

BY EDDY ROBINSON

URBAN INDIGENOUS WAYS OF KNOWING

# LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Osgoode Hall Law School (Toronto, ON) - We [I] would like to begin by acknowledging that the land on which we gather is the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee, the Métis, and most recently, the territory of the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation. The territory was the subject of the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement between the Iroquois Confederacy and the Ojibwe and allied nations to peaceably share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes.

This territory is also covered by the Upper Canada Treaties.

Today, the meeting place of Toronto (from the Haudenosaunee word Tkaronto) is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work/present in this territory.

## Locate Ourselves

**“Elders have always stated the importance of locating ourselves to the universe.” - *Brent Debassige***



“Put on this Indigenous lens.”



“Who are people with culture?”



DR. CARL JAMES

““The starting point for organizing the program content of education or political action must be the present, existential, concrete situation reflecting the aspirations of the people.”

–PAULO FREIRE – PEDAGOGY OF THE OPPRESSED ( 1970)

## INDIGENOUS WAY OF KNOWING

“The epistemology emphasizes the importance of respect, reciprocity, relation, protocol, holistic knowing, relevancy, story, interpretive meaning, and the experiential that encompasses Indigenous ways of knowing.”

- MARGARET KOVACH 2010

# Indigenous Ways of Knowing

- Medicine Wheel
- Seven Teachings
- Four Directions
- Thirteen Moons
- Talking Circles
- Sweat Lodge Ceremony
- The Four Medicines
- Vision Quest
- Strawberry Fast
- Wampum Belts
- Traditional Storytelling
- Traditional Dance
- Clan Systems
- Ceremony
- Creation Story
- Language
- Spirit Names
- Sacred Objects
- Water Drum
- Long House
- Great Law of Peace
- Creation Story
- Sacred Fire
- Traditional Music



# SAFE SPACES



Cultural safety is defined as “the state of being capable of functioning effectively in the context of cultural differences”.

# INDIGENOUS SCIENCE: FASTING CEREMONIES - GATHERING DATA, INTROSPECTION

## AGAWA ROCK



Robert Berdan ©

# DEFINITION OF URBAN

: Of, relation to, characteristic of, or constituting a city

Origin of URBAN – Latin *urbanus* - city dweller

First Known Use: 1619

[www.Merriam-webster.com/dictionary/urban](http://www.Merriam-webster.com/dictionary/urban)

# DEFINE URBAN...

What does Urban mean to Ethno-communities?

What does Urban mean to mainstream society?

What does Urban mean to the Indigenous community?

# ACCESSING URBAN INDIGENOUS ORGANIZATIONS

- Urban Spaces
- Urban Organizations
- Teachers
- Friendship Centres
- Art
- Music

# HOW WE CAN ENGAGE UIWOK?

"Indigenous ways of knowing calls on students not to live in the past but to live within a relationship with the past."

Dr. Susan Dion

“I tell my students that the foundations of Canadian education are land and Indigenous people...We begin by acknowledging the First Peoples of this land and their experiences of education and how their knowledge systems can serve to lead to a clearer and deeper way of knowing.”

Dr. Celia Haig-Brown

# RESPECTFUL METHODOLOGY

"When researching Indigenous ways of knowing approach them with the four r's in mind; respect, reciprocity, relevance and responsibility."

Verna Kirkness, Ray Barnhardt (2001)



# Technology

“So it was essentially in the past 150 years that the speed of message transmission truly changed...In the world of radio, film, television...The image and sound creates new realities with intense emotional components. For spectators they induce a sense of being there...There is a powerful illusion of presence in places where on occasion spectators are not and have never been.”

