

Reconciliation as Non-Alienation:
The Politics of Being at Home in the World¹

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Abstract

Critics of reconciliation in contemporary politics raise the question of whether it is a necessary or constructive demand in moral and political life. Distinct from justice, reconciliation is a response to alienation in politics, understood as the inhibition or loss of agents’ appropriative agency, through which they fashion themselves a home in the world. The politics of reconciliation is a politics of homemaking, in which agents struggle over the shape of the social world that defines, organizes, and mediates their social identities, positions, agency, well-being, and even their dreams. Reconciliation as non-alienation is a practical political necessity of all appropriative agents to claim the space they need to be able to live, indeed, to breathe. In this sense, the project of reconciliation is not one that can be easily relinquished, and least of all by those who are oppressed and dominated in contemporary world politics. Agents who participate in the project of reconciliation embark on remaking, and potentially transforming, themselves, and thereby, the world. Seen in this light, the political project of reconciliation, given the history of human iniquity, has the potential to make radical demands of us all.

Keywords

Reconciliation; alienation; non-alienation; disalienation; colonial injustice; structural injustice; settler colonialism

Bio

Catherine Lu is Professor of Political Science at McGill University, in Montreal, Canada. Her research focuses on critical and normative approaches in international political theory on cosmopolitanism, global justice, colonialism, structural injustice, alienation, and reconciliation. She is the author of *Justice and Reconciliation in World Politics* (2017) and *Just and Unjust Interventions in World Politics* (2006).

“How could you explain that four hundred years in a place didn’t make it a home?”

Saidiya Hartman, *Lose Your Mother*²

“We feel that one of the things taken from many Indigenous Peoples through colonization, perhaps even, I would argue, the most important thing was our ability to dream for ourselves.”

Cindy Blackstock, quoted in *Reclaiming Power and Place*³

... it is the colonized man who wants to move forward, and the colonizer who holds things back.

Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*⁴

1. Introduction

The killing of George Floyd on May 25, 2020, sparked hundreds of protests in America, and across the world, against structural anti-Black racism and police violence.⁵ Demands for justice for Floyd, as well as for hundreds of other victims of racist and state-sponsored violence, have come from human rights organizations such as Amnesty International,⁶ as well as many other grassroots initiatives, from online petitions to street murals to mass protests.⁷ In conjunction with demands for individual accountability of the police officers involved, there have been calls for police forces as well as various levels of government in the United States to address systemic or structural racism.⁸ Such demands for corrective interactional, institutional, and structural justice have been part of the Black Lives Matter Movement, now a global social force dedicated to

countering state-sanctioned violence and anti-Black racism, in order to promote “freedom and justice for Black people and, by extension, all people.”⁹

A steady companion to such calls for justice are pleas for reconciliation.¹⁰ Pope Francis implored “the national reconciliation and peace for which we yearn.”¹¹ Scholars and journalists have also advocated the creation of truth and reconciliation commissions.¹² Indeed, the cities of San Francisco, Philadelphia, and Boston are working with the Grassroots Law Project to create Truth, Justice, and Reconciliation commissions, launched in the fall of 2020, to address structural racism and police brutality in the criminal justice system, in order to dismantle a “cruel and oppressive force of injustice for African Americans, Native Americans, Latinos, immigrants, members of the LGBTQIA community, and all marginalized communities.”¹³ While the U.S. House Judiciary Committee held a historic vote on H.R. 40 in April 2021, approving a bill to create a commission to examine appropriate remedies for the “lingering negative effects of the institution of slavery” in the United States, some American cities are already embarking on reparations commissions that aim to address a wide range of race-based structural inequities in the areas of property and commerce, health care, education, employment, as well as criminal justice.¹⁴

The political discourse of reconciliation has been salient in Canada since the mid-2000s. A 2006 court-mandated settlement of the largest class action suit in Canadian history included compensation to Indian Residential School survivors, as well as funds to assist their psychological healing, and for various commemorative activities.¹⁵ The settlement also instituted the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada to hear survivor testimonies and to provide a comprehensive accounting of the historic wrongs of the residential school system. In addition to its final report in 2015, the TRC of Canada issued 94 Calls to Action, calling on state

agencies and civil society organizations to address a variety of social, political, and economic injustices and inequities in contemporary state policies, practices, as well as social structures.¹⁶ The 2019 Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls established that the heightened vulnerability of Indigenous women and girls, as well as of 2SLGBTQIA people,¹⁷ to violence amount to race-, identity-, and gender-based genocide. The report also called on police services to establish “an independent, special investigation unit for the investigation of incidents of failures to investigate, police misconduct, and all forms of discriminatory practices and mistreatment of Indigenous peoples within their police service”.¹⁸

In the summer of 2021, the unfinished work of the TRC became apparent upon the discovery of over 1,300 unmarked graves of children in plots next to residential schools.¹⁹ The 2015 TRC report had estimated that there were 4-6,000 deaths of children from the Indian Residential School system, and its Calls to Action (numbers 71-76) included calls to federal, provincial, and municipal governments to work with churches and Indigenous groups to locate and identify missing and deceased residential school children, inform families, provide appropriate commemoration, and protect sites where residential school children are buried. According to the former Chair of the TRC, and Senator, Murray Sinclair, the number of dead children may be close to 15-25,000; the higher number would represent one out of six children who attended the Indian Residential School system.²⁰ The grim revelations from a long century of a genocidal assimilationist education system have forced deeper public grappling with how far Canadians are from a true acknowledgement of the toll of settler colonialism. They have also led to renewed demands for greater accountability of governments, and of the Catholic church, to give public access to their residential school records, as well as to increase other reparative measures, including reforming contemporary child welfare policies.²¹

According to Sheryl Lightfoot, Indigenous peoples have embarked on the process of reconciliation because it requires from states “a credible commitment to change its future power relations and give up a certain degree of real, material, and political power in exchange for a new, renegotiated, more just and legitimate relationship with Indigenous peoples.”²² In addition, police forces,²³ churches, universities, the arts, and many other professional and civic communities have engaged in various projects of reconciliation aimed at improving relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

While those who have been or are oppressed have engaged with the politics of reconciliation with structural transformation in view, others, including states and dominant groups have also engaged with discourses of reconciliation, but often in ways that aim to dampen exposed social divides, blunt accountability, and/or forestall structural change. For example, in response to the assault on the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021, by far-right groups and supporters of former U.S. President Donald Trump who refused to acknowledge his electoral defeat, both Trump and then President-elect Joe Biden, called for “healing” and “reconciliation”.²⁴

Many are, understandably, skeptical about reconciliation as a political project, or uncertain what value it can have. Why should anyone, especially those who are victimized and oppressed, as well as their allies, care about reconciliation? What value does reconciliation have that is distinct from justice? Especially in cases of clear wrongdoing, why not just focus on justice as accountability of the wrongdoers?

In my work, I have argued that whereas justice refers to tasks related to remedying various kinds of injustices, reconciliation should be understood as responding to various kinds of alienation implicated in or produced by unjust or dominating contexts.²⁵ I draw on German critical theorist Rahel Jaeggi’s conception of alienation, which refers to experiences of

disconnection, disruption, or distortion in “the structure of human relations to self and world” and “the relations agents have to themselves, to their own actions, and to the social and natural worlds.” Alienation is a “particular form of the loss of freedom” that involves “a relation of disturbed or inhibited appropriation of world and self.” Successful appropriation by an agent “can be explicated as the capacity to make the life one leads, or what one wills and does, one’s own; as the capacity to identify with oneself and with what one does; in other words, as the ability to realize oneself in what one does.”²⁶ Alienation can thus be understood as an undermining or inhibition of an agent’s appropriative agency that renders her incapable of seeing herself as a self-realizing agent in the social world.²⁷ Alienated agents cannot be at home in the world.

When understood as a response to alienation so understood, the work of reconciliation is not the same as fulfilling the demands of justice. Reconciliation work is normatively important, however, because addressing alienation may provide or strengthen the motivational bases for agents to do justice, or redress injustice, at all, as well as shape the ways they pursue justice, and even how they conceive of the subjects and demands of justice. The work of reconciliation is fundamental to addressing agents’ motivations to realize the transformation of social/political identities, practices, and conditions in ways that support collective efforts to create mutually affirmable and affirmed social/political orders and relations for the flourishing of non-alienated agents. I aim in this contribution to elaborate on how we should understand this call for reconciliation as non-alienation, and on that basis, show why reconciliation as a moral/political project cannot and should not be so easily relinquished.

