

The Henceforward Episode 1

Give It Back: A Conversation Around Reparations

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Eve: Aang aang. This is Eve Tuck, and this is The Henceforward, a podcast on settler colonialism and anti-blackness on Turtle Island. Here we seek to build mutually respectful conversations about Indigenous and Black life in settler societies through attempting to talk, text, transit and land.

Speaker 1: You think it's on?

Interviewer: Yes, it is on.

Interviewer: What does reparations mean to you?

Speaker 1: Well, I think in a general global sense, restitution of what's owed to people, can't have people serve and do things to build countries and not be compensated for that.

In Canada specifically, reparations definitely means that Black people and Indigenous people have access to the things that we didn't have access to because of privilege. Privilege allows people to contain a certain way and have those means and accesses we don't have. We should have back.

Reparations is a financial -- some people say it's not financial. It's going forward. No, no. Reparations mean repairing what happened previously, so, yes, it has to go backwards for us to go forward.

Speaker 2: Okay, reparation mean, to me, in a nutshell, giving back for what is stolen from people. In terms of Black people, it's about the labor, the forced labor. It's about compensation for physical hardship, the killings, the looting, the rapes. It's also compensation for the property that was stolen and the profit that was gained from that. We can go on and on and on.

Speaker 3: How I understand reparations and what reparations mean to me is like a payback of some sort. I think that it's, usually, I understand, in the context of money or capital or land given back to folks who have been under robbers or who have been exploited, who have been oppressed, who just experienced silence. That's how I understand reparations.

Sefanit: Welcome to The Henceforward. First, we wish to acknowledge that we are settlers on Turtle Island and recognize that this land has been occupied through colonial violence and continues to be occupied. We speak to you from the traditional territory of the Huron-Wendat and Petun First Nations and Seneca and most recently, the Mississaugas of the Credit River.

My name is Sefanit. I'm born to Eritrean immigrants and grew up on the West Coast of Canada. I'm both intrigued and uncertain by the concept of imagining futures which is what draws me to this podcast.

This podcast is a conversation and an opportunity to hear from our community. What we are hoping to do is open up new ways to think of reparations, to show the way that this relates to Black and Indigenous people in Canada, and how these groups engage with this project and politic.

In Tuck, Guess and Sultan's article, Not Nowhere: Collaborating on Selfsame Land, it is put quite simply. Henceforward is the start of the future now. Therefore, we want to make clear that reparations is a contemporary issue, a current and relevant topic of exploration.

As this podcast is being produced, we are at the closing of a 15-day occupation of the Toronto Police Headquarters by the Black Lives Matter-Toronto Coalition. I've had the opportunity to watch and participate in what has become known as #BLMTOTentCity. In this community, on a small scale, The Henceforward is and was made possible.

At Tent City, Black and Indigenous people exist in a radically different social and political world. I had the chance to bring in some voices from Tent City. We explore questions of reparations which was profoundly powerful and a site of resistance and possibilities.

The ideas you are about to hear throughout this episode will bring into question what reparations could and should look like. If it's a viable or useful project, what costs can come with it and how it relates to decolonization. This conversation is inconclusive. We can only hope that you'll come to the end of this episode with a greater understanding of different approaches to reparations but also, with more questions. Throughout the episode, we consider what reparations mean in the context of The Henceforward.

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Speaker 4: Reparations, to me, means not only a monetary operation, but I think it's more than that. I think it's what systems are in place to help support and help empower people who have been disenfranchised, people who have been marginalized, people who have been taken advantage of, systemically, and oppressed.

Speaker 5: Reparations, to me, means the reconciliation of the traumas in the past. We have universally agreed that the practices of the past, including unwaged labor, slavery and the colonization of land and stealing of land is not something that we believe in. In order to right those wrongs, we have to, as a community, understand that these communities deserve reparations, whether they're monetary, whether they look like

land claim, whether they look like any or everything that these communities ask for because I think the ball is in their court to decide what they want in return.

Speaker 6: Reparation means, to me, a systemic acknowledgement and accountability, actionable accountability with bringing back, giving back those resources that have been exploited, that have been stolen, that have been taken away through generations of systemic exploitation. It's giving it back.