Ursula Franklin

# RE-INDIGENIZING CYBER & DIGITAL SPACE

- Digital Bundles: Montage of our stories
- Every bundle has a story
- Digital Storytelling: Oral Tradition
- One on One sessions with Elders through Skype
- Websites
- Profiles Online
- Social Media
- Video Channel: Youtube, Vimeo
- BLOG: Indigenous content, Indigenous voice

# ENGAGING INDIGENOUS CULTURE THROUGH MODERN TECHNOLOGY?

- We can engage Indigenous culture through modern mediums such as modern/digital technology and digital space (cyberspace)

- ▶ 1491 – Pre-existing International Relationships
- ▶ 1492 – Contact with Columbus
- ▶ 1620 - The Recollets—a religious order from France—establish the first residential school, near Québec City.
- ▶ 1763 – Royal Proclamation
- ▶ War of 1812
- ▶ 1857 – The Gradual Civilization Act requires that all Indian males over the age of 21 who can speak, read, and write English or French will be “enfranchised,” meaning that they must renounce their Indian status and become a British subject.
- ▶ 1860 – Indian Lands Act
- ▶ 1876 – Indian Act
- ▶ 1885 to 1895 – Laws prohibiting Indigenous Ways of Knowing
- ▶ 1906 - Amendment to the Indian Act—Aboriginal peoples can be removed from reserves near towns with more than 8,000 inhabitants.
- ▶ 1907 - Dr. Bryce Chief Medical Inspector for Indian Affairs reports 50% mortality rate in Residential Schools and further reports that health conditions in the residential schools are a “The Story of a National Crime.”
- ▶ 1920 – Duncan Campbell Scott Minister of Indian Affairs makes it mandatory for Indigenous Children to attend Residential Schools
- ▶ 1960’s – Forced Sterilization of Indigenous Women in Canada, Sixties Scoop, right to vote
- ▶ 1996 – Last Residential School in Canada is closed. The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP Report) is released and a public inquiry is called into the effects of Residential Schools
- ▶ 2000’s – Millennial Scoop - Children in care
- ▶ 2007 - Canada opposes and does not endorse the United Nations Declaration on The Rights of Indigenous Peoples - UNDRIP’s
- ▶ 2008 – Stephen Harper gives Statement of Apology
- ▶ 2015 – According to Health Canada there are 133 Drinking Water Advisories in First Nation communities across Canada
- ▶ 2015 – Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada – Calls to Action: 94 Recommendations

The Impacts of 524 years of oppression have led to Indigenous People leading statistic in almost every area of health inequities in Canada

# VIEWING CURRENT INDIGENOUS MEDIA IN THE CLASSROOM

- CBC's 8<sup>th</sup> Fire – Soap Box, 500 years in two minutes
- CBC - Moccasins and Concrete: The Urban Native Story
- Aboriginal Peoples - National Film Board
- [www.goodminds.com](http://www.goodminds.com)

# TRADITIONAL HEALERS, ELDERS OR MEDICINE PEOPLE

- Elders and Traditional people who are willing to share their knowledge and wisdom through teachings and “natural counselling” can assist individuals in attaining balance
- Elders, Healers and Medicine People are respected for their wisdom and teachings that bring cultural perspectives to individuals seeking that guidance

# RELATIONSHIP

- We are Indigenous where-ever we are. If we are abroad or dressed in regular clothes on the subway. In your classroom
- We don't have to be dressed in Pow Wow/Traditional regalia to be Indigenous. Regalia is just an extension of our spirit and how we celebrate in Pow wow or ceremony. It is not our complete Indigenous identity
- We need to have a relationship with the land. We need that balance with the land and or we cannot fully engage our culture through technology



*A woodcut by Theodor De Bry, in the 16th century, based on the writings of Bartolomé de las Casas.*

“Christopher Columbus is identified as the one who started it all...he has come to represent a huge legacy of suffering and destruction .”

