# RECONCILIATION IN PRACTICE

*A Cross-Cultural Perspective*

EDITED BY RANJAN DATTA

Excerpt

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PART ONE

# UNDERSTANDING RECONCILIATION

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*Chapter One*

# POSSIBILITIES AND CHALLENGES IN RECONCILIATION

RANJAN DATTA

This edited collection, *Reconciliation in Practice: A Cross-Cultural Perspective,* is a response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada's assertion that meaningful engagement between Indigenous Peoples and non-Indigenous Canadians will be key in advancing reconciliation. The contributions to this book showcase various cross-cultural, community-oriented activities that represent serious attempts to understand and take responsibility for the meaningful implications of reconciliation. Through these essays, personal reflections, and poems we begin to identify areas of opportunity, as well as current obstacles, to progress toward reconciliation.

The book initiates a transdisciplinary discussion that challenges not only traditional science and social science mindsets but enlarges the concept of reconciliation to include building respectful relationships with Indigenous Peoples, respecting Indigenous treaties, taking action to decolonize our ways of knowing and acting, understanding the role of colonized education processes, protecting our land and environment, creating food security, ensuring nutritious food, creating an intercultural space for social interactions, and developing transnational empowerment.

Inspired by the work of Indigenous scholars Drs. Marie Battiste (2017, 2013, 2000), Eve Tuck and Wayne Yang (2012), Shawn Wilson (2011, 2008), Verna St Denis (2007), and Margaret Kovach (2010) about decolonizing our ways of knowing, thinking, and acting, this book encourages a fundamental shift to thinking of reconciliation as a continuous process that belongs to everyone. As such, it has huge implications and possibilities for reimagining our relationships with both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples. This book hopes to

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support all of us (i.e., Indigenous, settlers, old immigrants, new immigrants, and refugees) as we envision how Indigenous histories, perspectives, worldviews, and approaches to learning can thoughtfully and respectfully be made part of the work we do in our everyday practice.

Approaching the topic of reconciliation from an interdisciplinary perspective, the contributors employ a variety of participatory research engagement methods. As a result, the scholarship that comes out of this research varies in form and content and speaks to a wide and diverse audience. Bringing together community engagement, activism, research, and scholarship to advocate for socio-environmental justice, the book provides the learning support for researchers, teachers, students, and community members who want to develop their capacity to engage with Indigenous communities based on intercultural understanding, empathy, and respect.

*Reconciliation in Practice* invites non-Indigenous Canadians, particularly new immigrants and refugees, to learn about Indigenous history, culture, values, and goals, to join in solidarity with Indigenous communities, and to engage in the process of determining what reconciliation in practice means to them and to their collective communities. The book is an invitation for all of us to work together as Indigenists, to build relational networks for the important task of intercultural bridging, to move beyond cultural awareness and inclusion, and to challenge racist ideology as we rethink and re-imagine our relationships with one another in a sharing place — a motherland (Battiste 2013; Wilson 2013). Our target is to build bridges between Indigenous Peoples, settlers, refugees, and new immigrants that can lead us to rethink and redo the work that we do in classrooms, organizations, communities, and in our everyday lives in ways that are thoughtful, respectful, and responsible.

This book is designed to engage us in a discussion on the responsibilities between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples as part of the process of developing our personal and collective understandings and practices. In the process of reflecting on our responsibilities, we demonstrate how Indigenous guidance on reconciliation can assist us in further contextualizing our roles and responsibilities. From a responsibility perspective, we realize that reconciliation is not an abstract entity that exists in a vacuum waiting for the enlightened among us to bring them into practice. Rather, the meanings of reconciliation are varied, dynamic, and forever transforming.

Here, we offer a critical gaze that brings together community engagement, activism, research, and scholarship to advocate for socio-environmental

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justice and trans-systematic reconciliation of cross-cultural knowledge. Contributors are from various disciplines, including science, social science, arts, and interdisciplinary. We used our disciplinary, interdisciplinary, and transdisciplinary expert eyes in a type of social entrepreneurship model—working on sustainable, critical, anti-racist learning, responsible learning, and community building.

While significant emphasis has been placed on the process of reconciliation, there have been misunderstandings, a lack of trust and respect, and negligence from and within both settler and new Canadian (i.e., immigrant and refugee) communities regarding its meaningful interpretation (Clark, de Costa, and Maddison 2017; Egan 2011; Morgan 2018). This book addresses several unanswered questions in current practices of reconciliation, including: *Is reconciliation an end goal to be achieved or is it a process? Is it a collective or individual responsibility? Why am I responsible for the meaningful implementation of reconciliation? How am I benefiting from Indigenous perspectives on reconciliation?* To begin to address these questions, we must first understand what reconciliation is and the challenges and possibilities it holds. What does reconciliation mean? How do we follow the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) calls to action and work together to change our practice?

