Indigenous peoples — that being the***Indian Act***. Let us take a minute to understand this from a broad perspective before examining it in more depth as part of the Chapter 6 – *Colonization, Assimilation Policies, and Genocide*.

The Indian Act: A Summary

- What did you know about the *Indian Act* prior to viewing this video?
- What did you learn from this short video?
- What were some of the aspects of the *Indian Act* that you found profound, disturbing, or not fully understood?
- Are you aware of any other type of legislation that has such widespread impacts on a group of people?
- Why do you think there has been no movement toward repealing the *Indian Act*, although it has been heavily criticized for many years?
- How would you describe the *Indian Act* if someone asked you to explain it?

Here is an excerpt regarding the *Indian Act*:

"The *Indian Act* is the primary law the federal government uses to administer Indian status, local First Nations governments, and the management of reserve land. It also outlines governmental obligations to First Nations peoples. The *Indian Act* pertains to people with Indian Status; it does not directly reference non-status First Nations people, the Métis or Inuit. First introduced in 1876, the Act subsumed a number of colonial laws that aimed to eliminate First Nations culture in favour of assimilation into Euro-Canadian society. A new version of the Act was passed in 1951, and since then, has been amended several times, most significantly in 1985, with

changes mainly focusing on the removal of discriminatory sections. It is an evolving, paradoxical document that has enabled trauma, human rights violations and social and cultural disruption for generations of Indigenous peoples" (Indian Act, 2022).

As stated, we will examine the *Indian Act* in more depth along with other aspects of governmental control over the lives of Indigenous peoples in Canada.

Key Terms and Concepts from the Chapter

- the works of S. Augustine, P. Augustine, Paul, & Sark
- traditional regalia
- Maw'omi, gathering of the people
- birchbark wigwam (Mi'kmaq structure used for shelter and living)
- definition of treaty/treaties
- Mi'kmaq Social Values and Economy (Daniel N. Paul)
- gender roles
- L'nuey
- Royal Proclamation of 1763
- *Indian Act* of 1876

Important Readings/Viewings for Next Class

- (Vowel, 2016). Indigenous Writes: A Guide to First Nations, Métis, & Inuit Issues in Canada : pp. 171-205 (Main Topics – Residential Schools, Sixties Scoop, and Inuit Relocation)

Special Topics of Interest

- Dr. James S. Frideres: First Nations in the Twenty-First Century

Cultural Competency Supplemental Tutorials

- Life Cycle Teachings: Wabano Health Centre

Chapter 6: Colonialism ~ Colonization Practices of the Indian Act ~ Indian Residential Schools ~ Genocide

Introduction

At this stage in our learning journey, we've been introduced to Indigenous peoples, their worldviews, cultures, histories, and tragic trajectories brought about by colonialism. During the second half of this course — now that you have a basic yet solid understanding — we shift gears to have you engage with the upcoming material, readings, viewings, lectures, and independent research for your assignments. It will be a time for serious **reflection**, and it will be a time for answering a fundamental question: **why**?

- Why has this happened?
- Why has colonialism been such a destructive force?
- Why does it take so long to resolve or reconcile our past?
- Why are there still instances of ongoing colonization?

The 'why' question is a powerful one, as asking *why* requires critical analysis, reflection, understanding, and thoughtful ordering of ideas before answering. When you are preparing your assignments, always keep 'why' questions close at hand: they will strengthen your understanding and help you think things through.

There will be many terms and concepts yet to master, but let us look at several that need addressing before going too much further.

Topics at a Glance

- Mastering Terminology
- Frideres' Overview of *History of Indigenous Peoples in Canada*
- Colonization Practices and the *Indian Act* of 1876
- Reserve System
- Indian Residential Schools (including Vowel's *Chapter 20*)
- Sixties Scoop & Inuit Relocation (including Vowel's *Chapters 21* & *22)*
- Broken Promises, Racism, and Genocide

Mastering Terminology

I would like to take a few minutes to define the many terms that, while already appearing in this text, will also

be discussed in this chapter and beyond. In a way, this review will serve to provide specific guidance relating to these terms and critical concepts about Indigenous and non-Indigenous relations. Following the definitions, we, myself included, can begin to master them.

I turn to a very important source for several of these definitions; the source is the Lexicon of Terminology used by the 2018 National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. I believe that this lexicon is an important source, as the work of the National Inquiry drew heavily from other important works — including the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. The lexicon also represents another important perspective — that being from an Indigenous women's perspective. Their perspective, more than any other, must be at the forefront, given that colonialism has had its most profound impact on women. We will take some time to examine the work of the National Inquiry later in the course.

Colonialism

"Colonialism is the attempted or actual imposition of policies, laws, mores, economies, cultures, or systems and institutions put in place by settler governments to support and continue the occupation of Indigenous territories, the subjugation of Indigenous Nations, and the resulting internalized and externalized thought patterns that support this occupation and subjugation."

Colonization

"Colonialism is not to be confused with colonization. Colonialism is the ideology advocating colonization. Colonization generally refers to the process by which Europeans invaded and occupied Indigenous national territories.

Decolonization/Decolonized/Decolonizing

"Decolonization is a social and political process aimed at resisting and undoing the multi-faceted impacts of colonization and re-establishing strong contemporary Indigenous Nations and institutions based on traditional values, philosophies, and knowledge systems.

It is the meaningful and active resistance to forces of colonialism that perpetuate the subjugation and/or exploitation of Indigenous minds, bodies, and lands. It requires individuals to consciously and critically question the legitimacy of the colonizer and reflect on the ways we have been influenced by colonialism.

According to Margaret Kovach, the purpose of decolonization is to create space in everyday life, research, academia, and society for an Indigenous perspective without it being neglected, shunted aside, mocked or dismissed (Kovach, 2009, pp75-93). Note: The term 'decolonizing' is preferred over 'decolonization' or 'decolonized' to demonstrate that the process is ongoing."

Intergenerational trauma

"Intergenerational trauma is transmission of the effects of trauma across generations, affecting the children and grandchildren of those initially victimized. This includes the transmission of historical oppression and colonization that continues to impact the health and well-being of Indigenous peoples today."

Racism

"Racism is a social construct that has social, political, and economic consequences. Racism is an ideology that directly or indirectly asserts that one group is inherently superior to others, that a person's social and moral traits are predetermined by their biological characteristics. According to the Ontario Human Rights Commission, racism can be openly displayed in racial jokes and slurs or hate crimes, and it can also be more deeply rooted in attitudes, values and stereotypical beliefs. In some cases, these are unconsciously held and have become

deeply embedded in systems and institutions that have evolved over time. Racism operates at a number of levels, including individual, systemic, and societal.

The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination defines racial discrimination or racism as any distinction, exclusion, restriction, or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment, or exercise, on equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, or any other field of public life."

Reconciliation

"Reconciliation means different things to different people, communities, institutions, and organizations. In the context of residential schools, 'reconciliation' is about coming to terms with events of the past in a manner that overcomes conflict and establishes a respectful and healthy relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people moving forward.

Reconciliation is a Western concept that describes a process of bringing one's spirit to a place of peace. Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines reconciliation as 'the act of causing two people or groups to become friendly again after an argument or disagreement.'

In its simplest definition, 'reconciliation' is the re-establishment of a conciliatory state. However, many Indigenous peoples assert that this state has never existed between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission mandate describes reconciliation as 'an ongoing individual and collective process, [which] will require commitment from all those affected including First Nations, Inuit, and Métis, former Indian Residential School students, their families, communities, religions entities, former school employees, government, and the people of Canada' (TRC Final Report summary, p. 17.).

In the TRC Final Report, the Commission defined reconciliation as 'an ongoing process of establishing and maintaining respectful relationships,' and identified the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as the appropriate framework for reconciliation that flows from and upholds the principle of Indigenous self-determination. In this way, the TRC expanded the scope of reconciliation beyond residential schools to call for a fundamental restructuring of the institutions, systems, and structures of colonialism with [sic] across all levels of Canadian society and placed particular emphasis on the role of Indigenous Peoples in the reconciliation process:

'A critical part of this process involves repairing damaged trust by making apologies, providing individual and collective reparations, and following through with concrete actions that demonstrate real societal change. Establishing respectful relationships also requires the revitalization of Indigenous law and legal traditions. It is important that all Canadians understand how traditional First Nations, Inuit, and Metis approaches to resolving conflict, repairing harm, and restoring relationships can inform the reconciliation process…These traditions and practices are the foundation of Indigenous law; they contain wisdom and practical guidance for moving towards reconciliation across this land' (TRC Final Report, Vol. 6., pp. 11-12).

The TRC concluded that:

'Although the Commission has been a catalyst for deepening our national awareness of the meaning and potential of reconciliation, it will take many heads, hands, and hearts working together, at all levels of society to maintain the momentum in the years ahead. It will also take sustained political will and concerted material resources… Canadians have much to gain from listening to the voices, experiences, and wisdom of Survivors, Elders, and Traditional Knowledge Keepers—and much more to learn about reconciliation. Aboriginal peoples have an important contribution to make to reconciliation. Their knowledge systems, oral histories, laws, and

connections to the land have vitally informed the reconciliation process to date, and are essential to its ongoing progress.' (TRC Final Report, Vol. 6, p. 4). The Commission emphasized that Indigenous Peoples are not solely victims of violence, but holders of Treaty, constitutional and human rights that must be upheld. In the TRC's view, Reconciliation involves truth telling that 'restores the human dignity of victims of violence and calls governments and citizens to account. Without truth, justice is not served, healing cannot happen and there can be no genuine reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in Canada.' Reconciliation is not about 'closing a sad chapter of Canada's past, but about opening new healing pathways of reconciliation that are forged in truth and justice'" (TRC Final Report, Vol. 6, p. 7).

In 2023, I had the opportunity to visit the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation at the University of Manitoba. Figure 23 below is a central artifact for the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The Bentwood Box was a carved, wooden chest that victims and witnesses would place testimonials and other personal items in that they brought before the commission.

Figure 23

Bentwood Box, National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, University of Manitoba

Residential school system

"In Canada, the Residential school system was a network of boarding schools for Indigenous students administered by the Canadian government and Christian churches.

Initiated in the 1880s, these schools operated until the 1990s, with the last school closing in 1996. Residential Schools removed Indigenous children from their homes, families, and communities, with a purpose of educating and assimilating Indigenous children into Euro-Canadian culture.

Residential Schools generally operated on a half-day system in which students divided their time between classroom and working, learning skills that they were told would allow them to earn a living once they left the schools. Often, however, this work had little to do with providing a skill base; rather, Indigenous labour helped to run these schools in the most inexpensive manner possible.

At the schools, students were isolated, and because the schools were segregated by gender, many students were separated from some of their siblings. Most students' hair was cut short and they were stripped of any trappings of Indigenous culture. They were not allowed to wear their own clothes nor were they allowed to speak their first language. Schools were chronically overcrowded and food was poor. Children were underfed and malnourished, making them vulnerable to illness, including tuberculosis and influenza. Abuses of all types were prevalent, including high rates of sexual abuse.

It is estimated that over 150,000 First Nation, Métis, and Inuit children attended Residential Schools. In recent years, former students have pressed for recognition of abuses suffered at Residential Schools. This resulted in the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement in 2007, a formal apology from Prime Minister Stephen Harper in 2008, and the creation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 2008."

S. 35, Constitution Act, 1982

"In 1982, the Canadian government repatriated the Constitution and formally entrenched existing Aboriginal and Treaty rights in Canadian law. These rights now receive legal protection under Section 35. Existing Aboriginal land rights can no longer be extinguished without the consent of those Aboriginal Peoples holding interests in those lands.

Section 35 of the Constitution states: (1) The existing aboriginal and treaty rights of the aboriginal peoples of Canada are hereby recognized and affirmed. (2) In this Act, 'aboriginal peoples of Canada' includes the Indian, Inuit, and Métis peoples of Canada. (3) For greater certainty, in subsection (1) 'treaty rights' includes rights that now exist by way of land claims agreements or may be so acquired. (4) Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, the aboriginal and treaty rights referred to in subsection (1) are guaranteed equally to male and female persons."

Settler colonialism

"Settler colonialism is a form of colonialism that functions through the replacement of Indigenous populations with an invasive settler society that over time develops a distinctive identity and sovereignty. Settler colonialism, like colonialism, is an ideology or structure, not an event. Settler colonialism persists in the ongoing elimination of Indigenous populations and the assertion of state sovereignty over Indigenous Peoples and lands. Settler colonialism refers to settler colonizers who come to new lands with the intent to permanently occupy and assert authority over Indigenous lands.

Settler colonialism refers to settler colonizers who come to new lands with the intent to permanently occupy and assert authority over Indigenous lands. When settling, an imperial power oversees the immigration of settlers who consent, often only temporarily to the authority of the imperial power. When allegiance to the imperial power is severed, however, settler colonial societies continue to exercise power."

Seven Sacred Teachings

"The Seven Sacred Teachings is a term used by many, but not all, Indigenous peoples in what is now referred to

as Canada. The term refers to the foundational concepts by which we should all live our lives in the best interest of ourselves, our families, our communities, and all living things. The Seven Sacred Teachings are: love, honesty, courage, wisdom, humility, truth, and respect."

Please keep these terms in mind going forward; the author did not include all the terms from the *Lexicon*. There are several there that could be useful in your assignments, such as 'resistance'/'resurgence.'

Frideres' Overview of *History of Indigenous Peoples in Canada*

There was a considerable amount of information that was presented in Frideres' overview respecting the history of Indigenous Peoples in Canada. Can you recall some of the more prominent acts, decrees, policies, and sanctions levied against Indigenous peoples? Let's list the more impactful.

If you said, *reserve system, withholding the right to vote, Indian Residential School system,* and/or *banning cultural practices with punishment of imprisonment if participating in these activities*, you have highlighted some of the most insidious forms of colonization with the goal to totally assimilate Indigenous peoples and their respective cultures into the Dominion of Canada.

By way of further historical context, the following highlights years leading up to the infamous *Indian Act* of 1876:

"The 1850 *Act for the Better Protection of the Lands and Property of the Indians in Lower Canada* was one of the first pieces of legislation that included a set of requirements for a person to be considered a legal Indian — a precursor to the concept of 'status.' These requirements were based on blood, and essentially said that people 'shall be considered as Indians' if they were of 'Indian blood' and were members of a 'Body or Tribe of Indians.' All descendants of such people were considered to be Indian. So too were non-Indians who 'intermarried with such Indians,' people whose parents (one or both) would have been considered Indians, and 'all persons adopted in infancy by any such Indians.'

The Acts commonly known as the ***Gradual Civilization Act* of 1857** and the ***Gradual Enfranchisement Act* of 1869** were primarily aimed at removing any special distinction or rights of First Nations peoples in order to assimilate them into the larger settler population. This was initially meant to be accomplished by the *Gradual Civilization Act* through voluntary enfranchisement (i.e., a First Nations person would give up their status in exchange for land and the right to vote), but only one person voluntarily enfranchised. As a result, the government then began unilaterally enfranchising First Nations people.

A number of Indigenous groups made treaties — in particular the first five Numbered Treaties — with Canadian governments before the 1876 passing of the *Indian Act" (*The Canadian Encyclopedia, 2023).

Colonization Practices and the *Indian Act* of 1876

We will now look at some of these governmental policies all under the over-arching and controlling *Indian Act* of 1876 (please make sure to view this link). While the *Indian Act* may have been seen by those in power as merely assisting to integrate (assimilate) Indigenous peoples into the dominant Euro-western culture, Indigenous peoples weren't long in recognizing these colonization practices as a means to control every aspect of their lives. Nothing about it was 'Creator-given,' nor did it resemble their values, cultures, governance structures, economies, protocols, and relationships with other peoples and all their relations.

The list of practices is extensive; however, the most impactful are the ones that I present below. You may

uncover other practices such as the ones I mentioned earlier, such as withholding Indigenous peoples' right to vote. This practice was not only a very demeaning and clear message around the government's view of Indigenous peoples generally as wards of the state, but to control Indigenous peoples' position of inferiority within society. Banning cultural practices is another form of aggressive assimilative policies, which is a direct method to strip Indigenous peoples of their culture. Neither of these practices could withstand court challenges and were quickly reversed.

We will now examine the reserve system, Indian Residential schools, the Sixties Scoop, and Inuit Relocation before looking at the broader impacts of broken promises, racism, and genocide.

Reserve System (Canada and the United States)

I present a visual display with an accompanying story about one reserve I visited in 2012 (see Figure 24).

Figure 24

Siksika First Nation, Alberta, Canada

It is important to make a distinction between the Crown-owned land where Indigenous peoples in Canada were assigned to live, known as **reserves;** whereas, they are known as **reservations** in the United States. The next video presents what Indigenous people think of these places, whether a reserve or a reservation, through one word descriptions. A forewarning: these are very powerful descriptions.

- Reservation | Native Americans | One Word

Indian Residential Schools

- Residential Schools in Canada: A Timeline

Key Messages from Vowel (*Chapter 20: Monster: The Residential-School Legacy*)

1. Statistics (150 years of operation; 150,000 children attended; 6000 children (at least) who died while in the system (p. 171).
2. Historic trauma transmission — "cumulative emotional and psychological wounding across generations" (p .172).
3. It was legal, acceptable, and happened (p. 172).
4. Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: 2008-2015 (p. 172).
5. How did you not know this? (p. 173).
6. Canada's First Public Apology: 2008 (p. 173); and, as we know, Roman Catholic Church only offered an apology in 2022 (Varis).
7. TRC (2015): "The establishment and operation of residential schools were a central element of this policy, which can best be described as '**cultural genocide**'" (p. 173).
8. TRC Calls to Action (p. 174).
9. Education for Reconciliation: "Education is key to reconciliation." University of Winnipeg and Lakehead University (2016-2017) introduced the mandatory course (p. 176).
10. K-12 Education on Indigenous peoples' shows no mandatory courses; only six provinces offer elective Indigenous Studies courses (p. 177).

- Stolen Children | Residential School survivors speak
- Sisters & Brothers
- E'nikaq Nsitunaq / I Lost My Talk

Additional Indian Residential School Documentary

Crimes against children at residential school: The truth about St. Anne's – The Fifth Estate

Sixties Scoop

Key Messages from Vowel (*Chapter 21: Our Stolen Generations: The Sixties and Millennial Scoops*)

1. **Sixties or Millennial Scoop**, also referred to as *Stolen or Lost Generations* (p. 181).
2. Similar child welfare and protection policies were also implemented in Australia with unfavourable results (p. 181).
3. Adoption as cultural annihilation: statistics show that at least 11,132 status-Indian children were removed from home between 1960-1990. Estimates show about 20,000 Metis and non-status were placed in care. With 70-90 percent placed in non-Indigenous homes (p. 182).
4. One Manitoba judge, appointed to an inquiry into the child welfare system in 1982, commented, "The miracle is that there were not more children lost in the system run by many well-intentioned people. The road to hell was paved with good intentions, and the child welfare system was the paving contractor" (p.

183).

5. By 2002, 22,500 Indigenous children in foster care. Indigenous children are six to eight times more likely than non-Indigenous children to end up in care (p. 183).
6. This over-representation . . . "is not rooted in their Indigenous race, culture and ethnicity. It's rooted in the same colonial history and resultant poverty, social and community disorganization . . ." (p. 183).
7. Systemic discrimination and underfunding and Federal Court ruling of 2012 (p. 184), and 2021 federal government decision not to appeal and settle lawsuit in 2021 (Varis).
8. Millennial scoop and continuation of over-representation, e.g.: Indigenous children represent 21 percent of children in Manitoba; but 84 percent of children in permanent care (p. 184).
9. Statistics tell us one thing; but it becomes evident that poverty is at root and compounded by intergenerational trauma and poor structural conditions (pp. 185-187).
10. Legacy of 100 years of cultural abuse (p. 187).

- Separating children from parents: The Sixties Scoop in Canada

While the over-representation of Indigenous children in the child welfare system raged on for decades, there was one Indigenous warrior who took on the government to bring accountability to this tragic situation. The work of Dr. Cindy Blackstock, Executive Director of First Nations Child & Family Caring Society of Canada, Associate Professor & Director of FNCARES (First Nations Children's Action Research and Education Service) at the University of Alberta, and Professor in McGill's School of Social Work, through the establishment of Jordan's Principle and a recent Federal Court $23B First Nations child-welfare settlement, is a story that we will revisit in our chapter on Indigenous peoples in the 21st century.

Inuit Relocation

As mentioned earlier in the text, I have had the opportunity to work in the North in the territories of the Inuit. I've been fascinated with the landscape, its peoples, and the adaptability that is necessary to live in the northern reaches of Turtle Island (see Figure 25).

Figure 25

Inuit Mother and Child, Iqaluit, Nunavut.

Sadly, the Inuit are now at the frontlines of the global climate emergency. According to the Canadian Climate Institute, "The North is warming three times faster than the global average. The impacts of this warming will be profound and extreme. These impacts are compounded because colonial policies and historic underinvestment have left Northern infrastructure in poor condition, uniquely vulnerable to climate change. This will have devastating consequences for Northerners, disrupting supply chains and putting essential services like health care at risk. Lives, livelihoods, and cultural practices are also threatened by permafrost thaw and a changing environment" (Canadian Climate Change, 2024).

Let us now look back in time at the chapter topic that author Chelsea Vowel wrote about in her text, *Indigenous Writes: A Guide to First Nations, Métis, & Inuit Issues in Canada*.

Key Messages from Vowel (*Chapter 22: Human Flagpoles: Inuit Relocation*)

1. Another apology by Federal government; this time, to the Inuit for the relocation of families from Inukjuak and Pond Inlet to Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay during the 1950s (p. 191).
2. Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) pointed this out in its 1996 report and included such impacts as a) severing Aboriginal people's relationship to the land and environment and weakening cultural bonds; b) a loss of economic self-sufficiency, including, in some cases, increased dependence on government transfer payments; c) a decline in standards of health; and d) changes in social and political relations in the relocated population (p. 191).
3. Federal government's approach to the Inuit of the North was different than for First Nations: it was characterized by an unwillingness to take responsibility, although Supreme Court ruling of 1938 affirmed otherwise (p. 186). It is rather a disinterest and neglect approach (Varis).
4. Inuit relocations between the 1930s and 1950s saw a disruption to lives and decisions made with no consultation (p. 193).
5. *Qimmiijaqtauniq*: The Dog Slaughter actions by authorities (RCMP) in the 1950s to 1970s saw Inuit sled dogs killed *en masse*. While under the guise of public health and safety, it coincided with relocations, removal of Inuit children from their families for extended periods of time, and destruction of a traditional way of life (p. 194).
6. Another goal of the relocation was to assert Canadian sovereignty in the High Arctic (p. 203).
7. Vowel concludes, "Perhaps the only way relocation will cease to be offered as a solution to the 'Indian and Inuit problem' is if non-Indigenous Canadians learn the history and recognize that abandoning a failed tactic is in the best interest of all peoples living in this country" (p. 204).

I present two videos below which speak directly to **forced Inuit relocation**. The first one was created by IKERAS Assistant Professor Enooyaq (Enoo) Sudlovenick and produced by Wrong Horse Productions. Enoo is an Inuk marine biologist and researcher; she was a recipient of the 2021 Weston Family Awards in Northern Research for her research into the health of marine animals of the Arctic. Soon to be Dr. Sudlovenick (University of Manitoba, 2024), she explains her real-life connection to the tragedy of forced Inuit relocation. Her great-grandfather on her mother's side was a German whaler, while her other maternal ancestors were North Baffin Inuit in an area ranging from modern-day Pond Inlet to Somerset Island — and as far as Taloyoak on the mainland. Her father's ancestors were Inuit from Inukjuaq in Nunavik. She grew up in Iqaluit and Pond Inlet on Baffin Island, and as a child, she ventured with her parents into the waters of Nunavut to examine marine life, including sea angels, northern krill, and eels.

Enoo prepared this video for her IKE-1040 class, and she has openly shared it with the Faculty. It is such an invaluable resource to accompany the chapter in Vowel (2016), and, most importantly, it is the story of her and her family.

- IKE1040 Forced Relocation Video by Assistant Professor, Enooyak Sudlovenick

The second video is titled “Ausuittuq,” and it was produced by the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami; it also has a story about forced relocation. Larry Audlaluk explains the political context of the High Arctic relocation and the creation of Ausuittuq (Grise Fiord), Nunavut.

- Ausuittuq – Larry Audlaluk

The chapter now leads us to something that should be very obvious by now: Indigenous and non-Indigenous relations have a long history of broken promises, racism, and genocide.

Broken Promises, Racism, and Genocide

The following videos present on some very impactful systemic issues, and they will give rise to many reflections, discussion points, and information that will illuminate further on the complex — and sometimes unfathomable — to understand the state of Indigenous and non-Indigenous relations in Canada.

- Canadians have been breaking their promises to Indigenous people
- Confronting racism in Canada on National Indigenous Peoples Day
- How Canada changed the definition of genocide while engaging in crimes against Indigenous Peoples

Key Terms and Concepts from the Chapter

- reflection and asking “why?”
- colonialism
- colonization
- decolonization/decolonized/decolonizing
- intergenerational trauma
- racism
- reconciliation
- residential school system
- S. 35, Constitution Act, 1982
- settler colonialism
- seven sacred teachings
- Gradual Civilization Act of 1857
- Gradual Enfranchisement Act of 1869
- reserves and reservations
- cultural genocide
- Sixties/Millennial Scoop
- forced Inuit relocation

Important Readings/Viewings for Next Class

- self-directed this week

Special Topics of Interest

- Full Story: I Lost my Talk Tribute
- Where are the Children? Healing the Legacy of Residential Schools

Cultural Competency Supplemental Tutorials

- Mi'kmaq Language Websites

Chapter 7: Trauma and Intergenerational Trauma ~ Traditional Healing ~ Contemporary Health, Healing, and Wellness

Introduction

I wish to introduce this chapter with the following statement, taken from my course syllabus. And although I spoke to this at the beginning of our journey, it is worth repeating again.

"The history of Indigenous peoples is one that is characterized by trauma. While we are attempting to move into a period of healing and reconciliation, trauma and its impacts are still with us. Students will be exposed to this topic in our readings, class discussions, personal stories, and exercises. This needs to be stated, as one does not want to be taken 'off guard.' Having said this, we have many resources at our disposal, including Elders, experienced counsellors, and caring instructors who have experience in navigating these difficult topics" (IKE-1040 Course Outline, 2024).

Topics at a Glance

- What is Trauma?
- Intergenerational Trauma
- Traditional Healing
- Contemporary Health, Healing, and Wellness

What is Trauma?

One of the first comprehensive writings on historical trauma and Indigenous peoples was prepared by Cynthia C. Wesley-Esquimaux and Magdalena Smolewski for the Aboriginal Healing Foundation Research Series. Wesley-Esquimaux and Smolewski (2004) in *Historic Trauma and Aboriginal Healing* write,

"Historic trauma became a part of Aboriginal people's common experience, covertly shaping individual lives and futures, and devastating entire communities and regions. Since contact, First Nation people have experienced several waves of traumatic experience on social and individual levels that have continued to place enormous strain on the fabric of Aboriginal societies across the continent. Throughout this report, the term 'genocide' is used many times when referring to the Aboriginal people's experiences in America. Since psychologists, psychiatrists, and anthropologists all agree that victims of intense trauma, as well as their offspring, show

the same emotional responses as the survivors of genocide, it is necessary to address this issue, anticipating possible controversy over the use of the term "genocide" in the Aboriginal context. Recently, more and more socio-cultural researchers and historians venture into this delicate area of study, pointing out that the Aboriginal civilization witnessed many "unknown" or "silent" genocides that often left various cultural groups badly damaged and even extinct (such was the case with the Aboriginal population of Tasmania). More researchers dare to use the term genocide; whereas before, people talked about oppression, relocations, stolen generations, and so on, and risking a strong critique from their more conservative colleagues. This report sees the necessity of discussing issues of genocide in a public and/or academic arena. This part of the study is intended to initiate a discussion and illustrate the contention that Aboriginal people in the Americas, throughout the centuries, had to deal with strong, relentless forces of annihilation that were as evil and destructive as the Nazi's power was during World War II. It is only due to their cultural strength that some Aboriginal people survived to pass painful memories onto the generations after. Again, Aboriginal people's experiences were not particular in the world history of oppression.

It has been pointed out that historic colonialism produced a profound alteration in the socio-cultural milieu of all subjugated societies, but Aboriginal people in North America do not stand alone in the annals of historical injustice. Glaring examples include the forced relocations of Indigenous people in South Africa, slavery on the African continent and the stolen generations of Indigenous people in Australia. Terrifying examples of oppressive tendencies in other historical contexts include the Jewish Holocaust and the internment of Japanese nationals in Canada. A few examples of societies and cultures affected by visible genocide were presented. However, the reader should note that there were many others" (Wesley-Esquimaux and Smolewski, 2004, pp. 55-56).

The authors also explain the clinical disorder known as **Complex Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder** below:

"1. A history of subjugation to totalitarian control over a prolonged period [of time] (months to years). Examples include hostages, prisoners of war, concentration camp survivors, and survivors of some religious cults. Examples also include those subjected to totalitarian systems in sexual and domestic life, including survivors of domestic battering, childhood physical or sexual abuse, and organized sexual exploitation (Herman, 1997:121).

2. Alterations in affect regulation, including:

- persistent dysphoria;
- chronic suicidal preoccupation;
- self-injury;
- explosive or extremely inhibited anger (may alternate); [and]
- compulsive or extremely inhibited sexuality (may alternate).

3. Alterations in consciousness, including:

- amnesia or hyperamnesia [sic] for traumatic events;
- transient dissociative episodes;
- depersonalization/derealization; [and]
- reliving experiences, either in the form of intrusive post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms or in the form of ruminative preoccupation.

4. Alterations in self-perception, including:

- sense of helplessness or paralysis of initiative;
- shame, guilt, and self-blame;

- sense of defilement or stigma; [and]
- sense of complete difference from others (may include sense of specialness, utter aloneness, belief no other person can understand, or non-human identity).

5. Alterations in perception of perpetrator, including:

- pre-occupation with relationship with perpetrator (includes preoccupation with revenge);
- unrealistic attribution of total power to perpetrator (caution: victim's assessment of power realities may be more realistic than clinician's);
- idealization or paradoxical [relationship]...
- sense of special or supernatural relationship; [and]
- acceptance of belief system or rationalizations of perpetrator.

6. Alterations in relations with others, including:

- isolation and withdrawal;
- disruption in intimate relationships;
- repeated search for rescuer (may alternate with isolation and withdrawal);
- persistent distrust; [and]
- repeated failures of self-protection.

7. Alterations in systems of meaning, [including]:

- loss of sustaining faith; [and]
- sense of hopelessness and despair" (Wesley-Esquimaux and Smolewski, 2004, p. 95).

A copy of the authors' full report can be obtained at https://www.ahf.ca/files/historic-trauma.pdf.

Further resources on trauma from the **Aboriginal Healing Foundation**, also part of the Research Series mentioned earlier, include reports also examining Métis and Inuit experiences:

Reclaiming Connections: Understanding Residential School Trauma Among Aboriginal People

Métis History and Experience and Residential Schools in Canada

A Brief Report of the Federal Government of Canada's Residential School System for Inuit

The Aboriginal Healing Foundation ceased operations in 2014, as funding was no longer available; however, their contribution to healing and community health was monumental. I invite you to visit their website, which contains a record of their work — and their story.

Intergenerational Trauma

Let us now view a couple of videos that present on **Intergenerational Trauma**. Please bear in mind the difficult and potentially 'triggering' material, not only in this chapter, but throughout the textbook.

Intergenerational Trauma Animation

- What did you take away from this viewing?

- Did anyone note where this animation was produced? What does that mean?
- After viewing, what other thoughts occurred after you had time to reflect?

The Impact of Intergenerational Trauma

- What did you take away from this viewing?
- What does this tell you about the impacts of historic and intergenerational trauma?
- What are the costs of intergenerational trauma?
- Does our knowledge of impacts and costs suggest we need to pay attention to current-day actions and harms?

It is through the work of the Aboriginal Healing Foundation that created the conditions for Indigenous peoples to be directly engaged in their own healing. You can read about their research and approaches, which were ground-breaking for positioning traditional healing through culture into practice across Canada, on reserves, in urban settings, and even in Canada's prisons.

Traditional Healing

I would now like to present on a study that I was engaged in as a federal government public servant with Correctional Services Canada between 2003 and 2014, and even beyond.

I will begin by telling my story of how I became involved in the development of the Aboriginal Offender Substance Abuse Program for Correctional Services Canada in 2003. The written record can be found in the CSC Research Report by Kunic & Varis (2009). The need was very clear and aptly stated by CSC Elder Susan Stranglingwolf, Siksika First Nation, AB: "Our boys need this program so they can return to their communities healthy and strong. You will make mistakes and that is okay. As long as you do what needs to be done in a good and respectful way." In the latter part of her statement, Elder Susan was referring to the fact that the work on which we were about to embark was historic and never done before. When doing this work, one has to be patient and know that there will be trial and error and lessons learned; but the key was to be guided by Indigenous teachings and values.

But before I begin, I'd like to draw attention to several photos from the experience; firstly, the place at which the journey began can be seen in Figure 26; next, Figure 27 shows the team of Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and CSC Directors who were instrumental in its launch; and lastly, the final national training session in Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory, Ontario is shown in Figure 28. Everything came together in the Fall of 2003 at the Willow Cree Healing Lodge, located on the Beardy's and Okemasis First Nation's Reserve, just west of Duck Lake, Saskatchewan.

Figure 26

Willow Cree Healing Lodge, Saskatchewan

Figure 27

2003 AOSAP Project Team, Wanuskewin, SK

Figure 28

AOSAP National Training, Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory, ON

A review of the literature on programmed development was clear on what was considered as the best approach to providing effective treatment for Indigenous peoples — and in particular — Indigenous offenders. I present a synopsis of what we found from this review.

“It has been shown that the integration of contemporary best practices with culturally appropriate approaches (i.e., a blended approach) promotes healing and general wellbeing among Aboriginal offenders, and reinforces cultural values, which may later serve to mitigate risk for re-offending and sustain healthy community functioning (Ellerby & Ellerby, 2000; Trevethan, Moore & Allegri, 2005).

A **blended approach** recognizes that addressing family of origin and developmental experiences, and teaching traditional culture are critical to the process of healing and maintaining wellness of Aboriginal peoples (Ellerby & Ellerby, 2000; Ellerby, 2002). It is generally accepted that for western therapies and models to be most effective with Aboriginal peoples, they must examine Aboriginal spirituality, incorporate traditional Aboriginal thinking and practice and understand the Aboriginal worldview (Duran & Duran, 1995; Dell & Lyons, 2007). Aboriginal scholars have consistently maintained that the role of traditional teachings and culture in the facilitation of wellness for, and resiliency of Aboriginal peoples must be regarded as the foundation on which treatment is grounded (Couture, 2000)” (Kunic & Varis, 2009).