–LINDA TUHIWAI SMITH





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CANADA'S FIRST  
PRIME MINISTER, SIR  
JOHN A. MACDONALD  
IN 1883

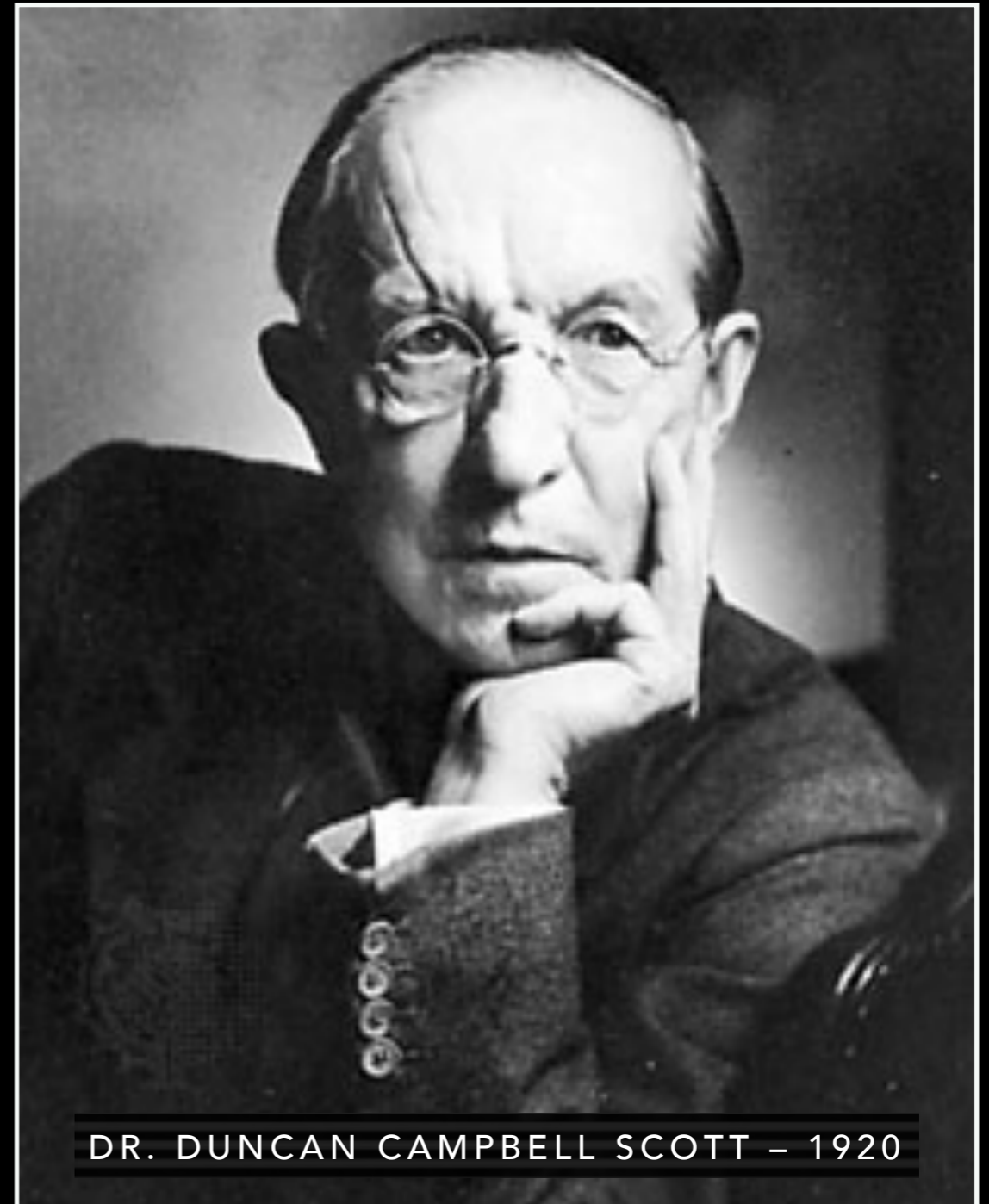
“When the school is on the reserve the child lives with its parents, who are savages; he is surrounded by savages. Indian children should be withdrawn as much as possible from the parental influence.”



## INTENT...

“I want to get rid of the Indian problem. Our objective 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, that is the whole object of this Bill.”

Served as the deputy superintendent of the [Department of Indian Affairs](#) from 1913 to 1932



DR. DUNCAN CAMPBELL SCOTT – 1920

# MACLEANS

BY [Aaron Wherry](#)