Lauren: Hey, everyone. My name is Lauren, and I'm a 23-year-old white, female body who moved to Canada from Birmingham, England in 2004. I spent most of my adolescence, teen and adult years in Orillia, Ontario until I shortly moved into the city of Toronto last year.

This podcast has allowed me to contextualize the relationships between the colonial settler, anti-blackness and Indigeneity, and I'm continuously thankful for the opportunity to listen, understand and engage with the notions of reparations.

During this podcast, I've had the humbling pleasure of conversing with Giniw, Golden Eagle or by his Christian name, Kory Snache, an Anishinaabemowin, as a second language teacher at Mnjikaning Kendaaswin Elementary School in the Chippewas of Rama community.

This conversation helps to understand the varying degrees of reparations in Canada, how they had been implemented and what, other than monetary compensation, is needed in order to make reparations a viable project in Ontario in Canada.

I'm extremely thankful to Giniw for taking the time to participate in this podcast and to have his added and important knowledge to the discussion of reparations and what it means for The Henceforward.

Giniw: How would you describe reparation in Turtle Island? There are a number of different avenues how reparations happen. For Indigenous people, they don't necessarily call them reparations. They'll mask it in different areas.

One way is with land claims. A lot of communities are taking land claims to courts; and because land claims typically include land that is being occupied, say, by descendants of settlers or Canadians or so on and so forth, not only our people as Anishinaabe, but other Indigenous nations cannot access those lands. So, reparations, in that sense, will come in what they call a loss of land use settlement.

Instead of just calling it reparations, they'll give them money for land that they cannot have access to, and access being typically hunting or fishing or families that have lost land used to traditional trap lands or traditional areas where their families used to harvest or where communities used to do social functions like ceremonies or gatherings or holy sites, things like that, spiritual sites. That's one way they mask reparations.

Another way is with treaty negotiations. With treaty settlements, typically there's financial compensation for loss of land use. Again, the same kind of idea but instead of just the land claim, it's different because it has to do with a treaty which is a nation-to-nation agreement. We have our own treaties with the French, with the British, with the Americans, with the Crown and with Canada.

One example I'll use is Rama, in our own community, we've signed 14 different treaties, one of which is in court, in litigation right now, is Williams Treaty, and that covers most of central Ontario. It's a massive, massive area, and it's hundreds of millions of acres. It was signed in 26 clauses, and we just got rights back to one of the clauses. That one clause alone is 200 million acres. The rights we got back to that territory was hunting and fishing.

Out of 200 million acres, 90% of that land is non-usable for our people in terms of it's now private land or it's been developed. It's commercial land and so on and so forth. We can't go there and harvest obviously. So, what the government will offer and what we'll fight for in court is the loss of land use compensation. So that's like reparations. However, depending on the nation and the location of it, people will fight for the actual land back.

Reparations, a big court case years ago was the Supreme Court with residential school survivors. What the government did was they did cast settlement for people that had attended, to prove that they had suffered some type of abuse or harm on the residential schools, and this survivor, depending on the alleged abuse, is given more money. So abuse could be physical, mental, sexual type of abuse. Payouts were given out to those survivors. That was one form of assimilation and actually cultural genocide that was imposed. That's another way reparations happen.

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Right now in other court cases, the Supreme Court is with '60s Scoop survivors, so are the Children's Aid Society backed by the government, but basically this enemy is necessary in excuse to take the native children out of their home and adopt them to non-native Christian families for no reason at all. That's going to the Supreme Court for settlement right now.

Another process that's being looked at again to go to court for the idea of reparations or compensation is children that were taken away to attend school from their home, and it was different from residential school. So, when certain people came of age, they were actually adopted out to non-native, Anglo-Saxon families who are Christians, just literally take them home in their total care. Kids going to attend high school. It will be good for them getting an education, but the underlying factor beneath that was to separate them from their families and their communities to get an education to train them to be good Christian citizens.

My father was taken when he was 13, and he didn't return to Rama until he was 20. So my father is caught up in that, and now that's even being looked at too, is the assimilation process because that was done in three-tier system. So there's reparations for that kind of idea.