In the following Section (2), I provide an account of the historical context of contemporary reconciliation politics in order to explain the roots of skepticism. In contexts of political

transition prompted by the end of civil wars, authoritarian regimes, or regimes of racial oppression, new regimes engaged in reconciliation processes to account for the crimes of past regimes as a way to mark or establish major political and ideological shifts. Commissions focused on past or historic injustice came to be adopted in democratic contexts not undergoing major political transition, as a way to acknowledge past injustices and address their contemporary legacies. This focus on historic wrongs, however, has been inadequate in many contemporary democratic contexts. Highlighting the continuity between historic wrongs and contemporary structural injustice leads to different ways to think about the project of reconciliation. In Section 3, I provide my account of reconciliation that is grounded in a regulative political ideal of non-alienation, and explain how it can aid our understanding and assessment of the politics of reconciliation as focused on ‘being at home in the world’. I assert that this view of reconciliation should lead to a more critical acknowledgement and examination of the modern state as constituting a source of structural alienation for a variety of groups that have experienced or continue to experience statist and (settler) colonial subjugation. In combination with racial hierarchy, I argue that statist structural alienation has precipitated existential alienation for those in positions of structural indignity.

In Section 4, I explore the challenge of disalienation as a struggle to resist and dismantle alienating subjectivities produced in dominating and oppressive social conditions. Disalienation politics, evident in contemporary social and political conflicts over public memory, statues, institutions, and spaces, have the potential to provoke painful self-reflection as a way to stimulate the motivational resources of agents to pursue or support social and structural change. Conservative reactions to such politics, however, buttress more extreme right-wing ideologies and movements that aim to forestall this transformative potential, and perpetuate structural

injustice and domination. In Section 5, I argue that reconciliation as a response to existential alienation focuses on the challenge of cultivating non-alienated agency, which requires reconciliation to be an open-ended ongoing process, rather than one characterized by “closure” or a predetermined end-point or end-state. There is not one path, but there are plural paths to non-alienation; reconciliation as non-alienation cannot presume or produce a final end-point or closure, but points to ongoing, transformative projects of self-realization in changing structural contexts.

In the conclusion, I address the concern that reconciliation as non-alienation is an illusory or infeasible political ideal, given that contemporary conditions of structural injustice and alienation do not afford room for non-alienated agency. I also explore whether in some conditions, pursuing non-alienation as a regulative political ideal can precipitate irreconciliation. While it is true that the regulative ideal of non-alienation may close off possibilities for some forms of interactional reconciliation, I conclude that the struggle for non-alienation can open space for alternative, transformed, and more emancipated dreams of reconciliation.

2. Historical context

The contemporary politics of reconciliation emerged in the 1990s as structural changes in regional and international orders precipitated significant regime transitions in Latin America, Africa, Asia, and central and eastern Europe. In the aftermath of violent conflict, authoritarianism, and oppression that ended with peace settlements or regime changes, societies struggled to build new institutions and transform political practices in ways that would avoid a repetition or return to a problematic past. In the “transitional justice”²⁸ literature that developed to study and assess these struggles, reconciliation came to enjoy as much prominence as justice as an organizing normative purpose and framework for these efforts. While its relationship with

justice was contested, reconciliation came to take on the normative task of repairing damaged relationships in order to achieve a morally acceptable transition of power, despite not applying the standard mechanisms of justice for wrongdoing, such as criminal trials that yield punishment of wrongdoers. The ideal of political reconciliation thus signified “moral ambition within political constraints.”²⁹ The 1994 Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa became the model for reconciliation processes that aimed to respond to political injustices and wrongdoing as part of a political transition from a racially oppressive state and divided society to a democratic human rights-respecting regime of multiracial equality.³⁰

From a historical perspective, one could understand the globalization of the political discourse of reconciliation and transitional justice – their embeddedness in the United Nations as well as their promotion by powerful states and global civil society organizations – as a completion of a centrist-liberal narrative arc of the history of the twentieth century. That narrative concentrates on World War II, the war against Nazi Germany, and the judgement at Nuremberg, as effecting the repudiation of white supremacy, right-wing nationalism, and authoritarian militarism, and their replacement by human rights-respecting, liberal democratic nation-states with sovereign equality as the defining markers of the progressive endpoint of postwar reconciliation and transitional justice. In the postwar liberal international order, especially during the Cold War, the fact that defeating Nazi Germany required an alliance of capitalist (United States), communist (Soviet Union), and imperial (Great Britain) powers, none of which were stalwart promoters of racial equality, social justice, or disarmament, was relatively obscured. According to historian Nikolai Kaposov, the memory of the Holocaust was central to the reconstruction of Western Europe, and later, the European Union, as a unifying symbol of a shared history of moral transgression and repentance. Creating a “common European memory

centered on the memory of the Holocaust” was “a means of integrating Europe, combating racism, and averting national and ethnic conflicts.”³¹ In this historical narrative, the collapse of the Soviet empire in the 1990s, involving the fall of authoritarian communist regimes in eastern and central Europe, and the end of apartheid in South Africa, the last remaining formal system of racial oppression at the international level, demonstrated the steady progress of a liberal international order, and implied the inexorable global triumph of capitalist liberal democracy that could promise freedom and justice for all.

As Barry Buzan and George Lawson have noted, however, this progressive narrative obscured the racism, authoritarianism, militarism that were integral to the development of Western-colonial international society.³² Perhaps not surprisingly, then, the idea of reconciliation as a political project in transitional contexts of postconflict or regime change came to motivate activists seeking recognition, reparations, and structural transformation within contemporary Western and liberal democratic states. In the United States, the Greensboro Truth and Reconciliation Commission (1999-2006), examining events that led to the death of five people during an anti-Ku Klux Klan protest in 1979, was the first application of the South African model to racial injustice in that country, “designed to examine and learn from a divisive event in Greensboro’s past in order to build the foundation for a more unified future.”³³ Ronald W. Walters compared the cases of the United States and South Africa in his book, *The Price of Racial Reconciliation*, arguing for the applicability of the framework of reconciliation for racial oppression, a political project that is imperative for “the survival of the democratic idea” in America.³⁴

Initially, the rationale for embarking on reconciliation projects was to acknowledge historic injustices, such as the Indian Residential school system in Canada, or the 1979 incident in

Greensboro, compensate survivors, and close the books on past injustice. In contexts of regime transitions, truth and reconciliation commissions operated to expose the truth of past injustice as a way to forge a new regime's identity as no longer continuous with that unjust past. Such an approach typically also involves implicitly a claim that an injustice is past or has passed, and is no longer present, continuing, or being reproduced. There was another truth, however, that commissions so mandated potentially displaced, which is the ongoing reproduction of oppressive and dominating practices, conditions, and relations in contemporary social structures.

The temporal limitation of reconciliation processes, understood as a form of achieving closure for past injustices, without much scrutiny of the present ongoing reproduction of injustice, was a defect even in contexts of regime change such as post-apartheid South Africa. Indeed, protests against police brutality sparked by the killing of George Floyd extended to South Africa.³⁵ In settler colonial contexts, such reconciliation processes can distort or obscure contemporary social realities by historicizing injustices, and run into the danger of serving to maintain the status quo of "neocolonial affirmation."³⁶ According to Rauna Kuokkanen, discussing the recent contemporary efforts of Nordic states to embark on reconciliation processes with the Sámi people, "The process in the past 3 years leading toward establishing a truth and reconciliation commission shows no sign of a departure from the assimilationist policies. Therefore, the Sámi may well be reconciled into a contemporary injustice as the consequence of the TRC in Finland. As settler colonial policy making, reconciliation then represents a continuation and extension of the colonial order, subtly entrenching existing injustice and reaffirming and legitimating state control."³⁷

Indeed, Glen Coulthard has criticized the project of reconciliation as an "individual and collective process of overcoming the subsequent *legacy* of past abuse, not the abusive colonial

structure itself.’³⁸ Instead of ushering in major social and political transformations, reconciliation seemed to mirror historical colonial practices, in which Indigenous peoples were forced or defrauded into signing treaties of friendship and protection with European colonizers. While reconciliation in interpersonal relations is often characterized as transformative of the social relations between agents, the critique of the discourse and politics of reconciliation is that they are employed or engaged in by states and dominant groups precisely to deny or forestall a transformative politics of redress.