October 1, 2009

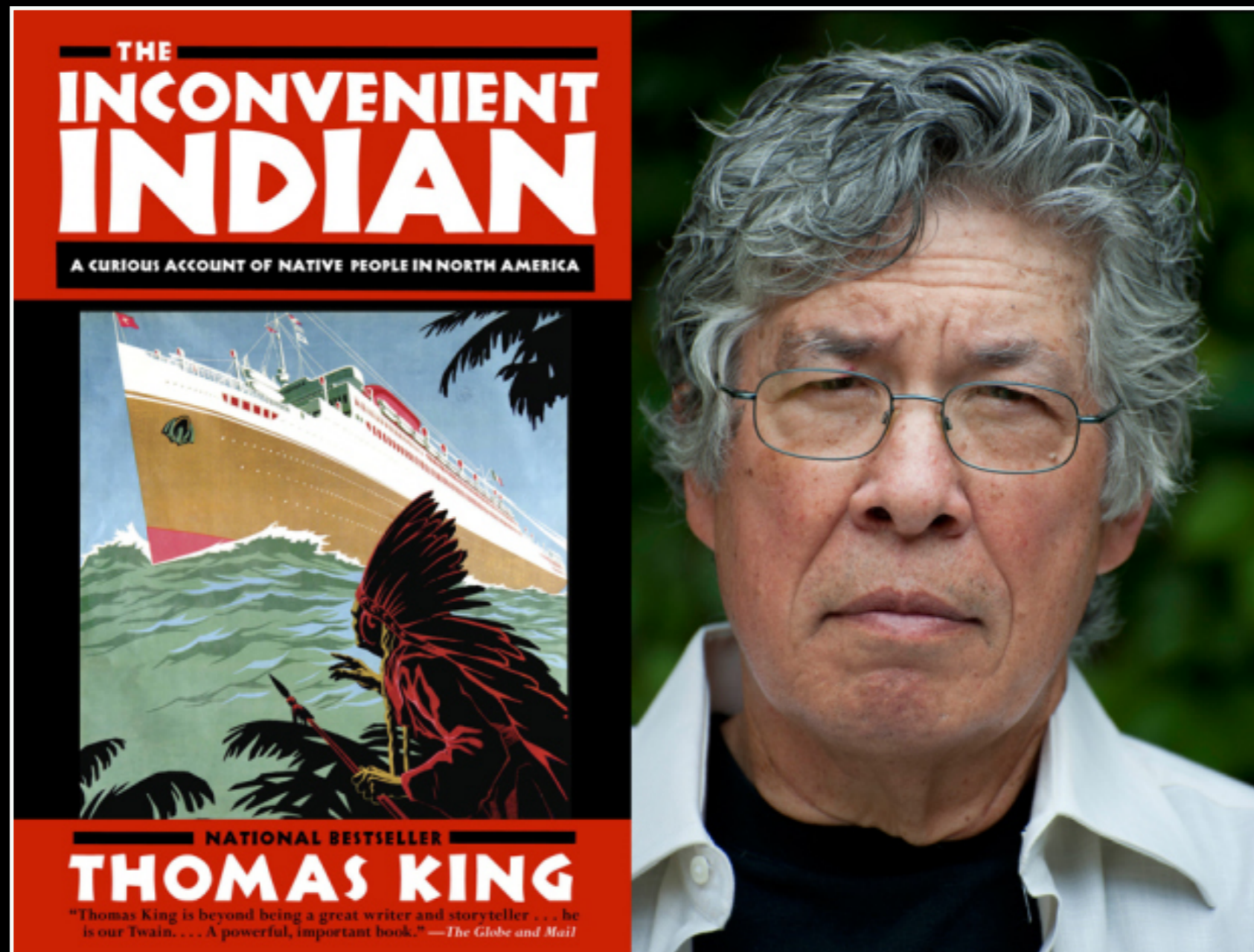


–STEPHEN HARPER

“There are very few countries that can say for nearly 150 years they’ve had the same political system without any social breakdown, political upheaval or invasion. We are unique in that regard. We also have no history of colonialism.”

“The fact of the matter is there has never been a good collective noun because there’s never been a collective to begin with.”

—THOMAS KING



# ABORIGINAL, INDIGENOUS, FIRST NATIONS, MÉTIS & INUIT

## DEFINITION:

Canada recognizes three distinct groups of Indigenous People and they are comprised of the following:

- ▶ First Nations; Status, non-Status and Treaty
- ▶ Métis
- ▶ Inuit
- ▶ FNMI - Acronym