You may recall in Chapter 3, we spoke about Indigenous worldviews and ways of knowing, being, and doing. Without sounding facetious, Indigenous peoples know how to live, heal, survive, and thrive. Indigenous peoples

have been doing it for millennia, even though they were destined for extinction, not through a catastrophic disaster like an asteroid striking the earth, but a more treacherous and prolonged force — colonization.

When Dr. Joe, my mentor, helped us conceptualize the program, his recommendation was absolutely clear. He spoke of the concept of a blended approach, and, as mentioned earlier, he used the term "**using medicines on both sides of the river**," which signified using the "best practices of both worlds."

The significance of using the "best practices of both worlds" was that the substance abuse treatment (healing program), which was developed by our team at the Addictions Research Centre, Correctional Services Canada, Montague, PEI, was that it was highly successful — not anecdotally — but as evidenced through research.

We first piloted the program in several institutions across the country, one location being the Stony Mountain Institution, in my homeland, Territory 1, just north of where I grew up in Winnipeg, Manitoba. This can be seen in Figure 29.

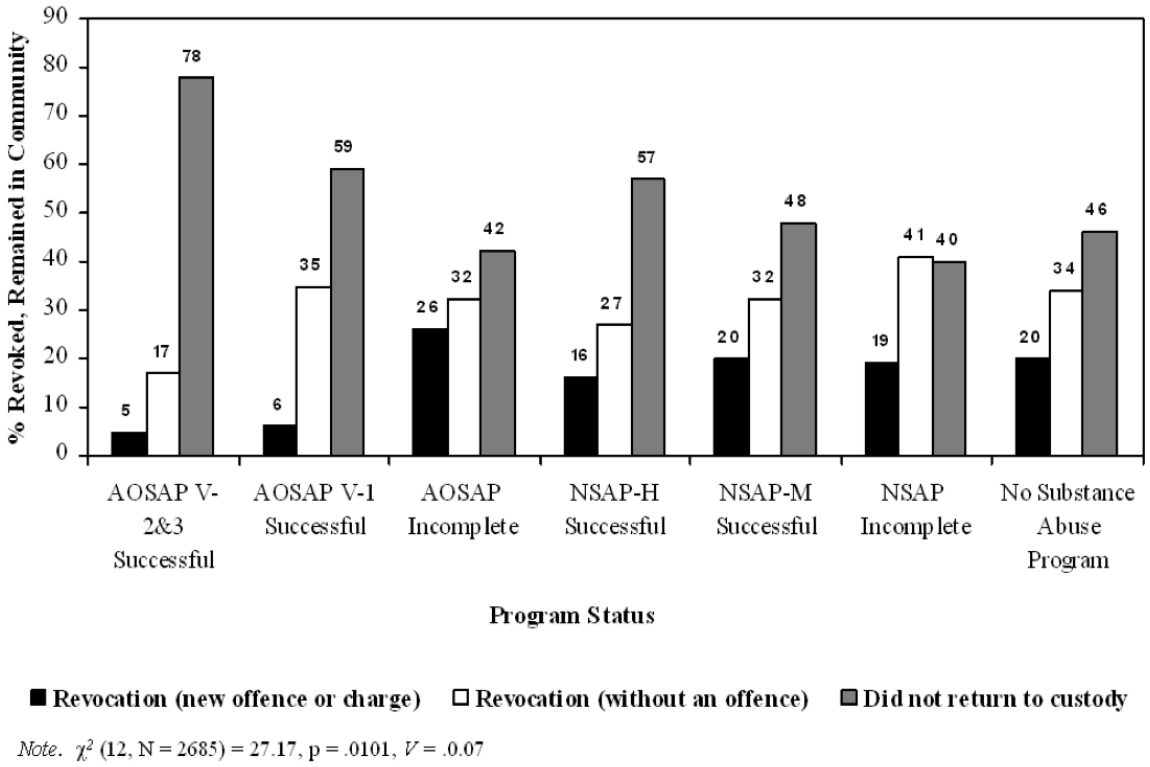
Figure 29

CCS's Stony Mountain Institution, Manitoba

Below in Figure 30, we see the results from our study. These capture that offenders who successfully completed the AOSAP had much better outcomes after being conditionally released and remaining in the community, without a revocation and/or criminal conviction, compared to participants in a main-stream program (NSAP) or participants who had not completed any form of treatment.

Figure 30

Distribution of Revocations Across Program Exposure Categories



Note. χ^2 (12, N = 2685) = 27.17, p = .0101, V = .0.07

"These findings add weight to the evidence in support of traditional approaches to treating substance abuse problems in Aboriginal men.

Aboriginal scholars have consistently argued that the role of traditional teachings and culture in the facilitation of wellness for, and resiliency of Aboriginal peoples must be regarded as the foundation on which treatment is grounded. The fact that AOSAP outperformed mainstream substance abuse programs is consistent with contemporary best practices in effective correctional intervention. Offering content and a mode of service delivery that is responsive to the offender's attributes will facilitate active participation and engagement of the offender in treatment and lead to better outcomes.

In the case of Aboriginal offenders, programs and interventions that are grounded in Aboriginal traditions, spirituality, and culture that strive to heal the individual in holistic terms, will facilitate rehabilitation efforts and enhance engagement and participation of the offender in treatment" (Kunic & Varis, 2009).

This research is just one perspective; another perspective is the actual men who participated in the program: let us hear what they had to say.

Voices from Inside – How Culture Healed

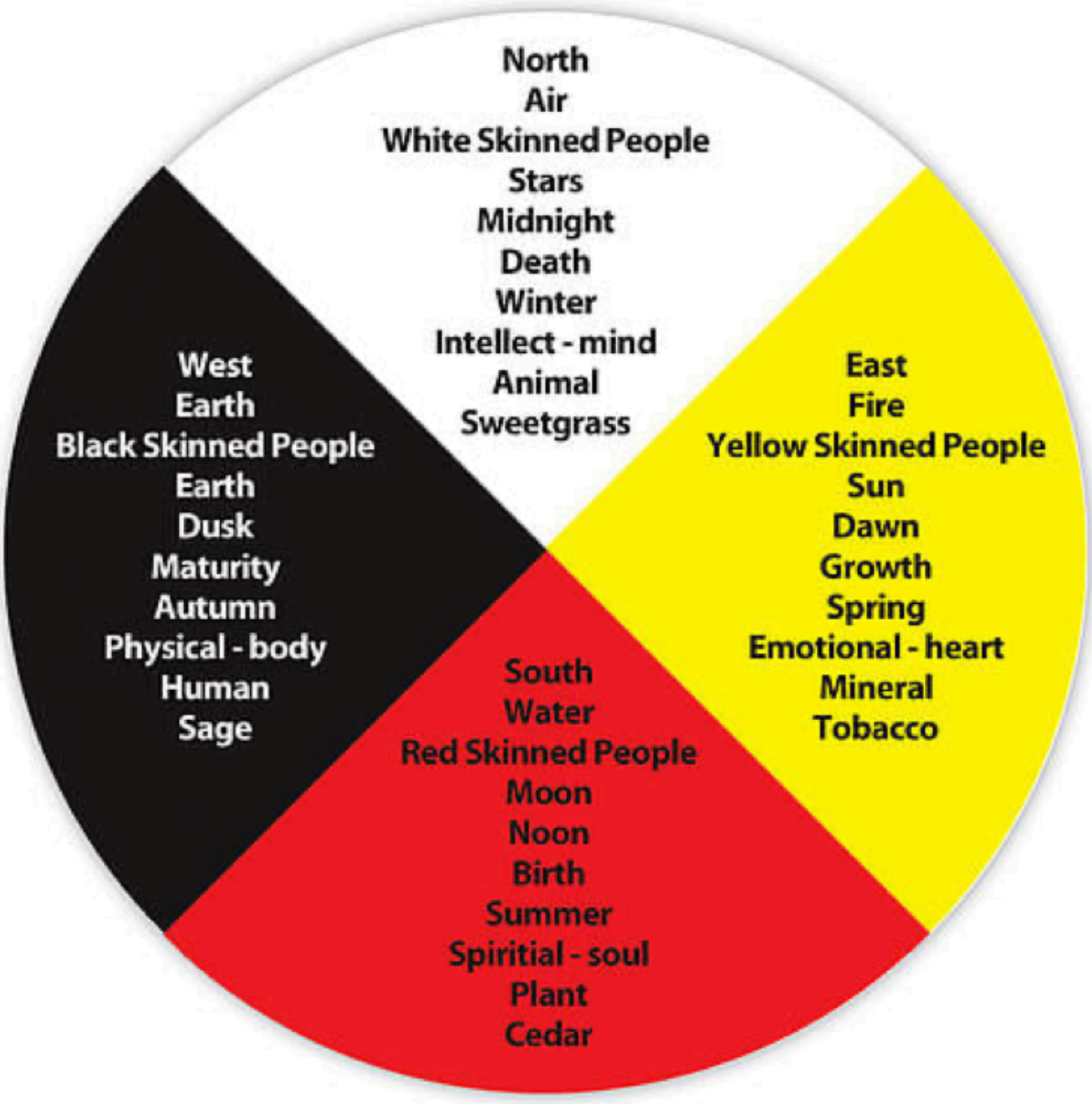
One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://pressbooks.library.upei.ca/ike1040indigenousteachings2ndedition/?p=79#audio-79-1

Contemporary Health, Healing, and Wellness

Many contemporary Indigenous **health**, **healing**, and **wellness** programs use cultural teachings as their foundation, most often delivered through an Elder. One such teaching is the **Medicine Wheel** depicted in Figure 31. While it is not the only method or tool, it has found great utility.

Figure 31

The Medicine Wheel



There are a number of ways that the Medicine Wheel teachings are used by Elders, practitioners, and communities. They may be integrated into treatment, and, dependent on the cultural teachings, those in the traditional healing or helping professions may introduce participants to the cultural teachings respecting the connectedness of relations that comprise the world in which they live, as depicted in the image above.

Introduced in the AOSAP, the Medicine Wheel, which we renamed the **Circle of Wellness**, unfolded into other explorations, including how it applied to the four domains of self (physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual), stages and roles in life, and how it could help with self-care, wellness, healthy living, and self-monitoring. There are many uses of the Medicine Wheel, including community development, research, and education. If you

want more information regarding the teachings contained in the Medicine Wheel, please see *Special Topics of Interest* at the end of the chapter.

Lastly, contemporary traditional healing and medicine can be found in an array of settings, encompassing varied approaches and methods. On a most positive note, this upsurge in cultural reclamation and self-autonomy are attracting more and more Indigenous youth to enter professions like healthcare. Before leaving this topic, let us first look at one community site using traditional healing.

CAMH opens Sweat Lodge

Like most topics covered throughout this text, we cannot examine these in any depth in an introductory course, such as *Indigenous Teachings of Turtle Island*. The *Special Topics of Interest* and *Cultural Competency Supplemental Tutorials* at the end of each chapter are offered as additional resources, should you wish to explore further. Moreover, the Indigenous Studies Program exists so you can enter higher-level courses to examine topics of interest in more detail.

Key Terms and Concepts from the Chapter

- complex post-traumatic stress disorder
- Aboriginal Healing Foundation
- intergenerational trauma
- a blended approach
- using medicines on both sides of the river
- health
- healing
- wellness
- the Medicine Wheel/Circle of Wellness

Important Readings/Viewings for Next Class

- Alfred, Venne, and Manuel articles – *A Manual for Decolonization* (pp. 10-21)

Special Topics of Interest

- The Witness Blanket: Stories from Survivors of Indian Residential Schools
- Coming Home: Sixties Scoop Survivors Reclaim Their Culture

Cultural Competency Supplemental Tutorials

- What is the Medicine Wheel? (Jeff Ward)

Chapter 8: Land Dispossession ~ Systemic Racism ~ Right to Self-Determination

Introduction

I begin this chapter with a reflection: Who are the stewards of the **land** and earth? Who are the ones who will protect the **air** we breathe or the **water** we drink? Who will ensure that these three essential elements necessary for survival are safeguarded? The fourth essential element, **fire**, can only exist with the first three. All four elements are our relations, and we only exist as a species because of them. So who are the protectors or stewards of these sacred elements?

Is it the public? Is it the government? Is it non-governmental organizations (NGOs)? Is it other entities, like Canada's top 10 mining companies, whose combined revenue in 2022 topped 100 billion dollars? Is it the coal, oil, and gas sector, which is consistently identified as the main source of greenhouse gas emissions with 100 companies having been the source of more than 70% of the world's global industrial emissions since 1988? Is it the airlines — which are also major contributors to air pollution — with the global market share reaching 779 billion U.S. dollars in 2023? Air Canada is ranked 10th on the list of the world's largest airlines with 2023 revenue of $12.7 billion and assets totaling $21.8 billion. Is it the banks, whose "aggregate assets of the 50 largest banks contracted 2% to $89 trillion" in 2022?

I could go on to examine and report on the revenue and profits of transnational corporations in agribusiness, the forestry sector, the fishing industry, and other corporate entities who are in the 'extractive' or 'polluting' business; and then see what portion of profits go back to activities designed to sustain or protect the elements; but this is best left to experts, researchers, and scholars to pursue. While I know 'big businesses' been introduced into the equation on the climate change fight, their commitment and larger contribution to 'protecting,' 'sustaining,' and 'conserving' are largely nebulous based on my cursory review.

In a recent article titled, "The determinants of planetary health: an Indigenous consensus perspective," Redvers et al. (2022) in their summary write,

"Indigenous Peoples have resiliently weathered continued assaults on their sovereignty and rights throughout colonialism and its continuing effects. Indigenous Peoples' sovereignty has been strained by the increasing effects of global environmental change within their territories, including climate change and pollution, and by threats and impositions against their land and water rights. This continuing strain against sovereignty has prompted a call to action to conceptualize the determinants of planetary health from a perspective that embodied Indigenous-specific methods of knowledge gathering from around the globe. A group of Indigenous scholars, practitioners, land and water defenders, respected Elders, and knowledge-holders came together to define the determinants of planetary health from an Indigenous perspective. Three overarching levels of interconnected determinants, in addition to ten individual-level determinants, were identified as being integral to the health and sustainability of the planet, Mother Earth" (p. 156).

You are invited to explore this area through articles like the one above or through the cross-listed IKE and Applied Climate Change course: IKE-2030: *Indigenous Knowledge & Climate Change*, whose description is as follows:

"This course brings knowledge of Canadian Indigenous communities' relationship to the environment as valuable lessons for understanding climate vulnerability, impacts and, adaptation. Students will be led by a local First Nations teacher whose valuable insights to implementing efficient uses of our land and spiritual relationships with nature can assist in addressing global sustainability." The course was initially created and taught by L'nu Elder, Historian, and scholar, Dr. Patrick Augustine, who I highlighted earlier in the text.

So to conclude this introductory reflection, and to answer the question, *Who are the protectors or stewards of these sacred elements?,* I would say that Indigenous peoples are the ones who have, not only a vested interest in survival, but have been recognized globally as peoples who have traditional knowledges — many rooted in 'science' that are needed for Mother Earth's survival — including the human species. It is sadly ironic what has happened to First peoples and where we are today. Now that time is running out on climate change and adaptation fixes, Indigenous peoples continue to be the most impacted by the actions, or lack of action, by those who have been responsible for where we are today. Let us return to the important topics in this chapter.

Topics at a Glance

- The Land, Water, Air, Fire, and Relations of the L'nu
- Alfred, Venne, and Manuel
- Land Dispossession
- Systemic Racism
- Right to Self-Determination

The Land, Water, Air, Fire, and Relations of the L'nu

I have been fortunate enough to travel throughout Mi'kmak'i and the seven districts; one of my favourite spots is Unama'kik. Within that district, one will find the spectacular Cape Breton Trail, which attracts tourists from all over the world. Isn't it majestic? (see Figure 32.)

Figure 32

Unama'kik and the Cape Breton Trail, Nova Scotia

If you wish to know more about Unama'kik in relation to Indigenous Education, please visit Unama'ki College, Cape Breton University, Nova Scotia, where close to 500 Indigenous students attend. Pertinent to this chapter, I encourage you take a few moments to gather more information on Unama'ki's Mi'kmaq voice on natural resources and the environment at Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources.

The Oceans and the Finned

Our Elder-in-Residence, Dr. Judith Clark, provided me with this excellent video that brings to the forefront the issues that face our oceans and finned relations. It is a reality that we must address.

Netukulimk by Ocean School

The Air and the Winged

Lastly, I acknowledge that, as a species, we must do better in relation to our air which we breath. Without air, we cannot survive, nor can our majestic winged relations fly to carry our prayers to the Creator. Figure 33 captures Kitpu flying with the air, the land, and the water on Epekwitk, Prince Edward Island.

Figure 33

Kitpu flying with the air, the land, and the water on Epekwitk

Alfred, Venne, and Manuel

If I haven't already mentioned it, the Mi'kmaq word *Kitpu* means *Eagle* in English. Kitpu is revered by Indigenous peoples not only in Epekwitk and all districts of Mi'kmak'i, but also across Turtle Island. We will now return our focus to the chapter and examining the matters of land dispossession, systemic racism, and the fight for sovereignty. I believe that the best way to do so is to have us discuss the readings of **Alfred, Venne, and Manuel** from the *Whose Land is it Anyway? A Manual for Decolonization* text. Below are selected quotes from each author.

Taiaiake Alfred: It's all about the land

"Reconciling with colonialism cannot heal the wounds the colonizers have wrought on our collective existence. The essential harm of colonization is that the living relationship between our people and our land has been severed. By fraud, abuse, violence, and sheer force of numbers, white society has forced us into the situation of being refugees and trespassers in our own homelands and we are prevented from maintaining the physical, spiritual, and cultural relationships necessary for our continuation as nations" (p. 11).

- How do you feel about this?

Sharon Venne: Crown title : A legal lie

"In 1972, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) – which some people refer to as the World Court – issued an advisory opinion in relation to the rights of Indigenous peoples in the Western Sahara case. The Court struck down the concepts of discovery, conquest, and terra nullius – lands without any people. Our nations were never discovered; we were not lost. We were not conquered. Our territories were not terra nullius – the ICJ directed

that there needed to be a treaty prior to entering into their territory. British Columbia and large areas of Canada did not have treaties with the colonizers. Instead, Canada tries to manipulate the treaty process. The policies leave our nations in debt as our small underfunded communities need to borrow money to have the resources to negotiate with Canada. The irony of the whole process is not lost on our old people – 'Why are we borrowing money to talk about our lands?' Then, there are the non-ending unilateral decisions by Canada while it changes the non-ending policies and directives. Canada makes no attempt to have a true treaty relationship based on trust and good faith. It is one-sided. It is also contrary to the United Nations' directives" (p. 16).

- How do you feel about this?

Arthur Manuel: From dispossession to dependency

". . . they had fenced off our lands from us and pushed us up against the river on the tiny reserve. But for my father, it was never more than a stopgap measure. He devoted his life to trying to get back our land and our right to govern ourselves.

In the immediate term, welfare cheques would play an important pacification role. It meant our people spent less time on our land and it allowed the white man to bring in all sorts of new laws forbidding us from hunting and fishing and trapping on our territories. When these measures were put in place, the Canada we see today was finally created. Indigenous peoples, from enjoying 100% of the landmass, were reduced by the settlers to a tiny patchwork of reserves that consisted of only 0.2% of the landmass of Canada, the territory of our existing reserves, with the settlers claiming 99.8% for themselves.

This is, in simple acreage, the biggest land theft in the history of mankind. This massive land dispossession and resultant dependency is not only a humiliation and an instant impoverishment, it has devastated our social, political, economic, cultural, and spiritual life. We continue to pay for it every day in grinding poverty, broken social relations, and too often in life-ending despair" (p. 20).

- How do you feel about this?

How do you feel about everything you've read, viewed, and learned to this point in the course? Sadly, we have not even touched on half of the harms that you've yet to learn about. That being said, let us first examine land dispossession.

Land Dispossession

Initially when teaching earlier versions of this chapter, my focus was not informed by global developments around land tenure and Indigenous rights. As highlighted in the Redvers et al. (2022) article, the issue of **land dispossession** is a worldwide phenomena. But in further support of the role Indigenous peoples play in terms of stewardship, aside from the Canadian and North American context, consider the following:

"80% of the world's remaining biodiversity is currently stewarded by Indigenous Peoples. Yet, Indigenous Peoples inhabit only 22% of the Earth's surface (Tauli-Corpuz, 2016). Indigenous Peoples manage or have tenure rights to a little more than a quarter of the world's surface in 87 countries or politically distinct areas on all inhabited continents. It is increasingly being appreciated that recognising Indigenous Peoples' 'rights to land, benefit sharing and institutions is important to meeting local and global conservation goals' (Garnett, Burgess, Fa et al., 2018). The essential roles of Indigenous Peoples are recognised [sic] in the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Nagoya Protocol (Greiber, Moreno, Ahren, et al., 2021), a demonstration of the need

for their essential leadership within conservation and sustainability spaces. However, Indigenous **land tenure rights** are under continued threat from governments, multinational corporations, and other interests, with violence against Indigenous environmental activists being strongly related to economic activities with high environmental impacts. Indigenous land tenure rights guarantees ownership or control of lands and resources, which ensures protection and conservation of the planet's ecosystems. It is integral that more awareness, amplification, and actioned support for Indigenous land tenure rights occurs to better ensure a healthy planet for all" (Redvers et al., 2022, 160).

One of the authors cited in the excerpt above, Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, an Indigenous leader from the Kankanaey Igorot people of the Cordillera Region in the Philippines, former Chairperson of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII), and later, Special Rapporteur of the Human Rights Council on the Rights of Indigenous peoples, gave a special lecture to my 2009 UPEI *Introduction to Sociology* class on 'Indigenous peoples, globalization, and the environment.' She appears in Figure 34, in the middle, with my students beside her. It was by pure luck that she happened to be on campus and made herself available to students, so I planned for her come to my class to do exactly that. It is yet another occasion to have created the opportunity to meet such a distinguished Indigenous leader.

Figure 34

United Nations Chairperson and Special Rapporteur, Victoria Tauli-Corpuz with UPEI Students

Over the last two decades, there has been an increased awareness and resistance against land dispossession.

Land dispossession is defined as “the taking or using of Indigenous land without free, prior, and informed consent” (Ninomiya, M. E. M., Burns, N., Pollock, N. J., Green, N. T., Martin, J., Linton, J., … & Latta, A., 2023). Globally, Indigenous peoples have mobilized and are “fighting back against land seizures” — but with a cost. According to the World Resources Institute, in 2017, “197 land and environmental defenders were killed, the bloodiest year since Global Witness began keeping records on this issue” (Velt, 2018).

It is through a global connectedness, resistance lens, and knowing that the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007) is now acknowledged and accepted by most civilized countries — including the ‘hold-out countries’ of Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and the United States, — who initially refused to sign the UNDRIP, upon which I draw inspiration and hope.

As highlighted in the Alfred, Venne, and Manuel readings, land dispossession has been the main vehicle by which colonizing nations have come to ‘own’ the lands of the First peoples. The ongoing fight for the respect and recognition of the human rights of Indigenous peoples, including land access and possession, is continuous, and, as we will see in the next chapter, it is a fight that will not go away. Recall in the Manuel article, ‘land theft’ and its consequential impacts of ‘dependency’ is something that one would not simply forget about until it is rectified. Manuel also talked of ‘humiliation’ and the more insidious and damaging act of systemic racism.

In 2013, a television series titled *8th Fire: Aboriginal Peoples, Canada, & the Way Forward,* narrated by the now Province of Manitoba Premier, Wab Kinew, aired on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) television network. I continue to reference this series, including Episode 3: “Whose land is it anyway?“. If you want clarity around the issue of land dispossession, and even solutions to this problem, this is a must-watch.

Systemic Racism

Systemic racism (also known as **institutional racism**) is defined as “a concept whereby the social structures produce inequalities based on racial discrimination. Racialized people thus face challenges due to racism from both individuals and institutions (health, education, penal system, etc.). Systemic racism is a concept different from that of individual racism” (Souissi, 2022).

Let us now look at systemic racism in Canada, which also highlights other races and ethnicities as well.

Please view this *YouTube* video: What systemic racism in Canada looks like (CBC, 2020)

- What did you think?
- How do you feel about this?
- Why does systemic racism still continue to this day?

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

I know that the clear majority of Canadians do not condone of any form of racism or discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age, or mental or physical disability, as outlined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which also describes those basic rights and freedoms that all Canadians enjoy and preserve Canada as a free and democratic county. The Charter is one part of the broader Constitution Act, 1982.

Specific to Indigenous peoples, the Charter states:

“Section 25 – Aboriginal, treaty, or other rights and freedoms

25. The guarantee in this Charter of certain rights and freedoms shall not be construed so as to abrogate or derogate from any aboriginal, treaty, or other rights or freedoms that pertain to the aboriginal peoples of Canada including:

a) any rights or freedoms that have been recognized by the Royal Proclamation of October 7, 1763; and

b) any rights or freedoms that now exist by way of land claims agreements or may be so acquired."

"The Constitution recognizes the rights of Aboriginal Peoples of Canada to protect their culture, customs, traditions, and languages. The Aboriginal Peoples of Canada are also referred to as Indigenous Peoples, though constitutional provisions specifically refer to Aboriginal Peoples.

Section 25 makes it clear that other rights contained in the Charter must not interfere with the rights of Aboriginal Peoples. For example, where Indigenous Peoples are entitled to special benefits under treaties, other persons who do not enjoy those benefits cannot argue that they have been denied the right to be treated equally under section 15 of the Charter.

In addition to **section 25 of the Charter**, **section 35 of the *Constitution Act***, 1982, Part II – Rights of the Aboriginal Peoples of Canada, states that the existing Aboriginal and treaty rights of the Indigenous Peoples of Canada are recognized and affirmed. The Supreme Court of Canada has ruled that section 35 means that Indigenous rights under treaties or other laws are now protected under the *Constitution Act*, 1982" (Government of Canada, 2022).

The topic of systemic racism is an area that the IKERAS Faculty explores in many courses it offers to students. For now, know that systemic racism has had — and continues to — substantially affect Indigenous peoples in a myriad of ways, including fair treatment by the justice system and equitable access to the land and waters, housing, clean drinking water, education, health care, employment, and food security, to name a few of the most pressing issues faced by Indigenous peoples.

As humans, we tend to be presented a problem and quickly look to solutions. The 'problem' of Indigenous and non-Indigenous relations in Canada has been known for a long time, and it has its roots in colonialism and colonization. In 1969, the federal government's solution to the 'Indian problem' came in the form of a policy document labelled the White Paper. The **White Paper**, with little to no widespread consultation, aimed at extinguishing all treaties, the *Indian Act*, and Crown fiduciary obligations to those Indigenous peoples covered by the *Indian Act* — and it was a means by which the government could eventually declare Indigenous peoples 'assimilated' into Canadian society. This proposal drew a firestorm response from Indigenous leaders and communities, as it was such a blatant act of systemic racism. Solutions are never simple, and we must recognize that Indigenous and non-Indigenous relations in Canada are highly complex.

We will examine how Indigenous peoples arrived at their own solutions, including cultural reclamation, resistance, and activism in the next chapters. However, one over-arching solution, **Indigenous sovereignty,** has been discussed, debated, and considered as therein emerges principles of self-determination, self-government, and protection human rights. Yet, it too has been dismissed by some Indigenous scholars as merely a conception that continues colonial hegemony to thrive.

According to Rashwet Shrinkhal, Department of Contemporary & Tribal Customary Law, Central University of Jharkhand, India, they conclude after a comprehensive examination of Indigenous sovereignty in international law by stating,

"Sovereignty exhibits temporal relativism in terms of its meaning and scope. What it used to symbolise [sic] and what it presently stands for depends upon the political subjects who have unfold its ambit and continue to do so in defining relationships with one another; setting their political agendas; and their plans for attaining and

sustaining autonomy and social justice. Thus to appreciate how sovereignty matters and for whom, historical and cultural context must be taken into account. In connection with indigenous peoples, traditional notion of sovereignty carries the unpleasant traits of colonialism. Indigenous peoples have seriously put a challenge to this archaic notion and redefined the concept from their own perspective. For them, indigenous sovereignty is linked with identity and right to self-determination. Self-determination should be understood as power of "peoples" to control their own destiny. Therefore for indigenous peoples, right to self-determination is instrumental in the protection of their human rights and struggle for self-governance. However the indigenous peoples' right to self-determination inherently carries a gene of secessionist tendency which should be democratically neutralised [sic] to the maximum possible extent by ensuring political and social autonomy to indigenous communities and respecting their human rights" (Shrinkhal, 2021).

Let us briefly explore the 'right to self-determination,' as this principle is most recognized as an important way forward for Indigenous peoples — even though the grander solutions respecting the environment still loom large.

Right to Self-Determination

While the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007), also referred to as UNDRIP, is a foundational global framework, we will spend the last portion of this chapter looking at **the right to self-determination** from the Canadian context.

Government of Canada's Position

The Department of Justice, **Government of Canada** website titled, *Principles respecting the Government of Canada's relationship with Indigenous peoples,* presents the following as a way to introduce the Government of Canada's stance some 50 years after the infamous *White Paper*,

"The Government of Canada is committed to achieving reconciliation with Indigenous peoples through a renewed, nation-to-nation, government-to-government, and Inuit-Crown relationship based on recognition of rights, respect, co-operation, and partnership as the foundation for transformative change.

Indigenous peoples have a special constitutional relationship with the Crown. This relationship, including existing Aboriginal and treaty rights, is recognized and affirmed in section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*. Section 35 contains a full box of rights, and holds the promise that Indigenous nations will become partners in Confederation on the basis of a fair and just reconciliation between Indigenous peoples and the Crown.

The Government recognizes that Indigenous self-government and laws are critical to Canada's future, and that Indigenous perspectives and rights must be incorporated in all aspects of this relationship. In doing so, we will continue the process of decolonization and hasten the end of its legacy wherever it remains in our laws and policies.

The implementation of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* requires transformative change in the Government's relationship with Indigenous peoples. The UN Declaration is a statement of the collective and individual rights that are necessary for the survival, dignity, and well-being of Indigenous peoples around the world, and the Government must take an active role in enabling these rights to be exercised. The Government will fulfill its commitment to implementing the UN Declaration through the review of laws and policies, as well as other collaborative initiatives and actions. This approach aligns with the UN Declaration itself, which contemplates that it may be implemented by States through various measures" (Government of Canada, 2021). The principles are also presented in Figure 35.

Figure 35

Principles of Canada's Relationship with Indigenous Peoples

Department of Justice Canada | Ministère de la Justice Canada

PRINCIPLES

Respecting the Government of Canada's Relationship With Indigenous Peoples

The Government of Canada recognizes that:

1. All relations with Indigenous peoples need to be based on the recognition and implementation of their right to self-determination, including the inherent right of self-government.

2. Reconciliation is a fundamental purpose of section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*.

3. The honour of the Crown guides the conduct of the Crown in all of its dealings with Indigenous peoples.

4. Indigenous self-government is part of Canada's evolving system of cooperative federalism and distinct orders of government.

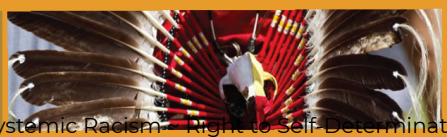
5. Treaties, agreements, and other constructive arrangements between Indigenous peoples and the Crown have been and are intended to be acts of reconciliation based on mutual recognition and respect.

6. Meaningful engagement with Indigenous peoples aims to secure their free, prior, and informed consent when Canada proposes to take actions which impact them and their rights on their lands, territories, and resources.

7. Respecting and implementing rights is essential and that any infringement of section 35 rights must by law meet a high threshold of justification which includes Indigenous perspectives and satisfies the Crown's fiduciary obligations.

8. Reconciliation and self-government require a renewed fiscal relationship, developed in collaboration with Indigenous nations, that promotes a mutually supportive climate for economic partnership and resource development.

9. Reconciliation is an ongoing process that occurs in the context of evolving Indigenous-Crown relationships.



10. A distinctions-based approach is needed to ensure that the unique rights, interests and circumstances of the First Nations, the Métis Nation and Inuit are

Assembly of First Nations' (AFN) Position

As you may recall in one of the earlier chapters, we looked at the **Assembly of First Nations** (AFN), a national governance structure overseeing strategic direction, policy development, and direct negotiations with the Government of Canada on behalf of the 600-plus First Nations in Canada. According to the AFN Rights & Justice Branch Rights Sector, which issued an update report on the Inherent Right to Self-Government Policy Directive by the Government of Canada, they state:

"With the passage of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (UNDA) on June 21, 2021, the Inherent Right to Self-Government (IRSG) continues to be identified as a policy that is clearly inconsistent with the UN Declaration, particularly Articles 18 and 19. This outdated and racist policy must be formally repealed by Canada. First Nations-in-Assembly have passed several resolutions rejecting the IRSG including AFN Resolution 24/2005, Review of the Federal Comprehensive Claims Policy and the Federal Inherent Right to Self-Government Policy.

First Nations-in-Assembly have long called for rights-based approaches aligned with legal and political structures and that are consistent with the full recognition of First Nations' inherent rights, title, and jurisdiction. While First Nations have continued to express concern with Canada's approach to self-government tables, consultation and engagements continue to be a federal priority, as evidenced by Minister of Crown Indigenous Relations (CIRNA) Minister Miller's 2021 Mandate Letter whereby the Minister was mandated to 'work with Indigenous partners and relevant Ministers to accelerate the Recognition of Indigenous Rights and Self-determination processes . . .'

The AFN continues to advocate that Section 5 of the UNDA commits Canada to take 'all measures necessary' to ensure consistency of federal laws and policy with the UN Declaration. The UNDA could be a viable mechanism to achieve immediate repeal of this policy as directed by the First Nations-in-Assembly.

The AFN will continue to support First Nations in their strategies and methods of asserting self-determination and self-governance apart from legislated or imposed colonial policy and legislated operatives. The AFN will continue to call on Canada to ensure its efforts are respectful of First Nations' distinct approaches to asserting their inherent rights to their lands and resources. The AFN continues to action Resolution 25/2019, Support for a First Nations Led Engagement Process on Nation Building, calling for a process to replace existing rights-based policies through a First Nations-led process.

The AFN will continue to explore options to address the consequences the IRSG and develop options for the First Nations-in-Assembly to consider on how redress and compensation, such as loan-forgiveness, might finally overcome the long, dark shadow of this harmful policy. Federal commitment to supporting First Nations in the exercise of their inherent rights must also address the systemic consequences and costs of this policy and support First Nations-led alternatives that respect our rights and honours Canada's commitments" (AFN, 2022).

So what does all this mean?

