

dom. It contributes to the development of Indigenous law authority, distinct from Aboriginal law, in which Indigenous legal systems are being developed to accurately reflect the axiology of distinct cultural laws and jurisdictions.

### Reference

Reynolds, Jim (2018) *Aboriginal Peoples and the Law: A Critical Introduction*. Vancouver: UBC Press.

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Tanya Talaga, *All Our Relations: Finding the Path Forward*. Toronto: House of Anansi Press, 2018. 320 pages. ISBN 9781487005733. \$19.95 paperback.

Derived from the CBC's Massey Lectures Series, Tanya Talaga's *All Our Relations* is written as a call to action, imploring Canadians and the government to "understand and address the aftermath of cultural genocide that has resulted in a rise in youth suicides in Indigenous communities in Canada and abroad" (p. 16). Drawing examples from across the world, including Canada, United States, Australia, Brazil and Scandinavia, Talaga shines light on global injustices imposed upon Indigenous peoples. While this comparative look across countries suggests a pattern of mistreatment and trauma, the book also evokes a sense of hope and possibility, instilling the idea that there is a way forward. This book is beneficial for students, policy makers, researchers, scholars and anyone interested in understanding Indigenous mental health and the colonial practices that shape current-day situations. As a non-Indigenous Canadian, I value the insights presented in this book and use them as a springboard for reflecting on my own biases, evaluating what my commitment and contribution can look like towards reconciliation.

*Chapter 1* commences with a discussion about intergenerational trauma stemming from years of poverty, abuse and identity oppression. It examines the difference between Western and Indigenous worldviews, and the role that media and film play in portraying Indigenous identity. "No Indigenous person saw themselves in any of those characters. They weren't real. And yet they became a part of every Indigenous person's reality. Indigenous people have been trapped in these identity constructs in part because of their near complete absence from the written narratives of the colonist nations" (p. 20). In response to the shocking suicide rates among Indigenous communities, Talaga urges federal and provincial governments to devise a mental health plan for youth as well as to enhance the coordination of on-reserve mental health services

(p. 9). Suicide among Indigenous peoples is high, with the Inuit even more pronounced. "For the past 15 years, the Inuit suicide rate has been 10 times the national average" (p. 12). Talaga concludes the chapter by offering four questions critical for every Indigenous person to answer in order understand their purpose: *Where do I come from? Where am I going? What is my purpose? Who am I?*

*Chapter 2* delves into the impact of residential schools, the Indian Act, territorial acquisition, resettlement and Treaties. Talaga features four events which forever changed Indigenous peoples' relationship with the land: fur trading, the missionaries who brought with them a different notion of God, the creation of the Indian Act, and residential schools which removed 150,000 Indigenous children from their families, communities, and land. "They got disconnected from everything. Knowledge was not passed down. Parents lost their purpose; their whole reason for being...and this is where we are today" (p. 47). Citing the case of Brazil as one of the greatest injustices on Indigenous peoples, Talaga underscores horrific human rights violations.

*Chapter 3* discusses rites, ceremonies, familial ties, connections and Indigenous identity. "Attachments, kinship, and family tell us who we are and where we come from, and give us a sense of dignity and belonging" (p. 93). This chapter also addresses child safety, suicide prevention awareness, the welfare system, and the underreporting / inaccuracies in reporting suicide. Talaga highlights high suicide rates being due to the "lack of determinants of health and social equity such as healthcare, housing, and a safe environment" (p. 123), and asserts, "Canada is the only G8 country without a national suicide strategy" (p. 178). Talaga also shares some key developments such as the Royal Commission's National Prevention Strategy, the creation of a Federal government Office for Child Safety, Saskatchewan's First Nation Suicide Prevention Strategy and the National Inuit Suicide Prevention Strategy.