HIGH UP IN THE SKY - 1901



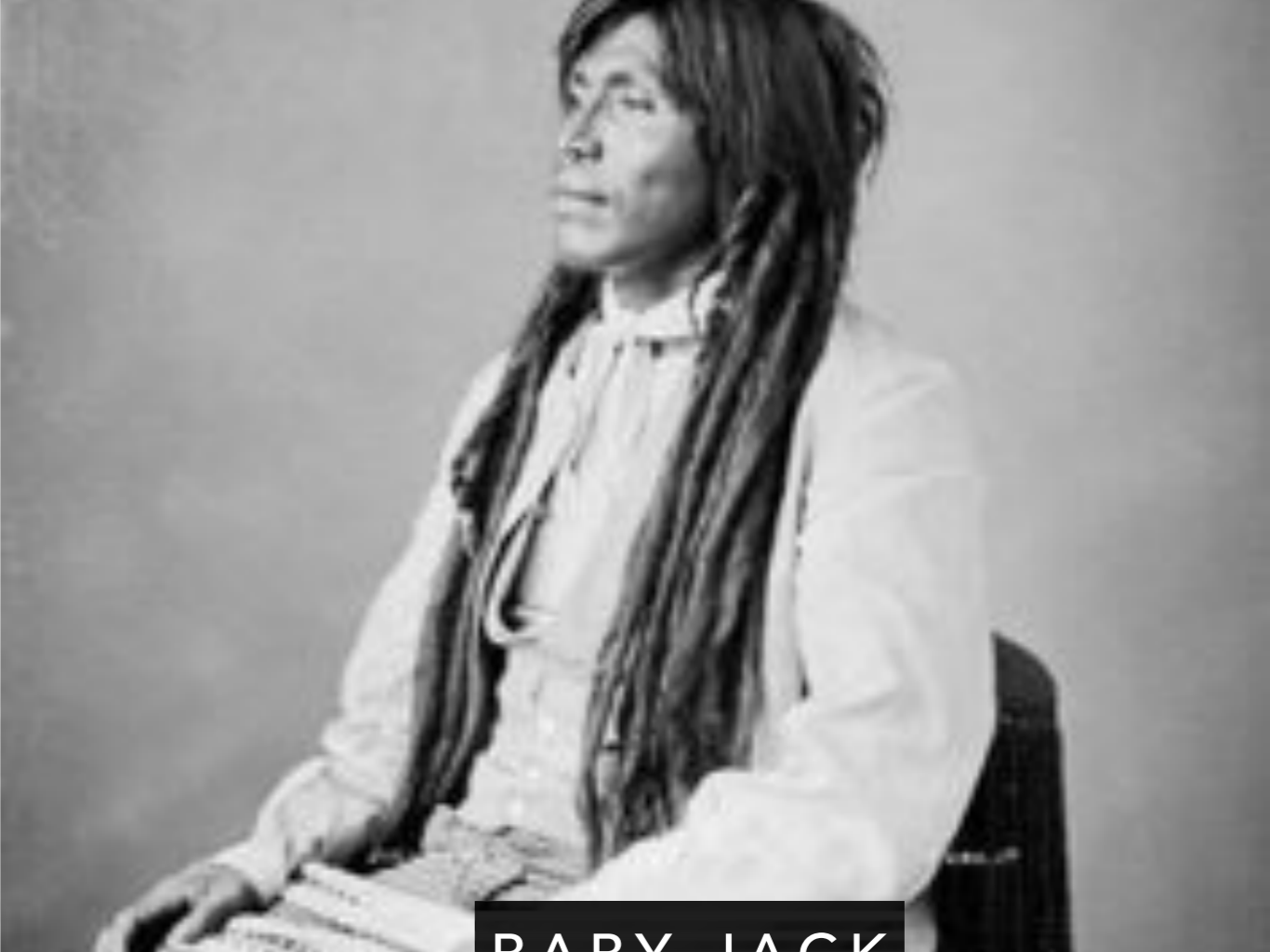
LITTLE WOLF - 1908



SHINGWAUK - 1850



**POUNDMAKER**



**BABY JACK**





# IDENTITY CREATED FOR US...

- Indian
- Indian Princess
- Chief
- Brave
- Maiden
- Savage
- Aboriginal
- Native Canadian
- Pow Wow
- Totem
- Tribe
- Pipe Dream
- Redman
- Fried Bread
- Wild Rice
- Resilient



United Nations

United Nations  
**DECLARATION**  
on the **RIGHTS**  
of **INDIGENOUS**  
**PEOPLES**