In my scholarly, yet lay-person opinion, as this is highly principles-based and policy development-related work by two parties, there is simply an impasse. Clearly, one party (Government of Canada) considers this work important, yet, they are managing the process and determining the ways forward. On the other hand, the very peoples whose lives and rights to 'self-determination' are at stake, and knowing that "to implement the UN Declaration means respecting First Nations' inalienable right to our distinct self-government models free from colonially imposed policies that limit the scope and content of our sovereignty," their position is clear: let our work guide the process and outcome.

We have covered an enormous amount of information, starting from Indigenous peoples' connection to land

through to the right to self-determination — and these are complex matters. Let me end on a most positive note: maybe it is not as complex as we are led to believe. In this video below, change is more than possible.

Mulroney gave Inuit 'a right to self-determination,' former Nunavut premier says | Canada Tonight

As I was putting the final touches on this chapter, the Government of Canada had a special state funeral for the former Prime Minister Brian Mulroney (1984–1993) who passed away at the age of 84 on February 29, 2024. We honour such leaders as him for their contributions to the public service and especially to the Inuit of the North.

Key Terms and Concepts from the Chapter

- earth, air, water, and fire
- excerpts from Alfred, Venne, and Manuel
- land dispossession
- land tenure rights
- systemic or institutional racism
- Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms: Section 25
- Constitutional Act: Section 35
- the White Paper policy
- Indigenous sovereignty
- the right to self-determination
- the positions of the Government of Canada and Assembly of First Nations

Important Readings/Viewings for Next Class

- Laboucan-Massimo article, "Lessons from Wesahkecahk" – *A Manual for Decolonization* (pp. 36-41)

Special Topics of Interest

- Towards Truth: supporting First Nations truth telling and the Uluru Statement from the Heart
- L'nuey Moving Towards a Better Tomorrow

Cultural Competency Supplemental Tutorials

- Lunalia 2022: Mi'kmaq moon ritual – a conversation with Darlene Gijuminag

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Chapter 9: Indigenous Resilience ~ Reclamation ~ Resistance

Introduction

As I started writing this chapter, I had to first think about the themes that comprise not only this chapter, but the remaining chapters. These themes are very important and central to how this journey of *Indigenous teachings* becomes etched into the mind, body, and spirit — and, more importantly, how it may resonate, long after the course ends.

I used the term 'etched,' and it's quite appropriate, which I will explain momentarily. I am particularly drawn to all photographs of the communal drum; I also cherish these photos very deeply, and I see the drum and dedicated drummers at Indigenous gatherings across Turtle Island. The Mi'kmaq term for **gathering** is ***Mawi'omi***. In this chapter, I use select ceremonial drumming photos to signify the three main themes of resilience, reclamation, and resistance.

Topics at a Glance

- Indigenous Resilience
- Reclamation
- Resistance

I draw your attention to Figure 36, which was taken in 2019 at the first Indigenous Artisan Market in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island.

Figure 36

Drummers Calling the Ancestors ~ Resilience

When you look at this photo, what do you see, hear, feel, and understand?

There is much happening here; your interpretations and experiences with the image are uniquely yours. It was only through a deeper exploration of my own photograph that I saw the 'etchings' behind the young woman recording the song. These etchings are known as petroglyphs. "Petroglyphs are carvings that are incised, abraded, or ground by means of stone tools upon cliff walls, boulders, and flat bedrock surfaces" (The Canadian Encyclopedia, 2023). While the replication needs verification, the design is distinctly Mi'kmaq.

While beyond the scope of this text to examine Mi'kmaq petroglyphs and information relating to these archeological discoveries, we do know that these etchings usually "include animals, anthropomorphic figures, hunting and fishing scenes, footprints and fingerprints, and ornamental designs that are also found on Mi'kmaq clothes" (The Canadian Encyclopedia, 2023). Hence, we see two panels, one with the distinct design, and on the other panel, a person wearing traditional clothing with the design woven throughout. Lastly, research into the Mi'kmaq peoples show that they occupied parts on Mi'kmak'i between 10,000 to 13,000 years ago. Petroglyphs are one way to understand the story of the ancestors. A fascinating documentary that discusses the preservation of knowledge relating to Mi'kmaq peoples and artifacts can be found in the CBC Land and Sea production called *The Mi'kmaq Journey*.

"Drummers Calling the Ancestors ~ Resilience" represents the link between the present and the past. The traditional drumming songs during a Mawi'omi or Powwow are powerful, and one can sense the presence of the spirits. When we gather, we honour 'all our relations.' We not only come to honour, see loved ones we may not have seen for a long time, and be immersed in cultural ways, but we also come to heal. Indigenous peoples have endured much over the millennia. Let us now explore this concept of resilience.

Indigenous Resilience

Before examining some concrete examples of **resilience**, we should define *resilience*. Although it's from the Australian context, I found this contemporary definition and work of its authors exceptionally insightful:

"Contemporary definitions of resilience refer to an individual's positive adaptation to the experience of adversity. Indigenous resilience is a complex phenomenon which relies on the positive adaptation of the individual, the community, and the environment to adversity. Indigenous Peoples of Australia, like most other Indigenous populations globally, experience higher levels of adversity than non-indigenous people with a greatly disproportionate burden of disease, disability, premature mortality, and pervasive health inequalities over many decades" (Usher et al., 2021).

The definition is appropriate to Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island, but what makes their work, *Indigenous resilience in Australia: A scoping review using a reflective decolonizing collective dialogue*, significant is the inclusion of Indigenous insights and narrative. The authors go on to state,

"Current understandings of these concepts (resilience, adaptation, adversity), largely framed in Western understandings, are unquestioningly accepted, reframed for, yet not by, Indigenous peoples, and then are unchallenged when imposed on Indigenous peoples" (Usher et al., 2021).

The authors found, in a review of 'Indigenist' literature, that the conception of Indigenous resilience extends beyond Western frameworks and concepts. They highlight that,

". . . Importantly, many studies confirm adversity is linked to the enduring legacies of colonization, continuous and cumulative transgenerational grief and loss, structural inequities, racism, and discrimination. These external factors of adversity are unique to Aboriginal populations, as are the protective factors that entail strengthening connection to culture (including language reclamation), community, ancestry, and land (including management and economic development) which contribute to individual and collective resilience. These findings suggest that Aboriginal community resilience is strengthened through the collective experience of adversity, such as transgenerational grief and loss, and the resulting support structures and shared resources that are developed and maintained through cultural practices to strengthen the bonds and mutual reciprocity to participate in transformative strategies to address adversity" (Usher et al., 2021).

An important contribution from the Canadian context comes from the 2010 article by Patricia D. McGuire titled *Exploring Resilience and Indigenous Ways of Knowing*. McGuire, also known as Kishebakabaykwe, who traces the contributions of other Indigenous scholars — some of whom have published research reports for the Aboriginal Healing Foundation — writes,

"Resilience, as a social theory term, dates from the 1970s (Dion-Stout and Kipling, 2003). The definition of resilience is elusive as it can mean many things. The common meanings are "the ability to rebound from challenges in everyday life" (Wesley-Esquimaux, 2009) and to recover from and survive adversarial conditions. Fleming and Ledogar (2008) call it a positive adaption to life despite harsh conditions. Andersson and Ledogar (2008) describe resilience as a positive lens through which to view Aboriginal communities.

Exploring resilience is based on community strengths, although Newhouse (2006) cautions that resilience can also be based on ideas about survival of the fittest. If the concept of resilience is used as a social lens on Aboriginal communities, Merritt (2007) argues, then, it must be defined from an indigenous context. To this end, Durie (2006) defined indigenous resilience as 'Superimposed on adversity and historic marginalization, indigenous resilience is a reflection of an innate determination by indigenous peoples to succeed. Resilience is the polar opposite of rigidity. It provides an alternate perspective to the more usual scenarios that emphasize

indigenous disadvantage and allows the indigenous challenge to be reconfigured as a search for success rather than an explanation of failure' (quoted in Valaskakis et al., 2009).

Indigenous resilience in this context is based on indigenous people(s)' innate capacities and focuses on success rather than overcoming challenges. In 2009, Wesley-Esquimaux contended that indigenous resilience has to be considered as a reawakening of the social and cultural resiliencies that indigenous peoples used to sustain them throughout other challenges" (pp. 120-121).

There are many scholarly articles on the topic of Indigenous resilience; in fact, there are too many to highlight here. However, I teach an upper-level Indigenous course on *Indigenous Health, Healing, and Wellness*, and I have found a course text, *Introduction to Determinants of First Nation, Inuit, and Metis Peoples' Health in Canada* (de Leeuw, Stout, Larstone, & Sutherland, 2022) that covers a broad spectrum of writings on resilience, especially as it relates to individual and community health. The text is a compilation of works from various authors. I present one quote from Johnson, Smith, and Beck (2022), who write about First Nations systems innovations as an example of resilience. They write,

"Despite continuing to be impacted by colonialism and oppression, First Nations have demonstrated remarkable resilience and ceaseless efforts to exercise **self-determination**. First Nations and other Indigenous people in BC, Canada, and internationally have advanced a multitude of efforts and strategies to make decisions for themselves, reclaim control through unity, and develop strategic partnerships to increase involvement is decision-making" (Johnson, Smith, & Beck, 2022, p. 253).

There is one other author, a member of the Kainai Nation, Blackfoot Confederacy, whose works speak directly to Indigenous resilience — as it's directly embedded in ways of knowing and being. In an article titled "In the Spirit of Dr. Betty Bastien: Conceptualizing Ontological Responsibilities through the lens of Blackfoot Resilience," Dr. Gabrielle Lindstrom, along with co-author Robert Weasel Head, (2023) write,

". . . a detailed review of the literature gave way to a distinct view of Blackfoot resilience as being a genealogical connection to the land in conjunction with strong leadership. Moreover, various themes emerged that helped to contextualize a deeper understanding of Indigenous resilience, including the importance of land, culture, relationships, language, leadership, sovereignty, identity, history, and community, as being key themes.

. . . research has illuminated how the impacts of colonization on Indigenous people, namely, intergenerational/historical trauma/oppression created through settler colonialism policies and processes are often the driving factor in attempts to better understand Indigenous notions of resilience. In other words, Indigenous resilience is often conceptualized as a response to colonization as opposed to an ontologically rooted state of existence (Lindstrom, 2023). Indigenous resistance to ongoing settler colonialism through the practice of Indigenous cultural lifeways, worldviews, and cultural transmission are demonstrative of the enduring nature of Indigenous perseverance as Indigenous nations are not homogenous and have differences in how they interpret the world based on ecological location and social structure" (Lindstrom and Head, 2023).

Lastly, Dr. Lindstrom, an Indigenous scholar at Mount Royal University in Calgary, writes,

"The beauty of human experience resides in our ability to learn and make meaning from these experiences not from a privatized space that forces us to suffer alone, but rather, within a holistic network of relations that fosters a recognition of a suffering that is shared, of a strength that is cultivated through dialogue and story-sharing, of a resilience that is fostered in a reciprocal exchange of compassion" (Lindstrom, 2023, p. 191).

If you wish to explore more of Dr. Lindstrom's work, I have included a *TEDx Talks* link under the *Special Topics* section at the end of the chapter.

To conclude this exploration, I provide the following *Government of Canada* link to a short, but highly illuminating video that explores several key topics, including resilience:

Resilience | Mentorship | Hope | Canada | Indigenous Women | Speak up

- What did you take away from this?
- What did you learn about resilience?
- What role do women play in advancing resilience, reclamation, and resistance?

Let us now look at the next key topic of our chapter.

Reclamation

I use the word **reclamation**, but there are many other similar words that I came across when researching for this section. A standard, Euro-centric Western definition (Oxford Dictionary, 2024) reads:

"rec·la·ma·tion /ˌreklə'māSH(ə)n/

noun: reclamation; plural noun: reclamations

1. the process of claiming something back or of reasserting a right. Usage: 'the reclamation of our shared history'"

Other words (synonyms) from the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2024 include:

- recovery
- recapture
- retrieval
- rescue
- repossession
- replenishment
- recoupment
- redemption

We will explore what reclamation means from an Indigenous perspective, and important linked words like *resurgence, revitalization, restoring, reimaging, recentering, reframing,* and *returning* are appearing in our present-day narratives. Figures 37 and 38 are images that show these **cultural reclamations** that are happening on campuses and communities across Kanata.

Figure 37

Mawi'omi at the University of Prince Edward Island, 2016 ~ Reclamation

Figure 38

National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, Prince Edward Island, 2023 ~ Reclamation

In my survey of Indigenous reclamation literatures, I discovered a host of areas in which Indigenous scholarship and contributions are taking place once the 'reclamation floodgates' have been fully opened. These include:

- language revitalization (McIvor & Anisman, 2018; McIvor, 2020);
- sustainable self-determination (Corntassel & Bryce, 2011);
- restoring Indigenous knowledge in practice and policy (Alfred, 2015);
- land, water, and environment (Twance, 2019; Liboiron, 2021; Leonard, 2023);
- governance and empowerment (Palmater, 2015);
- climate change and adaptation (Kınay, Wang, Augustine, P., & Augustine, M., 2023);
- education and pedagogy (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991; Battiste, 2019; Anthony-Stevens & Gallegos Buitron, 2023; Pratt & Bodnaresko, 2023);
- research (Kovach, 2021; Smith, 2021; Wilson, 2020);
- food sovereignty (Robin, 2019);
- storytelling (Archibald, 2008);
- art and performance (Taylor, 1996; Charles, 2020);
- humour (Taylor, 2012), and;
- above all else, *Indigenous Teachings*.

As one can see from the above survey, there are waves of Indigenous knowledges heading in all directions. Many deal specifically with Indigenous peoples' efforts to reclaim those ways of being, knowing, and doing, but at the same time, exposing others to the legacies and futures of colonization practices that go unchecked.

There are many fascinating works and articles on reclamation; let me share one that I thought spoke about looking forward, while still very much in the present and still honouring our past. In an Indigeneity contribution, "Global Futurisms: Prophetic Practices of Reclamation, Liberation, and Transcendence" by Timotéo I. Montoya II from the 2024 book, *A Companion to Contemporary Art in a Global Framework*, edited by Jane Chin Davidson and Amelia Jones, the author states,

"No longer enchanted with the Eurocentric and white supremacist-informed notions of 'universal' human qualities and progress-oriented metanarratives of Western colonial society perpetuated through Western science, colonial nation states, corporations, and other Western institutions (such as museums, schools, and political organizations), postmodernism in its critical forms seeks relativist ways of understanding the world by exploring the immanent, or individual and subjective frames of experience. With a skeptical orientation toward modernist idealism, which understood and defined reality through the seeking of universal truths (that were often inseparable from Eurocentrism), critical postmodernism came to reflect and be defined by novel present frames such as those held by Black, Indigenous, Asian, and other peoples of the global majority. These diverse present frames hold new potential understandings of the world liberated from modernist metanarratives. By exploring these immanent subjective frames through art and cultural theory, a plurality of perspectives that decentered Western colonial society begin to come into view and can be explored" (Montoya, 2024, p. 245).

With a good, healthy exploration of reclamation, I present a few links to solidify the learning, which will no doubt create more reflections:

NACF Releases Report on *Native Arts and Culture: Resilience, Reclamation, and Relevance* (see the video of the same name on *Native Arts and Culture Foundation* website)

Stories of reclaiming, owning and living Indigenous ways of being in Thunder Bay (CBC News, 2023)

Studying to preserve Indigenous language (CBC News, 2019)

- What were the main messages from each reporting?
- How does this make you feel?
- To what extent are these reclamation initiatives representative of what is happening across Turtle Island?
- In your opinion, how long will it take before full reclamation is a reality?

There is no linear pathway to Indigenous reclamation; that is, from the information presented in the last chapters and until this point in your reading, one doesn't necessarily follow a chronological order of, let's say, trauma → healing → resilience → and reclamation. It can start with resistance, which we will examine next.

Resistance

I introduce this section with a famous Indigenous leader quote: "If we must die, we die defending our rights." –Sitting Bull

Sitting Bull (1831-1890) was an Indigenous Hunkpapa Lakota leader from the North American Great Plains, South Dakota, United States. The quote "references the 1876 Battle of Little Bighorn and Sitting Bull's final surrender and murder at the age of 59 years in 1890 by Indian Agency Police at Standing Rock Reservation" (Oster, 2004). Standing Rock is also the site of recent Indigenous resistance and protest. Indigenous peoples within Canada have been in a constant state of **resistance**. Our history of Indigenous and non-Indigenous relations contains as many examples of resisting colonization as there were buffalo that graced the Great Plains. I direct you to Chapter 6: *Resistance I — 1750s to 1870s* and Chapter 8: *Resistance II — Red River and*

Saskatchewan in a open source textbook titled Histories of Indigenous Peoples and Canada — which looks specifically at resistance movements in the historical context.

Did you know that Indigenous peoples on both sides of the border, Canada and the United States, fought for these nation-states in the two World Wars, despite all that happened to their peoples during the last century and a half?

In 2005, I was part of a first-ever delegation of Veterans Affairs Canada staff, Indigenous War Veterans, youth, and cultural performers travelling overseas to France and Belgium for the 'Aboriginal Spiritual Journey: Calling Home Ceremony.' The purpose of the journey and special ceremony was to call home the spirits of all Indigenous peoples who gave their lives, and whose spirits were left behind in Europe (see Figure 39).

Figure 39

Indigenous War Veterans participating in the 'Calling Home Ceremony,' France, 2005

Did you know that it was after the Second World War in 1945 that **Indigenous war veterans** returned home to intolerable discrimination and appalling treatment, even after playing a significant role in Canada's war effort?

In the text, *Keeping the land: Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug, reconciliation and Canadian law*, which examines government's position respecting Indian lands, Dr. Rachel Ariss, Associate Professor, Legal Studies, University of Ontario Institute of Technology, and Indigenous community leader John Cutfeet stated that

Aboriginal activism has played an important part in the shifting legal and social landscapes of Aboriginal peoples and communities over time" (Ariss & Cutfeet, 2012, pp. 9-10). Ariss & Cutfeet (2012) explained that "the contemporary movement for Aboriginal rights begins with the return of Aboriginal veterans from World War II....Aboriginal service people were discriminated against on the basis of Indian status by the federal government bureaucracies in terms of benefits paid to their dependents while overseas, as well as in the benefits they received as veterans on their return" (p.10). The authors added that during this time, 1940s and 1950s, the Canadian public became aware of the significant contributions of Aboriginal veterans to the war effort but also became cognizant of the broader issues of discrimination, inequality, and human rights violations (Ariss & Cutfeet, p.10). The authors concluded that these "combined factors created some openness to re-thinking aspects of relating to Indians and Indian lands" (Ariss & Cutfeet, 2012, p. 10).

Resistance is invariably linked to rights. As the opening quote to this section pronounces, even if one must die, Indigenous rights must be protected. One Indigenous filmmaker, Alanis Obomsawin, spent an entire career ensuring that these resistance movements were documented. Her more well-known *National Film Board* (NFB) documentaries include:

Incident at Restigouche

Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance

Rocks at Whiskey Trench

Trick or Treaty?

Is the Crown at war with us?

In an interview with NFB Pause, she shares her thoughts on the making of *Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance*, 25 years after its release in 2018:

Alanis Obomsawin on Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance

As a warrior and Abenaki film director, whose works have garnered international attention, the following describes Alanis and her contribution:

"One of the most acclaimed Indigenous directors in the world, Alanis Obomsawin came to cinema from performance and storytelling. Hired by the *NFB* as a consultant in 1967, she has created an extraordinary body of work—50 films and counting—including landmark documentaries like *Incident at Restigouche* (1984) and *Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance* (1993). The Abenaki director has received numerous international honours and her work was showcased in a 2008 retrospective at New York's Museum of Modern Art. 'My main interest all my life has been education,' says Obomsawin, 'because that's where you develop yourself, where you learn to hate, or to love'" (*National Film Board*, 2024).

There is an award in her honour, named the *Alanis Obomsawin Award for Commitment to Community and Resistance*. The following is a brief description:

"It was first inaugurated in 2011 by Cinema Politica and given to John Greyson. The creation of this award was inspired by Ms. Obomsawin's awe-inspiring and unstoppable dedication to social justice and political documentary.

The AOACCR award is meant to celebrate the efforts and talents of a filmmaker who has shown a commitment to community and resistance in documentary filmmaking through the ways in which they showcase the stories of underrepresented and/or marginalized communities engaged in struggle. The award also honours a filmmaker whose dedication to social justice is connected to, but goes beyond filmmaking practices and who

actively participates in civil society, engages in collective action and uses film as a platform for progressive and radical social and political transformation" (Cinema Politica, 2015).

There are two areas I would like to explore with you before leaving the topic of resistance. Below, you will find a link to an article with well-done commentary, and then, followed by a video (see the end of the article by Michelle Cyca, 2017) on a resistance movement to 'Canada 150,' which was organized to celebrate Canada's 150 years of existence. It will also serve to highlight the main points we have learned to this point in the textbook, including the fight of Indigenous peoples in this chapter to reclaim and resist.

The article: Resistance 150: Indigenous artists challenge Canadians to reckon with our history

- How do you feel about this?
- What role does resistance play in illuminating the 'truth'?
- Do you think it's more important to celebrate or resist? Please explain.

Now, I would like to get your thoughts on the Melina Laboucan-Massimo article on Lessons from Wesahkecahk that you read. As with the other readings from the *Manual for Decolonization*, I thought I'd provide a passage and get your response; or conversely, if you have a passage that resonated with you, please do share. Here is what I viewed as an important point, and more specifically, what creates the impetus for 'resisting.' Laboucan-Massimo begins,

"Our prophecies speak of a time when the blue sky and waters turn black and green things turn brown and die; when animals and fish disappear and birds drop from the sky. This devastation will come as a result of mankind's greed and disrespect of Mother Earth. This time is upon us.

The Alberta tar sands are scarring the earth – polluting and draining watersheds, poisoning the air, and destroying the land I call home. The landscape is drastically changing from a once pristine and beautiful boreal forest to an increasingly industrial and toxic terrain. Animals and fish have become sick with tumours, and caribou are now listed as an endangered species. People are no longer safe to harvest traditional medicines, teas or berries because they have become contaminated – and even though we fear that our medicines have turned into poison, we continue to forage (and forge) the path ahead. People young and old have started to die of rare forms of cancers that we have never seen before. I come from a community where, until my generation, my family was able to live sustainably off the land.

The tar sands are not an isolated incident; neo-colonialism in the form of resource extraction is happening across Turtle Island and throughout Mother Earth. Today the earth is being contaminated and destroyed at an unparalleled rate, and people and animals alike are being sacrificed for the benefit of the greedy few.

We are not only in an ecological crisis; we are in a moral human crisis. All around the world, we see people's homes and traditional territories being turned into industrialized landscapes. We see people's clean drinking water being overtaken and turned into toxic dumpsites for industrial facilities. It is painful to see the devastation to the land. It reaches a deep part in your spirit – a feeling of indescribable grief" (Laboucan-Massimo, 2017, p. 37).

- How do you feel about this?
- What may Melina have been experiencing physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually at the time?
- Where does resistance or the act of resisting come from?
- Why don't others feel this intensity of thoughts and emotions as Melina does?
- Do you think the author will see her vision come to fruition? Her vision is summarized as follows: "People from diverse backgrounds and creeds will truly begin to work together in honesty and respect – with a

deep sense of solidarity with one another. It is a time when people from the Four Directions will come together to work for justice, peace, freedom, and recognition of the Great Spirit and the sacredness of our Mother Earth. This time, my friends, is upon us" (p. 40).

Indigenous resistance, like most topics covered in this textbook, is a course in and of itself. In fact, the IKERAS Faculty offers a course titled *Indigenous Resistance and Decolonization*. For now, know that resistance will be inevitable if Indigenous peoples' rights and treaties are violated. We will examine this further in the next chapter, under social activism.

Key Terms and Concepts from the Chapter

- gathering/Mawi'omi
- resilience
- striving for self-determination
- reclamation
- cultural reclamations
- resistance
- Indigenous war veterans
- the importance of rights

Important Readings/Viewings for Next Class

- Kanahus Manuel's article – *A Manual for Decolonization* (pp. 42-46)

Special Topics of Interest

- ***Resilience:*** Transforming Through Resilience | Gabrielle Lindstrom | TEDxYYC
- ***Reclamation:*** Indigenous Cinema
- ***Resistance:*** Powwow at Duck Lake

Cultural Competency Supplemental Tutorials

- Ulali – All My Relations

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Chapter 10: Indigenous Peoples in the 21st Century

Introduction

Before introducing the central topic of this chapter, ***Indigenous peoples in the 21st century***, a few more words on **Indigenous resurgence** are worthy of sharing. The following excerpt comes from prominent Indigenous scholars; they speak of Indigenous resurgence and the fight for self-determination in the context of unending tensions that exist for Indigenous peoples in a nation-state that's trying to somehow rid itself of its imperialistic, colonizing hegemony through words — but it's nowhere near ready for the action necessary to decolonize itself and create real change. Coulthard, Manuel, Posluns, Deloria, & Manuel explain,

"Over the past ten to fifteen years, Indigenous resurgence has emerged as a central theoretical framework in much Indigenous writings on colonization and decolonization. Resurgence calls on Indigenous people and communities to combat the violence of colonial social relations through the revitalization of Indigenous epistemologies, political structures, and place-based economic practices. As an ethicopolitical practice, resurgence demands that we decolonize 'on our own terms,' to quote one of its core theorists, Nishnaabeg scholar and activist Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, 'without the sanction, permission, or engagement of the state.' 1) While theories of resurgence are at their core rooted in land and place, they also recognize that we are 'intrinsically linked to and [are] influencing global phenomena; indeed, our systems of ethics require us to consider these influences and relationships in all of our decision making.' 2) For Simpson, then, resurgence must be vigilantly global in scope, both ethically and politically" (Coulthard, Manuel, Posluns, Deloria, & Manuel, 1974).

As seen at the end of the last chapter, the creation of Nunavut and moving its peoples into early stages of **self-determination** and **self-governance** within the existing parameters of territory within Canada has been an important step and a concrete example of Indigenous resurgence; but the over-arching tensions are far from over.

So where does one begin to really understand Indigenous peoples in 21st century? There are many aspects of Indigenous life, including on-going struggles, cultural reclamation, resurgence, and the ever-important resistance against measures that diminish them as peoples. It will take much more than this introductory course to examine these aspects. However, let me suggest a few immediate ideas of where to start.

The IKERAS Faculty has an array of Indigenous Knowledge Education (IKE) courses listed in the University's Course Catalogue, in which you can immerse yourself and begin a journey of getting to know our Indigenous instructors, their connections to communities, and correspondingly, Indigenous peoples — including the three main cultural groups — First Nations, Inuit, and Métis.

In the last two decades, there have been steady waves of Indigenous writers and storytellers who bring their rich narrative to the mainstream public, and you can have a most unique glimpse into the lives of Indigenous peoples — past, present, and future — through their works. I just picked up a book the other day titled *Me Tomorrow: Indigenous Views on the Future* (2021), edited by a prolific Indigenous writer, Drew Hayden Taylor, as lately I've been wanting to explore conceptions of time and futurism through an Indigenous lens. I couldn't begin to list all the talented writers, but I can point you to a good text to begin exploring some of those writers: it's called *An Anthology of Indigenous Literatures in English: Voices from Canada*, published by Oxford University Press in 2020.

A quick trip to UPEI's Robertson Library and their Indigenous holdings will further your discovery. I mentioned in the last chapter that Indigenous Cinema contains a treasure trove of films, documentaries, and shorts for your viewing. IKERAS has both an Indigenous literatures (IKE-2046) and Indigenous music, film, and arts (IKE-2042) course that will expose you to an array of works and lives.

Lastly, in the last chapter, I introduced you to an exceptionally well-done CBC television series released in 2013 called the *8th Fire*, narrated by Wab Kinew, now the Manitoba Premier. Start with Episode 1: *Indigenous in the City*; the episode profiles several Indigenous peoples, and the episode is guaranteed to unapologetically confront any preconceived notions or stereotypes of who Indigenous people are in the minds of the misinformed.

Topics at a Glance

- Indigenous peoples in the 21st Century
- Inuit and Métis Nations
- Social Activism: Creating a New Narrative for Social Change

Indigenous Peoples in the 21st Century

As you may have gathered by now, I enjoy photography. The use of digital images to capture people and events dates back to the creation of the camera. I may have a piece I wrote about the history of photography when I was enrolled in the Photography Program at Holland College, Charlottetown, PEI, from 2014-2016, but I will forego that discussion in favour of focusing on the topic at hand. Though, the history of photography, relating to Indigenous peoples and its digital exposition, is significant.

The mediums of photography, television, film, documentaries, and social media do play a role in informing about Indigenous peoples. The perceptions we form from these often stay with us for a long time. Sadly, certain stereotypes and caricatures can be one of those perceptions. I believe that images and/or narratives which have significant meaning and importance for respective cultures must be created by Indigenous people themselves, or at the very least, people who are quite Indigenous-informed. Recall that Frideres spent considerable time explaining why the authors of history matter; the days of cultural appropriation must be put in the 'rearview mirror,' and it's time for Indigenous peoples to be in the driver seat of their own destiny. Again, we'll leave further exploration of Indigenous self-determination, knowledge creation, and control over their own narrative for later.

In Figure 40, you will find images of Elders, adults, and youth at gatherings and events. In no way do they represent the diverse cross-section of Indigenous peoples across Turtle Island, nor how they live, work, and contribute daily to contemporary society. Nonetheless, they do capture Indigenous peoples that I have known or encountered in my travels.

Figure 40

Images of Indigenous peoples in the 21st Century

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://pressbooks.library.upei.ca/ike1040indigenousteachings2ndedition/?p=99#h5p-2

One of the most important features of Indigenous peoples in the 21st century is that they are the fast-growing demographic in Canada. According to Frideres (2024), ". . . Indigenous growth shows the population grew by nearly 43 percent, with nearly half under the age of 25, compared to 28 per cent for the non-Indigenous population" (Frideres, 2024, p. 237). He further states, "projections of Indigenous population suggest they will make up nearly seven per cent of the Canadian population by 2041" (p. 237).

Beyond the population growth, most importantly, the number of Indigenous young adults attending post-secondary institutions has reached new levels. Figure 41 presents a photo of Simon Fraser University (SFU)'s Class of 2017 that included every level of degree, including Bachelor, Master, and PhD. My daughter, Morgan, obtained a BA Honours in Psychology at UPEI in 2012, then received her Master of Arts in Criminology from SFU, located in British Columbia. She has been a Sessional Lecturer with the IKERAS Faculty since 2022.

Figure 41

Class of 2017 Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, British Columbia

The same year, 2017, on this other end of the country at the University of Prince Edward Island, a record ten Indigenous students were awarded degrees in various faculties. What is also unique is that Elder Judy Clark, Abegweit First Nation, who was also UPEI's long-standing Elder-in-Residence, was conferred an Honorary

Doctor of Philosophy. It was a special year in higher education for the First peoples of Epekwitk, along with other Indigenous students receiving their degree from the university. Figure 42 presents several images from that special convocation day in May of 2017.

Figure 42

Class of 2017, University of Prince Edward Island, Charlottetown, PEI

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://pressbooks.library.upei.ca/ike1040indigenousteachings2ndedition/?p=99#h5p-3

What do we know about trends in educational attainment and employment for Indigenous peoples?

According to Statistics Canada (2021), which undertook an examination of postsecondary educational attainment and labour market outcomes of Indigenous peoples through census data, "Indigenous people have made important gains in higher education from 2016 to 2021, with the share of Indigenous people holding a bachelor's degree or higher increasing by 1.9 percentage points over that period. Increases were seen across all Indigenous groups, namely First Nations people, Métis, and Inuit. This corresponded with better labour market outcomes compared to Indigenous people with lower levels of educational attainment."

In the same report, Statistics Canada indicated that "during the 2021 Census reference week, from May 2 to May 8, 2021, 61.2% of Indigenous adults aged 25 to 64 years were employed, with the proportions varying across Indigenous groups: 56.6% among First Nations people, 68.8% for Métis, and 55.2% for Inuit. While these employment rates all fell below the rate recorded for the non-Indigenous population (74.1%), the gap narrowed with increasing levels of education" (Statistics Canada, 2021).

These two findings reveal that these two important social demographic attributes have important significance to Indigenous peoples' integration into Canadian society; additionally, they are key determinants to their health and well-being. There is additional social demographic information that could be included, such as age distributions, dependency ratios, and income, but these are left for further exploration in higher level courses, such as IKE-2220: *Indigenous Peoples in Canada*.

The education and employment findings suggest we, as a country, are heading in a very positive direction with respect to Indigenous peoples, whereas decades earlier, there was a stark socio-economic trend that was heading in a completely different and disconcerting direction, as compared to their non-Indigenous counterparts.

Frideres (2024) offers the following as contributing to an even more promising future:

"Two changes in Canadian society would make it possible to bring about social change that would integrate Indigenous peoples in mainstream society without having to assimilate: decentralization and Indigenous sovereignty. Indigenous peoples are demanding to have a say in the future of Canada, and a liberal democracy must take these concerns into account if it is to build a cohesive society. Change must fully involve Indigenous peoples. This is a two-sided process, and unilateral methods to invoke social change, whether imposed from the top down or welling up from the grassroots, are doomed to failure. New models of representing Indigenous peoples in the **policy development process** need to be established so that their aspirations can be included in the development of Canada" (Frideres, 2024, p. 261).

Indigenous Organizations

Before leaving our discussion on Indigenous peoples in the 21st century, I draw your attention to the nationally-recognized Indigenous organizations that reflect what Frideres termed 'policy development' and the consultation process on any issues or matters that impact Indigenous peoples. The 'duty to consult' is a legally binding concept that must be adhered to when making decisions that could affect Indigenous peoples and their communities.

Provided is a list with links to those national organizations:

- Assembly of First Nations
- Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami
- Métis National Council
- National Association of Friendship Centres
- Native Women's Association of Canada
- Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada
- Women of the Métis Nation

Allyship

In the last decade, the terms 'ally' and '**allyship**' have been introduced to describe the role or action(s) that non-Indigenous peoples can take to acknowledge, support, and work with Indigenous peoples going forward, especially in our advancing reconciliation. Below is a succinct video that explains these concepts further. I am a firm believer that allies are needed for this future to become a reality.

How to be a good ally? Naomi Bob – Indigenous Voices on Reconciliation

Another video that is highly appropriate to share at this point in our learning journey also speaks to the role others can take to support a future that is inclusive of Indigenous peoples. The speaker is very open about his life, and you will find that Indigenous peoples are quite willing to share their stories, as honesty, authenticity, and the lived reality are prerequisites for relational accountability to occur.

What non-Indigenous Canadians need to know

We will now turn our attention to further understanding two other nations that comprise Indigenous peoples in Canada: the Inuit and Métis Nations.