Those are the ways in which reparations happen typically for Indigenous people, or resource extraction as well, there's usually reparations for loss of land use or destruction of the land or the nations whose land, the development is happening in. I get a lot of argument from people who are like, "Well, it was a long time ago." You get that argument. "It's not relevant because that was 100 years ago. That was 60 years ago. You have to get over it. You have to keep striving to go forward."

I always put it to people simply. So, if I came up to you and I came and I broke your legs. Let's say you're a runner. Let's say you're an Olympic runner, and that's what you did for your life. I came up and broke your legs and then I just walked away. Now you can never run again, but it's not my fault. You've got to deal with this. So I put it in very simple terms, and people who are responsible need to be held accountable for their actions.

With Indigenous people, shouldn't be people who are affected by assimilation processes that were pushed by the government, and churches have financially benefited from this. If we take money and we don't have access to our lands, we lose a connection. Probably the biggest connection of our people is our connection to the land.

You try to explain it to people, in-depth. Our language when we speak in our own people's language, and it describes everything as living or nonliving. It reflects totally about our spirituality and our connection to the land and how we're all seen as equal, from a bird to a fish to a human being. Everything is equal. Nothing is less or more. If you start giving up that respect to the land, you lose that sense, and it becomes less important.

In terms of the Canadian government playing a role in reparation, 100% they're responsible for what's happened. There's no denying that. The Canadian government paid for church groups to push residential school, to run residential school. They're paid to administer it. Not only that, groups like the Red Cross was also involved. They benefited financially.

It's like sticking a tire in the spokes. You're responsible for sticking a stick in there. You have to take responsibility for your action. It will cost money. The government likes to fight it a lot and do their appeals. If you do research in the court cases, that's apparent.

Ideally, what a lot of us, young Indigenous people, what we talk about, a lot of us want to reestablish our ways in our community, our faith and our belief systems and our language and our traditional harvesting methods and our traditional cultural

practices back in our communities because we believe it can make our people stronger again, physically and mentally and spiritually, so in a lot of different ways.

In terms of administering language immersion programs, that costs money to pay people to administer it. To travel to different places, to meet with elders, to sit down with people who have the knowledge to pass on, that all costs money. The government needs to look at that and finance these type of things, finance these ideas, and a lot of us want there to be Indigenous schools that reinforce all these ideas.

There are a few privately-run schools that are called survival schools. The Mohawk people have a few like the Akwesasne Survival School. These people come out with such a sense of identity because they can identify with who they are. They're very strong-minded people. That is what we want to push for with our people as Anishinaabe, but not only that, across the board for all Indigenous people.

The government should fund those schools because they're responsible for why we don't have those in our community. There's no debating that. There wasn't an option for us. It wasn't our choice. We literally had our hands tied, right? So we would like to see schools and institutions established that will reinforce those ways.

It's almost ironic how institutions that were established to destroy our way of life, we need them now to reestablish it. That is what we find, Indigenous people are finding that as actually working because that's how our people learn nowadays is institution-based learning, but also amalgamating our ways into those institutions.

All across Ontario, our words are embedded into the landscape of this country. There's a deeper understanding, a great history there that hasn't really been touched by a lot of people. By naming streets, by naming certain areas in our language, by explaining where that name comes from, why it's important; people will gain understanding of how we see the world, how we see things.

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In terms of Toronto, if you look at Spadina, that comes from *Ishpadinaa*, which means a rise in the land, so it has to do with the ridgeline and beyond Casa Loma. If you look at Etobicoke, in our language, comes from *Wadoopikaang* which means place of the alders, so there's a lot of alder-type trees there. Mississauga means a large river in our language. *Misi-zaagiing* is what it comes from. That was actually coined for the people that occupied the land.

So, all this history is embedded everywhere. Not a lot of people know these things. It's a beautiful, beautiful history. There's a deeper understanding that connects us to the land in those landscapes. To not acknowledge it is almost to erase our history and make it insignificant. We're seen as second class citizens in our own country.

In Ontario, we get no money for Indigenous language farming. For education, for instance, I get no money to teach Ojibwe. All the resources I have to create, day and night, on my own. The resources that I use were created by other language teachers before me, usually by hand, hand-drawn, handwritten, everything. This all has to do with our language is not seen as viable.