# PRINCIPLES OF RECONCILIATION

1. THE *UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES* IS THE **FRAMEWORK FOR RECONCILIATION AT ALL LEVELS** AND ACROSS ALL SECTORS OF CANADIAN SOCIETY.
2. FIRST NATIONS, INUIT, AND MÉTIS PEOPLES, AS THE ORIGINAL PEOPLES OF THIS COUNTRY AND AS SELF-DETERMINING PEOPLES, HAVE TREATY, CONSTITUTIONAL, AND HUMAN RIGHTS THAT MUST BE RECOGNIZED AND RESPECTED.
3. RECONCILIATION IS A PROCESS OF HEALING OF RELATIONSHIPS THAT REQUIRES PUBLIC **TRUTH SHARING**, APOLOGY, AND COMMEMORATION THAT ACKNOWLEDGE AND REDRESS PAST HARMS.
4. RECONCILIATION REQUIRES CONSTRUCTIVE ACTION ON ADDRESSING THE ONGOING LEGACIES OF COLONIALISM THAT HAVE HAD DESTRUCTIVE IMPACTS ON ABORIGINAL PEOPLES' EDUCATION, CULTURES AND LANGUAGES, HEALTH, CHILD WELFARE, THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE, AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES AND PROSPERITY.
5. RECONCILIATION MUST CREATE A MORE **EQUITABLE AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETY** BY CLOSING THE GAPS IN SOCIAL, HEALTH, AND ECONOMIC OUTCOMES THAT EXIST BETWEEN ABORIGINAL AND NON-ABORIGINAL CANADIANS.
6. ALL CANADIANS, AS TREATY PEOPLES, SHARE RESPONSIBILITY FOR ESTABLISHING AND MAINTAINING MUTUALLY RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS.
7. THE PERSPECTIVES AND UNDERSTANDINGS OF ABORIGINAL ELDERS AND TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE KEEPERS OF THE ETHICS, CONCEPTS, AND PRACTICES OF RECONCILIATION ARE VITAL TO LONG-TERM RECONCILIATION.
8. SUPPORTING ABORIGINAL PEOPLES' **CULTURAL REVITALIZATION AND INTEGRATING INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS**, ORAL HISTORIES, LAWS, PROTOCOLS, AND CONNECTIONS TO THE LAND INTO THE RECONCILIATION PROCESS ARE ESSENTIAL.
9. RECONCILIATION REQUIRES POLITICAL WILL, JOINT LEADERSHIP, TRUST BUILDING, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND TRANSPARENCY, AS WELL AS A SUBSTANTIAL INVESTMENT OF RESOURCES.
10. RECONCILIATION REQUIRES SUSTAINED **PUBLIC EDUCATION AND DIALOGUE, INCLUDING YOUTH ENGAGEMENT**, ABOUT THE HISTORY AND LEGACY OF RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS, TREATIES, AND ABORIGINAL RIGHTS, AS WELL AS THE HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY CONTRIBUTIONS OF ABORIGINAL PEOPLES TO CANADIAN SOCIETY.



Truth and  
Reconciliation  
*Commission of Canada*

**Truth and Reconciliation  
Commission of Canada:  
Calls to Action**



# LEGACY - CHILD WELFARE

1. We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to commit to reducing the number of Aboriginal children in care by:

i. Monitoring and assessing neglect investigations.

ii. Providing adequate resources to enable Aboriginal communities and child-welfare organizations to keep Aboriginal families together where it is safe to do so, and to keep children in **culturally appropriate environments, regardless of where they reside.**

iii. Ensuring that social workers and others who conduct child-welfare investigations are properly educated and trained about the history and impacts of residential schools.

iv. Ensuring that social workers and others who conduct child-welfare investigations **are properly educated and trained about the potential for Aboriginal communities and families to provide more appropriate solutions to family healing.**

v. Requiring that all child-welfare decision makers consider the impact of the residential school experience on children and their caregivers.

2. We call upon the federal government, in collaboration with the provinces and territories, to prepare and

publish annual reports on the number of Aboriginal children (First Nations, Inuit, and Métis) who are in care, compared with non-Aboriginal children, as well as the reasons for apprehension, the total spending on preventive and care services by child-welfare agencies, and the effectiveness of various interventions.