Inuit and Métis Nations

You likely have a good grasp on the Inuit, having been introduced at various points in our learning journey to the peoples, their histories, and past and contemporary issues — largely in Chapter 9. I begin by asking the basic question below to refocus our attention on the Inuit Nation:

Who are the Inuit?

In 2005, as a member of the Aboriginal Spiritual Journey delegation with Veterans Affairs Canada, which I spoke about earlier, I had the opportunity to meet several **Inuit**. In Figures 43, 44, and 45, I present two of our Inuit youth, an Inuit Elder, and members from the Inuit community who unveiled an Inuksuk in Juno Beach in France.

Figure 43

Aboriginal Spiritual Journey Inuit Youth Delegates

Figure 44

Aboriginal Spiritual Journey Inuit Elder

Figure 45

Inuit community members unveiling an Inuksuk in Juno Beach in France.

The Aboriginal Spiritual Journey was a significant teaching, and a most humbling experience.

In Figure 46, you will find population data respecting the Inuit (Statistics Canada, 2021).

Figure 46

Statistical Description of the Inuit in Canada (2021)

Inuit population count: 70,545
Growth (2016 to 2021): +8.5%
The majority of Inuit lived in Inuit Nunangat (69.0%).

Geography	Distribution of the Inuit population
Inuit Nunangat	
Nunatsiavut	3%
Nunavik	18%
Nunavut	44%
Inuvialuit region	4%
Outside Inuit Nunangat	31%

Note: The growth rates for the period from 2016 to 2021 were adjusted for incompletely enumerated reserves and settlements.

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2021.

The following two videos will give you further perspectives regarding the lives of the Inuit; the first video is an Inuit Elder, Rebecca Iquollag, on the 'Inuit way.' The second is a short film showcase from National Geographic with the following description: "In Northeastern Canada, a traditional Inuit hunter, carver, and guide is watching the world change before his eyes. In Keeper of the Flame, Derrick Pottle shares the meaning behind the Inuit way of life and why he continues the traditions of his culture" (National Geographic, 2018).

The Inuit Way: Rebecca Iquollaq – Gjoa Haven Elder

Keeping the Inuit Way of Life Alive in a Changing World | Short Film Showcase

The IKERAS Faculty hopes to introduce more courses specific to the Inuit in the future. We will now examine the Métis Nation.

Who are the Métis?

According to the 2021 Census, 624,220 people identified as **Métis**, and 224,650 individuals reported being a registered member of a Métis organization or settlement. Additional population data can be found at Statistics Canada.

I return to the work of Chelsea Vowel, who examines Métis identity in her book *Indigenous Writes: A Guide to First Nations, Métis, & Inuit Issues in Canada* (2016). She states,

"It wasn't until 2003 that the question, 'Who really is Métis?' got some serious attention. The Supreme Court of Canada heard a case involving a father and son who shot a moose out of season without a licence…The Powley Test, as it is known, set out basic criteria for determining who is accepted as Métis by the Canadian state. Here I am using the Métis Nation of Alberta's summary of those criteria, which is pretty similar to what other regional Métis organizations have adopted and use to determine regional membership:

'Métis means a person who self-identifies as a Métis, is distinct from other aboriginal peoples, is of historic Métis Nation ancestry, and is accepted by the Métis Nation'" (p. 41). Despite being overly broad, it did accomplish one

thing; that being the concept of the community; in this case, the Métis Nation determining who is and is not a member of their community. This may be another application of the concept of self-determination and the right for the nation to determine who is and isn't part of their community.

In 2016, the Supreme Court of Canada released the *Daniels* decision, which made the determination that "Indians," as defined by section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982, included Indians (status and non-status alike), Inuit, and Métis (Vowel, 2016, p. 49). There are further details and implications, but know that the *Daniels* decision is still being worked through in every respect, from the federal government responsibility to programs and services provided to Métis peoples through organizations representing both Métis and off-reserve Indigenous peoples. It is quite complex.

Let us turn to the following video, which not only covers the information above quite succinctly, but also highlights the controversy that a 'mixed' heritage can bring in different parts of Canada.

Who are the Métis?

My first clear recollection of being introduced to Métis peoples came in 2005 when I was involved in the Aboriginal Spiritual Journey: Calling Home Ceremony with Veterans Affairs Canada. Figure 47 shows the young Métis singer-songwriter and fiddle player, Sierra Noble; her mother, Sherry Noble; and the former National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, Chief Phil Fontaine. You may sample some of Sierra's work by following the embedded links in the text.

Figure 47

Métis musician Sierra Noble, Sherry Noble, and Chief Phil Fontaine (2005)

Figure 48 shows a group of Métis traditional dancers who were also part of the Aboriginal Spiritual Journey. The traditional music and dance of Métis peoples is quite distinct and distinguishable from other Indigenous groups.

Figure 48

Metis cultural performers in Juno Beach, France (2005)

Please take note of the Métis sash that is worn by both Sierra and the cultural performers. The **Métis sash** is described as follows:

"The Métis sash is a colourful finger-woven belt that is usually three-meters long. It is sometimes referred to as L'Assomption sash or Ceinture Fléchée (arrow sash). The sash was used by the Voyageurs of the fur trade and was quickly adopted by their Métis sons. They used the sash as a belt to hold coats closed, and, also as a towrope, tumpline, towel, and even a sewing kit. The Métis sash became the most recognizable part of the Métis dress and a symbol of the Métis people. Today, the sash continues to be an integral part of Métis culture and heritage" (Métis Nation of Alberta, 2024). The sash is but one of the distinctive symbols of Métis culture, with the other described on the site.

As indicated earlier, one of the national organizations representing Métis Nations and their peoples is the Métis National Council. I invite you to learn more by visiting their website, which will link you to important learning resources. In the future, the Faculty plans to introduce specific courses relating to the Métis. We have several Métis members on Faculty, and if I have not pointed this out before, please visit the Elders and Scholars profile page.

Let us now look at the final topic of this chapter, "Social Activism: Creating a New Narrative for Social Change."

Social Activism: Creating a New Narrative for Social Change

What is social activism anyway? When you think of social activism, what are the first things that come to mind? Does Figure 49 correspond with your image of social activism?

Figure 49

Climate Emergency March, Charlottetown, PEI (2019)

So what is social activism? Is it...

- fighting for social rights?
- actively protesting injustice?
- a collective social movement to enact or bring about change?

What are the characteristics of **activists** or the features of **activism**? Which attributes, either positive or negative, are linked to either or both terms? Please make your list, and let's compare.

Using the two key words above, I did a quick scan of the literature, and I included the word '**stereotype**.' While the latter is suggestive of preconceived notions of what we tend to think, I wanted to get a sense of what the literature tells us. Below are some of the words (stereotypes) associated with the terms, with the authors who published scholarly articles on various aspects of the topic in parentheses.

- marginalized and racialized (Anyiwo, Palmer, Garrett, Starck, & Hope, 2020)
- eccentric and militant (Bashir, Lockwood, Chasteen, Nadolny, & Noyes, 2013)

- tree-hugger, hippie, and over-reactive (Bashir et al., 2013)
- unpleasant extremists (Sobieraj, 2011)
- feminists, aggressive, unconventional, and disagreeable (Berryman-Fink & Verderber, 1985; Twenge & Zucker, 1991; Dutt & Grabe, 2014)
- radical, aggressive emotionality, moral superiority, and virtue-signaling (Phelan, 2019)
- disadvantaged, strong, and aggressive (Burrows, Selvanathan, & Lickel, 2023)
- raging grannies (Sawchuk, 2009)

How do your perceptions and those above compare? An interesting study on activism and identity by Mannarini, Fedi, & Pozzi (2024) examined the perceptions of young activists themselves. The study is explained this way:

"Identity is considered a key factor in activist engagement. In this study, we examined the self-representations of a group of young activists through the lens of the ego-ecological approach, which emphasizes the interplay of representations, attitudes, and beliefs (including stereotypes) that circulate both within groups and in the broader sociocultural environment in identity formation" (Mannarini, Fedi, & Pozzi, 2024).

Interestingly, the authors reported that "our young participants' self-representations portrayed activists as determined, passionate, strong, competent, cohesive, receptive to ideas and needs, warm and supportive people, all positive characteristics attributed to the self, which resonate with the stereotypical notion of the 'good activist'" (Mannarini, Fedi, & Pozzi, 2024).

In a further review, Anyiwo, Palmer, Garrett, Starck, & Hope (2020) examined the sociopolitical action of racially marginalized youth. Based on their review of the literature, they found that the 'nature of sociopolitical action' comprises the following:

"Youth's individual sociopolitical action can occur through conventional politics and community engagement such as writing letters to political officials about sociopolitical concerns, voting, giving opinions to media outlets, and volunteering [1,4,9]. Through interpersonal resistance, youth may reprimand friends, adults, or strangers who make racist comments and defend those who are racially targeted [10••,11,12]. Political engagement and resistance can also manifest in subtle, every day, and seemingly mundane strategies youth use to express themselves and survive [13] such as wearing clothing with cultural and political messages [14••], and academically persisting to contest social stereotypes [15,16,17•,18].

Collectively, youth sociopolitical actions manifest across multiple domains including joining political parties and campaigning [4,19,20], organizing to address systemic inequity [2,5,21,22,23••,24], and protesting (e.g., boycotting, blocking traffic, occupying buildings, marching) [4,6,19,25,26]. Organizing is a collective engagement practice that helps to bring together groups to advocate for resources and shape the policies and decisions made within social structures [2,23••]. Organizing provides an entree for youth to demand racially just institutional change from schools [27], a space that engenders the ability to work collaboratively with peers towards sociopolitical action [3,24], and a context to receive intergenerational care that helps to cultivate more activism [7,23••]. Protesting provides space for youth to assert their voices and advocate for social justice [4,19,25,26]. For example, racially marginalized youth describe protesting with family, peers, and teachers to advocate for educational equity, engaging in 'die-ins' to protest police brutality, and participating in marches to advocate for immigration reform [11,16,17•].

Racially marginalized youth use digital media (e.g., online videos, blogs, social media) to build a sense of community, share their stories, and access a larger audience for their social justice efforts [5,25,26,28,29•,30]. For example, Black youth use social media hashtags (#BlackLivesMatter, #IfTheyGunnedMeDown) to facilitate dialogue about racial injustice, such as the murders of Black people by police, and to challenge stereotypical,

hegemonic depictions of Black people in mainstream media [6,28,30,31]. Similarly, Latinx youth use social media to provide counter narratives to racialized and anti-immigrant discourse and to advocate for the rights of undocumented youth [31,32]" (Anyiwo, Palmer, Garrett, Starck, & Hope, 2020).

While their examination was focused on sociopolitical action in the United States, the authors imply that other nation-states may be 'sites' of action, as indicated in the following quote:

"Nations with a history of racial stratification, such as the United States, have enacted policies and practices that sustain white dominance and the marginality of non-white racial groups. However, racially marginalized youth's resistance has been instrumental in promoting societal change aimed toward dismantling this dominance" (Anyiwo, Palmer, Garrett, Starck, & Hope, 2020).

What about Indigenous social activism? What about Indigenous social activism in Canada? Before examining this topic, I present one other aspect of activism that is worthy to consider.

People Known for Activism

- What did this webpage reveal about people known for activism? Did you recognize any names? Would any of these individuals be characterized as 'unpleasant extremists,' 'aggressive,' or 'over-reactive'?
- Did their efforts bring about substantial attention to or societal change? What change occurred because of their activism?
- You will note several Indigenous individuals on that list.

Indigenous leader, Arthur Manuel, who you were introduced to in an earlier chapter, asserts that the rise of two significant Indigenous activist movements, '**Defenders of the Land**' and '**Idle No More**' as a **grassroots struggle**, is the result of inaction by the colonial power and structures. He states,

". . . the Defenders and Idle No More are the basis for building a movement in Canada. No one else will play this role except us, and we can build on the considerable discontent floating around in communities.

Even with Justin Trudeau's charm offensive, people see that things are not adding up. One thing is promised but another is delivered. We have seen again and again that the prime minister and premiers are not interested in giving up one inch of power to Indigenous peoples, and Prime Minister Justin is no exception. You are daydreaming if you think you can negotiate your way to freedom without creating tension to push our colonizers to decolonize Canada" (Manuel, A., 2017, p. 30).

In the article by Kanahus Manuel, *Decolonization: The Frontline Struggle* — which was your 'homework' — I found her personal account to be very important for understand why an Indigenous mother would risk going to jail for her activism. She recalls,

"When I was arrested, I was in a truck with my three-month old child, my sister, and my mother in the hills above Bella Coola. In the web of charges they threw at me, the one that finally stuck was for "assaulting police," a charge that had been levelled against many of us who were, in fact, assaulted by the police when we were trying to protect our land from the Sun Peaks development. I remember this as the saddest moment of my life. Not because I was going to jail but because I realized that while I was away, I would be separated from my infant son . . . But I survived this ordeal because by then I already knew who I was and what I had to do as a Secwepemc woman to fight for my people. This was the period where my own mind was being decolonized" (Manuel, K., 2017, p. 43).

Like Kanahus, there are many other Indigenous women activists in Canada who felt that it was their obligation to 'defend' and not sit 'idly' by when such pressing matters — such as the "environment, Indigenous and treaty

rights, equal access to education and health care, and the rights of women and children" — needed action. These include such names as Bertha Clark Jones, Autumn Peltier, and Cindy Blackstock, to name just a few (Boyko, 2022).

The Government of Canada has dedicated a webpage to celebrate National Indigenous History Month, and a special feature of this site is the contributions of those deemed Indigenous trailblazers. Please take a moment to learn about these inspiring Indigenous peoples who represent many areas, such as the arts, sports, scientists and researchers, and activists and advocates (Government of Canada, 2024).

One globally recognized Indigenous activist, author, lawyer, and Mi'kmaq (Eel River Bar First Nation, NB) is Pam Palmater. Her seminal 2015 publication, *Indigenous Nationhood: Empowering Grassroots Citizens*, is an excellent read for understanding what it will take to achieve nationhood through mobilizing community. Let us take a minute to listen to her views on activism. There is also a message about what non-Indigenous peoples can do regarding the issues.

Dr. Pamela Palmater is an advocate for Indigenous issues

- What were her main points for non-Indigenous peoples in Canada?

I turn my attention closer to Epekwitk and an Indigenous social activism movement in which I participated. It was the 2013 national Idle No More movement that was sweeping across the nation, in most major cities including Charlottetown. The protest was in opposition to an omnibus bill (Bill C-45) that gave the federal government wide-spread power to circumvent existing legislation such as the Indian Act, Navigable Water Protection Act, and Environmental Assessment act, which "diminished the rights and authority of Indigenous communities while making it easier for governments and businesses to push through projects without strict environmental assessment" (de Bruin, 2013). See Figure 50 with an accompanying video from the Charlottetown Protest.

Figure 50

Idle No More, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island (2013)

Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x0AE-DTnn5Q

Following the event, I gave a special 'teach-in' at the university for faculty, staff, and students, as many did not know what this social movement was about. I think this was the very first time as an academic, even though I was still part-time, that I had addressed the broader university community on Indigenous issues.

Several years later, another movement — **Black Lives Matter** — a social justice activism movement, took hold, beginning in the United States and spreading globally; it is described in this way:

"The movement seeks to attain racial justice for African-Americans and those who identify as black. Activists who participate in the movement aim to bring an end to violence and systemic racism aimed against black people. Since its inception as a hashtag, it has transformed into a full-fledged movement that manifests on and offline, and it has expanded from being a response to police brutality to encompassing all types on injustices faced by black people, including in the realms of education, the criminal justice system, and class relations" (Open Case Studies, UBC, 2024).

Like Black Lives Matter, it was not long before **Indigenous Lives Matter** came to be. Already propelled by decades of injustice and inaction, and the collective will to stand up to oppression following Idle No More, it wasn't long before Indigenous peoples rose once more. Figure 51 presents a series of images from the Indigenous Lives Matter March in 2020.

Figure 51

Indigenous Lives Matter in Charlottetown, PEI (2020)

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://pressbooks.library.upei.ca/ike1040indigenousteachings2ndedition/?p=99#h5p-4

There is a site that details the history of the Indigenous Lives Matter movement and a description of current Indigenous social activist movements in Canada, which bring attention to issues of injustice and systemic racism, a term we learned about in chapter six. Please visit Stand in Solidarity: Movements Declaring that Indigenous Lives Matter.

This important topic would take an entire course to do it justice; in fact, the IKERAS Faculty recently launched a specific course, titled IKE-2052: *Indigenous Resistance and the Work of Decolonization*, in the Spring Semester of 2024 that will examine resistance and decolonization movements in greater detail. But, before leaving this section and chapter, here is a quick video that, in my mind, says it all.

Indigenous Canadian water activist addresses UN

- How did that make you feel?

My question — the one that has been on my mind for well over a decade; the one I have presented on in many courses that I've taught; the one that prompted me to join several grassroots movements; and the one I think about when I consider how our decisions of today will have impacts seven generations from now, including inaction — is a simple one: can we sit idly by as our world and life as we know it is in peril?

Key Terms and Concepts from the Chapter

- Indigenous Peoples in the 21st century: where are we at today?
- Indigenous resurgence
- self-determination
- self-governance
- policy development process
- allyship
- who are the Inuit and Métis?
- the Métis sash
- activists & social activism
- stereotypes
- activists movements: 'Defenders of the Land' & 'Idle No More'
- grassroots struggle
- Black Lives Matter & Indigenous Lives Matter

Important Readings/Viewings for Next Class

- Senator Murray Sinclair's article from *A Manual for Decolonization* (pp. 68-72)

Special Topics of Interest

- Learning resources about First Nations, Inuit and Métis across Canada
- Taiaiake Alfred on *It's All About the Land*

Cultural Competency Supplemental Tutorials

- What's a Powwow?

End Notes

1. Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, Dancing on Our Turtle's Back: Stories of Nishnaaneg Recreation, Resurgence, and a New Emergence (Winnipeg: Arbeiter Ring Press, 2011), 17.
2. Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom through Radical Resistance (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017), 56.

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Chapter 11: Truth and Reconciliation ~ Calls to Action ~ Responsible Citizenship

I will forego a lengthy introduction to this chapter and simply present the topics that we will cover below:

Topics at a Glance

- Understanding and Enacting the TRC Calls to Action
- Reconciliation Through Education
- Exploring Responsible Citizenship

Understanding and Enacting the TRC Calls to Action

There are several documents that are most instructive in understanding and enacting the **Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC**) **Calls to Action**, one of which is included as the first document in the Reading Resources section of this textbook. It is titled, *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*. This summary report presents on the findings and main discussions that are contained in the TRC's final multi-volume reports.

There are many publications with the Final Report (Volume 6) discussing the essence of the Commission's work, including the methodology, what information was gathered from the special hearings and submissions, and the evidence that resulted in the calls to action. Anyone wishing to review the Commission's publications can access these at the *National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation* (NCTR) at https://nctr.ca/records/reports/.

Again, the written documentation is voluminous. Yet, the first seventeen (17) pages of the Commission's Final Report succinctly outline what reconciliation is all about, where we stand today, why this work is important, and what we must do together to achieve success. Here are a few excerpts:

"To the Commission, 'reconciliation' is about establishing and maintaining a mutually respectful relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in this country. For that to happen, there has to be awareness of the past, acknowledgement of the harm that has been inflicted, atonement for the causes, and action to change behaviour.

We are not there yet. The relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples is not a mutually respectful one. But we believe we can get there, and we believe we can maintain it. Our ambition is to show how we can do that" (TRC, 2015, p. 3).

"The urgent need for reconciliation runs deep in Canada. Expanding public dialogue and action on reconciliation beyond residential schools will be critical in the coming years. Although some progress has been made, significant barriers to reconciliation remain. The relationship between the federal government and

Aboriginal peoples is deteriorating. Instead of moving toward reconciliation, there have been divisive conflicts over Aboriginal education, child welfare, and justice. The daily news has been filled with reports of controversial issues ranging from the call for a national inquiry on violence towards Aboriginal women and girls to the impact of the economic development of lands and resources on Treaties and Aboriginal title and rights" (p. 4).

"Too many Canadians know little or nothing about the deep historical roots of these conflicts. This lack of historical knowledge has serious consequences for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples, and for Canada as a whole. In government circles, it makes for poor public policy decisions. In the public realm, it reinforces racist attitudes and fuels civic distrust between Aboriginal peoples and other Canadians. Too many Canadians still do not know the history of Aboriginal peoples' contributions to Canada, or understand that by virtue of the historical and modern Treaties negotiated by our government, we are all Treaty people. History plays an important role in reconciliation; to build for the future, Canadians must look to, and learn from, the past.

As Commissioners, we understood from the start that although reconciliation could not be achieved during the TRC's lifetime, the country could and must take ongoing positive and concrete steps forward. Although the Commission has been a catalyst for deepening our national awareness of the meaning and potential of reconciliation, it will take many heads, hands, and hearts, working together, at all levels of society to maintain momentum in the years ahead. It will also take sustained political will at all levels of government and concerted material resources" (p. 4).

"Without truth, justice, and healing, there can be no genuine reconciliation. Reconciliation is not about 'closing a sad chapter of Canada's past' but about opening new healing pathways of reconciliation that are forged in truth and justice. We are mindful that knowing the truth about what happened in residential schools in and of itself does not necessarily lead to reconciliation. Yet the importance of truth telling in its own right should not be underestimated; it restores the human dignity of victims of violence and calls governments and citizens to account. Without truth, justice is not served, healing cannot happen, and there can be no genuine reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in Canada" (p. 7).

"Educators told us about their growing awareness of the inadequate role that post-secondary institutions played in training the teachers who taught in the schools. They have pledged to make educational practices and curriculum more inclusive of Aboriginal knowledge and history. Artists shared their ideas and feelings about truth and reconciliation through songs, paintings, dance, film, and other media. Corporations provided resources to bring Survivors to events and, in some cases, some of their own staff and managers. For non-Aboriginal Canadians who came to bear witness to Survivors' life stories, the experience was powerful. One woman said simply, 'By listening to your story, my story can change. By listening to your story, I can change'" (p. 15).

And most importantly,

"Together, Canadians must do more than just talk about reconciliation; we must learn how to practise reconciliation in our everyday lives—within ourselves and our families, and in our communities, governments, places of worship, schools, and workplaces. To do so constructively, Canadians must remain committed to the ongoing work of establishing and maintaining respectful relationships.

For many Survivors and their families, this commitment is foremost about healing themselves, their communities, and their nations in ways that revitalize individuals as well as Indigenous cultures, languages, spirituality, laws, and governance systems. For governments, building a respectful relationship involves dismantling a centuries-old political and bureaucratic culture in which, all too often, policies and programs are still based on failed notions of assimilation. For churches, demonstrating long-term commitment requires atoning for actions within the residential schools, respecting Indigenous spirituality, and supporting Indigenous

peoples' struggles for justice and equity. Schools must teach history in ways that foster mutual respect, empathy, and engagement. All Canadian children and youth deserve to know Canada's honest history, including what happened in the residential schools, and to appreciate the rich history and knowledge of Indigenous nations, which continue to make such a strong contribution to Canada, including our very name and collective identity as a country. For Canadians from all walks of life, reconciliation offers a new way of living together" (p. 17).

You have already heard several times throughout the course about the TRC's Calls to Action. There is a separate document (15 pages) in the NCTR publication website that contains the Commission's 94 Calls to Action. In a 20-minute recording, each of the 94 recommendations are read out, via the audio-visual video found here: Summary of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's 94 Calls to Action.

If you look at the 94 calls to action, there are sixteen categories:

1. Health;
2. Education;
3. Language and culture;
4. Child welfare;
5. Justice;
6. Commemoration;
7. Reconciliation;
8. National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation;
9. Education and reconciliation;
10. Missing children and burial information;
11. Museums and archives;
12. Royal Proclamation and Covenant Reconciliation;
13. Youth programs;
14. Church apologies and reconciliation;
15. Media; and
16. Sports

You may wish to explore the recommendations with a category that interests you. Who knows... maybe you'll see where you may contribute. I often cite Recommendations 61-64, which deal specifically with public education to advance reconciliation. I first heard about these specific calls from Charlene Bearhead and her work as education coordinator at the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, University of Manitoba, when she came to Prince Edward Island to address UPEI's Faculty of Education (see Figure 51).

Figure 51

Charlene Bearhead at special UPEI Faculty of Education workshop

Ms. Bearhead, an ally education activist and advocate, also worked as education coordinator for the *National Inquiry into Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls*. Immediately below (see Figure 52), you will find an image that is taken from one of the Canadian Museum on Human Rights installations that symbolizes what this inquiry was all about through the depiction of empty Red Dresses and why the inquiry's title is named "Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls." The inquiry's body of work and subsequent *231 Calls for Justice* figure prominently as a foundational document in the Faculty's mandate and other courses.

Figure 52

Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls

Ms. Bearhead currently does work with Canadian Geographic and has authored many books.

I also frequently refer to the two recommendations on Newcomers to Canada, as I provided many information sessions as a special guest lecturer for newcomers to PEI, so they could get a better sense of Indigenous peoples through my presentations. Those recommendations read,

“93. We call upon the federal government, in collaboration with the national Aboriginal organizations, to revise the information kit for newcomers to Canada and its citizenship test to reflect a more inclusive history of the diverse Aboriginal peoples of Canada, including information about the Treaties and the history of residential schools.

94. We call upon the Government of Canada to replace the Oath of Citizenship with the following: I swear (or affirm) that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Queen of Canada, Her Heirs and Successors, and that I will faithfully observe the laws of Canada including Treaties with Indigenous Peoples, and fulfill my duties as a Canadian citizen” (p. 10-11).

Below I provide two important video links that speak to reconciliation in Canada today; the first is from the Chair of the TRC Commission, former Senator and Justice Murray Sinclair. He was interviewed by CBC’s Adrienne Arsenault for *The National* on June 22nd, 2021.

Murray Sinclair on moving reconciliation forward in Canada

The next video is a reporting by CBC about the progress, or lack of progress, toward ‘enacting’ the TRC’s Calls to Action.

Where’s Canada at with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s 94 calls to action?

In March 2024, I was invited to give a special talk to the UNB Law Students' Association on the topic of "Where are we today?"

In my opening remarks, I went on to say that next year will mark the 10th Anniversary of the 2015 release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Final Report and 94 Calls to Action, so the topic of "Where are we today?" is quite timely.

The presentation focused on the TRC recommendations specific to justice. Four TRC recommendations were reviewed: 1) Educating lawyers (see 27 & 28 below:); 2) Overrepresentation of Aboriginal people in prison (see 30 below); and 3) Community programs (see 31 below).

TRC Justice Calls to Action

"27) We call upon the Federation of Law Societies of Canada to ensure that lawyers receive appropriate cultural competency training, which includes the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.

28) We call upon law schools in Canada to require all law students to take a course in Aboriginal people and the law, which includes the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism."

"30) We call upon federal, provincial, and territorial governments to commit to eliminating the overrepresentation of Aboriginal people in custody over the next decade, and to issue detailed annual reports that monitor and evaluate progress in doing so.

31) We call upon the federal, provincial, and territorial governments to provide sufficient and stable funding to implement and evaluate community sanctions that will provide realistic alternatives to imprisonment for Aboriginal offenders and respond to the underlying causes of offending."

I stated that 2023 marks eight years since the release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action, and the fifth year that the Yellowhead Institute has been tracking progress of the Calls to Action. In their *Calls to Action Accountability: A 2023 Status Update on Reconciliation* report, zero calls to action were completed, and over eight years since the release of the 94 Calls to Action, 81 Calls remain unfulfilled.

I posed two key questions that had a bearing on this profession — those being, *What about the four Justice recommendations*? and *What other major recommendations remain incomplete*?

In relation to the first question, all four of the justice recommendations noted below remain incomplete; they didn't seem overly surprised.

With respect to the other main recommendations, I stated that they were all important — with 81 remaining to be accomplished, and we as a country need to demonstrate the fortitude to do the right things to see all recommendations fulfilled. One of the students indicated that she heard that at this rate, sadly, all 94 calls to action would only be completed in 2065.

I concluded my talk by stating that the TRC is not simply a check-list, nor is it a report card. I would suggest it is about nationhood and a moral and legal obligation of meeting core human values. Only in 2023 did Universities Canada release their commitment to 'reconciliation' in broad terms. I would suggest that there is still an enormous gap between 'aspirational' statements and 'commitments' and the day-to-day reality of living

action through reconciliation. The law students were very appreciative of me addressing recommendation 28, although it was just a brief exploration and dialogue, and not a full course.

The matter of reconciliation is monumental. There is much to consider, and where does one really begin in writing about reconciliation? After some reflection, it came to me; the following topic is one which I have some knowledge, understanding, and experience — but of course — I am continuously learning.

Reconciliation Through Education

TRC Chief Commissioner Murray Sinclair, at the end of his tenure as TRC Commissioner, stated:

"**Education is the key to reconciliation**," and for clarity and vision added, "Education got us into this mess, and education will get us out of this mess." He then stated, "I said that on the final day of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Education is not about being in school. Education is about learning what it means to be a human being" (Algonquin Times, 2023).

I have taken up Elder Sinclair's words as an educator, and these resonate on many levels. Education is about learning to survive in a complex world and understanding our place and responsibility during this walk with it. My experience goes beyond the teaching I've done for two Atlantic Canadian universities, Saint Thomas University and the University of Prince Edward Island, for close to 30 years or the founding of a new IKERAS Faculty: it also involves understanding the challenge of changing a colonial structure. To be clear, the work of integrating Indigenous scholarship and voice into the academy is not a 'walk in the park.'

As new Indigenous scholars take up the TRC's calls to action, there is a need through research to fully understand Canadian post-secondary education as it undergoes a revitalization of values and practices as a response to acknowledging the harms caused by colonial practices and structures — and to make universities safe and inclusive places where the work of education can occur.

Through a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) funded project, a research team of scholars, of which I was a collaborator, examined institutional policies and initiatives of 12 Atlantic Canadian universities and intended to transform higher education to meet TRC reconciliation education goals. Additionally, we compared this with insights of Indigenous scholars' roles, safe spaces, university approaches to change, culture shifting, relationships, and generational impacts. The research is concluding at the time of this textbook publication, but we found a gap between what the universities are saying they want to do and the reality of life for Indigenous scholars within the academy. We were particularly interested in knowing the degree to which Atlantic Canadian universities engage in a 'Nation to Nation' approach, acknowledging the sovereignty of Indigenous Peoples (Snow, Mackinnon, Chappell, Varis, & Hudson, 2024).

In a recent book review of Truth and Reconciliation in Canadian Education: Critical Perspectives (Eds. Sandra D. Styres & Arlo Kempf, 2022), I introduced the review in this way:

"I reviewed Troubling with the hope, in transitioning full-time into the academy, that I would be provided solutions to a well-known 'reconciliation in education' predicament. Seven years after the release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Final Report (2015), while the book, through its many chapter contributors, does not profess to provide definitive answers on reconciliation, the truths it does present, some troubling, some poignant, are real. In the introduction entitled, A Troubling Place to Start: Reconciliation in Collapse, Kempf et al. get to the heart of the never-ending impasse, 'We watch as many school boards and universities fumble awkwardly through land acknowledgements.

Universities often assert commitments to 'Indigenize the academy' . . . and develop grammars of colonial benevolence while simultaneously holding firm on practices of colonial reproduction (p. xix). So, continues the difficult dialogue on how we, Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators, administrators, and staff, should bring about reconciliation at essential sites of learning. While Indigenous scholars are more than aware of what is required and how to proceed, there are 'forces at play' which become abundantly clear in this book" (Varis, 2023).

You can read the complete yet short book review; however, I concluded the review with the following:

"Troubling truth and reconciliation in our schools and universities, and in society, means a complete accounting of those influential 'forces at play.' This work offers truths that are timely and needed. This critical 'autopsy' of Canadian education must be understood from perspectives which are, on the one hand, brutally honest and troubling; yet hopeful and inspiring, on the other. There are well-defined opportunities that emerge from the reading of this book. While I suggest that new and prospective Indigenous scholars and allies could benefit from reading this text, the very individuals who must read it are those ultimately accountable on whether reconciliation in Canadian education fails or succeeds.

They include Ministers of Education, public school and post-secondary institution senior administrators, public school and post-secondary Boards, Deans, and Principals, Union and Faculty Association representatives, and all non-Indigenous faculty and teachers. Further, students and public wishing to understand reconciliation in education will find this book an honest appraisal of the current challenges and hopeful aspirations of those engaged in this work. The authors of *Troubling Truth and Reconciliation in Canadian Education: Critical Perspectives* have accomplished the goal of educating us while contributing to valuable knowledge regarding truth and reconciliation in Canadian education" (Varis, 2023).

We know there is movement in post-secondary institutions to take a greater role in advancing reconciliation in Canada. In a recent announcement on Universities Canada's commitments to truth and reconciliation, a membership association that supports the presidents of over 90 public and non-profit universities in Canada, stated on Policies, strategic plans, and governance:

"Universities commit to advancing truth as a step toward reconciliation. This includes acknowledging their role in colonialism and the legacy of residential schools in education in Canada. Universities affirm their commitment to supporting the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action; Calls for Justice from the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA people; the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples; and provincial commissions and reports regarding Indigenous peoples and their rights.

Universities commit to developing opportunities for Indigenous students, faculty, researchers, staff, and leaders at every level of the institution through governance structures, policies, and strategies that respect and make space for Indigenous expertise, knowledges and cultures" (Universities Canada, 2023).

Respecting Teaching and learning, they state,

"Universities commit to supporting the Indigenization of curricula through things such as responsive academic programming, support programs, orientations, and pedagogies and to making room for Indigenous Knowledges and ways of knowing throughout diverse fields of study, including opportunities for Elders and Knowledge Keepers in university structures" (Universities Canada, 2023).

And finally, on Supporting people, they add,

"Universities commit to supporting Indigenous-led resurgence and revitalization and to improving representation of Indigenous talent at the governance level and among faculty, professional, and administrative

staff. Acknowledging the additional stressors and duties often asked of Indigenous faculty and staff, universities commit to providing supports, resources, and recognition to ensure the advancement and retention of those staff.

Universities commit to ensuring that non-Indigenous students, faculty, staff, and leadership have the training and resources they need to uphold their responsibility to work towards reconciliation and decolonization across their institutions" (Universities Canada, 2023).

We will see how our post-secondary institutions respond to these commitments. As you know, at UPEI, we have made a historic move to introduce a new Faculty: **IKERAS**. We are a long way away from proclaiming success; we are at the beginning of a new pathway. The mandated IKE-1040 course is a direct response to the TRC calls to action, and we are exceptionally pleased to be playing a role in introducing that, which the TRC has recommended. Our Faculty is organizing and evolving (see Figure 53). The hard work is daily, and it will continue across the generations.