There is, thus, much skepticism and criticism about reconciliation as a moral/political project.³⁹ Skeptics wonder whether the ideal of social harmony or unity underlying the concept of reconciliation is not just myth and illusion, whether major historic political or social injustices can ever be repaired, and whether reconciliation processes can ever transform, rather than merely reflect, the structure of power relations in which its agents are embedded. Critics of the politics of reconciliation reveal its tendency to yield reactionary political programs, especially when reconciliation strategies focus on a depoliticized, medicalized notion of individual psychological healing from traumatic experiences, or function to pressure the politically weak to accommodate evil and injustice in the name of national or civic unity, or focus too narrowly or superficially on repairing relations between victims and perpetrators, while leaving unexamined the structural sources of their alienating interactions.⁴⁰ Given these defects, reconciliation hardly seems to be a moral/political ideal.

If we take these challenges seriously, we may conclude that it would be better to forego reconciliation as a necessary or constructive demand in moral and political life. The struggle against the pervasive injustices in our world would go better if reconciliation were no longer a part of the normative and political discourse. In my work, I have been sympathetic with these

criticisms, and I acknowledge that there is great value in exposing the neocolonial, domestication or legitimization functions of reconciliation discourse and practice in contemporary politics. Those involved in contemporary political struggles are wise to be cautious when engaging in reconciliation projects devised by states or their various agencies, from parliaments to police forces.

At the same time, I think there are compelling reasons to engage with this common discourse in a critical but constructive fashion. First, it is important to reveal what has been normatively deficient in contemporary ideas, discourses, and practices of reconciliation, and second, it is constructive to provide an alternative, more normatively and politically cogent reconstruction of the ideal, so that agents can reorient their understanding of the normative and political purpose of reconciliation practices, and hopefully transform them in more emancipatory directions.⁴¹ This task is predicated on the assumption that there is nothing intrinsic to the concept of reconciliation (just as there is nothing intrinsic to the concept of justice or freedom) that renders it inevitably regressive, rather than emancipatory.

In my work, I have argued that we should think about both justice and reconciliation in structural terms, and not only as qualities of interactional relationships. We should be more concerned about the structures that mediate identities, institutions, social positions, interactions, and conditions, making some more vulnerable to victimization or harms and burdens, while enabling others to have more advantages or privileges, and even to commit wrongdoing with impunity. Social structures, when unjust, define in morally objectionable ways the social positions, identities, agency, roles, aspirations, and potential and actual achievements of persons and groups. Structural injustices can inform laws, norms, and discourse; shape the design and purposes of institutions and social practices; and produce material effects. They enable,

legitimize, normalize, and entrench conditions under which structural and interactional injustice may persist on a regular and predictable basis. Structural injustices may produce “unintended, generalized, or impersonal harms or wrongs that result from social structural processes in which many may participate”.⁴²

For example, it would be difficult to account for persistently disparate outcomes with respect to health care, education, housing, income and wealth, between Indigenous and non-Indigenous persons without reference to structural usurpation of Indigenous governance and dissociation from Indigenous interests, generated by policies of genocide and forcible incorporation of Indigenous peoples in settler colonial states, predicated on the ideologies of civilization and progress that posited a fundamental incompatibility between Indigeneity and modernity. Social hierarchies – often based on race, class, and gender categories that transcend nationalist and statist divides – expose large categories of persons or peoples to social positions of inferiority or structural indignity that heighten their historic and contemporary vulnerability to various forms of injustice, oppression and domination.

Focusing on the structural continuities between contexts of historic colonialism and contemporary social structures at domestic, international, and transnational levels reveals that debates about justice and reconciliation in response to colonial injustice need to move beyond a historic injustice framework. Since structural injustices are contemporary, calls for reconciliation in contemporary politics are not about getting over the past, but about addressing the alienation of contemporary agents from contemporary social structures, including contemporary narrative structures about the past. Reconciliation, in this frame, is not only or mainly about closing the books on past injustice. It’s not primarily about victims or survivors letting go of resentment about a past injustice. It’s about how those whose social positions are produced by a structurally

unjust order today can dismantle unjust and alienating social identities, positions, and structures, and build a world in which all agents can cultivate non-alienated forms of agency and self-realization.

Reconciliation should be understood as part of a regulative political ideal of non-alienation, aimed towards the creation of a mutually affirmable and affirmed social/political order that can support the flourishing of non-alienated agents.⁴³ Rather than addressing an abstract philosophical question about how rational individuals may feel at home in the modern world, reconciliation as a moral/political project can be formulated as addressing a more practical question: How can agents come to affirm the social/political structures that enabled or produced (and still may be enabling and producing) social and political injustices, and which still may constitute so many of the options and limits of their lives?

The politics of reconciliation ultimately is a struggle about the shape of the social world that defines, organizes, and mediates agents' social identities, positions, agency, well-being, and even their dreams. Such politics involve contestations over narratives of that order in historic terms, as well as over representations of the current social/political order, and reveal conflicting images of home, including who can be at home in the world, and what kinds of identities, positions and roles are possible, and that are available to agents in different social positions to enact, practice, as well as imagine, in this home. In struggling to be at home in the world, agents in different social positions reveal different images of that home from their standpoints, presenting others with sometimes discordant, jarring, and unsettling images of the social/political order. When revealing disparate images of the social/political order, the politics of reconciliation generates sources of immanent critique through unsettling socially dominant images of home, as well as the images of oneself that are attached to or associated with those images, thereby destabilizing

the dominant schematic orderings of the social/political order, on which agents' ontological security and sense of home, depends. Through responding to such confrontations, agents who participate in the project of reconciliation embark on remaking, and potentially transforming, themselves, and thereby, the world. Seen in this light, the political project of reconciliation, given the history of human iniquity, has the potential to make radical demands on us all.

3. Images of home

In politics, agents engage in the quest for reconciliation by struggling to create a mutually affirmable and affirmed social/political order, a regulative ideal which we can characterize as being at home in the world.⁴⁴ Understanding reconciliation in this way entails an examination of what images of home are available in the social and political schemas and imaginaries⁴⁵ that provide the ground or structure for developing and mediating agents' social identities, aspirations, and appropriative agency. "Home" is the definer of personal and collective identity, and fulfillment or self-realization. Just as the domestic familial home is conceived as "the only setting where intimacy can flourish, providing meaning, coherence, and stability personal life",⁴⁶ the social/political home is the setting that organizes meaning, coherence, and stability in individuals' social existence, and the basis from which they flourish or flounder as social and political beings. We can understand contemporary struggles over public discourse, museum exhibits, monuments and statues, public space, and other social practices as windows into deeper contestations about images of home, with which individuals' social identities are inextricably bound, and by which their social agency and activities unavoidably mediated.

The politics of reconciliation is thus a politics of homemaking. But what does it mean to be at home in the world? Psychology studies have shown that "among adults, and on the level of

countries and ethnic groups, collective psychological ownership serves as a strong justification for territorial and nationalist sovereignty claims, and disputes about ownership of objects, cultural artifacts, and territories are frequent and tend to escalate to violent inter-group conflicts.”⁴⁷ Reconciliation as the politics of homemaking thus involves interrogating the basis of collective psychologies of home ownership. This way of understanding the politics of reconciliation also helps to explain why such conflicts are so emotionally charged, such as when communities are divided over the maintenance or removal of monuments of historic figures in public squares, or the renaming of sports teams, schools, and universities; over the creation and direction of national museums of cultural heritage; over the revision of portrayals of past events in school history textbooks; over revisions to contemporary celebratory traditions; or over which figures should or should no longer be commemorated through national holidays, street names, or currencies.

However these struggles play out, a dominant conception of the structure of the home that is the site of such collective struggles is the modern nation-state. The territorial nation-state, and the international system of states, are the presumed institutional frameworks in which contemporary individuals or groups struggle to realize freedom, equality, justice, and community. Hilary Pilkington has observed that the persistence of the idea of “homeland” in contemporary political discourse suggests that “an important element of the modern world outlook is the linking of individual identity to a territorially bound collective identity.”⁴⁸ While liberal conceptions of national belonging eschew primordial, ethnic, and organic notions of national or political community, they generally accept the modern territorial state as the given institutional framework of political life. As for the international level, proponents of liberal international order interpret decolonization as an extension of the value of national self-

determination to previously colonized peoples, and the universalization of sovereign equality as a progressive repudiation of the unequal status of peoples that was a defining feature of colonial international order.⁴⁹

The historical construction and expansion of modern international order, however, has been entangled with “scientific racism” and civilizational thought and discourse. According to Duncan Bell, in the nineteenth century and early twentieth century, “White supremacist visions of global governance circulated widely in the Anglo-American world.”⁵⁰ While “civilized” populations were entitled to their own state, the logic of civilized nations “justified imperial and colonial rule over Africans and even genocide in accordance with racial hierarchies, as well as forced deportations in accordance with visions of sovereignty based on national or ethnic homogeneity.”⁵¹ The construction of racial and civilizational hierarchies, backed by military domination, meant that the inclusion of non-Europeans and non-whites, whether in imperial projects, colonial civilizing missions, or later, in a system of formally independent states embedded in a capitalist global economy, would be marked by deep asymmetries and inequalities in standing, status, rights, burdens, and powers.⁵²

In my work, I have argued that state-centric institutions and practices of global governance reflect deep structural injustices that emanate from the colonial origins of modern international order. While historical decolonization conferred the status of formal sovereignty to postcolonial states, precolonial peoples who found themselves within a newly decolonized state or a settler state were denied any international standing as peoples in the interstate order and thus did not enjoy an internationally recognized right to self-determination as peoples, or the freedom to determine their political status or pursue their economic, social, and cultural development. Decolonization thus did not allow for secession or a reconfiguration of territory, or guarantee

international standing, or moral and political reciprocity, to peoples and other organized social groups within settler colonial and postcolonial states. Entrenchment of a state-centric international society has thus generated a structural legacy of injustice and alienation for those who continue to experience subjection to the state and international system as a colonizing project.