**3. We call upon all levels of government to fully implement Jordan's Principle.**

4. We call upon the federal government to enact Aboriginal child-welfare legislation that establishes national standards for Aboriginal child apprehension and custody cases and includes principles that:

i. **Affirm the right of Aboriginal governments to establish and maintain their own child-welfare agencies.**

ii. **Require all child-welfare agencies and courts to take the residential school legacy into account in their decision making.**

iii. **Establish, as an important priority, a requirement that placements of Aboriginal children into temporary and permanent care be culturally appropriate.**

5. We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to develop culturally appropriate parenting programs for Aboriginal families.

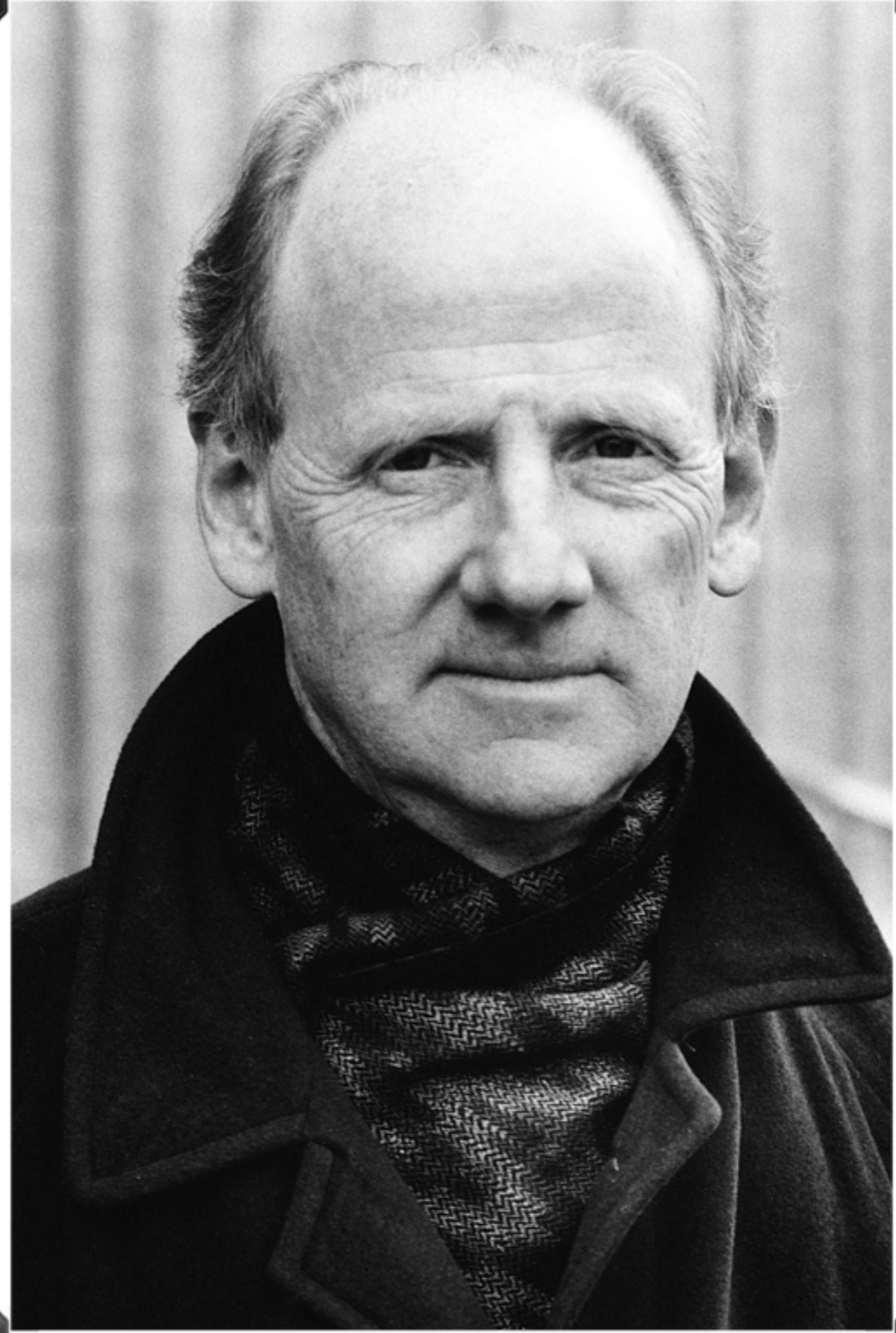
“The colonist and the colonized are old acquaintances...it’s the colonist who fabricated the colonized subject.”