## WHAT DOES RECONCILIATION MEAN?

Reconciliation is a complex process with a variety of definitions (Battiste 2013; Morgan 2018; Wilson 2018). Reconciliation involves remembering and acknowledging the wrongs that have been done, which include residential schools, the reserve system, cultural genocide, and systemic racism in Canada (McCrossan and Ladner 2016). It is important that all Canadians are educated about these wrongs, including the false narrative of Canadian history that fails to mention Indigenous Peoples (McCrossan and Ladner 2016). Through reconciliation, the colonial structures that have affected Indigenous Peoples for centuries must be removed and traditional ways of life must be restored.

Reconciliation takes on different meanings for different individuals and groups (Palmater 2014). It is a complex process with little agreement on how to define it or even go about defining it. There is no single meaning, program, or policy that can address reconciliation, and much remains to be done to achieve a social awareness of the historical and contemporary contexts that

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have contributed to the current socioeconomic reality of Indigenous Peoples. Any narrow, static definition of reconciliation is problematic. For instance, according to the Cambridge Dictionary, the word reconciliation defines a situation in which two people or groups of people become friendly again after they have argued. This narrow definition has been misinterpreted and applied incorrectly in many communities (James 2012; Wildcat, McDonald, Irbacher-Fox, and Coulthard 2014; Wilson 2018), causing misunderstanding and problems for Indigenous lives, culture, and land. It focuses on the past and on individual apologies and interpersonal forgiveness rather than the reshaping of collective relationships or redress for broader structural and systemic harms (James 2012). A narrow definition also implies that Indigenous cultures are fixed and unchanging (Morgan 2018). To avoid the problems connected with a narrow interpretation of reconciliation, it is important to understand ongoing processes prior to addressing the actual meaning of reconciliation.

Many Canadians, particularly members of immigrant and refugee communities, do not have adequate opportunities to learn the meaning of reconciliation (Abu-Laban 2018, 2014; Clark, de Costa, and Maddison 2017; Egan 2011; Morgan 2018; Simpson 2014), which may lead to numerous misconceptions about Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous expectations of reconciliation (Abu-Laban 2018, 2014; Clark, de Costa, and Maddison 2017; Tully 2000). Yasmeen Abu-Laban, an immigrant scholar in Canada (2018, 2014), argues that, based on his eight-year study with various new and old immigrant communities in Canada, the lack of knowledge/education on Indigenous communities can create many misconceptions not only of Indigenous Peoples but also of the process of reconciliation itself. In addition, other Indigenous and non-Indigenous studies suggest that we need to not only understand the complexity of reconciliation from various perspectives, but we must also take responsibility for practising it in our everyday lives (Clark, de Costa, and Maddison 2017; Egan 2011). For many Indigenous communities in Canada and other parts of the world, reconciliation is not a static process. Its meaning is complex, relational, and deeply rooted in the Indigenous history of colonization, land rights, self-governance, cultural heritage, socio-ecological justice, and environmental well-being (Barkaskas and Buhler 2017; Morgan 2018). Indigenous scholars, Elders, and Knowledge Keepers also suggest that reconciliation is primarily a settler responsibility and decolonization must be led by Indigenous Peoples (CBC 2018, 2017, 2016). In order to understand the varied and complex dynamics of reconciliation, I discuss the related

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possibilities and challenges through the frames of decolonization, land-based education, settler colonialism/colonial legacy, relational accountabilities, and Indigenous worldview.

## Decolonization

Decolonization is a central aspect of reconciliation. It is another ambiguous concept, but one that essentially demands the "repatriation of Indigenous land and life" (Tuck and Yang 2012: 1). Decolonization is not a metaphor, Eve Tuck and Ken Yang (2012) remind us; in its simplest form, it is something that aims to unsettle and dismantle settler colonialism. Many Indigenous scholars see reconciliation as a decolonial process (Battiste 2013). Reconciliation as decolonization "exposes places where dominant structures must be re-made to embrace other than dominant ways of knowing and doing" (Sasakamoose and Pete 2015: 4). Indigenous scholars Marie Battiste (2013) and Tuck and Yang (2012) explicitly argue that there can be no reconciliation without decolonization as the two processes are interconnected. Anishinaabe comedian and writer Ryan McMahon (2016: 10) says, "I would argue that before reconciliation, we really need to look at decolonization." He explains how we can begin to practise decolonization: "Decolonization starts with land. It starts with the question of land. Do Indigenous people have the ability to live freely on and with relationship to the land, as we did prior to confederation? And the answer right now is no" (2016: 12). Reconciliation as a decolonial process supports a resurgence in Indigenous culture, politics, knowledge, and on-the-land skills. The clear articulation of reconciliation as a decolonial process is an important step in realizing our responsibility. Decolonization can only be achieved by removing the effects of colonialism and encouraging self-determination for Indigenous Peoples. Understanding reconciliation in this context means envisioning a place for everyone to build this vital future, it is just one way forward in a larger struggle for justice, coexistence, and a better world for everyone.