The Eurocentric narrative of civilizational progress that forwarded the nation-state as a marker of civilization, also fated Indigenous peoples to extinction with the advent of modernity. In the “civilized” home, Indigenous people are alienated from an epistemic, social, ethical, normative, and material order that is predicated on denying the very possibility of realizing Indigenous ways of being – knowledge, philosophy, governance, or culture – in conditions of modernity.⁵³ Acknowledging that the forcible incorporation of Indigenous peoples as members of a largely “departed race” is not only a historic injustice, but a contemporary or ongoing structural injustice in postcolonial and settler colonial contexts, raises fundamental challenges to the legal and political authority and legitimacy of postcolonial and settler colonial states as well as of the international order of sovereign states.⁵⁴ Thus, Robert Nichols has observed that the most important aspect of struggles of Indigenous peoples in contemporary politics – over development projects, pipelines, burial sites, or mountain ranges – is that they are “*interpretive struggles*, challenging and unsettling the very terms of global political order.”⁵⁵ Given the lack of fit between Indigenous governance and settler state structures, redressing the existential and structural alienation of Indigenous Peoples from the contemporary international order entails revolutionary structural transformations of world order. Decolonizing the global home may entail fundamental modifications of the constitutive political and territorial rights of states, and the coercive architecture of the modern sovereign states system that enforces such rights.⁵⁶

In the case of Black people, the construction of Black identity in civilizational discourse as having “no culture, no civilization, no ‘long historical past’”,⁵⁷ and the “thingification” of Black subjects under colonial rule⁵⁸ left an enduring legacy in postcolonial Africa,⁵⁹ as well as in the African and Black diaspora. Contemporary Black scholars emphasize that Black subjectivity is constrained not only by legacies of past injustice, but by “the ongoing problem of Black exclusion from social, political and cultural belonging; our abjection from the realm of the human.”⁶⁰ Thus, for Christina Sharpe, anti-Black violence in the United States is not just a blemish on an otherwise well-functioning democracy, but “a predictable and constitutive aspect of this democracy”. She asks, instead of calling for justice as accountability, what political and social spaces would be opened if Americans were to understand that, “The ongoing state-sanctioned legal and extralegal murders of Black people are normative and, for this so-called democracy, necessary; it is the ground we walk on. ... What happens when we proceed as if we *know* this, antiblackness, to be the ground on which we stand”.⁶¹ Such existential alienation is pointedly captured by Saidiya Hartman’s account of her attempt to explain to the chief of Salaga, Ghana, the impact of slavery on Blacks in America: “How could you explain that four hundred years in a place didn’t make it a home?”⁶²

4. The pain and promise of disalienation politics

Nishnaabeg writer and educator Leanne Simpson has expressed her concerns about the progressive potential of the project of reconciliation in Canada through the use of a domestic analogy to describe the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples: “It reminds me of an abusive relationship where one person is being abused physically, emotionally, spiritually and mentally. She wants out of the relationship, but instead of supporting her, we are all gathered around the abuser, because he wants to “reconcile.” But he doesn’t want to take

responsibility. He doesn't want to change. In fact, all through the process he continues to physically, emotionally, spiritually and mentally abuse his partner. He just wants to say sorry so he can feel less guilty about his behaviour. He just wants to adjust the ways he is abusing; he doesn't want to stop the abuse."⁶³

Despite recognition by a majority of Canadians that much work remains to build a racially just society,⁶⁴ the image of Canada as an abusive and even genocidal home would be disorienting and unsettling for a population that considers the injustices of genocide, dispossession, and forcible incorporation to belong to a distant and remote past. With a vague and general understanding of its past, many Canadians continue to hold a positive self-image of the country and its "values" of "peace, freedom, democracy and human rights."⁶⁵ Such a positive self-image is difficult to reconcile with the image of Canada as an agent of past and ongoing Indigenous genocide, a controversy that has afflicted the Canadian Museum for Human Rights (CMHR) since its foundation. The museum's mission, until recently, included "celebrating Canadians' commitment to human rights":

"The citizens of Canada are endowed with inherent human rights and responsibilities, codified over time in treaties, policies, laws and declarations. The Museum provides a safe and engaging space to cultivate respect, gratitude, understanding and ongoing improvement of this human rights inheritance. The Museum connects its visitors with opportunities to explore the global development of human rights concepts and Canada's important role within it."⁶⁶

Established in 2014, the CMHR took five years to acknowledge that the Indian Residential Schools system amounted to a genocidal policy directed at Indigenous peoples in Canada, an

admission prompted by the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG).⁶⁷

How can agents, whose social imaginaries and associated conceptions of the right and the good may be distorted by structural injustice, come to be motivated to pursue self- and political transformation? Frantz Fanon articulated this question as a challenge of “disalienation” as a response to colonial domination and oppression: “Before embarking on a positive voice, freedom needs to make an effort at disalienation.”⁶⁸ According to Fanon, both the oppressed, as well as the oppressors, need to engage in processes of disalienation, for a new politics to be born. The project of reconciliation as non-alienation is intimately related to the disalienation of those who have developed their subjectivities (or sense of self and one’s place in the world) in conditions of structural domination and oppression.

For those who are dominated, alienation makes it difficult to engage in struggles against injustice or domination. The alienated may suffer from lacking the requisite self-respect required to mount a radical critique, or the requisite bases of social respect to participate effectively in the space of public reason distorted by structural injustice. Nor may the public engagement of the alienated conform to the standards of sober social analysis.⁶⁹ Alienated agency may produce engagement with unjust structures that are limited by those structures. Disalienation is essential to meet the challenge of agents *becoming* free and equal authors of their social structures, which is not resolved by others, such as the state, conferring on them the status of persons or citizens. Glen Coulthard has thus argued that the politics of liberal multicultural recognition are not enough to redress the ongoing settler colonial domination and oppression of Indigenous peoples. Following Fanon, he argues that dominated agents need to struggle to create new decolonized terms of association that they can call their own, and not only seek equal justificatory status

based on structures of colonial power, otherwise “the colonized will have failed to reestablish themselves as truly self-determining: as creators of the terms, values, and conditions by which they are to be recognized.”⁷⁰ As Leanne Simpson has put it, ‘We [Indigenous peoples] need to be able to articulate in a clear manner our visions for the future, for living as Indigenous Peoples in contemporary times. ... [This involves] articulating and living our legal systems; language learning; ceremonial and spiritual pursuits; creating and using our artistic and performance-based traditions.’⁷¹ Disalienation may thus involve a refusal⁷² of the social position or identities one has been assigned in the dominating home, withdrawal from the social world, creative reappropriation, and strategies of self-development and self-affirmation.⁷³ While disalienation for the oppressed requires such acts of imaginative resistance to the dominant social identities and positions offered, the space for such imaginings may require state and international support for the revival of Indigenous languages, cultures, and governance, since their resurgence is a precondition for Indigenous and other subjugated peoples being able to engage in decolonized struggles to be at home in the modern world.