FRANZ FANON - 1961

# RIGHTS NOT SYMPATHY

**“Indigenous People don’t need your sympathy, they need you to take action. I think that if you insist on sympathy you're trying to avoid action, and that's when I say it becomes a new form of racism,”**

**John Ralston Saul**



“I am just a human being trying to make it a world that is rapidly losing its understanding of being human.”

–JOHN TRUDELL





“I tell my students that the foundations of Canadian education are land and Indigenous people...We begin by acknowledging the First Peoples of this land and their experiences of education and how their knowledge systems can serve to lead to a clearer and deeper way of knowing.”

–DR. CELIA HAIG-BROWN



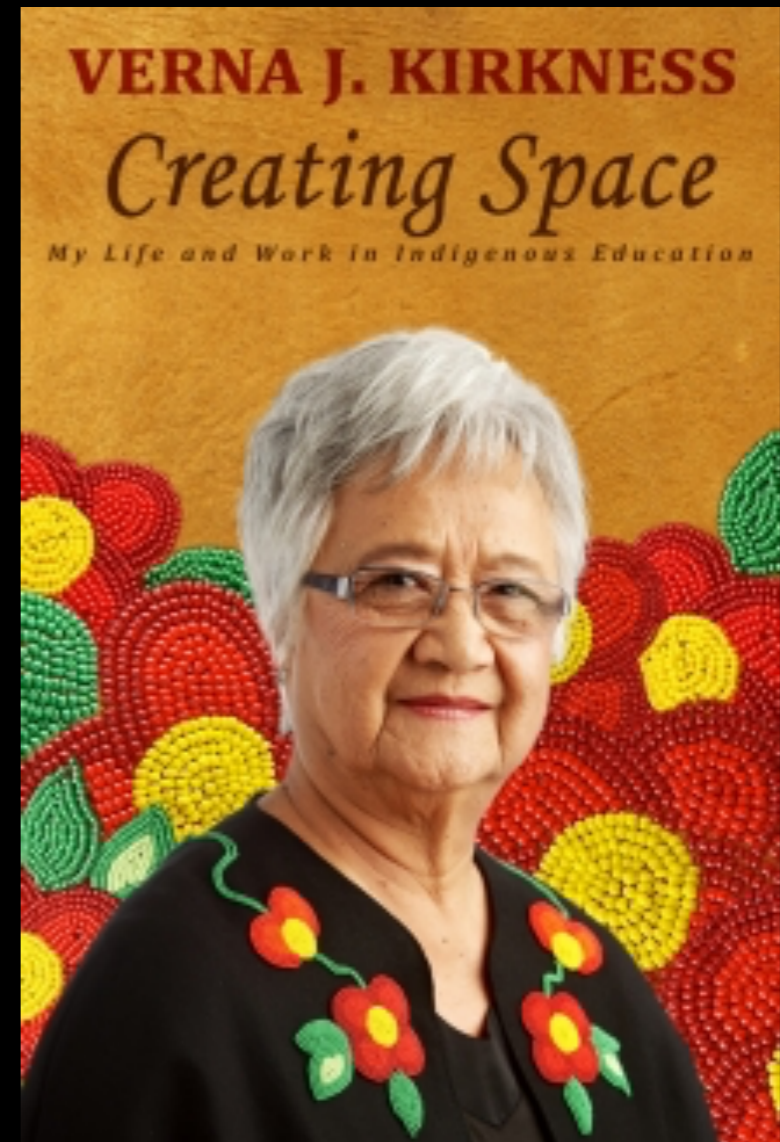
“My turn toward the work of contemporary artists is informed by my understanding of the relationship between community and Indigenous knowledge, the healing transformative role of artists, and the possibilities through a critical pedagogy of remembrance.”

–DR. SUSAN DION

# APPROACH INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE WITH THE FOUR R'S

“When researching Indigenous ways of knowing approach them with the four r's in mind; respect, reciprocity, relevance and responsibility”

Verna Kirkness, Ray Barnhardt (2001)





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THANK YOU