Figure 53

IKERAS Faculty group photo (August 2023)

I am grateful for the Faculty, as for the longest time, I was the sole 'Indian in the academy' teaching students about Indigenous peoples and their lives. Having a Faculty devoted to teaching and learning a distinct worldview has been the vision of many, including those who have since left and allies who understand what

this struggle is all about. To have our ways of knowing, being, and doing as distinct ontological, axiological, epistemological, and methodological approaches to create knowledge — so we may fully understand our world to the extent that we can honour, live, and survive with all our relations — has been a journey that our warrior scholars have been on for some time. If assimilation has been replaced by working together, then let us do so in the full spirit of reconciliation and education for the 21st century.

I would be remiss if I did not include other voices and what reconciliation means to them. Let's take a minute to listen.

What Does Truth & Reconciliation Mean To You?

Lastly, I would like to conclude this section with a brief video with Murray Sinclair, who I have grown to admire and respect dearly.

TRC Mini Documentary – Senator Murray Sinclair on Reconciliation

Let us now focus on another concept that I have been advocating — that being responsible citizenship.

Exploring Responsible Citizenship

You may remember the first section of the textbook, titled "Responsible Citizenship." Maybe it's long forgotten, but I did tie the concept into the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's work. I stated:

"Ever since the release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Final Report and Calls to Action in 2015, as well as listening to interviews with Commissioner Murray C. Sinclair, who has also served in the Senate of Canada, as well as being the first Indigenous person to serve as judge on the Court of Queen's Bench of Manitoba, I have been thinking about the key action we are asking our citizenry...

It was after a guest lecture on Indigenous peoples and their cultures to a group of newcomers in 2020 that it dawned on me that what we are asking every citizen to do is demonstrate **responsible citizenship** in our day-to-day lives**.** As an educator, and in response to the TRC's Calls to Action, my job is to create a learning opportunity that educates our students about what responsible citizenship means and looks like through this period of reconciliation. I contend that we are quickly seeing our society and other societies in the world at a crossroads, as we see grave mistakes of the past being repeated. In one word. it's disrespect. Disrespect for all our relations on Mother Earth, living and non-living...

What may seem isolated to Canada is not necessarily so. We must understand that 'colonization' and 'colonizing' behaviours, presenting as other ideologies and practices, are still in existence and present themselves globally. We must consider the broader need to commit to **responsible global citizenship** in this period of reconciliation."

I repeat some of the important considerations around this concept that I must admit will require additional exploration. There are several writings and views on this concept, but I did locate a very succinct video that captures brilliantly how Indigenous peoples frame responsibility: Rights Versus Responsibilities: An Indigenous Perspective

Hai Hai, Toghestiy, and Mel Bazil. This was filmed on stolen Gixtsan and Wet'suwet'en territories.

This is the perspective on responsibility that is most aligned to my concepts of responsible citizenship and responsible global citizenship. On the latter, I present an article titled, *Reconciliation and Global Citizenship*

Education in Canada, written by Charlene Bearhead for the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 2021.

So, there will be more that will follow on this concept in due time.

Key Terms and Concepts from the Chapter

- Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)
- Calls to Action
- Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls
- Justice Calls to Action
- education is key for reconciliation
- UPEI's IKERAS Faculty
- responsible citizenship
- responsible global citizenship

Important Readings/Viewings for Next Class

- self-directed this week: use the extra time to work on your assignments for the end of the term

References

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Chapter 12: Honouring Msit No’kmaq ~ Wahkohtowin ~ All Our Relations and Closing of Circle

Topics at a Glance

- Closing the Learning Circle
- Final Words

Closing the Learning Circle

Our learning journey together is now coming to a close, and as we enter this last phase, we’ll do this ceremonially. I always begin the closing of the learning circle with a warm welcome, a sacred smudging ceremony, and then a song. Let us first take a moment to honour the ancestors and relations, and particularly the L’nu and their lands, as none of this would be possible without them (see Figure 54).

Figure 54

Honouring the L’nu and their lands

I will ask that you remain standing as we hear the Honour Song as performed by Ms. Janey-Lynn Perrier of the Qalipu First Nation, Newfoundland, and UPEI Class of 2024 for the Winter 2024 Health, Healing, and Wellness course.

> *One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://pressbooks.library.upei.ca/ike1040indigenousteachings2ndedition/?p=105#oembed-1*

Videography credit: Austin Campbell, a member of Algonquins of Pikwakanagan First Nation, Ontario.

Wela'lin, hai hai, and thank you, Janey, for your beautiful singing of the Honour Song. It was so powerfully moving as you honoured your own Mi'kmaq (Qalipu First Nation, Newfoundland) ancestry during my course, and you have now received your BA in Music and a Minor in Indigenous Studies (May 2024). And, as always, to all my students — I extend a huge thank you for being part of this important learning journey.

Do you remember the words of the late Indigenous writer, Richard Wagamese, that were presented at the beginning of our journey in Chapter 2? Several times in this textbook, I've also mentioned his thoughts on learning, knowledge, and wisdom. He wrote:

"Knowledge is not wisdom. But wisdom is knowledge in action. I have lived most of my years immersed in the culture of books. I command a lot of facts. I comprehend a lot of concepts. That does not make me wise or even intelligent. It just indicates what I have memorized. But when I activate those facts and concepts to find

the greatest, grandest version of myself, and then use them to work toward that version, I begin the process of wisdom. The most essential question to ask myself is not 'What do I think about this?' but rather 'How do I feel about this?' In such simplicity is greatness made possible for an individual, a society and a human family."

-Richard Wagamese (Embers: One Ojibway's Meditations)

- What do you think Richard is saying? Does it make better sense now after our learning journey?
- What does this mean for your continued learning?
- What action is required of you going forward?

So, how do you feel about this?

I take the sacred feather and pass it around the circle, so each of us has an opportunity to speak and share what thoughts come to mind as we close our learning circle. This is such an important teaching, in and of itself. Before I pass the feather, I thank each of you for making this class so very special.

As the session comes to a close, I draw your attention to a series of images of an Indigenous youth theatrical performance troupe, formerly known as the 2011 Confederation Centre for the Arts Young Company. During the summer of 2011, they performed *The Talking Stick*. However, prior to their season beginning, they performed for Their Royal Highnesses, The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, Prince William and Kate Middleton, during their royal visit to Prince Edward Island (see Figure 55).

Figure 55

The Talking Stick Confederation Centre for the Arts Young Company, Charlottetown, PEI

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://pressbooks.library.upei.ca/ike1040indigenousteachings2ndedition/?p=105#h5p-1

Photo Credit: Georgia and East Coast Photography

I present one final video that I hope encapsulates what this course has been trying to do; while the video quality is not great, the audio is. The song performance is by Jacob MacInnis of the 2011 Confederation Centre for the Arts Young Company. *The Talking Stick* was a production of the late Cathy Elliott of Sipekne'katik First Nation, Nova Scotia, who tragically lost her life after being struck by a vehicle in 2017. Recall that 2017 was an important year in education across our country. Cathy devoted her life to education, theatre, and working with students. She had been engaged with a group of students from Sheridan College in Ontario when she left the physical world. She will be with many of us spiritually for a very long time, and her work lives on in future generations.

Seven Generations Work of Healing and Reconciliation in one Song

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://pressbooks.library.upei.ca/ike1040indigenousteachings2ndedition/?p=105#oembed-2

Final Words

As we end the term, I offer you my final words from this chapter: I wish you well in your professional and personal journey. You have learned much about Indigenous peoples, along with Indigenous and non-Indigenous relations in Canada and across Turtle Island. You have begun the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action by taking this course, and you are still in the reflection and writing mode.

I have been doing my own reflection to correspond with your reflective work, and this can be found in the next section of the textbook, "Section 3: Western Door ~ Relational Knowing and Honouring, Calls to Action, and Change." I also have some closing words for this textbook to say in "Section 4: Northern Door ~ Reconciliation and Responsible Citizenship."

It is my hope that you will continue to be engaged with the concept of relational knowing and honouring, your own calls to action, and responsible citizenship. I know you will, as this is not easy to forget. Once out there, it cannot be taken back. Interestingly, it may only come back months and years later — but it will come back.

Msit No'kmaq ~ Wahkohtowin ~ All our Relations.

References

Wagamese, R. (2016). Embers: One Ojibway's Meditations. D & M Publishers.

SECTION 3 : WESTERN DOOR ~ RELATIONAL KNOWING, HONOURING, AND ACCOUNTABILITY ~ CALLS TO ACTION ~ CHANGE

Western Door Reflection

A few words to begin

To begin, this reflection mirrors the type of reflection in which I have students engage in. Reflection is an opportunity to answer the question, *what I have learned*? But more importantly, *how does this make me feel? Why are these teachings important?* And *how I will go forward as I sit in the present and reflect back in time on the journey?*

In this shorter section in the direction of the west, with only one chapter, I will be reflecting upon the essence of **relational knowing and honouring**, **calls to action as relational accountability**, and **change** in the context of teaching, delivering this course, and working to see the integration and growth of the IKERAS Faculty within the academy.

Relational knowing and honouring

As if it were meant to be, three photographs presented themselves to me. They nicely coincide with this highly spiritual journey within the academy. The first, in Figure 55, I label *relational knowing and honouring within the academy*.

Figure 55

Relational knowing and honouring within the academy

I was asked if I would be interested in teaching a sociology course titled *Civility and Society* for the Department of Sociology and Anthropology during the first Summer Semester in 2019. I thought it was a perfect follow-up course to *Self and Society,* which I taught a couple of years earlier in 2017. Since joining UPEI in 2002, I was already teaching a section of the university's first-year *Introduction to Sociology* for well over 17 years, and all three courses were excellent learning opportunities. Being in the classroom to deliver and explore content — whether face-to-face, on-line, or in a hybrid format — researching and learning new subject matter and engaging students with the teachings, all part of being a teacher, are highly rewarding aspects, and in every respect represent relational knowing and honouring.

Relational knowing is first and foremost knowing one's self. Knowing one's gifts, one's passion or fire, and one's nature and vulnerabilities is a relational journey in and of itself. Knowing relational ways of engaging with community and society adds another layer of complexity. The pathways of knowing, learning, and engaging are varied, diverse, and, quite frankly, endless. Each day varies considerably when you think of it; days may appear similar, but each relational encounter presents a new pathway, especially when encountering strangers, new students, professors, staff, or colleagues.

Let us consider what Indigenous Richard Wagamese said:

"We approach our lives on different trajectories, each of us spinning in our own separate, shining orbits. What gives this life its resonance is when those trajectories cross and we become engaged with each other, for as long or as fleetingly as we do. There's a shared energy then, and it can feel as though the whole universe is in the process of coming together. I live for those times. No one is truly ever 'just passing through.' Every encounter has within it the power of enchantment, if we're willing to look for it" (Wagamese, 2016, p. 38).

As Wagamese suggests, life, trajectories, and enchanted pathways of relationality seemingly emerge if we are

open to it. Pathways within this relational journey reveal themselves in due course. Yet, we must be aware and, at times, knowing what specific path to take is somewhat of trick. The key is to know your nature and use sound judgement. Sometimes on the latter, if we make a 'snap' or 'unwise' decision, we find ourselves on another pathway. But, that too is an opportunity.

Since teaching has been part of my DNA (my father was an instructor and teacher), I've always felt that it's a natural fit, although at times, especially when trying something new in the classroom, it can be a bit intense internally. So this picture is a reminder that I've always honoured being with students, teaching, risking so I may learn, and being fully open to knowing as much as I can about relationality. My trajectory of beginning to understand Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing only came about mid-life, and in a most serendipitous way. It has allowed me to teach, write this Indigenous teachings textbook, and honour what I believe to be a most spiritual path.

In the image, I was facilitating a session with my *Civility and Society* class. I did not know at the time that two years later, in 2021, a special gathering would occur in the very spot I was standing. It was a gathering to mark the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. That day, and what occurred, opened the door for the creation of the new Faculty of Indigenous Knowledge, Education, Research, and Applied Studies. You can read about that in the introduction of this textbook.

This place is sacred to me, and I honour it always. Not too long ago, I told the President of the university that the location was the center of the campus. In my mind, this very special place represents the heart of our institution, and it should always be honoured. It's a place of compassion, openness, reconciliation, and learning, and I frequently bring my Indigenous classes there to open our hearts to other ways of knowing, being, and doing, providing the weather cooperates; it often does.

Calls to action as relational accountability

I present in Figure 56 below on the work I have undertaken at the University of Prince Edward Island, including the launching a new Faculty, developing the mandated IKE-1040 course, engaging with students in its teachings, and the creation of this textbook. In essence, these have been my calls to action.

Figure 56

Tipi poles being erected for Maw'omi, Abegweit First Nation, Prince Edward Island (2017)

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The image above shows a tipi (teepee), a Western plains structure, which has only the frame and not the outer covering — nor a sacred fire inside. The tipi was erected for a Mawi'omi (PowWow) in Abegweit First Nation, and I was immediately drawn to it for its message. The photograph was taken in June of 2016: sun shining bright, a young person running around it, the long shadow of another tipi on the ground, and the fact that I, a Manitoba Cree, had taken this picture of a western shelter on L'nu territory. I suppose it was a premonition or sign. In the spring of 2022, I made arrangements for a tipi to be erected at UPEI after the ground and structure was blessed by Elder Thirly Levi. Each of those poles represents a teaching, and upon reflection, I'm like the young person running around to experience everything that was unfolding, including the creation of the new Faculty.

My response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action started with the Commission's release of its Final Report in December 2015. I won't get into all the details, but I am sure you know that I take this pathway seriously. I honour it and what it means for our peoples, Indigenous and non-Indigenous relations, and future generations. I try often to inject the seven scared teachings into this work. Since it is heavy lifting, and has been since 2015 and even before being the sole 'Indian' teacher in the academy, I must be very careful not to cause my 'medicine wheel' to become imbalanced. Several times, it did result in a total imbalance. Imbalance requires always honouring the teachings so one can heal, restore health, and begin the good path to wellness. I am committed to the teaching and learning calls to action for as long as the Creator sees me on this pathway. I am humbled to bring Indigenous teachings to my students in the best way I know how.

In short, I believe that I am also applying the concept of relational accountability. As I indicated in the preface of this text, I am humbled by the work of countless selfless higher education warriors who honour family, community, their Elders, and teachers through the teachings that are now being passed on to others. It is this 'relational honouring' that embodies the desired outcome of Indigenization, reconciliation, and decolonization within higher education — a place where *Nation to Nation, People to People* relations transcend difference conceptually and in practice. I have been learning, and I am a '*kiskinwahamâkan*' or student of the teachings and life.

Change

As I consider this journey, I honour all relations, particularly the *kitpu* (Mi'kmaq for eagle) or *mikisiw* (Cree). I have learned so much about change through this wonderful relation that flies highest to the Creator. The eagle lives among us and is connected to all other relations, as evidenced in Figure 57.

Figure 57

Kitpu (mikisiw) with its relations on Epekwitk

I know we must always seek ways of knowing, being, and doing that honour all our relations. I see change as the only pathway for all relations to survive. We are not static, and we are not time travellers. We cannot go back and fix what has occurred, including the harms perpetrated on our relations, no matter how much we would like. We simply need to change what needs to be changed so as not to repeat past mistakes; and we also need to move forward while honouring the past through the values that our ancestors continue to provide us. While this concept will need further understanding and reflection, I do know that for Indigenous peoples, and what we have learned through this course, change is absolutely required.

References

Wagamese, R. (2016). *Embers: One Ojibway's Meditations*. D & M Publishers.

SECTION 4 : NORTHERN DOOR ~ RECONCILIATION AND RESPONSIBLE CITIZENSHIP

Conclusion

Reconciliation and Responsible Citizenship through Wisdom

As we conclude this section and chapter of our collective journey in the direction of the North, where wisdom resides, let us continue this process of active learning and applying wisdom to reconciliation and responsible citizenship. I keep coming back to the words of Richard Wagamese, and ask not "*What do I think about this?* but rather *How do I feel about this?* In such simplicity is greatness made possible for an individual, a society, and a human family."

It is in the journey toward wisdom, one that is a lifetime of learning, that we can realize reconciliation and responsible citizenship in a good way. I hope one day, as you put the teachings into practice, that you may be able to sit in that perfect place and reflect back on what was learned, acted upon, and accomplished. This place will look different for each of us. I add a few places where I've journeyed over the years. These are special places of learning, where I realized how I truly felt about this complex journey of self-discovery and reconciliation education.

Willow Cree Healing Lodge, Beardy's and Okemasis Cree Nation, Saskatchewan (2003)

North Shore with my relations, Epekwitk, Prince Edward Island (2004)

University of Prince Edward Island and Indigenous Teachings students (2023)

In June 2024, I had the opportunity to visit the First Nation University of Canada in Regina, Saskatchewan. This university is a “First Nations owned post-secondary institution that aspires to have a transformative impact by bridging our ceremonies, knowledge keepers, languages, and traditions with the delivery of high-quality education that will lead to the pride and success of all students, First Nations communities, and Canada” (First Nations University, 2024). In this perfect place, my reflection took on a spiritual dimension — one where years of hard work in the academy has come to fruition. Yet, I know much more work lies ahead. I also know this reconciliation journey is not a solo journey; instead, it is one that must be taken together — and I reserved a table just for you.

First Nation University of Canada in Treaty 4, Regina, Saskatchewan (2024)

But, it did not end there, rather this seems only to be the beginning of learning about reconciliation education. While the revelations and teachings happen most often close to home, one place that it comes to life is within my own homeland, Treaty 1, Winnipeg, Manitoba. It often is most pronounced during gatherings, where I can see my relations, generations of them, including the ancestors, in gratitude and in celebration.

National Indigenous Peoples Day at Forks, Wînipêk – Ȧ·ᓂVᐟ (Winnipeg), June 21, 2024

National Indigenous Peoples Day at Forks, Wînipêk – Ⅾ·σV᛬ (Winnipeg), June 21, 2024 with the Canadian Museum for Human Rights in the background overseeing all that we do to achieve reconciliation and responsible citizenship through wisdom.

Wela'lioq ~ Hai Hai ~ Thank you

Msit No'kmaq ~ Wahkohtowin ~ All my Relations

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Gratitude

As I stand in the direction of the northern door, which, in many Indigenous cultures, represents the spiritual realm of knowing, being, and doing, I can only think of one word that sums up how I feel about this professional and personal journey of reconciliation and responsible citizenship: gratitude.

As many of you may have gathered by now, I love music; I recently stumbled upon a brilliant, Canadian rock duo, and I thought it was perfect for the ending of my book. I could have included a more traditional song, like the ones included in our opening and closing ceremony, but this one answers the question posed by Wagamese — how I feel about this journey of reconciliation and my role as a responsible citizen. Before you access the video, I share a little bit about the artists in this excerpt from Wikipedia. You may also wish to explore their works at Crown Lands.

“Crown Lands is a Canadian rock music duo from Oshawa, Ontario.[1] The band consists of vocalist/drummer Cody Bowles, and guitarist/bassist/keyboardist Kevin Comeau.[1][2] With prog-rock influences, the duo compose music and lyrics inspired by Indigenous resistance to colonialism.[3] They have stated that their name, ‘Crown Lands,’ communicates a desire to disrupt the concept of Canadian ‘crown land,’ or government-held lands stolen from First Nations.[4]

Crown Lands won the Juno Award for Breakthrough Group of the Year at the Juno Awards of 2021.[5] The band were also nominated for Rock Album of the Year.[6] Their sophomore album Fearless was nominated for Rock Album of the Year at the 2024 Juno Awards.[7]” (Wikipedia, 2025).

I now invite you to listen to Feeling Good. Please check out the lyrics, which are also accessible there.

Msit No’kmaq ~ Wahkohtowin ~ All my Relations

Strong Running Buffalo

Textbook (OER) Development - Student Feedback

After reading this textbook, it would be greatly appreciated if you could complete the survey at the link provided below.

Your opinions, suggestions, and views are exceptionally valuable in further developing this product of learning.

Textbook (OER) Feedback

Wela'lin ~ Hai Hai ~ Thank you

About the Author

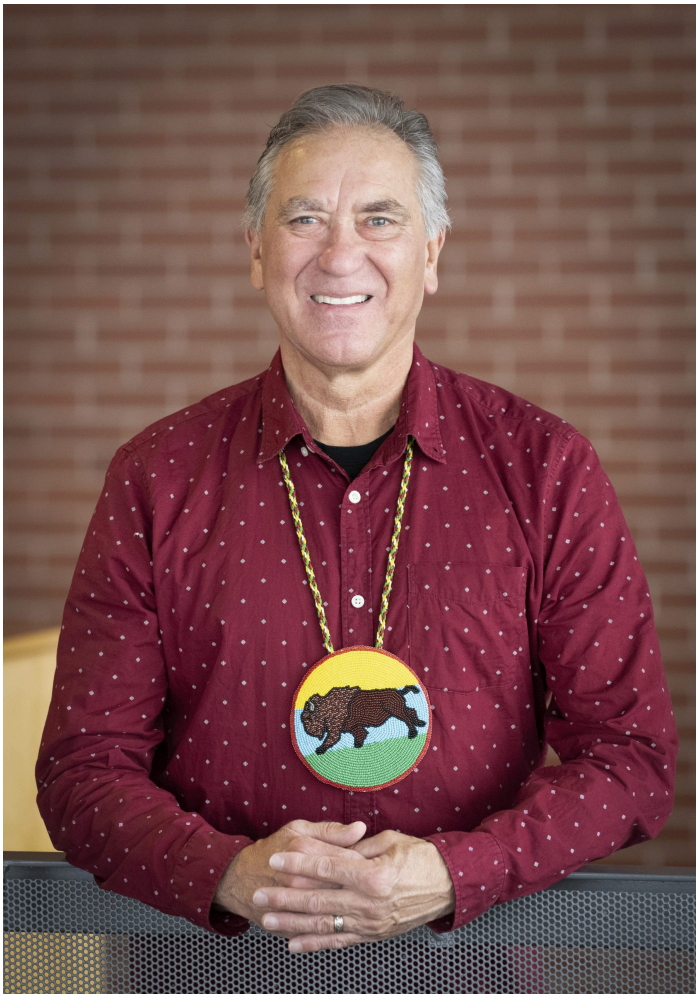

Photo: M. Needham, UPEI (2024)

David D. Varis, Assistant Professor, is of mixed ancestry, Cree (maternal) and Finnish (paternal). Born in Winnipeg (Wînipêk – Ȧ·σ-Vᐟ), he is on the unique path of living out the second half of his life in service to Indigenous communities and its peoples. Like many of his generation, who did not know about their Indigenous heritage, he now proudly lives his Cree ancestry (St. Peter's Indian Reserve/Peguis First Nation, MB). Much of his story in relation to professional work and contributions can be found in this book. Other contributions are underway in one form or another. He explains that he has a lot of catching up to do (half a lifetime) to understand his Cree bloodline and the countless cultural teachings that sustain a proud peoples on the rise. He is simply ecstatic to be in this student/learner (kiskinwahamâkan) and teacher (okiskinohamâkew) role during his seventh decade of discovery.

READING RESOURCES

Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada

Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future

Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Website: www.trc.ca

Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada

Honouring the truth, reconciling for the future : summary of the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.

Issued also in French under title: Honorer la vérité, réconcilier pour l'avenir, sommaire du rapport final de la Commission de vérité et réconciliation du Canada.

Electronic monograph in PDF format. Issued also in printed form.

Includes bibliographical references. ISBN 978-0-660-02078-5

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1. Native peoples–Canada–Residential schools. 2. Native peoples—Canada–History. 3. Native peoples–Canada–Social conditions. 4. Native peoples—Canada–Government relations. 5. Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. 6. Truth commissions–Canada.

I. Title. II. Title: Summary of the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. E96.5 T78 2015 / 971.004'97 / C2015-980024-2

Contents

Preface

Canada's residential school system for Aboriginal children was an education system in name only for much of its existence. These residential schools were created for the purpose of separating Aboriginal children from their families, in order to minimize and weaken family ties and cultural linkages, and to indoctrinate children into a new culture—the culture of the legally dominant Euro-Christian Canadian society, led by Canada's first prime minister, Sir John A. Macdonald. The schools were in existence for well over 100 years, and many successive generations of children from the same communities and families endured the experience of them. That experience was hidden for most of Canada's history, until Survivors of the system were finally able to find the strength, courage, and support to bring their experiences to light in several thousand court cases that ultimately led to the largest class-action lawsuit in Canada's history.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada was a commission like no other in Canada. Constituted and created by the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement, which settled the class actions, the Commission spent six years travelling to all parts of Canada to hear from the Aboriginal people who had been taken from their families as children, forcibly if necessary, and placed for much of their child- hoods in residential schools.

This volume is a summary of the discussion and findings contained in the Commission's final multi-volume report. The Final Report discusses what the Commission did and how it went about its work, as well as what it heard, read, and concluded about the schools and afterwards, based on all the evidence available to it. This summary must be read in conjunction with the Final Report.

The Commission heard from more than 6,000 witnesses, most of whom survived the experience of living in the schools as students. The stories of that experience are sometimes difficult to accept as something that could have happened in a country such as Canada, which has long prided itself on being a bastion of democracy, peace, and kindness throughout the world. Children were abused, physically and sexually, and they died in the schools in numbers that would not have been tolerated in any school system anywhere in the country, or in the world.

But, shaming and pointing out wrongdoing were not the purpose of the Commission's mandate. Ultimately, the Commission's focus on truth determination was intended to lay the foundation for the important question of reconciliation. Now that we know about residential schools and their legacy, what do we do about it?

Getting to the truth was hard, but getting to reconciliation will be harder. It requires that the paternalistic and racist foundations of the residential school system be rejected as the basis for an ongoing relationship. Reconciliation requires that a new vision, based on a commitment to mutual respect, be developed. It also

requires an understanding that the most harmful impacts of residential schools have been the loss of pride and self-respect of Aboriginal people, and the lack of respect that non-Aboriginal people have been raised to have for their Aboriginal neighbours. Reconciliation is not an Aboriginal problem; it is a Canadian one. Virtually all aspects of Canadian society may need to be reconsidered. This summary is intended to be the initial reference point in that important discussion. Reconciliation will take some time.

Introduction

For over a century, the central goals of Canada's Aboriginal policy were to eliminate Aboriginal governments; ignore Aboriginal rights; terminate the Treaties; and, through a process of assimilation, cause Aboriginal peoples to cease to exist as distinct legal, social, cultural, religious, and racial entities in Canada. The establishment and operation of residential schools were a central element of this policy, which can best be described as "cultural genocide."

Physical genocide is the mass killing of the members of a targeted group, and *biological genocide* is the destruction of the group's reproductive capacity. *Cultural genocide* is the destruction of those structures and practices that allow the group to continue as a group. States that engage in cultural genocide set out to destroy the political and social institutions of the targeted group. Land is seized, and populations are forcibly transferred and their movement is restricted. Languages are banned. Spiritual leaders are persecuted, spiritual practices are forbidden, and objects of spiritual value are confiscated and destroyed. And, most significantly to the issue at hand, families are disrupted to prevent the transmission of cultural values and identity from one generation to the next.

In its dealing with Aboriginal people, Canada did all these things.

Canada asserted control over Aboriginal land. In some locations, Canada negotiated Treaties with First Nations; in others, the land was simply occupied or seized. The negotiation of Treaties, while seemingly honourable and legal, was often marked by fraud and coercion, and Canada was, and remains, slow to implement their provisions and intent.1

On occasion, Canada forced First Nations to relocate their reserves from agriculturally valuable or resource-rich land onto remote and economically marginal reserves.2 Without legal authority or foundation, in the 1880s Canada instituted a "pass system" that was intended to confine First Nations people to their reserves.3

Canada replaced existing forms of Aboriginal government with relatively powerless band councils whose decisions it could override and whose leaders it could depose.4 In the process, it disempowered Aboriginal women, who had held significant influence and powerful roles in many First Nations, including the Mohawks, the Carrier, and Tlingit.5

Alert Bay, British Columbia, school, 1885. The federal government has estimated that over 150,000 students attended Canada's residential schools. Library and Archives Canada, George Dawson, PA-037934.

Canada denied the right to participate fully in Canadian political, economic, and social life to those Aboriginal people who refused to abandon their Aboriginal identity.6

Canada outlawed Aboriginal spiritual practices, jailed Aboriginal spiritual leaders, and confiscated sacred objects.7

And, Canada separated children from their parents, sending them to residential schools. This was done not to educate them, but primarily to break their link to their culture and identity. In justifying the government's residential school policy, Canada's first prime minister, Sir John A. Macdonald, told the House of Commons in 1883:

> When the school is on the reserve the child lives with its parents, who are sav- ages; he is surrounded by savages, and though he may learn to read and write his habits, and training and mode of thought are Indian. He is simply a savage who can read and write. It has been strongly pressed on myself, as the head of the Department, that Indian children should be withdrawn as much as possible from the parental influence, and the only way to do that would be to put them in central training industrial schools where they will acquire the habits and modes of thought of white men.8

These measures were part of a coherent policy to eliminate Aboriginal people as distinct peoples and to assimilate them into the Canadian mainstream against their will. Deputy Minister of Indian Affairs Duncan Campbell Scott outlined the goals of that policy in 1920, when he told a parliamentary committee that "our object is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic."9 These goals were reiterated in 1969 in the federal government's *Statement on Indian Policy* (more often referred to as the "White Paper"), which sought to end Indian status and terminate the Treaties that the federal government had negotiated with First Nations.10

The Canadian government pursued this policy of cultural genocide because it wished to divest itself of its

legal and financial obligations to Aboriginal people and gain control over their land and resources. If every Aboriginal person had been "absorbed into the body politic," there would be no reserves, no Treaties, and no Aboriginal rights.

Residential schooling quickly became a central element in the federal government's Aboriginal policy. When Canada was created as a country in 1867, Canadian churches were already operating a small number of boarding schools for Aboriginal people. As settlement moved westward in the 1870s, Roman Catholic and Protestant missionaries established missions and small boarding schools across the Prairies, in the North, and in British Columbia. Most of these schools received small, per-student grants from the federal government. In 1883, the federal government moved to establish three, large, residential schools for First Nation children in western Canada. In the following years, the system grew dramatically. According to the Indian Affairs annual report for 1930, there were eighty residential schools in operation across the country.11 The Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement provided compensation to students who attended 139 residential schools and residences.12 The federal government has estimated that at least 150,000 First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students passed through the system.13

Roman Catholic, Anglican, United, Methodist, and Presbyterian churches were the major denominations involved in the administration of the residential school system. The government's partnership with the churches remained in place until 1969, and, although most of the schools had closed by the 1980s, the last federally supported residential schools remained in operation until the late 1990s.

For children, life in these schools was lonely and alien. Buildings were poorly located, poorly built, and poorly maintained. The staff was limited in numbers, often poorly trained, and not adequately supervised. Many schools were poorly heated and poorly ventilated, and the diet was meagre and of poor quality. Discipline was harsh, and daily life was highly regimented. Aboriginal languages and cultures were denigrated and suppressed. The educational goals of the schools were limited and con- fused, and usually reflected a low regard for the intellectual capabilities of Aboriginal people. For the students, education and technical training too often gave way to the drudgery of doing the chores necessary to make the schools self-sustaining. Child neglect was institutionalized, and the lack of supervision created situations where students were prey to sexual and physical abusers.

The Mission, British Columbia, school opened in the early 1860s and remained in operation until 1984. Mission Community Archives.

In establishing residential schools, the Canadian government essentially declared Aboriginal people to be unfit parents. Aboriginal parents were labelled as being indifferent to the future of their children—a judgment contradicted by the fact that parents often kept their children out of schools because they saw those schools, quite accurately, as dangerous and harsh institutions that sought to raise their children in alien ways. Once in the schools, brothers and sisters were kept apart, and the government and churches even arranged marriages for students after they finished their education. The residential school system was based on an assumption that European civilization and Christian religions were superior to Aboriginal culture, which was seen as being savage and brutal. Government officials also were insistent that children be discouraged—and often prohibited—from speaking their own languages. The mis- sionaries who ran the schools played prominent roles in the church-led campaigns to ban Aboriginal spiritual practices such as the Potlatch and the Sun Dance (more properly called the "Thirst Dance"), and to

end traditional Aboriginal marriage prac- tices. Although, in most of their official pronouncements, government and church officials took the position that Aboriginal people could be civilized, it is clear that many believed that Aboriginal culture was inherently inferior.

This hostility to Aboriginal cultural and spiritual practice continued well into the twentieth century. In 1942, John House, the principal of the Anglican school in Gleichen, Alberta, became involved in a campaign to have two Blackfoot chiefs deposed, in part because of their support for traditional dance ceremonies.14 In 1947, Roman Catholic official J. O. Plourde told a federal parliamentary committee that since Canada was a Christian nation that was committed to having "all its citizens belonging to one or other of the Christian churches," he could see no reason why the residential schools "should foster aboriginal beliefs."15 United Church official George Dorey told the same committee that he questioned whether there was such a thing as "native religion."16

The goal of residential schooling was to separate children from their families, culture, and identity. Saskatchewan Archives Board, R-A2690.

Into the 1950s and 1960s, the prime mission of residential schools was the cul- tural transformation of Aboriginal children. In 1953, J. E. Andrews, the principal of the Presbyterian school in Kenora, Ontario, wrote that "we must face realistically the fact that the only hope for the Canadian Indian is eventual assimilation into the white race."17 In 1957, the principal of the Gordon's Reserve school in Saskatchewan, Albert Southard, wrote that he believed that the goal of residential schooling was to "change the philosophy of the Indian child. In other words since they must work and live with 'whites' then they must begin to think as 'whites.'" Southard said that the Gordon's school could never have a student council, since "in so far as the Indian understands the department's policy, he is against it."18 In a 1958 article on residential schools, senior Oblate Andre Renaud echoed the words of John A. Macdonald, arguing that when students at day schools went back to their "homes at the end of the school day and for the weekend, the pupils are re-exposed to their native culture, however diluted, from which the school is trying to separate them." A residential school, on the other hand, could "surround its pupils almost twenty-four hours a day with non-Indian Canadian culture through radio, television, public address system, movies, books, newspapers, group activities, etc."19

Despite the coercive measures that the government adopted, it failed to achieve its policy goals. Although Aboriginal peoples and cultures have been badly damaged, they continue to exist. Aboriginal people have refused to surrender their identity. It was the former students, the Survivors of Canada's residential schools, who placed the residential school issue on the public agenda. Their efforts led to the negotiation of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement that mandated the establishment of a residential school Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC).

The Survivors acted with courage and determination. We should do no less. It is time to commit to a process of reconciliation. By establishing a new and respectful relationship, we restore what must be restored, repair what must be repaired, and return what must be returned.

Reconciliation at the crossroads

To some people, *reconciliation* is the re-establishment of a conciliatory state. However, this is a state that many Aboriginal people assert never has existed between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. To others, reconciliation, in the context of Indian residential schools, is similar to dealing with a situation of family violence. It's about coming to terms with events of the past in a manner that overcomes conflict and establishes a respectful and healthy relationship among people, going forward. It is in the latter context that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada has approached the question of reconciliation.