For others occupying dominant social positions, disalienation practices need to aim to provoke recognition of problematic identities, beliefs, and practices (or the occurrent experience of psycho-affective alienation), while also providing positive motivational resources for agents to do the hard work of self-reflection and transformation. While the Canadian TRC did raise greater awareness of the residential school system, it faced obstacles from government to provide a full examination of the schools, including an accounting of the victims, whose unmarked graves are now being uncovered, as well as an accounting of the officials who were responsible for the assimilationist and eliminationist policies of successive Canadian governments over its 150-year history.⁷⁴

The pain that attends processes of disalienation, however, has provoked reactionary politics that aim to re-entrench the terms of structural domination. In response to growing awareness of the Dutch nation's history of slavery and colonialism, for example, far-right nationalists have employed the language of self-hatred to resist collective engagement in painful reflections about Dutch national history. According to Thierry Baudet, leader of the far-right, white supremacist/nationalist Dutch Forum for Democracy Party (FvD), "The West is suffering from an autoimmune disorder ... Part of our organism—an important part: our immune system, that which should protect us—has turned against us. We're being weakened, undermined, surrendered in every respect. Malevolent, aggressive elements are being smuggled into our social body in unprecedented numbers, while true causes and consequences are kept hidden."⁷⁵ Baudet employs the concept of *oikophobia*, or "fear of the home", which, he argues, feminist, Black, postcolonial and other social movements, have engendered by challenging the golden narrative of Dutch national history and "Western values" more generally, producing a citizenry that is ashamed of and alienated from its national identity.

The concept of *oikophobia* was developed by the conservative philosopher Roger Scruton.⁷⁶ In an essay on American education, he characterizes those who embrace multiculturalism as suffering from a "pathological *oikophobia*, a hatred of home, which has been a frequent disease among intellectuals since the Enlightenment. He sees that which is his "own," his inheritance, as alien; he has fallen out of communication with it and feels tainted by its claim on him." The picture of America that Scruton sees threatened by the liberal multicultural politics of recognition is one in which the democratic process and the rule of law function aptly to resolve social problems. Not "nationalist or xenophobic," his American citizen "assumed that it is right and normal to be proud of your country," a country with "a core of moral instinct, in

which respect for freedom went hand in hand with an equal respect for public decency.”⁷⁷ His account of American society, however, is clearly one that is dominated by a white majority culture, such that “Harlem” represents a “cultural minority” that is equal to “a Shi’ite village in Iran.”⁷⁸ In Scruton’s image of America, the white majority is implicitly the great definer of who can call America their home, and Blacks and other minorities can only claim to belong if they accept their racial subordination.

In offering this image of the American home, Scruton seems to engage in what philosopher Simon Keller has called a “patriotism of bad faith.”⁷⁹ The diagnosis of oikophobia also seems to misunderstand the motivation of the politics of disalienation; far from expressing a “hatred of home”, those whom Scruton criticizes for contesting dominant images of home seek to make the home better for all those who must live in it. Politically, the instrumentalization of oikophobia in far-right ideologies serves to reinvigorate the resolve of dominant social groups to cling to their distorted subjectivities, and to aspire to continue determining without reciprocation whose image of home organizes social and political life. The resonance of the concept of oikophobia with many ordinary people, and its instrumentality to the far-right political agenda, are indications of the serious pain engendered by the politics of disalienation. For to admit negative versions of the American home as “materialist, patriarchal, racist, imperialist and obsessed with property and power”⁸⁰ is to expose the bright self-image of Americans to a darker mirror image that provokes powerful emotions of inadequacy or shame, according to their own standards. It is the pain generated by the alienation or separation from a positive self-image, provoked by practices of disalienation, and the desire to avoid such pain, that motivates some to support the reactionary politics of the far-right. My point is that the politics of oikophobia is not primarily about the existential alienation of the dominant social group to participate meaningfully in the social

world, but about their attempt to dominate (or “determine without reciprocation”⁸¹) whose image of home will define and organize social and political life. By deflecting the painful and potentially transformative self-examination provoked by disalienation politics, conservative and far-right politics also close off possibilities for moving forward in struggles against structural domination and alienation.

5. Reconciliation as an open-ended process of self-realization

Lorraine Hansberry’s play, *Les Blancs*, vividly and presciently portrays these challenges that attend the politics of reconciliation in a postcolonial world.⁸² Set in a fictional African country on the verge of anti-colonial insurrection, the action begins with Tshembe Matoseh, a young African man, returning home from a comfortable life in Europe for his father’s funeral. The play makes trenchant critiques and poses difficult challenges about the ends and means of anti-colonial struggle, challenges that apply both to African-Americans fighting for civil rights in America, as well as to Africans fighting European colonial rule. Hansberry’s play deftly and poignantly exposes the dilemmas encountered by racialized subjects attempting to fashion a home in a world built on racial oppression and domination. While Tshembe’s brother Abioseh, a Roman Catholic about to enter the priesthood, takes an assimilationist route that threatens the anti-colonial struggle, the most poignant character in the play is Tshembe’s half brother, Eric, an African-European child of rape, who is eager to join the revolution, but becomes its casualty.

The colonial administration is represented by Major Rice, who is in charge of security in the shadow of an imminent insurrection. In explaining his attachment to the colonial project, Major Rice explains to the American journalist, Mr. Morris: “This is my country, you see. I came here when I was a boy. I worked hard. I married here. ... This is our home, Mr. Morris. Men like

myself had the ambition, the energy and the ability to come here and make this country into something... (He turns ever so slightly from time to time to catch TSEMBE's expression) They had it for centuries and did nothing with it. It isn't a question of empire, you see. It is our home ... We wish the blacks no ill. But – (Simply, matter-of-factly, a man confirmed) – *it is our home*, Mr. Morris.”⁸³ The thorough sense of entitlement expressed by Major Rice is buttressed by the play's revelation that he is also Eric's father, and the rapist of Tshembe's mother.

Hansberry's play shows vividly what is at stake in the struggle for home, even as she also sharply portrays the challenges confronting those who aim to forge a new politics of homemaking. One route she dismisses is the one taken by the American journalist, Charlie Morris, who views himself as far removed from the colonial projects of Europe, and offers new terms of association on equal terms. Tshembe criticizes the ahistorical move towards a new beginning, saying “For a handshake, a grin, a cigarette and half a glass of whiskey you want three hundred years to disappear – and in five minutes! ... In this light, for instance, I really cannot tell you from Major Rice!”⁸⁴

Near the end of *Les Blancs*, Tshembe, lamenting his involvement in the anti-colonial politics of his ancestral home, and its implications for the possibility of returning to his private, comfortable life with his European wife and child, exclaims: “I want to go *home*.” When asked if his home is in the mountains of Europe or the mountains where he grew up in Africa, he replies that he no longer knows.⁸⁵

The play's ambiguous and controversial ending reflects well the uncertain end-point of reconciliation as non-alienation. Far from closing the books, reconciliation as non-alienation is quite open-ended in terms of the substantive kinds of social forms or institutionalized relations that agents may come to endorse and pursue. In the case of settler colonialism, reconciliation as

non-alienation is not likely to accommodate the assimilationist dreams of settlers as a basis for inclusion of Indigenous peoples within a settler constitutional framework. But in contrast to conceptions of reconciliation as closure, reconciliation as non-alienation does not foreclose continued political struggle, and does not assume a homogenizing ideal or a conflict-transcendent form of social unity. For this reason, also, however, such a conceptualization of reconciliation cannot produce a substantive vision of what a reconciled social/political order should look like.

In *Les Blancs*, an ally of the anti-colonial cause, Madame Neilsen, asks Tshembe if he hates Europeans. He replies, “I have seen your mountains. Europe – in spite of all her crimes – has been a great and glorious star in the night. Other stars shone before it – and will again with it. ... The heavens, as you taught me, are broad and can afford a galaxy.”⁸⁶ Although I have said that we cannot offer a substantive vision of what a reconciled world would look like, we could view Hansberry’s vision of a galaxy of glorious stars as an apt abstract vision when imagining one kind of world we can hope for. It supports the view that a measure of conditions for non-alienated flourishing for Indigenous peoples in settler colonial states such as Canada, as well as in the wider world, is whether Indigenous peoples can effectively participate as equals in shaping their terms of association “without giving up who they are as indigenous peoples,” and whether they are empowered to return Indigenous “ways of knowing the world to their rightful place in the landscape of *human* ideas.”⁸⁷