Indigenous scholars define decolonization as an ongoing process of deconstructing colonial ideologies of the superiority and privilege of Western thought and approaches (Battiste 2017; Simpson 2014; Tuck and Yang 2012; Wilson 2017). They suggest that decolonization has dual meanings. On the one hand, decolonization involves dismantling structures that perpetuate the status quo, problematizing dominant discourses, and addressing unbalanced power dynamics. On the other hand, decolonization involves valuing and

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revitalizing Indigenous knowledge and approaches and weeding out settler biases or assumptions that have impacted Indigenous ways of being. Linda Smith (1999: 39) notes that "decolonization is about centering our concerns and worldviews and then coming to know and understand theory from our own perspectives and for our own purposes." Smith reveals that Indigenous perspectives and worldviews are paramount in a decolonization project. Similarly, Indigenous scholar Marie Battiste (2013, 2008, 2000) suggests that decolonization necessitates shifting our frames of reference with regard to the knowledge we hold; examining how we have arrived at such knowledge; and considering what we need to do to change misconceptions, prejudice, and assumptions about Indigenous Peoples.

Decolonization as a means to reconciliation is important for everyone, including newcomers in Canada (Battiste 2017). Battiste discussed the meaning of reconciliation from the perspective of decolonization on a CFCR 90.5 (Saskatchewan) radio program with me and radio host Jebunnessa Chapola in 2017. According to Battiste, decolonization has two pillars. First, we (immigrants, refugees, and settlers) need to understand that "our system of education is deeply colonial," and decolonization is a means to "help people to understand where colonialism came from … and unpack these histories from our own perspectives." She suggests that reconciliation "education needs to not just be a colonial experience … but it has to be a way to help people to understand their situation where they are and how they are in an inequitable situation." Second, decolonization in reconciliation is "recovery from colonial impact, restoration of Indigenous Peoples' identities, Indigenous Peoples' languages, Indigenous Peoples' experiences, and all things that we [Indigenous Peoples] need for restoring us in this country [Canada] which builds in treaties that have been signed, ignored, marginalized for many, many years in Canada."

Battiste explained that decolonization education can empower all of us. For her, reconciliation is a lifelong unlearning and relearning process. It can inspire us to ask questions: "How are we related to the colonization, oppressions? Who are the people who belong to the colonial culture? Who are the people benefiting from the oppressive systems? Who is privileged by oppressing others?" (n.p.). However, Battiste and Henderson (2000) warn that there is not just one Indigenous way of knowing or understanding. Thus, as we work to decolonize, we must be sensitized to the histories, cultures, knowledge, ways of knowing, and governance systems of various Indigenous Peoples and cultures. Discovering the traditions of different Indigenous groups can be

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difficult because, throughout our long history of colonization, Indigenous Peoples were not allowed to practise their traditions and as a result, many of those traditions are now lost. Therefore, Indigenous scholars (see for example Battiste 2013; Simpson 2014; Tuck and Yang 2012; Wilson 2017) argue that decolonization is an important component of reconciliation because it challenges the dominance of Western thought and brings Indigenous thought to the forefront.

Taiaiake Alfred, Elder, scholar, and writer from Kahnawá:ke in the Mohawk Nation, agrees that reconciliation is not possible without decolonization:

> When we talk about colonization, we tend to think of brutally stolen land, racism, broken treaties, and residential schools. Those are things that happened. Those well-known things shaped the relationship between Indigenous people and the settler society on this continent. But what was the deeper and lasting impact of those things on nations of Indigenous people? Alienation, separation, disconnection. To decolonize, we need to reclaim the sacred spaces of our traditional territories. Rename those spaces to sever the emotional and intellectual ties of colonially imposed names and restore the full histories and ancient significances embedded in Indigenous languages. Resurgence builds on the idea of resistance and deepens the understanding of decolonization. It is a way of thinking and being and practicing politics that roots resistance in the spirit, knowledge, and laws of our ancestors. It links pushing back against oppression to cultural restoration and healing practices at the individual, social, and national levels. (Alfred 2018: 8)

Elder Alfred emphasizes that through decolonization non-Indigenous people can play a role in Indigenous resurgence, and that, in fact, "decolonization starts inside of you" (12). He argues that we all need decolonization, Indigenous and settler alike. Decolonization is self-questioning and embraces the commitment to listen to the voices of Indigenous ancestors channelled through the young people of Indigenous nations, learn from Indigenous culture how to walk differently and love the land as best we can.