To the Commission, reconciliation is about establishing and maintaining a mutually respectful relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in this country. In order for that to happen, there has to be awareness of the past, acknowledgement of the harm that has been inflicted, atonement for the causes, and action to change behaviour.

Survivors' Sharing Circle at Truth and Reconciliation Commission Manitoba National Event, June 2010.

We are not there yet. The relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples is not a mutually respectful one. But, we believe we can get there, and we believe we can maintain it. Our ambition is to show how we can do that. In 1996, the *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* urged Canadians to begin a national process of reconciliation that would have set the country on a bold new path, fundamentally changing the very foundations of Canada's relationship with Aboriginal peoples. Much of what the Royal Commission had to say has been ignored by government; a majority of its recommendations were never implemented. But the report and its findings opened people's eyes and changed the conversation about the reality for Aboriginal people in this country.

In 2015, as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada wraps up its work, the country has a rare second chance to seize a lost opportunity for reconciliation. We live in a twenty-first-century global world. At stake is Canada's place as a prosperous, just, and inclusive democracy within that global world. At the trc's first National Event in Winnipeg, Manitoba, in 2010, residential school Survivor Alma Mann Scott said,

> The healing is happening—the reconciliation.... I feel that there's some hope for us not just as Canadians, but for the world, because I know I'm not the only one. I know that Anishinaabe people across Canada, First Nations, are not the only ones. My brothers and sisters in New Zealand, Australia, Ireland—there's different areas of the world where this type of stuff happened.... I don't see it happen- ing in a year, but we can start making changes to laws and to education systems... so that we can move forward.20

Reconciliation must support Aboriginal peoples as they heal from the destructive legacies of colonization that have wreaked such havoc in their lives. But it must do even more. Reconciliation must inspire Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples to transform Canadian society so that our children and grandchildren can live together in dignity, peace, and prosperity on these lands we now share.

The urgent need for reconciliation runs deep in Canada. Expanding public dia- logue and action on reconciliation beyond residential schools will be critical in the coming years. Although some progress has been made, significant barriers to recon- ciliation remain. The relationship between the federal government and Aboriginal peoples is deteriorating. Instead of moving towards reconciliation, there have been divisive conflicts over Aboriginal education, child welfare, and justice.21 The daily news has been filled with reports of controversial issues ranging from the call for a national inquiry on violence towards Aboriginal women and girls to the impact of the economic development of lands and resources on Treaties and Aboriginal title and rights.22 The courts continue to hear Aboriginal rights cases, and new litigation has been filed by Survivors of day schools not covered under the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement, as well as by victims of the "Sixties Scoop," which was a child-welfare policy that removed Aboriginal children from their homes and placed them with non-Aboriginal families.23 The promise of reconciliation, which seemed so imminent back in 2008 when the prime minister, on behalf of all Canadians, apologized to Survivors, has faded.

Too many Canadians know little or nothing about the deep historical roots of these conflicts. This lack of historical knowledge has serious consequences for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples, and for Canada as a whole. In government circles, it makes for poor public policy decisions. In the public realm, it reinforces racist attitudes and fuels civic distrust between Aboriginal peoples and other Canadians.24 Too many Canadians still do not know the history of Aboriginal peoples' contributions to Canada, or understand that by virtue of the historical and modern Treaties negotiated by our government, we are all Treaty people. History plays an important role in reconciliation; to build for the future, Canadians must look to, and learn from, the past.

As Commissioners, we understood from the start that although reconciliation could not be achieved during the trc's lifetime, the country could and must take ongoing positive and concrete steps forward. While the Commission has been a catalyst for deepening our national awareness of the meaning and potential of reconciliation, it will take many heads, hands, and hearts, working together, at all levels of society to maintain momentum in the years ahead. It will also take sustained political will at all levels of government and concerted material resources.

The thousands of Survivors who publicly shared their residential school experiences at TRC events in every region of this country have launched a much-needed dialogue about what is necessary to heal themselves, their families, communities, and the nation. Canadians have much to benefit from listening to the voices, experiences, and wisdom of Survivors, Elders, and Traditional Knowledge Keepers—and much more to learn

about reconciliation. Aboriginal peoples have an important contribution to make to reconciliation. Their knowledge systems, oral histories, laws, and con- nections to the land have vitally informed the reconciliation process to date, and are essential to its ongoing progress.

At a Traditional Knowledge Keepers Forum sponsored by the trc, Anishinaabe Elder Mary Deleary spoke about the responsibility for reconciliation that both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people carry. She emphasized that the work of rec- onciliation must continue in ways that honour the ancestors, respect the land, and rebalance relationships. She said,

> I'm so filled with belief and hope because when I hear your voices at the table, I hear and know that the responsibilities that our ancestors carried … are still being carried … even through all of the struggles, even through all of what has been disrupted … we can still hear the voice of the land. We can hear the care and love for the children. We can hear about our law. We can hear about our stories, our governance, our feasts, [and] our medicines We have work to do.
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> That work we are [already] doing as [Aboriginal] peoples. Our relatives who have come from across the water [non-Aboriginal people], you still have work to do on your road. The land is made up of the dust of our ancestors' bones. And so to
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> reconcile with this land and everything that has happened, there is much work to be done … in order to create balance.25

At the Victoria Regional Event in 2012, Survivor Archie Little said,

> [For] me reconciliation is righting a wrong. And how do we do that? All these people in this room, a lot of non-Aboriginals, a lot of Aboriginals that probably didn't go to residential school; we need to work together My mother had a
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> high standing in our cultural ways. We lost that. It was taken away. And I think
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> it's time for you non-Aboriginals … to go to your politicians and tell them that we have to take responsibility for what happened. We have to work together.26

The Reverend Stan McKay of the United Church, who is also a Survivor, believes that reconciliation can happen only when everyone accepts responsibility for healing in ways that foster respect. He said,

> [There must be] a change in perspective about the way in which Aboriginal peo- ples would be engaged with Canadian society in the quest for reconciliation.… [We cannot] perpetuate the paternalistic concept that only Aboriginal peoples are in need of healing The perpetrators are wounded and marked by history in ways that are different from the victims, but both groups require healing How can a conversation about reconciliation take place if all involved do not adopt an attitude of humility and respect? We all have stories to tell and in order to grow in tolerance and understanding we must listen to the stories of others.27

Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal representatives from 4Rs Youth Movement present the 4Rs drum made by Nisga'a artist Mike Dangeli, as an expression of reconciliation at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Alberta National Event, March 2014.

Over the past five years, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada urged Canadians not to wait until our final report was issued before contributing to the reconciliation process. We have been encouraged to see that across the country, many people have been answering that call.

The youth of this country are taking up the challenge of reconciliation. Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal youth who attended trc National Events made powerful state- ments about why reconciliation matters to them. At the Alberta National Event in Edmonton in March 2014, an Indigenous youth spoke on behalf of a national Indigenous and non-Indigenous collaboration known as the "4Rs Youth Movement." Jessica Bolduc said,

> We have re-examined our thoughts and beliefs around colonialism, and have made a commitment to unpack our own baggage, and to enter into a new rela- tionship with each other, using this momentum, to move our country forward, in light of the 150th anniversary of the Confederation of Canada in 2017.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission Traditional Knowledge Keepers Forum, June 2014. University of Manitoba, Adam Dolman.

> At this point in time, we ask ourselves, "What does that anniversary mean for us, as Indigenous youth and non-Indigenous youth, and how do we arrive at that day with something we can celebrate together?"... Our hope is that, one day, we will live together, as recognized nations, within a country we can all be proud of.28

In 2013, at the British Columbia National Event in Vancouver, where over 5,000 elementary and secondary school students attended Education Day, several non-Ab- original youth talked about what they had learned. Matthew Meneses said, "I'll never forget this day. This is the first day they ever told us about residential schools. If I were to see someone who's Aboriginal, I'd ask them if they can speak their language because I think speaking their language is a pretty cool thing." Antonio Jordao said, "It makes me sad for those kids. They took them away from their homes—it was torture, it's not fair. They took them away from their homes. I don't agree with that. It's really wrong. That's one of the worst things that Canada did." Cassidy Morris said, "It's good that we're finally learning about what happened." Jacqulyn Byers told us, "I hope that events like this are able to bring closure to the horrible things that happened, and that a whole lot of people now recognize that the crime happened and that we need to make amends for it."29

At the same National Event, TRC Honorary Witness Patsy George paid tribute to the strength of Aboriginal women and their contributions to the reconciliation process despite the oppression and violence they have experienced. She said,

> Women have always been a beacon of hope for me. Mothers and grandmothers in the lives of our

children, and in the survival of our communities, must be recognized and supported. The justified rage we all feel and share today must be turned into instruments of transformation of our hearts and our souls, clearing the ground for respect, love, honesty, humility, wisdom and truth. We owe it to all those who suffered, and we owe it to the children of today and tomorrow. May this day and the days ahead bring us peace and justice.30

Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians from all walks of life spoke to us about the importance of reaching out to one another in ways that create hope for a better future. Whether one is First Nations, Inuit, Métis, a descendant of European settlers, a member of a minority group that suffered historical discrimination in Canada, or a new Canadian, we all inherit both the benefits and obligations of Canada. We are all Treaty people who share responsibility for taking action on reconciliation.

Without truth, justice, and healing, there can be no genuine reconciliation. Reconciliation is not about "closing a sad chapter of Canada's past," but about open- ing new healing pathways of reconciliation that are forged in truth and justice. We are mindful that knowing the truth about what happened in residential schools in and of itself does not necessarily lead to reconciliation. Yet, the importance of truth telling in its own right should not be underestimated; it restores the human dignity of victims of violence and calls governments and citizens to account. Without truth, justice is not served, healing cannot happen, and there can be no genuine reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in Canada. Speaking to us at the Traditional Knowledge Keepers Forum in June of 2014, Elder Dave Courchene posed a critical question: "When you talk about truth, whose truth are you talking about?"31

The Commission's answer to Elder Courchene's question is that by *truth,* we mean not only the truth revealed in government and church residential school documents, but also the truth of lived experiences as told to us by Survivors and others in their statements to this Commission. Together, these public testimonies constitute a new oral history record, one based on Indigenous legal traditions and the practice of witnessing.32 As people gathered at various trc National Events and Community Hearings, they shared the experiences of truth telling and of offering expressions of reconciliation.

Over the course of its work, the Commission inducted a growing circle of trc Honorary Witnesses. Their role has been to bear official witness to the testimonies of Survivors and their families, former school staff and their descendants, government and church officials, and any others whose lives have been affected by the residential schools. Beyond the work of the TRC, the Honorary Witnesses have pledged their

commitment to the ongoing work of reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Ab- original peoples. We also encouraged everyone who attended trc National Events or Community Hearings to see themselves as witnesses also, with an obligation to find ways of making reconciliation a concrete reality in their own lives, communities, schools, and workplaces.

As Elder Jim Dumont explained at the Traditional Knowledge Keepers Forum in June 2014, "in Ojibwe thinking, to speak the truth is to actually speak from the heart."33 At the Community Hearing in Key First Nation, Saskatchewan, in 2012, Survivor Wilfred Whitehawk told us he was glad that he disclosed his abuse.

I don't regret it because it taught me something. It taught me to talk about truth, about me, to be honest about who I am I am very proud of who I am today.

It took me a long time, but I'm there. And what I have, my values and belief systems are mine and no one is going to impose theirs on me. And no one today is going to take advantage of me, man or woman, the government or the rcmp, because I have a voice today. I can speak for me and no one can take that away.34

Survivor and the child of Survivors Vitaline Elsie Jenner said, “I’m quite happy to be able to share my story. I want the people of Canada to hear, to listen, for it is the truth I also want my grandchildren to learn, to learn from me that, yes, it did

happen.”35

Another descendant of Survivors, Daniel Elliot, told the Commission,

> I think all Canadians need to stop and take a look and not look away. Yeah, it’s embarrassing, yeah, it’s an ugly part of our history. We don’t want to know about it. What I want to see from the Commission is to rewrite the history books so that other generations will understand and not go through the same thing that we’re going through now, like it never happened.36

President of the Métis National Council Clement Chartier spoke to the Commission about the importance of truth to justice and reconciliation. At the Saskatchewan National Event, he said,

> The truth is important. So I’ll try to address the truth and a bit of reconciliation as well. The truth is that the Métis Nation, represented by the Métis National Council, is not a party to the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement And
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> the truth is that the exclusion of the Métis Nation or the Métis as a people is reflected throughout this whole period not only in the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement but in the apology made by Canada as well....
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> We are, however, the products of the same assimilationist policy that the fed-
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> eral government foisted upon the Treaty Indian kids. So there ought to be some solution. The Métis boarding schools, residential schools, are excluded. And we
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> need to ensure that everyone was aware of that and hopefully some point down the road, you will help advocate and get, you know, the governments or whoever
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> is responsible to accept responsibility and to move forward on a path to reconciliation, because reconciliation should be for all Aboriginal peoples and not only some Aboriginal peoples.37

At the British Columbia National Event, the former lieutenant-governor of British Columbia, the Honourable Steven Point, said,

> And so many of you have said today, so many of the witnesses that came forward said, “I cannot forgive. I’m not ready to forgive.” And I wondered why. Recon- ciliation is about hearing the truth, that’s for sure. It’s also about acknowledging that truth. Acknowledging that what you’ve said is true. Accepting responsibility for your pain and putting those children back in the place they would have been, had they not been taken from their homes....
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> What are the blockages to reconciliation? The continuing poverty in our communities and the failure of our government to recognize that “Yes, we own the land.” Stop the destruction of our territories and for God’s sake, stop the deaths of so many of our women on highways across this country.... I’m going to continue to talk about reconciliation, but just as important, I’m going to foster healing in our own people, so that our children can avoid this pain, can avoid this destruction and finally, take our rightful place in this “Our Canada.”38

When former residential school staff attended public TRC events, some thought it was most important to hear directly from Survivors, even if their own perspectives and memories of the schools might differ from

those of the Survivors. At a Community Hearing in Thunder Bay, Ontario, Merle Nisley, who worked at the Poplar Hill residential school in the early 1970s, said,

> I think it would be valuable for people who have been involved in the schools to hear stories personally. And I also think it would be valuable, when it's appropriate … [for] former students who are on the healing path to … hear some of our stories, or to hear some of our perspectives. But I know that's a very difficult thing to do Certainly this is not the time to try to ask all those former students
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> to sit and listen to the rationale of the former staff because there's just too much emotion there … and there's too little trust you can't do things like that when
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> there's low levels of trust. So I think really a very important thing is for former staff to hear the stories and to be courageous enough just to hear them Where
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> wrongs were done, where abuses happened, where punishment was over the top, and wherever sexual abuse happened, somehow we need to courageously sit and talk about that, and apologize. I don't know how that will happen.39

Nisley's reflections highlight one of the difficulties the Commission faced in trying to create a space for respectful dialogue between former residential school students and staff. While, in most cases, this was possible, in other instances, Survivors and their family members found it very difficult to listen to former staff, particularly if they perceived the speaker to be an apologist for the schools.

At the trc Victoria Regional Event, Brother Tom Cavanaugh, the district superior of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate for British Columbia and the Yukon, spoke about his time as a supervisor at the Christie residential school.

> What I experienced over the six years I was at Christie residential school was a staff, Native and non-Native alike, working together to provide as much as possible, a safe loving environment for the children attending Christie school. Was it a perfect situation? No, it wasn't a perfect situation … but again, there didn't seem to be, at that time, any other viable alternative in providing a good education for so many children who lived in relatively small and isolated communities.

Survivors and family members who were present in the audience spoke out, saying, "Truth, tell the truth." Brother Cavanaugh replied, "If you give me a chance, I will tell you the truth." When trc Chair Justice Murray Sinclair intervened to ask the audi- ence to allow Brother Cavanaugh to finish his statement, he was able to do so with- out further interruption. Visibly shaken, Cavanaugh then went on to acknowledge that children had also been abused in the schools, and he condemned such actions, expressing his sorrow and regret for this breach of trust.

> I can honestly say that our men are hurting too because of the abuse scandal and the rift that this has created between First Nations and church representatives.
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> Many of our men who are still working with First Nations have attended various truth and reconciliation sessions as well as Returning to Spirit sessions, hop- ing to bring about healing for all concerned. The Oblates desire healing for the
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> abused and for all touched by the past breach of trust. It is our hope that together we can continue to build a better society.40

Later that same day, Ina Seitcher, who attended the Christie residential school, painted a very different picture of the school from what Brother Cavanaugh had described.

> I went to Christie residential school. This morning I heard a priest talking about his Christie residential school. I want to tell him [about] my Christie residential school. I went there for ten months. Ten months that impacted my life for fifty years. I am just now on my healing journey. I need to do this, I need to speak
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> out. I need to speak for my mom and dad who went to residential school, for my aunts, my uncles, all that are beyond now. All the pain of our people, the hurt,
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> the anger.... That priest that talked about how loving that Christie residential school was—it was not. That priest was most likely in his office not knowing what was going on down in the dorms or in the lunchroom There were things that
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> happened at Christie residential school, and like I said, I'm just starting my heal- ing journey. There are doors that I don't even want to open. I don't even want to open those doors because I don't know what it would do to me.41

These two, seemingly irreconcilable, truths are a stark reminder that there are no easy shortcuts to reconciliation. The fact that there were few direct exchanges at TRC events between Survivors and former school staff indicates that for many, the time for reconciliation had not yet arrived. Indeed, for some, it may never arrive. At the Manitoba National Event in 2010, Survivor Evelyn Brockwood talked about why it is important to ensure that there is adequate time for healing to occur in the truth and reconciliation process. She said,

> When this came out at the beginning, I believe it was 1990, about residential schools, people coming out with their stories, and ... I thought the term, the words they were using, were truth, healing and reconciliation. But somehow it seems like we are going from truth telling to reconciliation, to reconcile with our white brothers and sisters. My brothers and sisters, we have a lot of work to do in the middle. We should really lift up the word healing Go slow, we are going
>
> too fast, too fast...We have many tears to shed before we even get to the word reconciliation.42

To determine the truth and to tell the full and complete story of residential schools in this country, the TRC needed to hear from Survivors and their families, former staff, government and church officials, and all those affected by residential schools. Canada's national history in the future must be based on the truth about what happened in the residential schools. One hundred years from now, our children's children and their children must know and still remember this history, because they will inherit from us the responsibility of ensuring that it never happens again.

What is reconciliation?

During the course of the Commission's work, it has become clear that the concept of reconciliation means different things to different people, communities, institutions, and organizations. The TRC mandate describes reconciliation as "an ongoing individual and collective process, and will require commitment from all those affected including First Nations, Inuit and Métis former Indian Residential School (irs) students, their families, communities, religious entities, former school employees, government and the people of Canada. Reconciliation may occur between any of the above groups."43

The Commission defines *reconciliation* as an ongoing process of establishing and maintaining respectful relationships. A critical part of this process involves repairing damaged trust by making apologies, providing individual and collective reparations, and following through with concrete actions that demonstrate real societal change. Establishing respectful relationships also requires the revitalization of Indigenous law and legal traditions. It is important that all Canadians understand how traditional

First Nations, Inuit, and Métis approaches to resolving conflict, repairing harm, and restoring relationships can inform the reconciliation process.

Traditional Knowledge Keepers and Elders have long dealt with conflicts and harms using spiritual ceremonies and peacemaking practices, and by retelling oral history stories that reveal how their ancestors restored harmony to families and communities. These traditions and practices are the foundation of Indigenous law; they contain wisdom and practical guidance for moving towards reconciliation across this land.44

As First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities access and revitalize their spirituality, cultures, languages, laws, and governance systems, and as non-Aboriginal Canadians increasingly come to understand Indigenous history within Canada, and to recognize and respect Indigenous approaches to establishing and maintain- ing respectful relationships, Canadians can work together to forge a new covenant of reconciliation.

Despite the ravages of colonialism, every Indigenous nation across the country, each with its own distinctive culture and language, has kept its legal traditions and peacemaking practices alive in its communities. While Elders and Knowledge Keepers across the land have told us that there is no specific word for “reconciliation” in their own languages, there are many words, stories, and songs, as well as sacred objects such as wampum belts, peace pipes, eagle down, cedar boughs, drums, and regalia, that are used to establish relationships, repair conflicts, restore harmony, and make peace. The ceremonies and protocols of Indigenous law are still remembered and practised in many Aboriginal communities.

At the trc Traditional Knowledge Keepers Forum in June 2014, TRC Survivor Committee member and Elder Barney Williams told us that

> from sea to sea, we hear words that allude to … what is reconciliation? What does healing or forgiveness mean? And how there’s parallels to all those words that the Creator gave to all the nations.... When I listen and reflect on the voices of the ancestors, your ancestors, I hear my ancestor alluding to the same thing with a different dialect.... My understanding [of reconciliation] comes from a place and time when there was no English spoken … from my grandmother who was born in the 1800s.... I really feel privileged to have been chosen by my grandmother to be the keeper of our knowledge.... What do we need to do? … We need to go back to ceremony and embrace ceremony as part of moving forward. We need to understand the laws of our people.45

At the same Forum, Elder Stephen Augustine explained the roles of silence and negotiation in Mi’kmaq law. He said silence is a concept, and can be used as a con- sequence for a wrong action or to teach a lesson. Silence is employed according to proper procedures, and ends at a particular time too. Elder Augustine suggested that there is both a place for talking about reconciliation and a need for quiet reflection.

Reconciliation cannot occur without listening, contemplation, meditation, and deeper internal deliberation. Silence in the face of residential school harms is an appropriate response for many Indigenous peoples. We must enlarge the space for respectful silence in journeying towards reconciliation, particularly for Survivors who regard this as key to healing. There is a place for discussion and negotiation for those who want to move beyond silence. Dialogue and mutual adjustment are significant components of Mi’kmaq law. Elder

Augustine suggested that other dimensions of human experience—our relationships with the earth and all living beings—are also relevant in working towards reconciliation. This profound insight is an Indigenous law, which could be applied more generally.46

Elder Reg Crowshoe told the Commission that Indigenous peoples' world views, oral history traditions, and practices have much to teach us about how to establish respectful relationships among peoples and with the land and all living things. Learning how to live together in a good way happens through sharing stories and practising reconciliation in our everyday lives.

> When we talk about the concept of reconciliation, I think about some of the sto- ries that I've heard in our culture and stories are important These stories are so important as theories but at the same time stories are important to oral cultures. So when we talk about stories, we talk about defining our environment and how we look at authorities that come from the land and how that land, when we talk about our relationship with the land, how we look at forgiveness and reconcilia- tion is so important when we look at it historically.
>
> We have stories in our culture about our superheroes, how we treat each other, stories about how animals and plants give us authorities and privileges to use plants as healing, but we also have stories about practices. How would we practise reconciliation? How would we practise getting together to talk about reconciliation in an oral perspective? And those practices are so important.47

As Elder Crowshoe explained further, reconciliation requires talking, but our conversations must be broader than Canada's conventional approaches. Reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians, from an Aboriginal perspective, also requires reconciliation with the natural world. If human beings resolve problems between themselves but continue to destroy the natural world, then reconciliation remains incomplete. This is a perspective that we as Commissioners have repeatedly heard: that reconciliation will never occur unless we are also reconciled with the earth. Mi'kmaq and other Indigenous laws stress that humans must journey through life in conversation and negotiation with all creation. Reciprocity and mutual respect help sustain our survival. It is this kind of healing and survival that is needed in mov- ing forward from the residential school experience.

Over the course of its work, the Commission created space for exploring the meanings and concepts of reconciliation. In public Sharing Circles at National Events and Community Hearings, we bore witness to powerful moments of truth sharing and humbling acts of reconciliation. Many Survivors had never been able to tell their own families the whole truth of what happened to them in the schools. At hearings in Regina, Saskatchewan, Elder Kirby Littletent said, "I never told, I just told my children, my grandchildren I went to boarding school, that's all. I never shared my experiences."48

Truth and Reconciliation Commission Northern National Event, Inuvik, Northwest Territories, June 2011

Many spoke to honour the memory of relatives who have passed on. Simone, an Inuk Survivor from Chesterfield Inlet, Nunavut, said,

> I'm here for my parents—'Did you miss me when I went away?' 'Did you cry for me?'—and

> I'm here for my brother, who was a victim, and my niece at the age of five who suffered a head injury and never came home, and her parents never had closure. To this day, they have not found the grave in Winnipeg. And I'm here for them first, and that's why I'm making a public statement.49

Others talked about the importance of reconciling with family members, and cautioned that this process is just beginning. Patrick Etherington, a Survivor from St. Anne's residential school in Fort Albany, Ontario, walked with his son and others from Cochrane, Ontario, to the National Event in Winnipeg. He said that the walk helped him to reconnect with his son, and that he "just wanted to be here because I feel this process that we are starting, we got a long ways to go."50

We saw the children and grandchildren of Survivors who, in searching for their own identity and place in the world, found compassion and gained new respect for their relatives who went to the schools, once they heard about and began to understand their experiences. At the Northern National Event in Inuvik, Northwest Territories, Maxine Lacorne said,

> As a youth, a young lady, I talk with people my age because I have a good understanding. I talk to people who are residential school Survivors because I like to hear their stories, you know, and it gives me more understanding of my parents.... It is an honour to be here, to sit here among you guys, Survivors. Wow. You guys are strong people, you guys survived everything. And we're still going to be here. They tried to take us away. They tried to take our language away. You guys are still here, we're still here. I'm still here.51

We heard about children whose small acts of everyday resistance in the face of rampant abuse, neglect, and bullying in the schools were quite simply heroic. At the trc British Columbia National Event, Elder Barney Williams said that "many of us, through our pain and suffering, managed to hold our heads up ... we were brave children."52 We saw old bonds of childhood friendship renewed as people gathered and found each other at TRC-sponsored events. Together, they remembered the horrors they had endured even as they recalled with pride long-forgotten accomplishments in various school sports teams, music, or art activities. We heard from resilient, courageous Survivors who, despite their traumatic childhood experiences, went on to become influential leaders in their communities and in all walks of Canadian life, including politics, government, law, education, medicine, the corporate world, and the arts.

We heard from officials representing the federal government that administered the schools. In a Sharing Circle at the Manitoba National Event, the Honourable Chuck Strahl (then minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development Canada) said,

> Governments like to write ... policy, and they like to write legislation, and they like to codify things and so on. And Aboriginal people want to talk about restoration, reconciliation, forgiveness, about healing ... about truth. And those things are all things of the heart and of relationship, and not of government policy.
>
> Governments do a bad job of that.53

Church representatives spoke about their struggles to right the relationship with Aboriginal peoples. In Inuvik, Anglican Archbishop Fred Hiltz told us that

> as a Church, we are renewing our commitment to work with the Assembly of First Nations in addressing long-standing, Indigenous justice issues. As a Church, we are requiring anyone who serves the Church at a national level to go through anti-racism training We have a lot to do in our Church to make sure that racism is eliminated.54

Educators told us about their growing awareness of the inadequate role that post-secondary institutions

played in training the teachers who taught in the schools. They have pledged to change educational practices and curriculum to be more inclu- sive of Aboriginal knowledge and history. Artists shared their ideas and feelings about truth and reconciliation through songs, paintings, dance, film, and other media. Corporations provided resources to bring Survivors to events, and, in some cases, some of their own staff and managers.

For non-Aboriginal Canadians who came to bear witness to Survivors' life stories, the experience was powerful. One woman said simply, "By listening to your story, my story can change. By listening to your story, I can change."55

Reconciliation as relationship

In its 2012 *Interim Report*, the TRC recommended that federal, provincial, and territorial governments, and all parties to the Settlement Agreement, undertake to meet and explore the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, as a framework for reconciliation in Canada. We remain convinced that the *United Nations Declaration* provides the necessary principles, norms, and standards for reconciliation to flourish in twenty-first-century Canada.

A reconciliation framework is one in which Canada's political and legal systems, educational and religious institutions, the corporate sector and civic society function in ways that are consistent with the principles set out in the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, which Canada has endorsed. Together, Canadians must do more than just *talk* about reconciliation; we must learn how to *practise* reconciliation in our everyday lives—within ourselves and our families, and in our communities, governments, places of worship, schools, and workplaces. To do so constructively, Canadians must remain committed to the ongoing work of establishing and maintaining respectful relationships.

For many Survivors and their families, this commitment is foremost about healing themselves, their communities, and nations, in ways that revitalize individuals as well as Indigenous cultures, languages, spirituality, laws, and governance systems. For governments, building a respectful relationship involves dismantling a centuries-old political and bureaucratic culture in which, all too often, policies and programs are still based on failed notions of assimilation. For churches, demonstrating long-term commitment requires atoning for actions within the residential schools, respecting Indigenous spirituality, and supporting Indigenous peoples' struggles for justice and equity. Schools must teach history in ways that foster mutual respect, empathy, and engagement. All Canadian children and youth deserve to know Canada's honest history, including what happened in the residential schools, and to appreciate the rich history and knowledge of Indigenous nations who continue to make such a strong contribution to Canada, including our very name and collective identity as a country. For Canadians from all walks of life, reconciliation offers a new way of living together.

IKE 1040 Indigenous Teachings of Turtle Island - Robertson Library (Master List)

Please follow the link provided to be taken directly to the Robertson Library's IKE-1040 master reading list: https://library.upei.ca/reserves/ike-1040-indigenous-teachings-turtle-island

Vowel, C. (2016). Indigenous writes: a guide to First Nations, Metis, & Inuit issues in Canada. Winnipeg, MB: Highwater Press.

Available at https://web-s-ebscohost-com.proxy.library.upei.ca/ehost/ebookviewer/ebook/bmxlYmtfXzE1MDA5NjRfX0FO0?sid=f07bb83a-c820-41ba-9473-088b680bfde9@redis&vid=0&format=EB&rid=1 from Robertson Library **(Log-in Required)**

Selected Readings from Whose Land is it Anyway? A Manual for Decolonization: Part I

THE MACHINERY OF COLONIZATION

Christi Belcourt & Isaac Murdoch

It’s all about the land

Taiaiake Alfred

For many generations we Indigenous people have been in a life and death struggle for survival, for respect of our humanity, restoration of our nationhood, and recognition of our rights. This whole time, a constant surge of ancestral memory running through our veins has empowered and enlivened us and given us the gifts of tenacity, anger, patience and love, so that the people may continue and so that the generations that are yet to rise from the earth may know themselves as the real people of their land. The voices of our ancestors continue to call out to us, telling us that it is all about the land: always has been and always will be… get it back, go back to it. We have fought for the land and for our connection to it. For five hundred years, it is this struggle to restore the living relationship between our ancestors, our land and ourselves that has defined us as Indigenous people, and it is this struggle that has ensured our survival in the face of ignorance and violence.

Now that we have proven that we will not accept annihilation, we find ourselves in an era of reconciliation. Reconciliation? Like many of my sisters and brothers, I have trouble understanding what it is that we are trying to reconcile. Is the time for fighting over? Have we come through to the other side of the nightmare that is history? Have we decolonized this country? Reconciliation: the invitation from Canada to share in the spoils of our nations’ subjugation and dispossession. What a tainted gift, and such a false promise. Reconciling with colonialism cannot heal the wounds the colonizers have wrought on our collective existence. The essential harm of colonization is that the living relationship between our people and our land has been severed. By fraud, abuse, violence and sheer force of numbers, white society has forced us into the situation of being refugees and trespassers in our own homelands and we are prevented from maintaining the physical, spiritual and cultural relationships necessary for our continuation as nations.

Our struggle is far from over. If anything, the need for vigilant consciousness as Indigenous people is stronger than ever. Reconciliation is recolonization because it is allowing the colonizer to hold on to his attitudes and mentality, and does not challenge his behaviour towards our people or the land. It is recolonization because it is telling Indigenous children that the problem of history is fixed. And yet they know through life experience that things have not changed and are getting worse, so they must conclude I am the problem.

If reconciliation is allowed to reign, our young people are going to bear the brunt of this recolonization and carry a tension inside of them that is very difficult if not impossible to live with – indeed we are already seeing the sickening results of this psychological war on our young people in the shocking and recurring waves of self-harm and suicide that affiict every one of our communities.

When you are told that you are Indigenous, that this is your land, that you have a spiritual connection to this place and that your honour, health and existence depend on your relationships with that river, those animals, those plants, when you are told that this is the right and good way to live and you are held to account for that culturally and spiritually, and you’re not able or allowed to live out any of that… What happens to a person, a spirit, a mind? What emerges is not peace, power and righteousness but a mass psychopathology characterized by discordant identities, alienated personalities, and worst of all a culture of lateral violence fueled by unresolvable self-hatred. Sadly, this is becoming typical among Indigenous people, and typical I think of the societal reality that will form in the era of reconciliation.

Reconciliation's purported gifts can do nothing but make things worse because, paradoxically, educated people experience these soul illnesses even more than others. The educated person knows even more surely than everyone else that there is no way out of this colonially diseased dynamic. There really is no way to decolonize from within the recon- ciliation paradigm. There is no way, except to get out: a resurgence of authentic land-based Indigeneity. Our youth must be shown that they have the power to resolve the basic anxieties and psychological discords affiicting them by recognizing and respecting the powerful gifts that are there in their ancestral memory. The way to fight colonization is by reculturing yourself and by recentring yourself in your homeland.