At the same time, it should be acknowledged that conceptualizing reconciliation as a response to the history of human iniquity invites a tragic framing of non-alienation as addressing the challenges of “making possibility out of dispossession,”⁸⁸ slavery, genocide, and other socially produced atrocities. As Aimé Césaire has argued, it is impossible to return to a galaxy

populated by stars from a pre-colonial past.⁸⁹ Hartman has also reflected on the disappointment of being a Black person trying to return to a place that has not been touched by slavery. Her journey to Ghana to find “home” first reveals to her the difference between the Pan-Africanism of the continent and the Pan-Africanism of the diaspora.⁹⁰ Eventually, she identifies a connection through the stories of the stateless – those fugitives from slave-raids who fled their villages in search of “free territory”. Being at home in the world, according to the “fugitive’s dream,” did not entail return or belonging to a mythical homeland, but entailed that “old identities sometimes had to be jettisoned in order to invent new ones. Your life might just depend on this capacity for self-fashioning.”⁹¹ Ghanaian-American writer Yaa Gyasi’s novel, *Homegoing*, provides an illustrative case of imaginative homemaking in her fictional reconstruction of a family history of eight generations torn apart and indelibly shaped by slavery, colonialism, and racial iniquity. At various times, characters struggle precisely with making possibilities for self-realization in defiance of, as well as out of, their oppressive surroundings.⁹² Whatever their degree of success, to create narratives depicting agents’ struggles in contexts of genocide, slavery, and dispossession is a powerful exercise of appropriative agency for those whose capacities to appropriate and narrate their own histories were obliterated through “thingification” or genocide. The creative reappropriation and innovation required for self-realization in such contexts invariably will lead to plural paths and identities of anti-colonial and decolonial subjectivity. Reconciliation as non-alienation entails placing the homemaking struggles of the fugitive, the refugee, the exiled, the oppressed, and the dispossessed at the centre, rather than periphery, of our normative conceptions of being at home in this world.

7. Conclusion

The question of reconciliation is a question about whether and how agents can imagine new selves, another “other”, with whom to engage in transformed social relations, in order to create new forms of non-alienated flourishing in mutually non-alienating relations. Some may worry that the ideal of non-alienation is illusory or infeasible, given the impossibility of realizing the idealized subject in conditions of structural oppression and domination. How can non-alienated agents or structures be fashioned out of alienated subjects and conditions? Although agents and structures are mutually constituted, my view is that even agents in conditions of severe domination and oppression can exercise oppositional agency or resistance. This is not to say that such forms of political agency thereby generate a free or autonomous subject: the exercise of such agency cannot be equated with enjoying structural justice or freedom.⁹³ Still, this means that agents variously situated in unjust structures can make use of their agency to contribute to challenging and overturning structural injustices through self-transformation and collective action. Agents, individually or collectively, need not be autonomous in any ideal sense to do this, but the more effectively they are able to act from their social positions to dismantle structures of oppression and domination, and to dream new and less alienated ways of self-realization, the more structural freedom their agency will produce that will, in turn, enable them to develop more ideal non-dominated and non-alienated forms of subjectivity. As structures change, new norms and practices of politics will develop or become more visible, giving rise to new challenges that will engender further theoretical innovations about further structural changes. Different waves of feminism illustrate well how structural changes can produce new struggles for reconciliation when agents with new social identities interact in ways that precipitate new social conflicts. We can also evaluate the process of decolonization in this way, to help contextualize the normative

significance of historical periods of decolonization, and also make sense of contemporary claims by Indigenous and other subjugated peoples that colonialism is not over.

But achieving reconciliation as non-alienation is not likely with agents as they are. In settler colonial contexts, the collective psychology of settler home ownership that entrenches anti-Indigenous institutions, norms, and practices will need to be relinquished for a new non-alienated politics to be born. In this sense, it is true that the regulative ideal of non-alienation may close off possibilities for some forms of interactional reconciliation; indeed, the ideal of non-alienation reveals just how irreconcilable things may be between contemporary agents. Whether it is at the ballot box, in party politics, state agencies, or social movements, in the school lunchroom, corporate boardroom, on the movie screen, in the realm of domestic labour, at the hockey rink or basketball court, in hospital wards, or the halls of academia, the struggles of agents to be at home in the world – and between and within agents over whose home it is, and what kind of home it is, including how much and what kinds of non-dominating and non-alienating spaces are available to different categories of persons and social groups in these worlds – constitute the political struggle for reconciliation. When that struggle is viewed as one that aims at non-alienation, it can open space for alternative, transformed, and more emancipated dreams of reconciliation.

The stakes of the struggle are high. The problem of reconciliation is not only about how far such societies must go to repudiate their racist and genocidal past, but also, relatedly, what they (or we) must do to promote fundamental structural change, both domestically and globally, so that they/we can halt and prevent a racist and genocidal present and future. Reconciliation is a practical political necessity of all appropriative agents to claim the space they need to be able to live, indeed, to breathe. In this sense, the project of reconciliation is not one that can be voluntarily or easily given up by those who are oppressed and dominated in contemporary world

politics. To give up on reconciliation, on the struggle to be at home in the world, would be to give up on life itself.⁹⁴

¹ An earlier version of this chapter was presented virtually at the conference on “Reconciliation and Repair”, of the American Society for Political and Legal Philosophy, on September 25, 2020. Thanks to Melissa Schwartzberg and Eric Beerbohm for organizing the conference, and to Saira Mohamed and Ryan Preston-Roeder for their commentaries. Subsequent versions of the paper were presented at the Research Group on Constitutional Studies Works-in-Progress series at McGill University (November 2020), the Newcastle Politics Research Seminar (on zoom November 2020), and the Queen’s Legal and Political Philosophy Colloquium (on zoom November 2020). Thanks to all the participants, as well as Arash Abizadeh, Wendell Nii Laryea Adjetej, Yann Allard-Tremblay, Terri Givens, Will Kymlicka, Andreas Leidinger, Jacob Levy, Andrew Lister, Wayne Modest, Saira Mohamed, Ryan Preston-Roeder, Laura Routley, Christa Scholtz, Melissa Schwartzberg, Geoffrey Sigalet, Christine Sypnowich, Benjamin Thompson, Ashwini Vasanthakumar, Yves Winter, and Didier Zúñiga for comments.

² Saidiya Hartman, *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Through the Atlantic Slave Route* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007), p. 197.

³ Quoted in *Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls*, Volume 1a (2019), p. 353.

⁴ Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism* [1950] (New York : Monthly Review Press, 2000).

⁵ Derek Chauvin, was convicted in April 2021 of second-degree unintentional murder, third-degree murder, and manslaughter, and three other (former) police officers face charges. Police forces in the United States have killed approximately 1,100 people every year since 2013, according to the advocacy and research group, [Mapping Police Violence](#). See Laurence Ralph, “To Protect and to Serve: Global Lessons in Police Reform,” *Foreign Affairs*, 30 July 2020.

<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2020-07-30/police-reform-global-lessons>

⁶ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/get-involved/take-action/george-floyd-police-violence-usa/>

⁷ It is estimated that 15 to 26 million people participated in protests in the weeks following Floyd’s killing. See Larry Buchanan, Quoctrung Bui, Jugal K. Patel, “Black Lives Matter May be the Largest Movement in U.S. History,” *The New York Times*, 3 July 2020.

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/07/03/us/george-floyd-protests-crowd-size.html>

⁸ See for example, the statement by United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet:

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25910&LangID=E>

⁹ Black Lives Matter is a grassroots decentralized global network that was founded in 2013 by Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi, in response to the acquittal of George Zimmerman for the shooting death of Trayvon Martin in Sanford, Florida. See

<https://blacklivesmatter.com/herstory/>.

¹⁰ “We have got to have reconciliation. This country has not reconciled its differences with us. We survived slavery but we didn’t reconcile. We survived segregation but we didn’t reconcile. We’re suffering ... discrimination because we didn’t reconcile. It’s time for a Department of Reconciliation...” Al Green, Representative of the U.S. Congress, 8 June 2020.

<https://www.rev.com/blog/transcripts/congressman-al-green-eulogy-transcript-at-george-floyds-funeral>

¹¹ <https://www.npr.org/2020/06/03/868503678/pope-francis-prays-for-george-floyd-decries-the-sin-of-racism>

¹² Larry Schooler, *USA Today*, 7 June 2020.

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2020/06/07/floyd-killing-truth-reconciliation-commission-race-police-column/3147541001/>.