Many Indigenous scholars see the lack of decolonization as one of the most significant challenges to understanding and practising reconciliation (Battiste 2013; Smith 2008). Reconciliation as decolonization "exposes places where

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dominant structures must be re-made to embrace other than dominant ways of knowing and doing" (Sasakamoose and Pete 2015: 4). There is, for example, a consensus that globally, and particularly in Canada, universities have not decolonized; the curriculum is predominantly Eurocentric, "rooted in colonial, apartheid and Western worldviews and epistemological traditions" and, therefore, "continues to reinforce white and Western dominance and privilege" (Heleta 2016: 1). Linda Tuhaiwai Smith (2008) also argues that universities are places of colonialism, a legacy that has not completely ended. Decolonizing education systems involves rethinking the way schooling is delivered, including the curriculum, methodologies, and relationships with communities (TD Economics 2012), Many Elders and Knowledge Keepers suggest that decolonizing the education system has the potential to re-engage Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth in learning and empower them to achieve greater success (Morgan 2018; Simpson 2014).

Focusing on decolonization, a Cree Elder explains that reconciliation means not only respectful relationships but also doing the work together to make sure that Indigenous Peoples can fully exercise and enjoy their rights (Gray 2016). Therefore, according to Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers, decolonization means restoring culture and presence on the land — revitalizing Indigenous ways of being on the land — and using the strength that comes from that to confront the forces that seek to oppress and harm Indigenous Peoples.

Reconciliation as a lifelong decolonial process has an impact on Indigenous youth, and Indigenous youth activists have suggested that they want to focus on decolonization prior to discussing the process of reconciliation. Jeremy Garcia and Valerie Shirley (2012) suggest that for youth, decolonization offers ways to address issues specific to their needs and aspirations within education settings. Indigenous youth have shared in-depth accounts of the holistic benefits that can result from participation in the decolonization process. For instance, a Dene youth explains, "In decolonization, we have our own nations. We have our own political practices. We have rights to land, to establish our own economies, our own ways of life" ( Saskatoon Star Phoenix 2018). First Nations youth activist and blogger Andrea Landry (2018: n.p.), from Treaty Six Territory in Poundmaker Cree Nation, says, "The only reconciliation that exists for us, as Indigenous nations, is the reconciliation we need to find within ourselves and our communities, for agreeing and complying to this madness for so long." She continues, "I want our children to learn about our own liberation, rather than the colonizer's reconciliation … And I want our

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children to know that Indigenous liberation will always overthrow colonial reconciliation." The decolonization of education is a powerful tool for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous youths, wherein processes of decolonizing and historical consciousness are deeply linked (Donald 2012). It is a learning opportunity in service to both historical truth-telling and reconciliation. For youth, decolonization education encourages and facilitates learning experiences that explore difficult histories and contemporary challenges and mobilizes Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth to stand alongside each other in understanding, respect, solidarity, and resilience (Donald 2012; McGregor 2018).

## Land-Based Education

Aimed at reclaiming Indigenous Land Rights, land-based education is another important aspect of meaningful reconciliation (Simpson 2014; Wilson 2018). For instance, John George Hansen and Rose Antsanen (2017: 16) observe that "Indigenous lives and communities can be improved by connecting to traditional teachings, practices and spiritual ceremonies." Smith (1999: 142) reminds us that Indigenous education involves a decolonizing movement that seeks to restore the cultural ideas and practices from a history of colonial oppression, and that "cultural survival, self-determination, healing, restoration and social justice are engaging Indigenous researchers and Indigenous communities in a diverse array of projects." Thus, Indigenous Land-based education is a fundamental part of reconciliation because it promotes an Indigenous model of education in a culturally appropriate way; it is more than a set of beliefs, it has developed into a finely tuned model of Indigenous ways of knowing (Ermine 1995; Hansen and Antsanen 2017). Michael Chandler and Christopher Lalonde (1998: 191) have found that restoring the teachings within Indigenous education has produced some incredible results in Indigenous communities and that those that "have taken active steps to preserve and rehabilitate their own cultures are shown to be those in which youth suicide rates are dramatically lower."

Land-based education plays an active role in Indigenous ways of knowing and being and provides students with an explicit critique of how colonial processes impacted the reciprocal relationship Indigenous Peoples traditionally had with the land (Datta 2018). Students are given the tools to imagine an alternative environmental paradigm informed by Indigenous ways of knowing that subverts anthropocentric ways of relating to the Earth (Bang et al. 2014; Paperson 2014; Tuck, McKenzie, and McCoy 2014).

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Many Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers agree that land-based education is one of the most important parts of reconciliation (Datta 2018). For instance, at a traditional Knowledge Keepers' forum in Winnipeg in 2014, Mary Deleary, an Anishinaabe Elder, expressed very clearly that the work of reconciliation must continue in ways that honour Indigenous ancestors, respect the land, and rebalance relationships. Integrating Indigenous ways of knowing and being into the content and process of land rights and land-based education can create a sense of belonging for our students — Indigenous, immigrants, new immigrants, refugees, and settlers — thereby improving educational engagement and attainment. Focusing on Indigenous Land Rights also has the potential to shift the human relationship with the natural world, fostering an environmental paradigm protective of land-based practices (Anuik, Battiste, and George 2010; Battiste 2013; Simpson 2014).