*Chapter 4* highlights the death of Indigenous children in residential schools, poor healthcare systems, racially-segregated hospitals, and medical abuses and experiments on Indigenous children. "The history of the Indian hospitals was proof that the health and well-being of Indigenous Canadians was never and still is not equal to that of non-Indigenous Canadians" (p. 152). Talaga then details the overrepresentation of Indigenous peoples in the prison system. The chapter ends with a brief look at Article 24 (2) of the UNDRIP, declaring that while Indigenous people have the right to access the same standard of healthcare as non-Indigenous people, this protocol has not been fulfilled (p. 161).

*Chapter 5* elaborates on the horrific treatment of Indigenous peoples at the hands of the Church and the purposeful omission of Indigenous history in current education. Talaga quotes Senator Murray Sinclair: "the education system has played a dominant role in damaging relations between First Nations and the greater society, and has perpetuated

ignorance and unawareness among much of society” (p. 211). Talaga shares these sentiments: “The state education system has purposefully kept the general population ignorant of the physical, cultural, and spiritual genocide Indigenous peoples have endured for centuries. Further, lawmakers, judges, politicians, the deep thinkers of modern western society all grew up without the benefit of knowing the true history of their countries. So, their understanding, which shaped the policies, rules, and programs of democratic Nations, was flawed from the start. As a result, non-Indigenous people have struggled to understand the cause for justice and equity by the leaders of these Nations” (p. 213).

The book ends on a positive note. The Nunavut government created a Quality of Life Secretariat to lead suicide prevention initiatives, investing \$35 million in programs. The money will not only fund community-led plans, counselling services, research, training and hiring of Inuit staff (p. 215), but the efforts have resulted in the “de-normalization” of suicide (p. 250). The book concludes by coming full circle, posing the same four questions asked at the beginning: *Where do I come from? Where am I going? What is my purpose? Who am I?* Talaga emphasizes that “all children, regardless of their racial or socioeconomic background, need to know the answers to these four questions. They need to know who their ancestors are, who their heroes and villains are, what their family traditions are, and what culture and community they are a part of” (p. 220).

*All Our Relations* is written with purpose. It does not overly elaborate or include unnecessary nuance, which allows for ease of read. It examines Indigenous issues through a decolonizing historical, sociological, anthropological and ethnological lens and it is grounded in Indigenous theory frameworks. The stories and case studies are graphic, and while they pull at your heartstrings, they need to be told.

The methodology used is empirical, ethnographic and both qualitative and quantitative. It takes into account personal narratives, as well as narratives of other Indigenous people. The findings draw research from case studies, storytelling, observations, literature surveys, interviews and policy analysis. The evidence is well-researched, collecting data from various Indigenous communities in Brazil, Australia, Finland, Norway, the United States, and Canada (Nunavut and Northern Ontario).

The narratives from Indigenous storytelling are appealing. Talking openly about stigmas of mental health adds to the purpose of the book, for “If suicide is talked more openly, it could lead to an increasing number of people accessing treatment” (p. 250). The highlighting of strides and achievements made in recent history adds to the strength of this book. Lastly, there is a large human rights component woven throughout the chapters, which energizes and propels the reader toward movement, action and change.

One flaw of the book is that the chapters lack organization. Concepts do not follow from any structure. There is a lot going on in each chapter, and the use of subheadings could have rectified some of the perplexities. Similarly, a thematic organization could have prevented repetition throughout. Lastly, the author did not begin with the Indian Act. Starting with the history of the Indian Act would have set a stronger framework for understanding the concepts that followed.

Indigenous peoples have been marginalized. By failing to acknowledge and address the realities of oppressive colonial systems and structures, we continue to perpetuate this cycle of injustice. *All Our Relations* offers a path forward. It is a call to action, urging the government and all Canadians to play a part in the realization of equality. The book sheds light on the historical injustices of colonization, the forced removal of the land by segregation, the cultural genocide imposed by government policy and religious indoctrination, the increasing mental health crisis, and the need for education reform. "The fight for social equity and the basic determinants of health to Indigenous people is not merely rhetoric. It is a matter of life or death" (p. 178).

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