See also Sarah Souli, “Does America Need a Truth and Reconciliation Commission?” *Politico* 16 August, 2020: <https://www.politico.com/news/magazine/2020/08/16/does-america-need-a-truth-and-reconciliation-commission-395332>

¹³ For information on the Grassroots Law Project: <https://www.grassrootslaw.org/tjrc>

¹⁴ Joel Burgess, *USA Today*, 16 July 2020: <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2020/07/15/asheville-passes-reparations-black-residents-historic/5441792002/>

¹⁵ The court-mandated settlement was agreed to by the legal counsel for former Residential School survivors, the Assembly of First Nations, and other Indigenous organizations, as well as church bodies, and the Canadian federal government. The Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement (IRSSA) provided CAN\$1.9 billion to more than 78,000 former students of the residential schools system; CAN \$3.233 billion for settling almost 38,000 claims of sexual abuse and serious physical and psychological abuse; CAN \$60 million for the Canadian TRC; CAN \$20 million for commemorative projects; and CAN \$125 million for the Aboriginal Healing Foundation. See https://www.residentialschoolsettlement.ca/detailed_notice.pdf

¹⁶ Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: *Calls to Action*, (Winnipeg, Manitoba, 2012). https://ehprnh2mwo3.exactdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf

¹⁷ 2SLGBTQIA in this context refers to Indigenous people who identify as “Two-Spirit, transgender, lesbian, bisexual, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual, and/or gender diverse or non-binary.” See *Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls*, Volume 1a (2019), p. 447.

¹⁸ On genocide, see *Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls*, Volume 1a (2019), pp. 50-54, p. 355. On

police reforms, see *Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report*, Volume 1b (2019), 192.

https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Final_Report_Vol_1b.pdf

¹⁹ The Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation, in British Columbia's Central Interior, announced in May 2021 that using ground-penetrating radar, it had uncovered the remains of 215 children buried at the former Kamloops Indian Residential School. Weeks later, the Cowessess First Nation announced the discovery of 751 unmarked graves at a cemetery near the former Marieval Indian Residential School in Saskatchewan. Others has been in located in Cranbrook, B.C. and Penelakut, B.C. On the work of Indigenous archaeologist Kisha Suprenant and her team, see CBC Radio, *The Current*, 25 June 2021. <https://www.cbc.ca/radio/thecurrent/the-current-for-june-25-2021-1.6080012/residential-school-burial-searches-the-most-important-work-that-i-will-ever-do-says-archeologist-1.6080406>

²⁰ <https://www.cbc.ca/radio/thecurrent/the-current-for-june-2-2021-1.6049839/murray-sinclair-calls-for-inquiry-into-residential-school-burial-sites-more-support-for-survivors-1.6050375>

²¹ On continuing legal battles over the federal government's failure to provide equitable child and family services to Indigenous children, see the work of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada:

https://fncaringsociety.com/sites/default/files/judicial_review_information_sheet_june_14-18.pdf

For an investigative report on the Catholic Church in Canada, see Tavia Grant and Tom Cardoso, "The Catholic Church in Canada is worth billions, a *Globe* investigation shows. Why are its reparations for residential schools so small?" *The Globe and Mail*, 7 August 2021.

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-catholic-church-canadian-assets-investigation/>

²² Sheryl Lightfoot, "Settler-State Apologies to Indigenous Peoples: A Normative Framework and Comparative Assessment," *Native American and Indigenous Studies* 2 (2015):15-39 at 36.

²³ <https://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/en/news/2020/alberta-rcmp-launch-reconciliation-strategy>

²⁴ “My focus now turns to ensuring a smooth, orderly and seamless transition of power. This moment calls for healing and reconciliation.” Former U.S President Donald Trump, 7 January 2021. <https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2021/1/7/22219734/trump-capitol-transition-biden-impeachment>

²⁵ See Catherine Lu, *Justice and Reconciliation in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

²⁶ Rahel Jaeggi, *Alienation*, F. Neuhouse and A.E. Smith trans. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), xxi and 22, 2, 36 and 37.

²⁷ For a development of alienation along more Kantian lines, where alienation denotes a condition of agents who have lost or are denied their standing as morally autonomous agents (and hence are dominated), see Rainer Forst, “Noumenal Alienation: Rousseau, Kant and Marx on the Dialectics of Self-Determination,” *Kantian Review* 22, 4 (2018): 523-551. The Kantian-Forstian approach makes alienation practically synonymous with unjust domination, entailing a violation of right. Such alienation would be redressed through redressing injustice; and reconciliation as a response to such alienation would become synonymous with justice. Jaeggi’s account of alienation is thus more appropriate for my construction of reconciliation as a distinct moral striving from justice. For further elaboration, see my, “The Right to Justification and the Good of Nonalienation,” in *Justification and Emancipation: The Political Philosophy of Rainer Forst* (Penn State Series in Critical Theory), ed. Amy Allen and Eduardo Mendieta (Penn State University Press, 2019), 76-92.

²⁸ “Transitional justice” became the label for “the set of institutions, policies, and practices designed to deal with atrocities and major politically motivated human rights violations in the

process, anticipation, or aftermath of regime change or violent conflict.” Leslie Vinjamuri and Jack Snyder, “Law and Politics in Transitional Justice,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 18:1 (2015): 303-327. See also Pablo de Greiff, “Theorizing Transitional Justice,” in Melissa Williams, Rosemary Nagy, and Jon Elster, eds. *Transitional Justice* (New York, New York University Press, 31-77).

²⁹ Elizabeth Kiss, “Moral ambitions within and beyond political constraints,” in *Truth v. Justice: The Morality of Truth Commissions*, eds. Robert I. Rotberg and Dennis Thompson (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2000), 68-98.

³⁰ The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission put forth the claim that the road to reconciliation required a truthful accounting of the past. The achievement of reconciliation was associated with achieving national unity, the well-being of all citizens, and civic peace.

Government of South Africa, Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act 34 of 1995. <http://www.justice.gov.za/legislation/acts/1995-034.pdf>

³¹ Nikolay Koposov, *Memory Laws, Memory Wars: The Politics Of The Past In Europe And Russia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 10.

³² Barry Buzan and George Lawson, *The Global Transformation: History, Modernity and the Making of International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 124. See also Edward Keene, *Beyond the Anarchical Society: Grotius, Colonialism and Order in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

³³ See also the Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission, established in 2019: <https://msa.maryland.gov/lynching-truth-reconciliation/>

³⁴ Ronald W. Walters, *The Price of Racial Reconciliation* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2008), 130.

³⁵ “Thousands have attended Black Lives Matter demonstrations in Cape Town, Pretoria and Johannesburg to protest violence by security forces implementing the lockdown - and prior to the pandemic - directed mainly at poor, black communities.” <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-safrica-protests-police-trfn/south-africans-protest-police-brutality-against-poor-under-lockdown-idUSKBN23G2QQ>

³⁶ Courtney Jung, “Reconciliation: Six Reasons to Worry,” *Journal of Global Ethics* 14, 2 (2018): 252-265 at 262.

³⁷ Rauna Kuokkanen, “Reconciliation as a Threat or Structural Change? The Truth and Reconciliation Process and Settler Colonial Policy Making in Finland,” *Human Rights Review* 21 (2020): 293–312. In this case, reconciliation efforts will examine policies of “dispossession of land and resources, legacy of residential schools, language and identity theft, forced conversion to Christianity, destruction and defamation of Sámi spirituality and sacred sites, and active engagement in racial biology research as recently as in the late 1960s in which Sámi were measured and categorized.”

³⁸ Glen Sean Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 109.

³⁹ See Jung, “Reconciliation: Six Reasons to Worry,” for a trenchant review of the concerns of Indigenous scholars and activists about the limits and dangers of engaging in practices of reconciliation proposed by settler states. See also Alasia Nuti, “On Structural Injustice, Reconciliation, and Alienation,” *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy* 23, 4 (2020): 427-434.

⁴⁰ See Lu, *Justice and Reconciliation*, Chapter 6 for an elaboration of these critiques.

⁴¹ See Andrew Schaap, “Reconciliation as Ideology and Politics,” *Constellations* 15, 2 (2008): 249-264 at 249, for a similar Gramscian form of critique that does not view political ideas or concepts as intrinsically true or false, reactionary or radical, but as potentially emancipatory. See also Catherine Lu, “Structural Injustice and Alienation: a reply to my critics,” *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy* 23, 4 (2020): 441-452.

⁴² Lu, *Justice and Reconciliation*, pp. 35 and 118.

⁴³ Lu, *Justice and Reconciliation*, 182-216.

⁴⁴ See Michael O. Hardimon, “The Project of Reconciliation: Hegel’s Social Philosophy,” *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 21, 2 (1992): 165–95.

⁴⁵ According to Charles Taylor, a social imaginary entails “the ways that people imagine their social existence, how they fit together with others, how things go on between them and their fellows, the expectations that are normally met, and the deeper normative notions and images that underlie these expectations”. Social imaginaries feature common understandings among ordinary people “that makes possible common practices and a widely shared sense of legitimacy”. According to Taylor, the “Western social imaginary” consists of three cultural forms, located in the economy, the public sphere, and self-governance. See Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Duke University Press, 2003), 23.