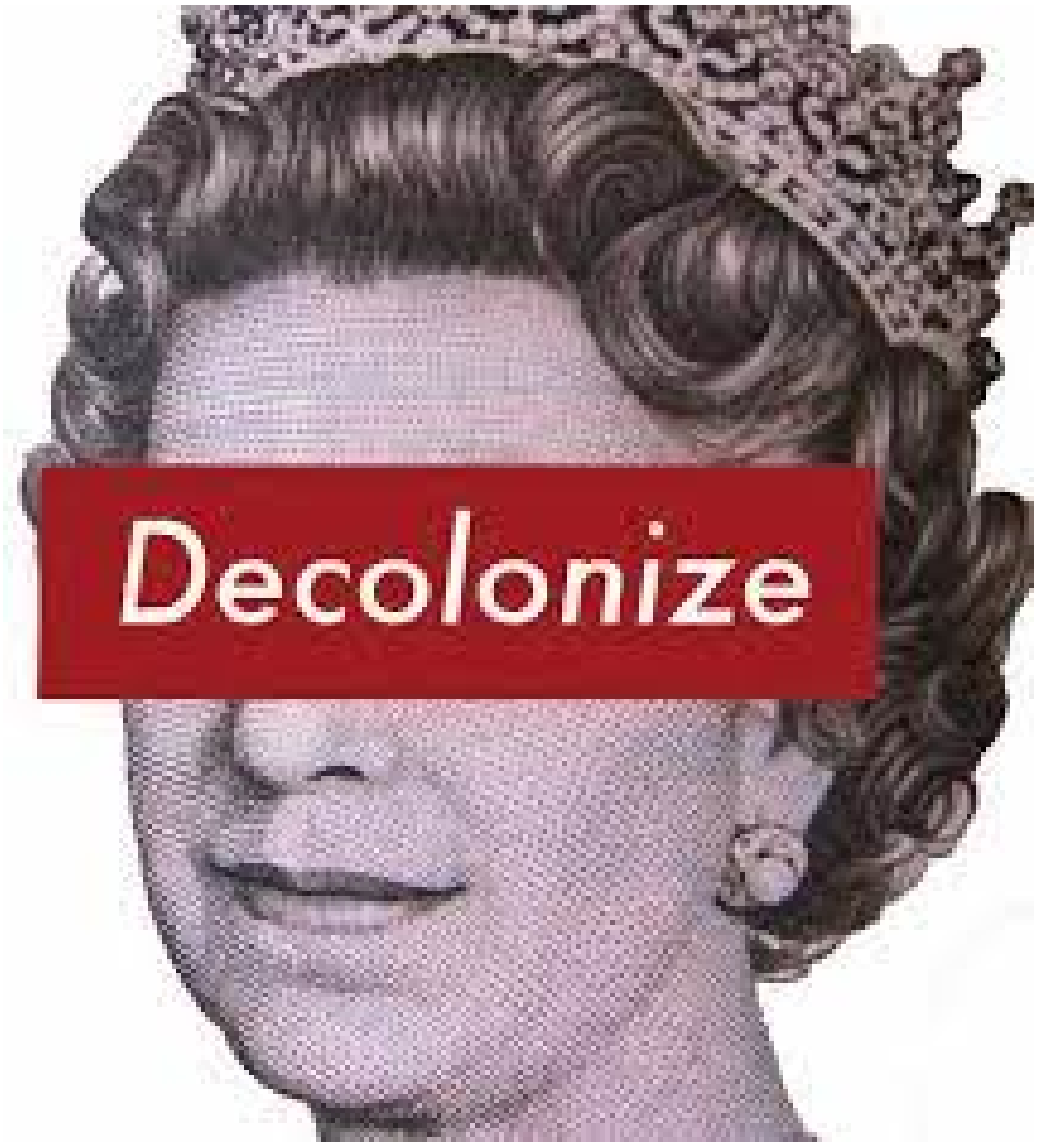
Does anyone remember the report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples? So much work went into that document, from all across the country and taking into account the perspectives and voices of all regions, generations and segments of our Indigenous peoples. From 1992 to 1996, a heady time when the legal and political phase of our peoples' struggle was at its peak, the voices of our ancestors came through in the wisdom spoken to the Commission through our clan mothers, chiefs and youth. What they told the Commission in a unified voice was that it's all about the land. In a rare show of integrity and respect on the part of government, the commissioners listened and the voices of our ancestors echoed in the multiple volumes of the Commission's lengthy and comprehensive report when they stated clearly and emphatically that what is needed to achieve the full decolonization of Canada is a massive transfer of land back to the Indigenous peoples. The need to restore our lands to our nations was true in1996 and it continues to be true today. A notion of reconciliation that rearranges political orders, reforms legalities and promotes economics is still colonial unless and until it centres our relationship to the land. Without a return of land to our nations and comprehensive financial support for Indigenous youth to reclaim, rename and reoccupy their homelands, to do what they need to do to ensure their own and coming generations' survival as real people, reconciliation is recolonization.

The voices of our ancestors still call out to us and their wisdom still flows through our veins. We just need to start listening to them: It's all about the land.

Taiaiake Alfred *(PhD—Cornell University) is an author, educator and activist from Kahnawake and internationally recognized Kanien'kehaka professor at the University of Victoria. He was the founding director of the Indigenous Governance Program and was awarded a Canada Research Chair 2003–2007, in addition to a National Aboriginal Achievement Award in education. He is the author of* Wasáse: Indigenous Pathways of Action and Freedom, Peace, Power, Righteousness: an Indigenous Manifesto, *and* Heeding the Voices of Our Ancestors.

Crown title : A legal lie

Sharon Venne



Red Rising Magazine

Most Canadians assume that somehow Canada acquired formal title to this land 150 years ago in the *British North America Act*, the country's founding document. That this is not the case is clearly reflected in the fact that Canada is still desperately negotiating with hundreds of First Nations to have them surrender, once and for all, their title to the lands given to us by the Creator.

So, it is clear even today that Canada and the provinces that were created by an Act of the British Parliament in 1867 do not have any inherent authority in our territories. In the creation of the state, the lie of underlying title was passed along without much thought to the implications. Or, if the

British House of Commons or Lords thought of the implications, there was a decision made at some point to try to simply disinherit the rights of our nations.

We see the continuation of these same legal lies today in the so-called British Columbia treaty process, which is clearly a sham process. It is not a treaty process. It is not dealing with the real issues of underlying title. The land claims policy of Canada works from the assumption that the title vests in the Crown and that the Indians are making a "claim" for our own lands and territories.

The British used the Doctrine of Discovery to assert authority and jurisdiction over our territories throughout Turtle Island. It was to prevent other colonizers from asserting their jurisdiction. The British Crown sent representatives across the oceans to the shore of our island. What they saw, they wanted. There was only one problem. The lands and resources were being used by our nations. In order to gain access to our territories, the British Crown enacted the *Royal Proclamation of 1763* to govern the subjects. This Proclamation was for the subjects of the Crown to follow when trying to access our territories. There are three important aspects of the Royal Proclamation: 1) In order to access the lands and territories of "Indian Nations or Tribes," there needed to be an agreement or a treaty. 2) If the Crown's subjects were within the territories of the Indian Nations or Tribes, the Crown was obligated to remove them (they would be considered squatters). 3) Agreements or treaties would be made only if the Indians "so desired." This makes treaties a prerequisite to the Crown's subjects legitimately moving into the territories of Indigenous Nations.

There was a start to the treaty-making process that moved from the east going west and north; when the colonizers reached the Rocky Mountains, they stopped making treaties with our nations.

Except for the treaties made on Vancouver Island and a small section of the northeastern part of what is now called British Columbia, the rest of the present province remains without the treaties that were demanded by the directives of the British Crown.

In 1972, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) – which some people refer to as the World Court – issued an advisory opinion in relation to the rights of Indigenous peoples in the Western Sahara case. The Court struck down the concepts of discovery, conquest and terra nullius – lands without any people. Our nations were never discovered; we were not lost. We were not conquered. Our territories were not terra nullius – the ICJ directed that there needed to be a treaty prior to entering into their territory. British Columbia and large areas of Canada did not have treaties with the colonizers. Instead, Canada tries to manipulate the treaty process. The policies leave our nations in debt as our small underfunded communities need to borrow money to have the resources to negotiate with Canada. The irony of the whole process is not lost on our old people – "Why are we borrowing money to talk about our lands?" Then, there are the non-ending unilateral decisions by Canada while it changes the non-ending policies and directives. Canada makes no attempt to have a true treaty relationship based on trust and good faith. It is one-sided. It is also contrary to the United Nations' directives.

This was clear in Canada's creation of the federal *Comprehensive Land Claims Policy* in 1986. This is a policy. It is not a law. It is not based on the elements of the Royal Proclamation of 1763. Canada continues to seek certainty largely through a de facto extinguishment of Aboriginal title. Most of the recent settlements contain a clause: "This Agreement constitutes the full and final settlement in respect of the aboriginal rights, including aboriginal title, in Canada of X First Nation." If our nations did not have title, why does the state spend so much money and time to get the nations to sign off on the extinguishment clauses of a claims settlement?

There is no attempt by Canada to seek co-existence as set out in the Royal Proclamation, which

recognized our nations and tribes as having ownership to our lands and the need for a treaty to access them. What is so hard to understand? Ownership would eliminate poverty. It would raise up our nations to their rightful place in the family of nations. Clearly, the state of Canada has a vested interest in maintaining the lie.

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From dispossession to dependency

Arthur Manuel

Gord Hill

Colonialism has three components: dispossession, dependence and oppression. Indigenous people live with these forces every day of their lives.

I began with dispossession: our lands were stolen out from underneath us. The next step was to ensure that we are made entirely dependent on the interlopers so they can control every aspect of our lives and ensure we are not able to rise up to seize back our lands. To do this, they strip us of our ability to provide for ourselves.

This was done by trying to cut us off from access to our land. My father, in his book *The Fourth World*, wrote how this was achieved in the BC Interior by literally fencing us off from our lands. Suddenly, our hunting grounds, our fishing spots, our berry patches and other gathering places were cut off by fences and then enforced by a maze of regulations, while our timber was carted away and our lands stripped of our minerals. This had never even been envisioned by our people.

Even when we allowed the newcomers to set up settlements on our land, it was unthinkable that suddenly our lands would be closed to us.

We were suddenly corralled onto reserves under the authority of an Indian agent and given a few

gardening tools for sustenance. In some areas, where the land was particularly fertile and the Indigenous peoples managed to generate small surpluses and tried to sell them, local white farmers complained about the competition and laws were passed forbidding us from selling our produce. It is important to note that our poverty is not a by-product of domination but an essential element of it.

But of course, it was not easy to keep us off our land. In my grandparents' time, there was no welfare. Our people still survived by returning to land in stealth, fishing, hunting, picking berries and then working seasonally as farm labour, as ranch hands or in the woods. We had to find ways to make money all year round and to gather a significant portion of our food from our lands surrounding the reserve.

Welfare was introduced quite late, and again its main purpose seemed to be to keep us corralled on our reserves. When it was first introduced, people were actually reluctant to take it. The Indian agent came and said the government was going to give us "relief money" and our people were instantly suspicious.

There was a big debate on the reserve about whether we should accept it or not. People tried to understand why the white man would offer to give us this and no one could figure it out. That was when I was young. People were always trying to figure out what the white man was thinking, and we never could. It was always a very delicate situation with the white man. You would listen to what they said but what they said often made no sense at all. I remember people coming to see my father to ask if they should take the relief money. Because he worked on the river for the lumber company, my father had more contact with the white man, so people would always ask him what he thought. He told them that if they needed it, they should take it. The logic was that it was due to us because they had fenced off our lands from us and pushed us up against the river on the tiny reserve. But for my father, it was never more than a stopgap measure. He devoted his life to trying to get back our land and our right to govern ourselves.

In the immediate term, welfare cheques would play an important pacification role. It meant our people spent less time on our land and it allowed the white man to bring in all sorts of new laws forbidding us from hunting and fishing and trapping on our territories. When these measures were put in place, the Canada we see today was finally created. Indigenous peoples, from enjoying 100% of the landmass, were reduced by the settlers to a tiny patchwork of reserves that consisted of only 0.2% of the landmass of Canada, the territory of our existing reserves, with the settlers claiming 99.8% for themselves.

This is, in simple acreage, the biggest land theft in the history of man- kind. This massive land dispossession and resultant dependency is not only a humiliation and an instant impoverishment, it has devastated our social, political, economic, cultural and spiritual life. We continue to pay for it every day in grinding poverty, broken social relations and too often in life-ending despair.

But that was always part of the plan. We were left isolated and hungry while our land generated fabulous revenues from the lumber, minerals, oil and gas and agricultural produce. We were to be kept penned in on our 0.2% reserves until we were starved out and drifted onto skid row in the city and gradually disappeared as peoples.

Our dependency was not some accident of history. It is at the heart of the colonial system. Our poverty is not an accident, the result of our incompetence or bad luck; it is intentional and systematic. The brilliance of the Canadian system as it has evolved is that today our poverty and misery are actually administered by our own people. In a spirit that seems profoundly insulting, this

system is even called by some “self-government.” Self-government as designed by the Canadian government is a system where we administer our own poverty.

The dependency built into this system can be heartbreaking. I once even heard a young person on the reserve saying that she could not wait until she was eligible to receive her own welfare cheques. That is how bleak their future is. That is all they had to hope for in life. Their own welfare cheque.

That is what colonialism leads to: complete and utter dependency. When this is the best they can hope for, it is not surprising that the suicide rate among our young people is among the highest in the world.

We cannot can solve these problems with a new program or new services administered from Ottawa or by Ottawa’s agents in our communities. Or by giving us hugs or tearing up when you speak of our misery. There is only one program to solve this dependency and despair, and that is to get rid of the deadening weight of the colonialism that causes it. For us to once again have access to our land and for the settlers to recognize at last our Creator-given title to it.

Arthur Manuel *was one of the giants of the Indigenous movement within Canada and internationally. He served as chief of his Neskonlith Indian band and chairman of the Shuswap Nation Tribal Council as well as co-chair of the North American and Global Indigenous Caucus at the U.N. Permanent Forum on Indigenous Peoples. He was also co-author, along with Grand Chief Ronald Derrickson, of the award-winning book* Unsettling Canada: A National Wake-up Call*. Arthur Manuel passed away in January 2017. Lorimer Press published his second book, co-authored with Grand Chief Derrickson, in the fall of 2017.*

The Indian Act –The foundation of colonialism in Canada

Russell Diabo

July 1901. Treaty Time, Little Forks, Rainy River. Photo MB Archives

The machinery of oppression in Canada has remained depressingly familiar for 150 years. From the pre-Confederation era until today, the Indian Act remains the foundation of Canadian colonization of Indigenous peoples. Although it has been amended numerous times since it was adopted in 1876, in the twenty-first century the Indian Act still maintains the main tenets of protection, control and civilization (meaning assimilation).

The Interpretation section 2.1 of the *Indian Act* provides key definitions of "Indians," "band," band list," "council of the band," "Indian moneys," Indian Register," "member of a band," "reserve" and other terms used by Ottawa bureaucrats and politicians for colonial regulations and policy. Section 2.1 (c) authorizes the federal cabinet to create new "bands," such as the Qalipu band recently created in Newfoundland.

The *Indian Act* was the original termination plan adopted by the Canadian Parliament over 140 years ago to break up Indigenous Nations into bands, setting Indian reserves apart, keeping a registry of Indians until assimilation is complete as individual "Indians within the meaning of the *Indian Act*"

and “Indian bands” respectively become a collection of Canadian citizens living within municipalities without any legal distinctions from the general Canadian population. They would become “Indigenous-Canadians,” an ethnic group among others in the Canadian mosaic without any more rights of standing than Italian- Canadians or Ukrainian-Canadians.

Elimination of Indigenous Nations as distinct political and social entities was the ultimate objective of Indian Affairs policy. In a 1920 speech to a Special Committee of the House of Commons, Deputy Superintendent General Duncan Campbell Scott said bluntly:

> *“I want to get rid of the Indian problem. I do not think as a matter of fact, that this country ought to continuously protect a class of people who are able to stand alone. . . Our object is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic and there is no Indian question, and no Indian Department”* (NAC RG10 Vol. 6180 File 470-2-3 Vol. 7: Evidence of DC Scott to the Special Committee of the House of Commons examining the *Indian Act* amendments of 1920, pp. 55, 63).

1969 White Paper on Indian Policy

In 1969, about a hundred years after the *Indian Act* was adopted, Liberal prime minister Pierre Trudeau and his minister of Indian Affairs, Jean Chrétien, believed assimilation of Indians had largely been completed and introduced a White Paper on Indian Policy to argue that special Indian rights were the problem and equality under the law was the solution. The 1969 White Paper proposed these policy objectives:

- Eliminate Indian status.
- Dissolve the Department of Indian Affairs within five years.
- Abolish the *Indian Act* and remove section 91.24 (“Indians and lands reserved for the Indians”) in the BNA Act.
- Convert reserve land to private property that can be sold by the band or its members.
- Transfer responsibility for Indian Affairs from the federal government to the provinces and integrate these services into those provided to other Canadian citizens.
- Appoint a commissioner to gradually terminate existing treaties.

The White Paper provoked widespread protest by Indians and responses in position papers like the Indian Association of Alberta’s Red Paper and the Manitoba Indian Brotherhood’s Brown Paper.

The modern Indian rights movement to protect and advance Inherent, Aboriginal and Treaty Rights was born, and regional Indian political advocacy organizations formed across Canada under the umbrella of the National Indian Brotherhood, which in 1982 became the Assembly of First Nations.

As First Nations galvanized across Canada to fight the Pierre Trudeau Liberal government’s proposed 1969 White Paper termination policy, the federal government was forced to consider a strategy on how to calm the Indian storm of protest by publicly agreeing to withdraw the proposal, while continuing to implement it through federal policy and programs.

In a memo dated April 1, 1970, David Munro, an assistant deputy minister of Indian Affairs on Indian Consultation and Negotiations, advised his political masters Jean Chrétien and Pierre Trudeau as follows:

> *“We can still believe with just as much strength and sincerity that the [White Paper] policies we propose are the right ones . . . The final [White Paper] proposal, which is for the*

> *elimination of special status in legislation, must be relegated far into the future . . . We should put varying degrees of emphasis on its several components and we should try to discuss it in terms of its components rather than as a whole . . . We should adopt somewhat different tactics in relation to the [White Paper] policy, but . . . we should not depart from its essential content".*

Among the post-1969 tactics the Indian Affairs bureaucracy adopted to control and manage Indians, in order to continue the federal off-loading and assimilation goals, was to increase program funding for housing, education, infrastructure, social and economic development, health, and so on to band councils. This funding was delivered through federal funding agreements with strict terms and conditions for band councils and band staff to deliver essential programs and services primarily to on-reserve band members, goals and results designated by Ottawa. In other words, social engineering.

This transfer increased Indians' dependency on the federal transfer payments and ensured accountability to Ottawa bureaucrats, not community members, through a system of indirect rule by band councils. They are expected to manage local discontent with chronic underfunding and underdevelopment on-reserve.

Another tactic for control and management of Indians used by Ottawa bureaucrats and politicians was to change the terms and conditions for funding of Aboriginal Representative Organizations (AROs) into two-part funding: 1) basic core and 2) project funding. Project funding means that to really survive, AROs need to develop funding proposals to the federal government to act as consultative bodies for federal government policy/legislative initiatives.

This is how the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), a National Aboriginal Organization (NAO), is funded, and how all of the Provincial/ Territorial Organizations (PTOs) are funded, which is why you rarely see the AFN National Chief, Regional Chiefs or PTO Leaders out at, or initiating, protests. From the band office, to regional First Nations organizations, to the AFN, Ottawa controls and manages the chiefs, leaders, and AFN National Chief and Executive through control of organizational funding.

The AFN uses Department of Indigenous and Northern Affairs (INAC) lists of chiefs recognized under the *Indian Act* as the official delegate list at AFN Chiefs' Assemblies. So, the circle is complete. The *Indian Act* empowers INAC to rule over Indigenous peoples. The Assembly of First Nations has to align its own policies and structure with the INAC objectives and operations in order to get the funding it needs to exist. INAC then funds the AFN to carry out its program objectives and to administer the services it wants administered. And the grassroots Indigenous people are left powerless and voiceless within this closed system of governance.

Russell Diabo *is one of the leading voices in the decolonial struggle in Canada. He was for many years a policy advisor at the Assembly of First Nations and now serves in that role for the Algonquin Nation Secretariat, and he is Senior Policy Advisor to the Algonquin Wolf Lake First Nation. He is also editor and publisher of an online newsletter on First Nations political and legal issues, the* First Nations Strategic Bulletin. *He is a member of the Mohawk Nation at Kahnawake, and part of the Defenders of the Land Network.*

Selected Readings from Whose Land is it Anyway? A Manual for Decolonization: Part II

THE RESURGENCE

The grassroots struggle: Defenders of the Land and Idle No More

Arthur Manuel

Gord Hill

The federal and provincial governments have tens of millions of dollars that they use strategically to manipulate Indigenous organizations and to undermine the grassroots' ability to move forward. One of their strategies in British Columbia is to "engage" Indigenous leadership in all kinds of negotiations that go nowhere. The modern treaty negotiations have been happening for more than 20 years and have cost well over a billion dollars. But while they are negotiating, they can at least pretend to investors that everything is under control. The Indians are at the negotiating table, and eventually they will agree to the government's extinguishment terms.

The Indigenous leadership and their non-Indigenous advisors involved in these negotiations justify sitting down with the government because they say, “only by holding discussions with the government can we make change.” They see those of us who will not negotiate under the government’s terms as frozen in time. As not capable of moving forward. As not getting with the program. Needless to say, the governments agree with the leadership and welcome them with open arms. They know they are a soft group to deal with because they have already agreed, by sitting down at the table, that their people’s own extinguishment will be the basis of the land claims agreement they will eventually sign.

Part of the reason for this is that our mainstream organizations generally select our leadership on the basis of money. They know that government money will quickly dry up if they elect leaders who fight for decolonization, but a compliant leadership attracts government money like horse dung attracts flies. People in Indigenous leadership know this, and there is an unwritten black list of people who will be excluded from the organizations because they are too grassroots. They only work with people who are acceptable to government.

It is this underlying reality that has given rise to Idle No More and groups like the Defenders of the Land. The fact that chiefs and councils will not rock the boat because they want to protect their government funding has meant that those who cannot accept this situation have no alternative but to work outside the mainstream organizations.

But at the same time, Defenders have to recognize that part of those funds are also necessary for many of our band members – our grassroots – who, in our dismal state of dependency, cannot afford to have their programs and services cut off. If we are going to do things that will threaten their lifelines, they need to be part of the decision- making process. We must try to ensure that we do not put our people in an impossible situation. We do this by working outside of the chiefs and council band structure but always working closely with the grassroots.

In this way, the Defenders and Idle No More are the basis for building a movement in Canada. No one else will play this role except us, and we can build on the considerable discontent floating around in communi- ties. Even with Justin Trudeau’s charm offensive, people see that things are not adding up. One thing is promised but another is delivered.

We have seen again and again that the prime minister and premiers are not interested in giving up one inch of power to Indigenous peoples, and Prime Minister Justin is no exception. You are daydreaming if you think you can negotiate your way to freedom without creating tension to push our colonizers to decolonize Canada.

There is nothing special about Indigenous peoples that will entice the white man to give us our freedom out of good will. Our only advantage is that our communities are spread across Canada in over a thousand locations, and they cannot take us all down at once. But unless we forcefully demand our rights, including our fundamental right to self- determination, we will not receive them. That, as minorities everywhere and in all times know, is how the world works. And that is what our current leadership, generally for their own self-serving reasons, is refusing to acknowledge.

This is why Idle No More and Defenders of the Land were formed. They reject not only the government colonial policies, but also those in our leadership who cooperate with the government colonial policies. We are now working to re-establish grassroots organizations, strategies and actions that will get us back on track defending our sovereignty and our ownership of our lands. Our people are fighting at the grassroots level to achieve self-determination, free from the colonial state.

We see courageous Indigenous people doing this every day, and if we cannot join them in these actions, we should at least support them in every way that we can. They are the future of our struggle, and our struggle is building a new decolonized Canada where our cultures and land rights are respected.

Arthur Manuel *was one of the giants of the Indigenous movement within Canada and internationally. He served as chief of his Neskonlith Indian band and chairman of the Shuswap Nation Tribal Council as well as co-chair of the North American and Global Indigenous Caucus at the U.N. Permanent Forum on Indigenous Peoples. He was also co-author, along with Grand Chief Ronald Derrickson, of the award-winning book* Unsettling Canada: A National Wake-up Call. *Arthur Manuel passed away in January 2017. Lorimer Press published his second book, co-authored with Grand Chief Derrickson, in the fall of 2017.*

Lessons from Wesahkecahk

Melina Laboucan-Massimo

Red Rising Magazine

Our prophecies speak of a time when the blue sky and waters turn black and green things turn brown and die; when animals and fish disappear and birds drop from the sky. This devasta- tion will come as a result of mankind's greed and disrespect of Mother Earth. This time is upon us.

The Alberta tar sands are scarring the earth – polluting and draining watersheds, poisoning the air and destroying the land I call home. The landscape is drastically changing from a once pristine and beautiful boreal forest to an increasingly industrial and toxic terrain. Animals and fish have become sick with tumours, and caribou are now listed as an endangered species. People are no longer safe to harvest traditional medicines, teas or berries because they have become contaminated – and even though we fear that our medicines have turned into poison, we continue to forage (and forge) the path ahead. People young and old have started to die of rare forms of cancers that we have never seen before. I come from a community where, until my generation, my family was able to live sustainably off the land.

The tar sands are not an isolated incident; neo-colonialism in the form of resource extraction is happening across Turtle Island and throughout Mother Earth. Today the earth is being contaminated and destroyed at an unparalleled rate, and people and animals alike are being sacrificed for the benefit of the greedy few.

We are not only in an ecological crisis; we are in a moral human crisis. All around the world, we see people's homes and traditional territories being turned into industrialized landscapes. We see people's clean drinking water being overtaken and turned into toxic dumpsites for industrial facilities. It is painful to see the devastation to the land. It reaches a deep part in your spirit – a feeling of indescribable grief.

It was over five years ago when I returned home to my community of Little Buffalo where my family lives to witness the aftermath of one of the largest oil spills in Alberta's and Canada's history. What I saw was a landscape forever changed by an oil spill that had consumed a vast stretch of the traditional territory where for generations my family had hunted, trapped, harvested medicines and picked berries.

Days before the federal or provincial governments were willing to acknowledge this tragedy, my family was sending reports of headaches, burning eyes, nausea and dizziness. They asked me if I could please find out more information – if it was an oil spill and how big it might be. It wasn't until five days later, only after the Harper government was re-elected, that the information was released on the magnitude of the spill. More than 4.5 million litres of oil had soaked into the land.

Soon afterward the story was swept under the carpet, away from the eyes of the public. Cleaning the toxic spill continued for the rest of that year, and the following year we still found a contaminated site despite claims by the company that all had been remediated. We know that the damage to the land will outlive our grandchildren's grandchildren.

This is one of the many reasons why I continue to fight for the protec- tion of Mother Earth. One of my clearest and most powerful memories as a child was of being out on the land with my kokum and mosom, travelling through the territory for the summer months by horse and wagon. Seeing the vastness of the land, I felt free. I was in awe of how beautiful, lush and expansive the land was and seeing so clearly the connection of the earth and the sky world made me feel complete.

Although, ironically, I am not sure the serenity and peace I felt then will ever return, because of the

extreme resource extraction taking place on the land. It is from this place that I persevere in this struggle to dismantle the machine of colonialism that still has a stranglehold on our people and land today. Social, political and economic pressures are literally tearing our communities apart. The colonial-industrial system is predicated on systems of power and domination, so it is no wonder that we see these systems play out in our communities, in our families, in our personal relationships and in our movements. We must be aware of how the harmful aspects of this predatory society have seeped into our lives, so that we may shed our involuntary inheritance of colonial behaviours: hierarchy, dominance, profit, greed, immediate gratification, and caring more about our egos and personal gain than the well-being of others.

The values of colonialism exist in the form of capitalism. We need to work together dismantle and reorganize this system and to recentre our values and how we relate to each other and the earth.

The colonial values of domination are embedded in patriarchy, which is one of the reasons why we see the raping and pillaging of Mother Earth as well as violence against women. I am not only talking about physical violence against women. I am talking about emotional, spiritual and psychological violence that is perpetuated in our society today and sometimes even in our movements. We must question the values we prioritize in our movements and understand how to create a paradigm shift in how we treat each other, ourselves, and the earth. If we continue to work from a colonial foundation, we are not recognizing the role and value of Indigenous ways of knowing and being.

The earth is our mother. Violence against the earth begets violence against women. This is both a political and personal issue for many of us. This is a reality that many of our communities face today. It is not just a news story. It is not a coincidence that over four thousand Indige- nous women are murdered and missing in the country we call Canada. Indigenous women are five times more likely than non-Indigenous women to die from violence.

I am bringing up these statistics not only because they are staggering figures. I speak to these issues because they are personal. This is real in my life. In 2013, I lost two women in my family to violence. One was my cousin, who was murdered by her partner, and the other woman was my little sister, Bella. Bella had just graduated from college in Toronto. Her death is still unsolved and listed as suspicious. In that summer alone, I attended three funerals within my own family. The other death was a suicide. This is a reality for our communities. Not only do we have to deal with resource extraction in our own backyards, but we must also deal with consistent violence in our lives as Indigenous peoples.

All life is sacred. And all life forms have spirit. When we destroy the land, we destroy other beings. We destroy Mother Earth. We violate the sacred connection that we have with her.

For many of us this work is not just a job, it is a way of life. I have come to realize it is not only how we politically challenge these systems of dominance but also how we decolonize and deconstruct them in our daily lives. We need to decolonize both politically and personally.

This is why I am intent on continuing to decolonize myself. I often ask myself: What kind of movement are we building? What are the values that guide our actions each and every day? What kind of future are we fighting for? Are we living in ways that will create the future that we envision? Are we treating our families, loved ones and those in our movements with the dignity and respect they deserve? We must be prepared to answer these questions.

Growing up, my dad would talk about how we could learn from the mistakes that Wesahkecahk, the trickster, would make so that we would know how to treat the world around us and how to respect other beings like animals, birds, plants and trees. I try to include these teachings in my life and in

how I interact with the world around me, including the way I carry myself and how I treat others, how I love myself, honour all living beings, and do my best to be humble and trustworthy. These values are important for me to live by and I incorporate these principles into my daily efforts of personal and political decolonization. In coming to further understand what resurgence looks like, I turn to the teachings, morals and values from our old stories as a way to decolonize.

The prophecy that I began with – when the blue sky and waters turn black and green things turn brown and die; when animals and fish disappear and birds drop from the sky – also speaks of a time when people will gather from the four sacred directions to stop this decimation, all distinctly separate but forever connected in the Sacred Hoop of Life. Those who have kept their ancient knowledge, ceremonies and stories alive shall be our teachers and our guides going forward.

People from diverse backgrounds and creeds will truly begin to work together in honesty and respect – with a deep sense of solidarity with one another. It is a time when people from the Four Directions will come together to work for justice, peace, freedom and recognition of the Great Spirit and the sacredness of our Mother Earth. This time, my friends, is upon us.

Melina Laboucan-Massimo *is a member of the Lubicon Cree First Nation. She is currently a Fellow at the David Suzuki Foundation. She worked as a Climate and Energy Campaigner with Greenpeace Canada and the Indigenous Environmental Network for the past decade. Facing firsthand the impacts of the Alberta tar sands to her traditional territory, Laboucan-Massimo has been a vocal advocate for Indigenous rights for over 15 years. She has written numerous articles on the tar sands and produced short documentaries on water issues and Indigenous cultural revitalization.*

Decolonization: The frontline struggle

Kanahus Manuel

Kanahus Manuel

When I was arrested I was in a truck with my three-month- old child, my sister and my mother in the hills above Bella Coola. In the web of charges they threw at me, the one that finally stuck was for "assaulting police," a charge that had been levelled against many of us who were, in fact, assaulted by the police when we were trying to protect our land from the Sun Peaks development. I remember this as the saddest moment of my life. Not because I was going to jail but because I realized that while I was away, I would be separated from my infant son. In fact, they separated us as soon as they led me into the booking room. I don't remember anything except the sound of my three-month-old crying for me in the next room. I insisted again and again that they bring him to me because I had to feed him.

Finally, because the child was by then screaming from fear and hunger, they brought him to me.

I held him in my arms and nursed him in the holding cell. But my heart was overcome by the sadness of knowing that in a few minutes they would take him away again. When he was finished feeding, I found myself tickling his feet trying to keep him awake, because I knew when he fell asleep they would take him away. He fell asleep. They took him away. And they put me away for eighty days.

I saw him every weekend because my father brought him to me in jail, and I gave him a supply of my expressed breast milk to feed him. I lived for those moments with my son and I died each time the visit was over and they took him away again.

But I survived this ordeal because by then I already knew who I was and what I had to do as a Secwepemc woman to fight for my people. This was the period where my own mind was being decolonized.The process had begun a few years before. When I was growing up, I went to white man's school in the town nearby to our Neskonlith reserve in the BC Interior. It was a bitter experience. This region of the country has a history of right-wing racists, and our school was rife with their mini-racist children. I came from a family proud of our Secwepemc heritage and would not accept shameful treatment for myself or my Secwepemc classmates. I learned to fight, to physically strike back at the outrageous behaviour towards us. I began to hate this school and I was determined to quit at the earliest opportunity. My father understood. In his own youth and throughout his life, he had also been a fighter. He gave me books like *The Autobiog- raphy of Malcolm X* that showed how a brilliant, angry man confronted the racist society he was born into. I finished high school away from the Interior in East Vancouver.

But it was finally the struggle to protect our land, and the people I met in that struggle, that really changed me. We began to understand the real depth of the reproach "seme7stsut" our people used to denote someone who was "acting white." We understood and we rejected the seme7stsut values of greed and arrogance that we associated with the white world and those seme7stsut among us. During this period of questioning, it was once again my father who gently guided me. He said I should go to community meetings. He was chief at the time and he was beginning to challenge the massive ski resort, really a complete town with 24,000 hotel beds, being planned on that still-wild part of our territory we called Skwelkwek'welt, which translates roughly into "our mountain lands." I became involved in the Skwelkwek'welt protec- tion group. I joined the camp in the forest to reoccupy our lands and to demand that the destruction of the forest be halted. It was during this period that I had my true education.

The Skwelkwek'welt Protection Centre was peopled mainly by youth and Elders, like Sarah Denault, Irene Billy and Wolverine, who was just out of jail from the Gustafsen Lake stand-off. They had grown up in the 1920s when there were still relatively few white people in the area, and their parents had grown up in a period when our lands were still ours. The Elders at the camp showed us a land rich in plant foods—roots, berries, plant stalks, mushrooms and lichens—as well as a home to deer, moose, bear, beaver, lynx, cougar and wolverine. Skwelkwek'welt was important to them because it was one of the last places in our territory where we could still hunt for food, gather medicines, and continue our Secwepemc cultural traditions. This education from the Elders, I came to understand, is an essential part of decolonization: seeking out the knowledge of your people, those who have the knowledge and can pass it on to you. Because the traditions and values of our people still beat in the hearts of our Elders and they are ready to pass them on to any who seek them out.

I also learned at the camp from other young people there who were part of the Native Youth Movement. We not only put information pickets on the road to Sun Peaks, but we also took over government offices responsible for giving the resort permission to seize our lands. The Elders taught us how incredibly rich our land was and how important to our survival it was to keep it wild, and the other

young people in Native Youth showed me that we did not have to passively accept the rape of our land. We could fight back – and we did. We did not go passively when the police attacked us. We defended ourselves and we defended our land.

But more important than all of this was the fact that I was able to get in touch with the spiritual life of our people. One of the Native Youth Movement women was pregnant. She told me she was going to have a traditional birth, and at first I did not know what it was. But then I also became pregnant and I also had a traditional birth. It was a powerful, life-changing experience.