Land-based education understands that Indigenous Land Rights and the process of reconciliation are interconnected and cannot be separated (Datta 2018). Traditional Powwow dancer and artist Shady Hafez challenges the Western process of reconciliation:

> The project of reconciliation, as it is currently framed, is a project I have little faith in. The reasoning is simple: The root of historical and current conflicts between Indigenous nations and the Canadian state is land, more specifically the occupation of Indigenous lands and the dispossession of Indigenous bodies from our lands. Therefore, if reconciliation is a goal that the Canadian state and the Canadian populace are fully committed to achieving, then why are we not resolving the primary issue of contention between our nations — that being land title and the ability of Indigenous nations to have autonomous control over our lands and affairs? If Canada is serious about reconciliation and implementing a nation-to-nation relationship with indigenous peoples, the process must begin by returning unused Crown lands to their respective Indigenous nations or providing restitution for lands that cannot be returned. Following which Canada should abolish the Indian Act and allow for full Indigenous autonomy over our lands. Canadians need to understand that part of reconciliation is appreciating the reality that we may not want to be part of the Canadian state. (Postmedia 2017: n.p.)

Conflicts about land and control over natural resources have often prompted

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extensive efforts to resolve differences through negotiation and dialogue. In instances where these processes have failed to result in a settlement, Indigenous communities have tried to protect their land through litigation or direct action, for example, the Idle No More movement, protests, occupations, and blockades. Many Indigenous scholars, community Elders, and Knowledge Keepers suggest that the Canadian government's current reconciliation initiatives are not enough to create Indigenous sovereignty and self-governance, presenting an additional hurdle to meaningful reconciliation (Antaki and Kirkby 2009). The rights of Indigenous Peoples need to be reconciled with the proclaimed sovereignty of non-Indigenous people in Canada. In many cases, reconciliation speaks to the need for non-Indigenous people in Canada to acknowledge the unfairness of the colonial assertion of sovereignty, assimilation policies, and denial of self-governance in order to develop harmonious and just relations with Indigenous Peoples.

## Recognizing the Historical Colonial Legacy

Recognizing, learning, and challenging the historical colonial legacy is another important part of reconciliation. Battiste (2017: n.p.) emphasizes the importance of not only "understanding and/or unpacking whiteness, colonization, and oppression that belongs with the kinds of language," but also suggests that we need to understand our own relationships to that. According to Battiste, decolonization is "beginning to understanding that 'I got it.' Once we get it, we will not go back to the colonial process in our research." When conducting research with Indigenous communities, Elizabeth Moje (2000: 25) says that "researchers should engage in research not only to produce knowledge but also to make positive change in the lives of those who participate in research, change that the participants desire and articulate for themselves." Battiste (2017) suggests that once we can recognize the historical colonial legacy of oppression, colonial culture, and colonial impact on our practice, we will be able to appreciate our relationship as researchers with that legacy. Once we understand the processes of colonization and our relationships with them, we can find out who we are as immigrants, refugees, and settlers and what we should do for the meaningful implementation of reconciliation. Recognizing the historical colonial legacy in reconciliation learning includes an in-depth understanding of settler colonialism, refusal of Indigenous Land Rights and self-governance, and ongoing racism.

One way of learning this important history is through critical anti-racist

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education, which helps to recognize the historical colonial legacy (St. Denis 2007). It is also useful for the understanding that the refusal to recognize Indigenous Rights to their land and natural resources is a significant concern for many Indigenous communities, particularly in Canada (Datta 2018 2017; Wildcat, McDonald, Irbacher-Fox, and Coulthard 2014). The lack of critical anti-racist education is a major challenge for meaningful action on reconciliation in Canada (Cannon and Sunseri 2011; St. Denis 2011a, 2011b, 2012, 2007) as it offers an in-depth understanding of the colonial history of Canada and facilitates action against ongoing colonial practices (St. Denis 2012). In proposing anti-racist education, Indigenous scholar St. Denis (2012) argues that the legitimating ideology of colonialism is rampant and is a daily reality for Indigenous Peoples. Verna St. Denis argues that the education system in Canada is challenging for many Indigenous communities. For instance, the residential school system is one of the darkest examples of Canada's colonial policies to eradicate Indigenous Peoples from settler society. Lasting for over a hundred years, with the last school closing in the mid-1990s, the extensive government- and church-run school system was "characterized by forced removal of families; systemic physical and sexual assault; spiritual, psychological and emotional abuse; and malnutrition, inhumane living conditions, death, and murder" (Cannon and Sunseri 2011: 278). Through colonization, the Canadian state attempted to assimilate Indigenous Peoples into the settlers' European ways of living. Settler policies and attitudes meant that Indigenous Peoples were cut off from their traditional cultures, languages, spiritualities, economies, systems of governance, and other important parts of their identity (St. Denis 2012, 2007; Steckley and Cummins 2008). Critical anti-racist education shows that understanding Canada's colonial history and debunking the racist myths that run through Canadian society is an important part of the truth and reconciliation process (TD Economics 2012). It also demonstrates how the legacy of colonization has affected and continues to affect many settler, immigrant, and refugee communities across many generations in Canada.