There's that concept, well your language is almost extinct. Why are you trying to save it? I get that even from our own people a lot which is actually sad, even from my students. There's no point to learn that. You might as well speak English. That's what everyone speaks. It's that kind of concept, but they don't understand how it spiritually connects us to everything.

I'll use an example. *Kinoomaage* is a word, to learn, and it has to do with how we draw information from the earth. Ki is the earth. In our language, ki means earth. *Kinoomaage* means you're learning from the earth, and that's the word that we use for that word, learning. We use *Kinoomaage Gamig* for school, but it shows that all of our knowledge came from the earth, historically.

Our spirituality, our understanding of the earth, of everything being seen as having a spirit or not having a spirit is embedded in the language, so we need to preserve it. We need to have funding sources, but until people really decolonize their thinking, see the value in our language, then I can't see things getting really any better.

Most Indigenous languages are on the verge of extinction, but it should focus on not only the victim side of things. We constantly hear about residential school. We constantly hear about '60s Scoop. We constantly hear about how we're the victim of society that it's just being shoved down our throats. We never celebrate our successes, our people's successes. We never hear about how the Anishinaabe people contributed to the world. That should be the shift in focus.

You have to show why people are valuable because even our own kids see that victim side, and majority of Canadians see that victim side because there has to be that shift. It can be embedded into institutions and into schools, but it has to be meaningful, and it has to be taught right by people who actually have the knowledge, not just people who are looking for a position or a job, but people who are in the know.

That is going to be a big challenge because our people are so affected by the assimilation processes that some communities don't even have or barely holding onto that knowledge. [*Anishinaabemowin language*]. Have a good night.

Interviewer: Is reparations a viable project in Canada, and why?

Speaker 7: Of course it is. You know what? I respect the question and the place it's coming from. I would ask why we need to ask a question like that in reference to operation

for the Jews? Do you understand? The principle about reparation is that you look at the victims. If you can identify the victims and you can identify the victimizers, then that's all you need. In the case of the Jews, they were able to identify the victims and the identifier, and they knew what they have to do. So, first, I don't know why there's a complete set of different standard.

Speaker 8: 100% yes. Where there's a will, there's a way. You make the things that you care about happen. I think that the conversations, the words, the education, all of that is so much more present. It's a lot more -- we're talking about it now, and I think that it is super viable in the next few years. Yeah, I think there's nowhere to go but up.

Speaker 9: Yes, it is. If you could spend billions of dollars on the military to, say, bomb countries around the world, we can easily also change our priorities. Our budget is a matter of priorities. If we prioritize the people and what they deserve over our imperial tendencies, it is viable. Not only is it viable in a one-time payment or transfer of payment or like transfer of land, it can be a sustainable solution to funding more post-secondary Indigenous students and add a program to that, that amends to right some of the wrongs that have happened in the past can also be sustainably funded in a much better and holistic way.

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Danielle: I'm Danielle. I identify as a woman of the African diaspora. I was born in Haiti, and I grew up in Quebec. As a result of the displacement of people of African ancestry, we were brought against our will on the Indigenous land of the Arawak in the Caribbean, the traditional territory of the Tainos of Haiti. I wish to acknowledge the legacy of Anacaona whose strength and refusal to submit to the colonial system remains immortalized in the Haitian collective mind and soul.

In this podcast, I'll introduce, as promised, the chair of the Global Afrikan Congress. The GAC is an international umbrella organization created by and for Africans and people of African descent whose goal is to achieve reparation for the exploitation of people of African heritage. In this interview, Cikiah talks about who should be entitled to reparation in a Canadian context. He also gave us some insights on the various forms reparation could take in Canada. He also elaborated on the topics of reparation in Haiti.

Cikiah: Reparation can mean, in context, as all of those people who have experienced the kind of oppression, the kind of mistreatment, there should be reparation; but there are some practical cases within the Canadian context that is much more dynamic than others the prolonged history of oppression, the nature of the oppression and so on. We could examine and should examine all of those cases.

If we looked at the case of the African enslavement, Canada likes to pride itself on the fact that it doesn't participate in the enslavement in Africa. Not so. That is incorrect. In fact, Canada enslaved African people in this soil. Therefore, Canada

is just as guilty as any other country. The difference is the scale and magnitude of the slave trade and enslavement in Canada is not the same as it had been in the United States, but that doesn't exempt Canada from being held responsible for its role in the enslavement of African people.