I had my child on the land surrounded by the Elder women who knew the rituals surrounding birth and the songs that were to be sung. I had my child in the forest looking up at the mountains, and bringing new life in the way my people had since time immemorial.

Three months later, my newborn and I were together in the holding cell in the Bella Coola jail. But even at that painful moment, I knew that for him, I had no choice. I had to fight and continue to fight for his right, for the right of all of my children, to be free from the racist, spirit- destroying colonial system – the genocide – that Canada still continues to serve us.

Since then, fifteen years have passed. I have not let up. I have intensified my efforts to free my people from colonialism. My generation finds itself on the front line of the decolonial struggle every day of our lives. We have to choose to fight for our rights and our future or to surrender them both and lose ourselves in a country that has shown only contempt for us.

That is the way the world is. That is our struggle. And today I am not afraid of jail and I am not afraid of the police. I urge all those who are fighting to decolonize Canada: Fall in and carry out your duties. The sides have already been chosen for you. You will not play mediators on our soil. We are the rivers, both sides of the rivers and all bridges connecting both sides. There is no middle ground. I urge all of our people: Fall in and we will struggle together for our future!

Kanahus Manuel *is a Secwepemc and Ktunaxa activist, birth keeper and Warrior. She appeared in a documentary film made by Doreen Manuel called* Freedom Babies*. She is well known for her activism against Sun Peaks Ski Resort, Imperial Metals and the Mount Polley mine spill and with the water protectors at Standing Rock. She is currently playing a leadership role in fighting the Kinder Morgan pipeline expansion through more than 500 kilometres of Secwepemc territory. As a result of her activism, she has been named in several court injunctions and has been jailed by the Canadian state.*

Dechinta Bush University: Land-based education & Indigenous resurgence

Glen Coulthard

Dechinta Bush University

At the heart of colonialism is the violent separation of our peoples from our social relation to the land. Any education aimed at decolonization must confront that violence – and one of the best ways to do this is to reintroduce and re-place Indigenous peoples on their lands with the knowledge-holders who are experts in living it. That is the thinking behind Dechinta Bush University, an institution that works in collaboration with my Yellowknives Dene First Nation, other Indigenous people in the North and the University of British Columbia (UBC) to offer a post-secondary program of Indigenous land-based education.

The first thing you discover at Dechinta is that everyone has something to learn and everyone has something to teach. The curriculum includes colonization and decolonization, Indigenous law and languages, and building sustainable communities. This means not only reading Indigenous political theory, but also learning how to tan moose hides, hunt, trap and collect medicines. You learn in a fire circle with Elders and leaders. Students and faculty bring their children for an outdoor immersive culture/language camp so that families learn collectively, with our children and Elders informing our discussions and actions and our semester

communities resembling real communities, with children as young as eighteen months and Elders as old as 94.

The objective is to provide a model of education that promotes true self-determination and decolonization for Indigenous peoples in the North. As a professor at the UBC campus in Vancouver in First Nations Studies and the Department of Political Science, and someone who for the last six years has been an instructor at Dechinta, I have come to understand the need for institutions like this on a fundamental level.

At UBC, we try to make the reconnections to our culture and our tradi- tional territories in order to formulate a critical analysis of our colonial present and its effects in the North. We come to understand that what is wrong with the forms of colonial economic and political development is that they obliterate those relationships of reciprocity that underlie a relationship with the land.

But you can only get so far teaching in a primarily cognitive sort of way through "traditional" sources and literatures that you use in university. As an instructor at Dechinta, I realized that I didn't really understand the critique offered by the Dene of capitalism in the 1970s until I started that experiential kind of relationship with the land through these land-based practices. I had learned as much as I could in the archive, talking to people, and reading about the history of the period, but it was only when I started to commit myself to relearning those practices and re-embedding myself in those social relationships with the land and place that I understood in a more concrete and embodied way what was wrong with the forms of economic development that have come to be dominant in the North and elsewhere. The experience Dechinta provides is not an add-on to a southern education; it is the necessary completion of it.

The effects of teaching and learning at Dechinta can be radical, but we are far from being renegades who are dropped into territories and determine the most radical and transformative educational experiences we think would be relevant for them. We work in a spirit of reciprocity, with community engagement and input. Elders are professors, even more so I would argue than the university professors and instructors who come from the South, myself included.

For me, at a personal level, working up North with the community on a program like this is crucial because it allows me to go home and bring my children with me. I live thousands of kilometres away, so it's important to me to include my children as often as I can. The collective nature of parenting and childcare at Dechinta is important because it is a contemporary expression of what we've always done.

When other Indigenous people see the success of the program they often ask if it is transferable – can it work on their territory? The acquisition or re-acquisition of land might be more difficult or impossible in certain parts of the country, and I think that we can concede that it might be more difficult by virtue of the structures that exist, the population densities and how thoroughly colonial discourse and the structure of dispossession have erased us from these spaces. But we should never concede that it is impossible. That is how it is often portrayed, that is how the enemy posits Indigenous claims: because Indigenous peoples have been so damaged by colonialism, because colonialism has been so thorough, it becomes such an absurd idea to think that we could correct this. It's a sort of self-perpetuating prophecy – colonialism has damaged us so much and it's been so thorough that we no longer have a legitimate claim to justice against it. We have to concede, we have to compromise, all these sorts of things, all of which are just other ways of telling us that we should not even dare to dream of a better life.

The other distinction that tends to get made in discussion of land-based education is the one between urban and rural experiences in relation to decolonization and colonization. I think that needs to be

broken down, not only because Indigenous lands are also cities but because the experience of colonization has been, if you look at it in a larger historical view, very similar. Indigenous peoples were dispossessed from their territories. This was fundamental in the construction of cities and urbanization. Once you are removed from the land, and once you are removed from your reserve land base, you have to migrate elsewhere – and that's often to urban centres that were built on your or someone else's stolen land. This was a constitutive feature of what Marx termed primitive accumulation, dispossession, proletarianization, market creation – but also the geographical, spatial reorganization of popu- lations through subsequent urbanization. And now that very colonial process (in Marx's own terms) is again devouring Indigenous spaces within cities through gentrification of neighbourhoods we inhabit. So this constant cycle of dispossession and violence and dispossession and displacement has happened to Indigenous peoples as much in cities as it has in land-based contexts. And, indeed, they're structurally related.

So, when we can start seeing that as Indigenous peoples, we can start building a more effective movement that recognizes those similarities, that what we are fighting against is essentially the same thing. We should stop fighting against each other because we see our experiences as being so different when, if we just step back a bit, they aren't. The issue that returns again and again in formulating institutions like Dechinta is the question of financial sustainability. That is a very pragmatic and real question that needs to be addressed. But at the same time, any Indigenous learning centre, by its very nature, has to be localized and decentralized. Place-based education isn't readily universalizable. It takes a lot of hard work and it has to be specific. You can't just disseminate it out, in a homogenous programming model, and Dechinta recognizes that.

There are also some who question Dechinta's Indigenous authenticity because of its connection to a large southern university. This is obviously a tricky question because it usually plays out that in order to be recognized, you have to make yourself like the power structure that is recognizing you. Recognition, as it always does, has a kind of assimilative pull to it.

But so far Dechinta has been successful in maintaining its autonomy and integrity in programming by remaining grounded in Indigenous traditions of thought and practice. Any sort of educational program- ming in the North tends to funnel students into the non-renewable resource economy, which is exploitative and is an antithesis to the types of social relations that we learn when we engage in these land-based practices and this form of education. So, as with all recognition politics, recognition is in a real tension with the decolonizing objectives of programming like this.

Although there can be no cookie-cutter approaches and programs like Dechinta must always defend their own integrity from the institutions they are associated with, the fact remains that one of the most common statements from the non-Yellowknives Dene students who take the program is, "I wish there was something like there where I'm from." Or, "How do we go about establishing something like this on our territory?"

This speaks to the real need and the strong desire for a truly resurgent, decolonizing, land-based education. Dechinta cannot be a turnkey model, but it can be an inspiration. We welcome Indigenous people to come to learn from us and take from us what is useful and, in the spirit of the place, we will also be happy to learn what you can teach us.

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thought. His book, Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition *(University of Minnesota Press), was released in August 2014 to critical acclaim.*

Going international to decolonize

Nicole Schabus

Nicole Schabus

I came to the Indigenous territories of North America from Europe, from Austria, a country with a terrible history of racism even worse, during the Second World War, the Holocaust happened in that land. I can assure you that this history affects future generations; it makes you doubt your own ability and that of your people to love. It made me question from early on whether I would have just been one of the followers or whether I would have stood up against our society totally dehumanizing another people and, in the process, ourselves.

No one has taught me more about resistance to oppression than Indigenous peoples, including some of my Aborigine friends I studied with in Australia and Indigenous peoples I worked with in Latin America.

I had the privilege of working and living alongside Secwepemc leader Arthur Manuel, a leading advocate for Indigenous land rights. If we are serious about decolonization, the starting point has to be that this land is Indigenous land. This is also recognized at the international level, where international human right bodies understand Canada's colonial past and present and call for the recognition of Indigenous land rights. I have attended international lobbying efforts where Indigenous peoples get treated as owners of their land, including by representatives of other nation states. It is only inside of Canada that the government makes Indigenous peoples feel like they are landless in their own territories.

This is one reason why it is so important to go international. Only by asserting their position internationally and interacting with other nations can Indigenous Peoples assert their nationhood. Arthur Manuel said: "You have to quit crying on the shoulder of the guy that stole your land!" He would tell his people that there is no point going to Ottawa. Instead he took the message to Washington, DC, in the context of the softwood lumber dispute, the UN in New York City and Geneva, and many other international fora. I worked with him at all of those fora and heard him make his impassioned pleas, but nowhere did I see him speak with more love and caring than at Neskonlith Band hall, in his community, where his children and grandchildren live. He would always go home and report back to his family, his Elders, his people. They understood the importance of the work at the international level.

The main reason Arthur Manuel went international was to keep his people, especially the land and water defenders, safe. When we came back from one of our first international campaigns, the Secwepemc women and Elders had set up a camp at Skwelkwek'welt against the expansion of Sun Peaks ski resort. As a real leader, he stood behind his people, especially the women, and backed them up. We brought in international human rights monitors and took the land issue international.

Nobody understood better than Arthur Manuel that Indigenous rights have an economic, social, cultural, and environmental dimension. We lobbied the World Trade Organization and NAFTA and had submis- sions accepted by both arguing that the non-recognition of Aboriginal title is a trade subsidy, because due to government laws and policies, corporations do not have to pay the Indigenous owners of the resource. He made it clear to the non-Indigenous people he spoke to that Indig- enous rights are ancestral rights, deeply rooted in their territories, and that this deep connection, the underlying or radical title of Indigenous peoples to their land, has to be recognized. He also made it clear to them that this is a much more solid foundation to base Canada on than the colonial doctrines of discovery and the claim that Crown title is the underlying title in Canada. The latter is pure colonialism, and yet those are the doctrines and laws that the Government of Canada and the courts have upheld.

The international remedy against colonialism is the right to self-de- termination. And there can no longer be any debate that Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination. For decades Canada tried to deny that Indigenous peoples have that right, that they are not "peoples" with their right to self-determination protected under the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), jointly known as the decolonization treaties. They wrote into international law the decolonization process that had been embarked on in Africa and Asia. Canada is a signatory to these international human rights treaties and bound by

its obligations. Yet as a settler colonial state, Canada wanted to deny that Indigenous peoples have standing as peoples in international law.

This is why it is so important to always refer to Indigenous peoples with an s, unless you are just referring to a specific nation or person.

The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) became the longest negotiated international human rights instrument in history, in part due to the strong opposition of settler colonial states, first and foremost Canada, the US, Australia and New Zealand, especially in regard to the Indigenous right to self-determination.

This is now enshrined in Article 3 of UNDRIP, which replicates Article 1(1) of ICCPR and ICESCR and makes it clear that this right applies to Indigenous peoples. Since even those four colonial musketeers have now changed their position on UNDRIP, there is international consensus that this right applies to Indigenous peoples and it can no longer be denied. Rather I would argue that it now constitutes a binding principle of international law, and on top of it, Canada is bound by international treaties like ICCPR and ICESCR that enshrine the right. The right to self-determination is the overarching umbrella right; much of its essence is then spelled out further in UNDRIP, in regard to land rights, governance and Indigenous prior informed consent (PIC). The latter principle is also increasingly enshrined in multilateral environmental agreements that recognize Indigenous PIC and therefore Indigenous decision-making power regarding access to their lands and resources; and if such access is to be granted, it has to be subject to remuneration or benefit-sharing.

It is clear that including Indigenous peoples as decision-makers and respecting their knowledge, which is the most long-term knowledge regarding the respective territories, will ensure more economically, culturally and environmentally sustainable development. It means the transition from the 0.2% of Canada's land base that currently make up Indian reserves enshrining economic marginalization and poverty, to decision-making over the remaining 99.8% or really Indigenous territorial authority over their lands and resources.

Arthur always circled back to the human rights dimension of Indigenous rights because he wanted settler Canadians to understand that this process of decolonization is also deeply connected to their rights. He said to settlers: "If you recognize our collective right to our lands and territories and decision-making over it, we will recognize your human right to stay here in our territories."

He would joke, in his endearing manner that breaks down barriers, that he knows that "they do not want you back where you came from. You have been here too long. You have a right to stay here as long as you recognize that it is our land and that we have a say over it."

The message that resonated from his last talks was that by non-Indigenous people working together with Indigenous peoples, it will mean a better future for future generations, because it is the best way to relate and connect to the land that we are all living on and to save the land that we all depend on from further destruction and alienation.

Nicole Schabus *is an assistant law professor at Thompson Rivers University. She has worked for Indigenous peoples in Latin America and across Canada, especially in the Interior of British Columbia. Nicole has been practising law in British Columbia in the fields of constitutional, criminal, Aboriginal and environmental law. She also reports on and analyzes international environmental negotiations, mainly under the Convention on Biological Diversity. She has assisted with the preparation of submissions to numerous UN human rights bodies for organizations with consultative status before*

the United Nations. She drafted amicus curiae submissions for Indigenous peoples that were accepted by with World Trade Organization and NAFTA international trade tribunals.

Selected Readings from Whose Land is it Anyway? A Manual for Decolonization: Part III

PATH TO RECONCILIATION

From the 2017 Convocation Speech

Senator Murray Sinclair

Forty years ago, on my first day of law, I was sitting in a discussion circle with classmates and we were asking ourselves why we were in law. Some talked about wanting to make lots of money. Some wanted to change the world. And some wanted to be famous as trial lawyers or counsel in some other capacity. But for me, I only wanted to understand – I wanted to understand why I did not know the laws of my people. I wanted to know why Canada did not know the laws of my people too. I wanted to know why a federal law passed by the Government of Canada could define my people and that we could not define ourselves. I wanted to know why I could not speak the language of my grandmother or know the history and the traditions of my people – the Anishnabe. I wanted to know why my grandmother, along with so many others, believed by not teaching me those things she was somehow saving my life. I wanted to know why and how in 1913 my family and neighbours could be forcibly removed from our traditional lands, from the prime agricultural lands along the Red River. From the very reserve that the Crown had agreed to set aside for our people in 1870, just forty-three years earlier, and be forcibly marched two hundred miles to the north to flood-prone swampy land, virtually uninhabitable, and unusable far to the north – to live there forever. I wanted to know why and how my tall, silent and strong grandfather had been able to resist that forcible removal and to remain

on his farm. And why and how a handful of other families had been able to do so as well, despite the use of the army to move others along. I wanted to know why that displacement of our people was never taught in the schools on the very land from which our people had been removed.

I wanted to know why my young and beautiful mother had died at the age of twenty-five from tuberculosis, a disease that killed our people by the thousands, and which few of the families of my non-Indigenous friends had ever experienced. I wanted to know why my serious and stern grandmother, who took us in after my mother died in order to raise us when she was sixty-three and my grandfather was almost seventy, was not able to grow up in the house of her own mother. Why she was raised in a convent by nuns, unlike her seemingly silly sisters, who we called "the big aunties," whose laughing energy overwhelmed our small house when they came to us each summer.

I wanted to know why my grandmother and my father, as well as my uncles and aunts who went to residential schools, never talked about it. Unlike the parents of my non-Indigenous friends, who loved to tell stories about their teachers and their classmates and who held high school reunions. I wanted to know about the sense of injustice that was carried by all of the adults in my life, in my family, in my community, like a sword and a shield ready to be wielded at a moment's notice at the smallest slight or glance or word. I wanted to know if anything could be done about that sense of injustice or if we would spend the rest of our lives in virtual and at times real conflict with our non-Indigenous friends and neighbours. I wanted to know if all of the things my family had experienced had happened to any others. And that's why I went to law school – I wanted to know why and I wanted to know what I could do about it.

I have dedicated my life to that process of discovery and it has not been easy, but as you know I have shared its burdens, as well as its joys, with many people along the way. I have seen many amazing things and borne witness to some amazing developments over the years. I have suffered personally, at the huge holes in my heart left from losing members of my family and some of my friends far too early. I cry inside each time

I hear of a young Indigenous person who has taken his or her life because the point of despair has become too intense for him or for her. My fears for my nieces, my daughters, and my wife, my sisters and my aunties increase each time I read in the news about another missing or murdered Indigenous women or girl. And though I do not know them, a piece of my heart is ripped away, and my sense of rage that this is somehow connected to our colonial and racist past increases. And I understand why my uncles and my aunts carried that sense of injustice I have mentioned as a sword and a shield.

But I have also seen great strength and resilience in the Elders and the survivors who have come through this genocidal past with hearts still filled with love for their families and for yours – respect for the inno- cent ones who have had no hand in this, and hope for the future. I have shared much time with them and they have held me back from my own pit of rage and despair, so that I may share the knowledge and appreci- ate the joy and excitement of young people such as you on the edge of greatness. They have made me see that we can change. They have made me see that I can change.

During much of my life, I have struggled with those personal responsibilities alongside of my growing public ones, and I have to say, I was constantly faced with the guilt of inadequacy as I saw that no change was occurring in those things I believed to be important over these many years. My process of discovery has uncovered a lot of painful things, painful for not only me, but painful also for this country.

Quite frankly, Canada's treatment of Indigenous peoples is nothing in which this country can take any

pride. But I sense that we are on the cusp of something special as this country begins to come to terms with our history, and you are on the leading edge of that.

Since we released the report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and our Calls to Action, I have been inspired at the public reaction to what we have said, and I have been inspired at the efforts of so many segments of society to work to make things better.

I hope that the new generation of professionals and scholars can see that they are not just the bearers of burdens of history, but they are also the beneficiaries of our new awareness. They are not just inheriting the painful legacy of the past, they are also inheriting the awareness and knowledge of why and how things happened. As well as a framework for defining Canada's new relationship with its Indigenous peoples. That is the edge of the future upon which we sit.

Armed with that knowledge, we will now be looking to you to continue the conversation of reconciliation which we have begun. We will be looking to them to move this country of ours into a new and truthful sense of itself. To shed the cloak of pain and shame, and to walk with Canada's Indigenous peoples into a future where our children will be able to talk to and about each other in a more respectful way.

You have to believe that doing something about this history is the right thing to do and you have to be fearless in doing what you can. This is not a time for the timid. It is a time for the daring. And I invite you to join me in this challenge. I invite you to move forward and let us dare greatly together.

Senator Murray Sinclair *served as Co-chair of the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry in Manitoba and as Chief Commissioner of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). As head of the TRC, he participated in hundreds of hearings across Canada, culminating in the issuance of the TRC's landmark report in 2015. Previously, Senator Sinclair served the justice system in Manitoba for over twenty-five years. He was the first Aboriginal judge appointed in Manitoba and he was very active within his profession and his community. He has won numerous awards, including the* National Aboriginal Achievement Award*, the* Manitoba Bar Association's Equality Award *(2001) and its* Distinguished Service Award *(2016), and has received honorary doctorates from eight Canadian universities. Senator Sinclair was appointed to the Senate on April 2, 2016.*

Decolonization is taking back our power

Pamela Palmater

Tannis Nielsen

Indigenous Nations on Turtle Island (what is now referred to as Canada, United States and Mexico) have experienced some of most prolonged and violent genocidal acts in the world's history. European settlers and their colonial governments colonized Indigenous territories and peoples with such lethal force that they managed to reduce Indigenous populations by the millions. The murders of Indigenous men, women and children, and even those yet unborn, were all committed in the colonial pursuit of unearned power and wealth: the theft of lands and natural resources, and control over new trading routes. The powerful state-propagated myth that colonization was benign, well-intentioned, inevitable and in the past has not only erased from history the culpability of states for genocidal policies aimed at eliminating "Indians," but also renders invisible our collective suffering in the present. This presents a challenge for Indigenous decolonization efforts aimed at both resisting ongoing colonization and also undertaking resurgence efforts aimed at revitalizing Indigenous cultures, laws and governing systems in and on our territories.

In general, when federal, provincial and municipal governments, mainstream media, public commentators and even some educational institutions acknowledge the atrocities of colonization at all, they tend to do so as if it is a legacy – a sad chapter of Canada's past, one that can be collectively acknowledged and quickly forgotten after tearful apologies. There is an urgent political desire for Indigenous peoples to "just get over it," despite the fact that colonization continues in equally lethal ways. Today, while there are many political promises of a renewed relationship, the goal of Indigenous assimilation and integration into "Canadian society" remains as the foundation of reconciliation platitudes underlying the new partnership moving forward. Even the push to move forward hampers our ability to have the truth of Canada's genocidal legacy brought to the fore and advocate for reparations. The race to move forward is more about firmly cementing the power status quo and ensuring the economic exploitation of our territories continues uninterrupted.

Faster than we can empower ourselves, our families, communities and nations with critical information and analysis, government communication networks spin our words to suit their political agendas. Public officials have adopted our calls for decolonization in their bid to promote more superficial forms of reconciliation like changing the names on buildings, placing our art-work on currency, or wearing clothing with Indigenous cultural designs in Parliament. Meanwhile, the crisis issues facing many Indigenous peoples that have directed resulted from historic and ongoing colonization remain unaddressed. Many First Nations have the lowest socio-economic indicators in Canada and some of the highest suicide rates in the world.

There is nothing in the reconciliation relationship that addresses these multiple overlapping crises – instead, First Nations are subjected to federally controlled and chronically underfunded social programs and services that do not increase with inflation, actual costs or population increases. Despite many alarms raised by research reports, commissions, court cases, federal officials like the Auditor General and Office of the Correctional Investigator, and United Nations human rights bodies, Canada alternates between governments that make ever deeper cuts to funding and those that make minor increases that never address actual needs.

In addition to poverty, homelessness, lack of access to education and employment, lack of access to healthcare and clean water, and higher rates of going murdered and missing, the impact of colonization on Indigenous children is especially acute. Statistically, Indigenous youth face a greater chance of being incarcerated than of getting a university education. Despite being only 4% of the population in Canada, Indigenous children are 48% of the children in foster care; 38% of all deaths in youth are from suicide, 60% of Indigenous children live in poverty, and nearly half of admissions to correctional detention centres were Indigenous youth. Indigenous children suffer twice the infant mortality rate, and higher rates of respiratory and infectious diseases, diabetes and serious injuries. Underlying all of these socio-economic conditions is the ongoing fact of land dispossession, oppression and institutionalized racism maintained and defended at all costs – financial and human – by successive Canadian governments.

One might wonder how Canada can so openly discriminate against Indigenous peoples, maintain such racist laws, or get away with not addressing the many crises that have captured the media's attention in recent years. Their primary method has served successive governments well: deny, deflect and defer. Whenever crises hit the news, the first reaction of government is to deny the problem, its severity or the government's liability outright in the hopes that the media will drop the story – which is sometimes effective. It is for this reason that First Nations have been forced into the court system to seek redress for ongoing problems related to a wide range of issues, from the denial of treaty rights to abuses in residential schools. However, sometimes the mainstream media stays on a story and the government is then forced to try to deflect blame for the crisis to the First Nation itself. Blaming the victim is a tactic that has been effectively used by rapists, pedophiles and war criminals for decades. It has been equally effective for Canadian governments as the media then latches on to the sensational implications and allegations of crooked chiefs, abusive First Nation men and dangerous protesters instead of the actual issue at hand.

If all else fails and the media remain focused on the core issue at hand, and the government can't back out of responsibility as easily as they had hoped, then their last tactic is delay. They will defer the matter to a committee, commission, inquiry, political roundtable or research project to be addressed another day – usually when that government is no longer in power. Most reports end up collecting dust on shelves; we are left with thousands of recommendations for change that never get implemented and the issue fades from public discourse.

Public education is itself a challenge when governments go to great lengths to make their laws and programs sound like they are making great strides in addressing long-standing issues. What the public often fails to understand is that while the specific law, policy, program or initiative names may have changed over time, the government's Indian policy objectives of (1) obtaining Indigenous lands and resources and (2) reducing financial obligations to Indians incurred through treaties and other agreements have not. Their primary method of either eliminating or assimilating Indians is evidenced in even the most modern of policies. Certainly, it is arguable that the federal government's programs and policies create the conditions of life that lead to the premature deaths of Indigenous peoples and, as such, could be considered a modern-day elimination policy. It has also been argued that the federal government's maintenance of the disappearing Indian formula in the *Indian Act* is a form of legal and political assimilation that will guarantee the legislative extinction of all Indians in Canada in time. However, assimilation tools take many forms, like the education curriculum in K–12 schools that teaches French and English language and history, the promotion of Canada as a bilingual state, and the primacy of Canadian laws. While some might argue that Canadian law protects Indigenous rights, their non-Indigenous lawyers, judges and police forces ensure that Canadian sovereignty is supreme and that any rights we have are subservient to those of the colonial regimes.

Canada works very hard to get in the way of real decolonization, as that would mean a substantive shift in power and wealth back to Indigenous peoples – something no government has yet put on the table for negotiation. This means that Indigenous peoples must engage in this exercise of decolonization in a context that is politically, socially and legally complex. What's worse is when governments are successful in creating divisions between "good Indians" and "bad Indians," "willing partner chiefs" and "rogue chiefs." Like all things Indigenous, decolonization should be a balance of both resistance and resurgence, where we withdraw from harmful government processes and relationships and reengage in those relationships that have sustained us for millennia – with the land, the water, our people and our cultures.

There is not one way to do this and we have to accept our people where they are in the decolonization process – some are not even thinking about it yet, while others are fully engaged in the conversation. The hard part will be holding our own leaders to account for the role some of them play in propping up colonial governments and their processes that hurt our nations.

Dividing ourselves along male/female, traditional/non-traditional, religious/non-religious, speaker/non-speaker, and on/off reserve members only serves the interests of the colonizers – not our people or our nations. We have to forgive ourselves for being colonized and lay the blame properly at the feet of the colonizers. It is not our fault if some of us cannot speak our languages, do not live on a reserve, or were never taught how to sundance. The colonizers and missionaries taught us that we were savages and heathens and taught our children to hate them- selves in residential schools.

These same messages are spread throughout our nations in more insidious forms today through government intervention and hateful media messages.

We must ensure that the decolonization process teaches our children to be critical thinkers and work towards stopping the spread of the colonial infection in our nations so that we can put more energy into our resurgence and nation-building. It won't be easy, but being the victims of modern genocidal policies is much harder. Our

people have survived everything Canada has done to us. Our ancestors are walking beside us as we revitalize our cultures and identities. Decolonization is about realizing that we have power to take back what is rightfully ours and ensure a future for our future generations.

Pamela Palmater *is from the Mi'kmaw Nation and a member of the Eel River Bar First Nation. She has been a practising lawyer for eighteen years and currently holds the Chair in Indigenous Governance at Ryerson University. Pam is an activist and was one of the spokespeople, organizers and educators for the Idle No More movement. She is a well-known media commentator and public speaker who is often called before parliamentary and United Nations committees as an expert witness on Indigenous rights. She has numerous publications including her books* Beyond Blood: Rethinking Indigenous Identity *and* Indigenous Nationhood: Empowering Grassroots Citizens.

This manual was inspired by a Federation of Post Secondary Educators of British Columbia (FPSE) speaking tour made by Arthur Manuel in 2016, less than a year before his untimely passing in January 2017.

Arthur Manuel was one of the most important strategists of the Indigenous movement within Canada and internationally and has been described as the Nelson Mandela of the movement for his principled and visionary leadership.

Arthur Manuel's 2016 tour lit fires of interest in BC Colleges and Universities around issues related to Indigenous decolonization and FPSE is proud to support this handbook in his name. It is also proud to be associated with the truly remarkable Indigenous writers and academics who are presented here.

A special thanks goes to Nicole Schabus, Chair of the Thompson Rivers University Faculty Association's Human Rights Committee, law professor and life partner of Arthur Manuel, for helping to make this handbook a reality.

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Appendix A : Mi'kmaq Prayer

Mi'kmaw Prayer of the Seven Sacred Teachings

Kisu'lk wela'liek wjit wla Na'kwek kisi Iknmuiek.

Wela'liek wjit wla kis tli Mawita'nen, aq etamulek piskwa'n ta'n eymek, klaman kis tliatew ta'n tel-mnueken.

Iknmuinen Nsituoqn, klaman kjijitutesnen ta'n koqoey Kelu'k wla wksitqamu'k.

Iknmuinen Ksaltultinen klaman kisi siawa'tesnen ksalsuti msit tamiaw.

Iknmuinen Kepmite'sultinen, klaman Kjijitutesnen ksalsuti msit tamiaw.

Iknmuinen Mlkitelsultinen, klaman ma' wen nutajite'lsik lukwatmn wla tett.

Iknmuinen menaqajewo'ltinen, klaman ma' wen ewlek kisna ewla'lat wen kikmanaq.

Iknmuinen Penoqite'lsultinen, klaman ma' wen kisi aji espite'lsik aq wikma'jl.

Aq Niskam, Iknmuinene Ketleweyuti klaman waqme'ktital Nkamulamunal aq njijaqmijinaq ta'n tujiw nmu'lek elmi'knik.

Na tliaj

su'ite'l (sweet grass)

Creator, Thank you for this day you have given us.

Thank you for allowing us to gather here today and we ask you to enter where we are, so that your teachings will work in us.

We ask for wisdom, so that we will know what is good in this world.

We ask for love, so we can spread your love everywhere.

We ask for respect, so that we will know that everyone comes from one place....from you

We ask for bravery, so that we will not be afraid to do your work here.

We ask for honesty, so that no one will lie or harm anyone of us.

We ask for humility, so that no one will be superior to another.

And lord, we ask for truth, so that we will see you in the future, on the last day with clean hearts and spirits.

Amen

Helen Sylliboy

Appendix B : Cree Prayer

Great Spirit Prayer

Oh, Great Spirit, whose voice I hear in the wind, Whose breath gives life to all the world.

Hear me; I need your strength and wisdom.

Make me walk in beauty, and make my eyes ever behold the red and purple Sunset.

Make my hands respect the things you have made and my ears sharp to hear your voice.

Make me wise so that I may understand the things you have taught my People.

Help me to remain calm and strong in the face of all that comes towards me.

Let me learn the lessons you have hidden in every leaf and rock.

Help me seek pure thoughts and act with the intention of helping theirs.

Help me find compassion without empathy overwhelming me.

I seek strength, not to be greater than my brother, but to fight my greatest enemy Myself.

Make me always ready to come to you with clean hands and straight eyes.

So when life fades, as the fading sunset, my spirit may come to you without shame.

(Cree Prayer)

Appendix C: Cree Sacred Smudging Prayer

Cree Smudging Prayer – Description of Actions

Thanks to the interpretation of Dolores Greyeyes Sand and editorial help from Solomon Ratt, this prayer was provided to those interested in learning the Cree language and has the side-by-side Cree / English translation. They write, "*For people brought up in nêhiyaw tradition, smudging is a deeply personal act that needs no discussion. This post is offered to others who are striving to build Cree tradition into their personal lives*". This piece, which we might consider a text or prayer, was composed initially in English, and presented in the Facebook group *Walking the Talk, A Sacred Responsibility*.

nimiyâhkasikân niskîsikohk isi ta-wâpahtamân kâ-isi-miywâsik askiy, êkosi nikakî-wâpahtên kâ-isi-miyosicik ayisiniwak mîna nîsta.	I bring the smoke up over my eyes so that I can see the true beauty of the world, so that I can see beauty in others and in myself.
nimiyâhkasikân niskiwanihk isi ta-pasoyân ka-oskimâkwahk askiy mîna nimawimostamawâwak kahkiyaw ayisiyiniwak kâ-pimohtêcik ta-kihcêyihtahkik.	I bring the smoke up over my nose so that I can smell the freshness of Mother Earth and pray that all those who walk upon her, do so in sacred manner.
nimiyâhkasikân nitônihk isi ta-kisêwâtisiyân mîna ta-sâkihowêyân ispîhk kâ-pîkiskwêyân.	I bring the smoke up over my mouth so I can speak with kindness and love.
nimiyâhkasikân nihtawakâhk is ta-natohtamân kisêwâtisiwin ohci.	I bring the smoke up over my ears so that I can hear with compassion.
nimiyâhkasikân ispimihk nistikwânihk isi êkâ ta-pakitêyimisoyân mâka ta-mâmitonêyihtamân ka-isi-kistêyimakik kahkiyaw ahcahkwak.	I bring the smoke up over the top of my head so that my thoughts are not self-defeating but instead honour my spirit and others' spirits as well.
nimiyâhkasikân nêstakâhk isi ta-miskamân nisôhkisiwin mîna sîpihkisiwin êkosi ta-sôhkêyimisoyân, ê-kiskêyihtamân ê-sâkihit kisê-manitow.	I bring the smoke over my hair so that I am connected to my inner strength and resiliency so that I can walk with confidence, knowing that I am loved by Creator.
nikisîpêkinicihcân miyâhkasikanihk ta-manâcihowêyân mîna ta-kistêyihtamâkêyân.	I wash my hands with the smoke so that I touch with respect and honour.
nimiyâhkasikân nispitonihk isi ta-sâkihitowêyân.	I bring forth smoke over both my arms so that I can use them to convey love.
nimiyâhkasikân misiwê nimiyâhk ta-kanâcihisoyân, ta-nahihtamân kiskinwahamâkosiwin, ta-miyo-pimâcihoyân.	I bring the smoke all over the front of my body and down my back to purify my energy so that I am open to the teachings that are meant to enhance my journey.
nimiyâhkasikân nihcâyihk ta-tapahtêyimisoyân, ta-miyo-pimohtêyân nitâniskoc-wâhkômâkanak ôtê nîkân ohci.	I bring the smoke downward towards my feet so that I can walk in humility and that my footsteps are guided to making a positive difference to the next seven generations.
nimiyâhkasikân nêwayak itêhkê ta-kistêyimakik nitâniskoc-wâhkômâkanak.	I bring smoke up to my heart four times to represent the Four Sacred Directions in honour of my Ancestors.
nimiyâhkasikân ta-nanâskomoyân.	I smudge in gratitude.