The legacy of the past is daunting but anti-racist education can show us the way forward by creating many possibilities for reconciliation in relationship-shifting restorative practices. It is an important tool for reconciliation because it is grounded in intergenerational Indigenous knowledge systems and the worldviews and cultures of the individual, family, or community being served; it is framed within an awareness of and engagement with colonial history; it is strength-based and holistic rather than punitive and isolated; and it leads

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to measurable positive change for the individual, family, or community being served. Critical anti-racist learning in land-based practices and approaches provides a concrete means to address colonial history while recognizing the complexity of intergenerational issues and working toward the mutual understanding and respect that truth and reconciliation require.

## Settler Colonialism

The challenges to reconciliation in settler-colonial societies are complex. Settler colonialism, as various studies emphasize (Barker 2012; Barker and Lowman 2015; Wolfe 1999), operates with its own particular logic, at the core of which is the elimination of the Indigenous, who must be displaced or destroyed to make space for settlement. This logic is "an organizing principle of settler-colonial society rather than a one-off (and superseded) occurrence," because in settler-colonial societies "invasion is a structure not an event" (Wolfe 2006: 388). Indigenous difference (presence, culture, identity, memory, history) is thus always threatening because it challenges the legitimacy of the settler state. Assimilation, read this way, is the logic of elimination in another form, for it seeks to eliminate the threatening and radical difference of the Indigenous other. The transformation of the colonial relationship is particularly challenging, not least because its psycho-affective structures mean that Indigenous Peoples have internalized their own domination, thus complicating the politics of recognition as it is typically conceived.

In the Canadian context, settler colonialism is about land, resources, sovereignty, and self-determination (Tuck and Yang 2012); as such, it involves the creation of a new social order. It is a mutual undertaking involving the colonizer and the colonized (Wildcat, McDonald, Irbacher-Fox, and Coulthard 2014). Settler colonialism is used in this chapter to describe white settlers and the associated white settler privileges. It recognizes the connecting processes of racial and colonial power inherent within the settler-colonial context of Canada and elsewhere.

Despite the importance of race to the dynamics of settler colonialism, discussions around racism have been overlooked in current reconciliation policies and practice, and anti-racist education and initiatives are extremely limited (Gebhard 2017). It is critical to address racism using the languages of racism and anti-racism — this acknowledges the presence of racism and, in doing so, overcomes denial. Deeply rooted racist attitudes and stereotypes surface when Canadians question why Indigenous Peoples cannot simply

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"get over it," show a lack of understanding of the intergenerational impact of colonization, and fail to commit to truth and reconciliation as a national priority. Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada Beverley McLachlin has labelled Canada's failure to denounce racism as "cultural genocide" against Indigenous Peoples. Anti-racist educator and scholar St. Denis (2007: 1087) argues that Indigenous Peoples are not and have never been a homogenous population although they do share "a common experience with colonization and racialization." The concept of racialization "brings attention to how race has been used and is continually used to justify inequality and oppression of Aboriginal peoples" (1071). Alex Wilson, a professor at the University of Saskatchewan, a member of the Opaskwayak Cree Nation and an organizer of Idle No More, says, "In our view the education system has failed us. It's not just failed us, it's failed everybody" (CBC 2018: n.p.). Similarly, Verna St. Denis, a professor at the University of Saskatchewan who is Cree and Métis and who has been teaching about anti-racism for thirty-five years, argues that "we're taking responsibility in that and saying we have a responsibility as educational institutions to teach about racism and anti-racism and that's not really happening" (CBC 2018: n.p.). Therefore, to truly understand the process of reconciliation, Indigenous scholars, Elders, and activists believe we need to understand settler colonialism, how it gives control of resources to some people and economically marginalizes others, and how it enables some to negotiate pathways to educational success and discourages others from even participating (Battiste and Herderson 2000). It is through this system of settler colonialism that the settler state committed what is today considered cultural genocide against Indigenous Peoples (Tasker 2015). Landry (2018: n.p.) says that the current form of reconciliation "is for the Colonizer." She argues that "this settler-colonial reconciliation branded by the government is artificially sweetened with handshake photo-ops and small pockets of money buying our silence on real issues." According to Landry, "This type of reconciliation is a distraction … This reconciliation is not our reconciliation. And we need to leave this conversation." Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers argue that accounts of settler colonization are not included in current education and citizenship programs and this lack of education has resulted in the proliferation of various myths about Indigenous Peoples. Some of the commonly held racist myths include that Indigenous Peoples do not pay taxes, do not have to pay for postsecondary education, almost all live on reserves and in rural areas, are falling further behind in the job market, very few Indigenous Peoples start

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their own business, and so on (TD Economics 2012). The perpetuation of myths and negative stereotypes like these make reconciliation very difficult. In order to begin on the path to reconciliation, we must challenge these myths, the historical colonial legacy, and the system of settler colonialism that has damaged Indigenous ways of life and our collective relationships.