⁴⁶ Elizabeth Pleck, *Domestic Tyranny: The Making of Social Policy Against Family Violence from Colonial Times to the Present* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 8.

⁴⁷ Maykel Verkuyten and Borja Martinovic, “Collective Psychological Ownership and Intergroup Relations,” *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 12, 6 (2017): 1021-1039 at 1022. See also M. D. Toft, “Territory and war,” *Journal of Peace Research*, 51 (2014): 185–198.

⁴⁸ H. Pilkington, “Going Home? The Implications of Forced Migration for National Identity Formation in post-Soviet Russia,” in *The New Migration in Europe: Social Constructions and Social Realities*, K. Kosher and H. Lutz eds. (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1997), p. 88.

⁴⁹ See Anna Stilz, “Decolonization and Self-Determination,” *Social Philosophy and Policy* 32, 1 (2015): 1-24; and Anna Stilz, *Territorial Sovereignty: A Philosophical Exploration* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019).

⁵⁰ Duncan Bell, “Founding the World State: H.G. Wells on Empire and the English-Speaking Peoples,” *International Studies Quarterly* 62 (2018): 867-879 at 871.

⁵¹ Eric D. Weitz, “From Vienna to the Paris System: International Politics and the Entangled Histories of Human Rights, Forced Deportations, and Civilizing Missions,” *The American Historical Review*, 113, 5 (2008): 1313-1343 at 1328.

⁵² Adom Getachew, *Worldmaking after Empire: The Rise and Fall of Self-Determination* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019).

⁵³ See Patrick Wolfe, “Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, 4 (2006): 387-409.

⁵⁴ In the United States, Congress in 1913 planned a monument to the “departed race,” to be built on Staten Island, New York. According to President William Howard Taft, the statue to commemorate the expected extinction of Indigenous people “tells the story of the march of empire and the progress of Christian civilization to the uttermost limits.” See Bruce Duthu, *American Indians and the Law* (New York: Penguin, 2008), xxiii.

⁵⁵ Robert Nichols, “Indigenous Peoples, Settler Colonialism, and Global Justice,” in Duncan Bell ed. *Empire, Race and Global Justice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 228-250 at 249.

⁵⁶ See Catherine Lu, “Decolonizing Borders, Self-Determination, and Global Justice,” in Duncan Bell, *Empire, Race and Global Justice*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 251-272 at 271.

⁵⁷ Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (New York: Grove Press, 1952).

⁵⁸ Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, 42.

⁵⁹ “The final and worst psychological impact [of colonialism] has been the generation of a deep feeling of inferiority as well as the loss of a sense of human dignity among Africans. Both complexes were surely the outcome not only of the wholesale condemnation of everything African already referred to but, above all, of the practice of racial discrimination and the constant humiliation and oppression to which Africans were subjected throughout the colonial period.”

See A. Adu Boahen, *African Perspectives on Colonialism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 108.

⁶⁰ Christina Sharpe, *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2016), 14.

⁶¹ Sharpe, *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being*, 7.

⁶² Hartman, *Lose Your Mother*, p. 197. See also Dionne Brand, *A Map to the Door of No Return: Notes to Belonging* (Toronto: Vintage Canada, 2011). Brand’s book begins with her account of a “tear in the world” that opened when she was thirteen, generated by her grandfather’s inability to tell her about her family’s origins: “We were not from the place where we lived and we could not remember where we were from or who we were.” (p. 5).

⁶³ Leanne Simpson, *Dancing on Our Turtle’s Back: Stories of Nishnaabeg Re-Creation, Resurgence and a New Emergence* (Winnipeg: Arbeiter Ring Publishing, 2011), 17.

⁶⁴ “Canadians are most likely to believe that Indigenous Peoples (77%), Black people (73%), and South Asians (75%) experience discrimination often or occasionally; by comparison, fewer – although still a majority - (54%) believe this is the case for Chinese people in Canada. Very few (5%) say that racialized Canadians never experience discrimination.” Also, “Majorities of Canadians who are Black (54%) or Indigenous (53%) have personally experienced discrimination due to race or ethnicity from time to time if not regularly. Such experience is also evident but less widely reported by those who are South Asian (38%), Chinese (36%), from other racialized groups (32%), or White (12%).” <https://www.environmentalinstitute.org/projects/project-details/race-relations-in-canada-2019>

⁶⁵ <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/united-nations-security-council-canada-1.5615488>

⁶⁶ Canadian Museum of Human Rights, Summary of the 2018-2019 to 2022-2023 Corporate Plan, <https://humanrights.ca/sites/prod/files/2019-02/2018-19%20Corporate%20Plan%20Summary%20-%20English.pdf>. Following a report that found “pervasive and systemic racism” in the operation of the museum itself, a change in leadership resulted in a changed mandate, see <https://humanrights.ca/about/mandate>.

⁶⁷ For a brief history of the museum’s changes on recognizing the Indian Residential School system as genocide, see David MacDonald, *The Sleeping Giant Awakens: Genocide, Indian Residential Schools, and the Challenge of Conciliation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2019), 167-171

⁶⁸ Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 206.

⁶⁹ See my “The Right to Justification and the Good of Nonalienation,” in *Justification and Emancipation*, p. 86.

⁷⁰ Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks*, 39.

⁷¹ See Simpson, *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back*, 17.

⁷² Audra Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life Across the Borders of Settler States* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014).

⁷³ See Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks*.

⁷⁴ See Matt James, "The structural injustice turn, the historical injustice dilemma and assigning responsibility with the Canadian TRC Report," *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 43 (2021): 374-396.

⁷⁵ Quoted in *The Nation*, January 2017. <https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/is-dutch-bad-boy-thierry-baudet-the-new-face-of-the-european-alt-right/> According to Ben Margulies, the FvD "unites the centre-right's favoured cultural identity and economic policies with far-right racism, authoritarianism and xenophobia in a single party." Margulie, "Why Europe Should Worry about Thierry Baudet," *EUROPP – European Politics and Policy / LSE Blog*, 24 April 2019: <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/europpblog/2019/04/24/why-europe-should-worry-about-thierry-baudet/>

⁷⁶ Roger Scruton, "Oikophobia," *Journal of Education* 175, 2 (1993): 93-98. It has also been instrumental in Scruton's endorsement of Brexit and criticisms of the European Union. See Roger Scruton, *England and the Need for Nations* (London: Civitas: Institute for the Study of Civil Society, 2006), 33-38.

⁷⁷ Scruton, "Oikophobia," 94.

⁷⁸ Scruton, "Oikophobia," 97.

⁷⁹ Simon Keller, "Patriotism as Bad Faith," *Ethics* 115 (2005): 563-592.

⁸⁰ Scruton, "Oikophobia," 96.

⁸¹ See Iris Marion Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), p. 38.

⁸² Lorraine Hansberry was born in 1930, in Chicago, Illinois, and died of cancer in 1965. *Les Blancs* was incomplete before her death in 1965, and finalized posthumously in 1972. Hansberry attended the New School for Social Research in New York, studied under W.E.B. Du Bois (1868-1963), and worked for *Freedom*, Paul Robeson's Black newspaper (1950 to 1953). In 1957, she wrote under a pseudonym to a feminist magazine, *The Ladder*, about feminism and homophobia, to avoid discrimination. Her most well-known play is *A Raisin in the Sun*. See Joy L. Abell, 'African/American: Lorraine Hansberry's *Les Blancs* and the American Civil Rights Movement' *African American Review* 35, 3 (2001): 459-470.

⁸³ Lorraine Hansberry (1930-65), *Les Blancs* in *Les Blancs: The Collected Last Plays* (New York: Vintage Books, 1972), Act 1, Scene 3, p. 71 (italics mine).

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 74.

⁸⁵ Hansberry, *Les Blancs*, Act 2, Scene 8, p. 126.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 125.

⁸⁷ Dale Turner, *This Is Not a Peace Pipe: Towards a Critical Indigenous Philosophy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 117, emphasis mine.

⁸⁸ Hartman, *Lose Your Mother*, p. 7.

⁸⁹ Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, 44-45.

⁹⁰ Hartman, *Lose Your Mother*, 218.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² Yaa Gyasi, *Homegoing* (Toronto: Anchor Canada, 2016), 99.

⁹³ See Jennifer Einspahr, “Structural Domination and Structural Freedom: A Feminist Perspective,” *Feminist Review* 94, 1 (2010): 1-19.

⁹⁴ For a poignant depiction of such a struggle for an Indigenous girl and her family, see Tracy Lindberg, *Birdie* (Toronto: Harper Collins, 2015).