## Reconciliation as Relational Responsibility

Reconciliation is a relational responsibility for all of us — Indigenous Peoples, settlers, and immigrants (Wilson 2018). Alison Norman, a research adviser in the Ontario Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation and a researcher at Trent University, explains that reconciliation is also a personal issue. She says, "We have to ask, 'How am I benefiting by living on this land that is a traditional territory of Indigenous people?'" (CBC 2017: n.p.). This statement is a reminder to all of us that being accountable for our relationships with Indigenous Peoples and the land involves not only learning about colonization and its impact but also building solidarity for Indigenous Land and Cultural Rights in Canada and beyond.

Cree Indigenous Elder Florence Highway from Saskatchewan believes that we should educate people about the trials and triumphs of Indigenous Peoples, especially since, in some ways, Indigenous Peoples are still coming to terms with their own history. Concepts like treaties, the Indian Act, and the residential school system are not necessarily common knowledge to new immigrants (CBC 2017). Similarly, settler scholar Dr. Ken Coates, who works with various Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, suggests that "all Canadians, including new Canadians, need to understand the collective responsibility for dealing with issues of the past" (CBC 2017: n.p.). Coates' research focuses on new immigrants and their interaction with Indigenous Peoples and their history. He believes that we are "much overdue and thinks First Nations people — and all Canadians — also have something to learn from newcomers" (CBC 2017: n.p.).

Dr. Jean-Paul Restoule (2015: 1), an associate professor of Aboriginal Education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto and a member of the Dokis First Nation (Anishinaabe), explains that "reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in Canada is a responsibility we all share. We can't wait for our governments or our administrative heads to make a change." His call for reconciliation is a process of relationship building and recognizing that we have responsibilities

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toward each other. Similarly, North American Indigenous scholar Dorothy Christian (2011) believes that Indigenous Peoples in Canada have the right to lead the process of reconciliation and that reconciliation is all our responsibility. Christian suggests that new immigrants and refugees are a significant part of Canada; therefore, they also need to accept responsibility for understanding the process of reconciliation. Learning about reconciliation not only creates belongingness for immigrants and refugees in Canada, but also benefits them by giving them self-awareness of their own rights. She goes on to describe accepting responsibility as a healing process. Once the silence is broken and each party has taken responsibility for their part in the relationship, they can begin relating to each other as dignified, autonomous human beings and a new relationship can begin.

Collective and individual responsibilities play a significant role in reconciliation; Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers suggest that each of us (as a collective and as individuals) is responsible for building trustful reconciliation (Morgan 2018). Further, individual and collective responsibility are fluid. Responsibilities in reconciliation can involve participating in ceremonies, personal actions, nature walks to experience the power of place, critical learning, anti-racist activities, acting against injustice, creative arts, hands-on application of theory, individual reflection, and group activities. According to Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers, there are a number of actions we can be responsible for, including the following: understanding the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) process and calls to action; building relationships with Indigenous communities; advancing relations with Indigenous Peoples; communicating through deep listening; creating partnership opportunities with Indigenous Peoples; sharing Indigenous ways of knowing; developing curiosity; practising relational leadership; empowering individuals to take action on reconciliation in their own lives; and increasing respect, understanding, and meaningful connections between citizens (Morgan 2018). Accepting responsibility also includes relearning the colonial history of Canada (Morgan 2018) and debunking the racist myths that run through Canadian society (TD Economics 2012). Through this relearning, we bring truth and reconciliation into our everyday practice, education, and discussion, and provide a concrete means to address colonial history. Reconciliation as relational responsibility also includes the responsibility for honouring and respecting treaties and healing.

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## Responsibility for Honouring and Respecting Treaties

Many Indigenous youth think that honouring and respecting treaties is a significant aspect of reconciliation (Morgan 2018). According to Ivana Yellowback, Nehinaw from Manto Sipi Cree Nation, student, and youth worker with the child welfare system:

> Being an Indigenous person in Canada, reconciliation is the treaties, honouring and acknowledging our treaties. The reason I say 'our' is because it's all of ours. Our communities are sovereign, distinct nations. Our nations made an agreement with Canada on a nation-to-nation basis. These were peace and friendship treaties. In these treaties, we did not cede our lands. These are still our territories, these are still our lands. (CBC 2016)

Ivana explains that talking about reconciliation will require learning about each of the different territorial treaties.

Responsibility for honouring and respecting treaties is also a healing process (Simpson 2014) and a virtue that involves making creation a better place to live. Healing is an important part of reconciliation for many Indigenous youth. For instance, Maya Nabigon, Anishinaabe from Sagkeeng First Nation, thinks reconciliation "is the healing of two nations coming together to find common ground and to move forward on any difficulties they have had" (CBC 2016: n.p.). Therefore, she says, "We need to educate ourselves and be ready." Another immigrant young person, Rehana Tejpar, says:

> Regardless of who we are, whether we have benefited from, or been a victim of colonization, perpetrator or survivor, we all have been wounded by colonization of people and the Earth and we all must heal from this wound in order to bring forth a more just and sustainable world. Healing intergenerational trauma collectively strengthens our capacity to do the work of radical adult education and community organizing and we recognize it as a valid part of the process of righting relations. (Tejpar 2018: 2)

The outcome of this process of reconciliation is healing. By working together, Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples can heal a country, heal our institutions and relationships, and heal the people.

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## Indigenous Worldview

From the Indigenous perspective, reconciliation is a process, and non-Indigenous people have important roles and responsibilities in following Indigenous guidelines for meaningful reconciliation. For instance, Dr. Malcolm Saulis, an Elder from Tobique First Nation, Indigenous scholar, and educator in the Faculty of Social Work at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, Ontario, explains that in the Indigenous worldview, the focus of reconciliation is on "building a relationship between people that doesn't have any differences attached to it" (Postmedia 2017: 2). People would have a common vision of the world in which they want to live. Saulis lists three complex but interconnected components in this ongoing process. First, reconciliation includes sharing responsibility for creation, that "the first thing that we share as people is that we have a responsibility to make Creation a healthy, livable place" (4). We have a responsibility to future generations and what we do now will have an impact. Second, reconciliation is a human process. That is, it is a process of building relationships that reflect reconciliation, such as the mutual acknowledgement that we are working together for the good of future generations. For explaining reconciliation Saulis uses ceremonies. Through ceremonies, Saulis asks: "What are you doing for reconciliation?" (4). He notes that "the usual response is 'I don't know what reconciliation is,' thus leaving it up to Indigenous people in the civil service to be responsible for it. But this is not reconciliation" (5). He reminds us that reconciliation is not only the responsibility of Indigenous Peoples but is the responsibility of all of us. Third, for Saulis, reconciliation is about respecting Indigenous ways of knowing and doing. Indigenous Peoples and their knowledge systems can guide all of us to the true meanings of reconciliation. While Indigenous Peoples can lead the way and help us define reconciliation, according to Saulis respect for Indigenous traditional ways of knowing will lead all of us to embrace our responsibilities for reconciliation.

Jaime Koebel is Michif/Nehiyaw from Lac La Biche, Alberta, and is the founder of Indigenous Walks, a series of guided walking tours that explore Ottawa's monuments, architecture, landscape, and art through an Indigenous perspective. Koebel (2017: 5) explains reconciliation from a philosophical perspective: "I think reconciliation can happen on a local scale and a large scale." For him, it is about starting to learn about the territory we are in. "It's one of the reasons why I started Indigenous Walks. Do you own land? What's your relationship to the place where you are, your house, the place you work? Who

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is a local Elder? Can you smudge in your building? Who were the people who lived here? What was their language, their basic cultural protocols?" (6). With this message, Koebel suggests that we should raise our children to be aware of both local and large-scale perspectives and that these perspectives should be connected with relationships with Indigenous Land, languages, and culture. Understanding the Indigenous worldview also allows us to see reconciliation through Indigenous eyes. North American Indigenous scholars Jim Dumont (1997) and Brian Rice (2005) suggest that seeing the world with Indigenous eyes opens four significant doors for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples. The first is the seeing path, also known as the Eastern door. It includes cosmology, visions, sounds, beliefs, and values that evolve from the spiritual world. The second is ways of relating. This Southern door is about cycles of life, time, mathematics, relationships between people, the Earth spirit, and Sky Worlds. The third is coming to knowing, also known as the Western door. It includes Elders, the learning path, and Indigenous knowledge. The fourth is ways of doing. This is the Northern door and it includes ethical and moral issues, ceremonies, healing, prayers, and lifeways. Within the Indigenous worldview, the four sacred directions provide a window for understanding patterns of thought; concepts of time, sacredness, and the natural world; development and role of consciousness, perception, language, dance and song; understandings of relationships (metaphorical and literal); morality and ethics; the environment; knowledge, wisdom stories and creation stories; and many other aspects of Indigenous Traditional Knowledge. This work provides a bridge between Traditional Knowledge and Western knowledge; it explores some connections of understandings from the different ways of knowing, including the perspectives of Indigenous cultures from other continents.

The term *reconciliation*, in the Indigenous worldview, has neither a fixed meaning nor an ending point. For instance, while Leanne Simpson (2014: 22) supports the broad approach to reconciliation as discussed by the TRC, she cautions that a focus on residential schools alone permits Canadians to assume that "the historical 'wrong' has now been 'righted,'" effectively discounting "the broader set of relationships that generated policies, legislation, and practices aimed at assimilation and political genocide." From a broader perspective, if reconciliation is to be meaningful for Indigenous Peoples, it must be grounded in cultural regeneration and political resurgence while requiring Canada to "engage in a decolonization project and a re-education project that would enable its government and its citizens to engage with Indigenous Peoples

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