We know that racism was created to justify enslavement, and we know the lingering effect of what that racism has and how it continues to exist in society and institutions today. So to the extent that we should hold Canada responsible, absolutely Canada must be held responsible.

Then of course we're also talking about the Indigenous people in this country. I'm sure you're familiar with the Truth and Reconciliation Report, and a number of their concrete recommendation came about that the Canadian government should take responsibility and repair the damage. In a sense, that is reparation as well.

Haiti was the first and only country that the enslaved African rose up and overthrew the slave system, only one, and this was in 1804. Now at the time that the Haitian freed themselves from enslavement, the European Countries, the United States, so, all of it together, sent troops back to Haiti to enslave the Africans. They were defeated. They were not successful in doing so.

What the governments in France, what they have done, Haiti had to pay reparations. Haiti itself had to pay France, pay reparation for recognition, to make quote unquote part of the international community. Adventurism into Haiti. They were defeated again. So, here it is. We had to pay the criminal for our freedom.

So, for the case of Haiti, it is particularly important for us because one cannot truly understand Haiti today unless you understand the history of that country. So, Haiti, the poverty in Haiti is created. This was created, first and foremost, by the enslavement. Second, it was created because Haiti had to pay so much of its money that should have been used for development of infrastructure, development of social service for the population. A large part of that money had to go and to pay the criminal for their own freedom. That's why the reparation movement in Haiti is so sensitive.

Of course, as you could recall, about 2003, under President Aristide, they took action, political action against France for reparation. Well, we know the results of that. Aristide was overthrown. The United States and France and Canada in a very critical role. So for those of us who are reparation activists, Haiti was front and center of our hearts, but we need to ensure that just as much be done for the people of Haiti.

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For so many reasons. They set the example, first and foremost, of freedom for us, all of us to follow. And then secondly, Haiti was singled out, in particular, in

punishment for having the courage to fight and win that war. There's no other country in the Western World that suffered as much as Haiti. As I said, Haiti suffered primarily because they overthrew the slave system, and I want to use Haiti as an example to other African countries, in the Caribbean, and in Latin America if we do this and fight and be victorious – what's going to happen to you? We're still paying that price today. Reparation is about repairing the damages. That's what reparation is. Reparation is, well the definition of court is to look at where the people were, before enslavement, oppression, exploitation and, Indigenous people, before colonization, look at where the people were and where they would have been had it not been for the disruption of their society.

In the case of African people in the Caribbean and in Canada who have experienced oppression, we need to say, "Where would we have been had it not been for this level of disruption and exploitation in our society?" So reparation is really about repairing the damage.

In the case of Canada, clearly, First Nation people, nation to nation, the damage that was done, reparation must be paid, compensation must be paid to the society, in keeping what is desired of the average people. Reparation must be a part of restoration self-determination.

Equally for African people, reparation must be our desire to be where we want to be. It is a desire to look at the conditions, social, economic, spiritual and psychological condition of our people, recognizing why we are where we are, as well as recognizing where we could be and where we should be, as a result of making reparation as part of the process of repairing the damage.

Reparation could take many forms. This all depends on where you are, specific geographical location and what you're dealing. In the case of Haiti, reparation should take the form of infrastructure development, housing, transportation, sewage, technological transfer, trade agreement, industrial development, agro-industrial development.

Reparation should take the form of psychological well-being of its people. Let's look at the impact of the slave trade and what's that done to us, psychologically, and how are we going to repair. Health care should be a fundamental part of that reparation because there are the particularities of the struggles of women, children.

So reparation can take many, many forms. Of course a huge component of this is the monetary parts of it. Oftentimes, people confuse reparation in a singular focus area that reparation is only monetary. It's not. A large part of reparation, as African people, we have to repair ourselves. We have to look at the post-traumatic stress syndrome and what has that done to us as a people and how are we going to repair that? That's something we need to do as part of self-reparation.

So, reparation is a huge, big component. It's not one, single factor, something we all have to work out. The legal system, for example, we need to look at the criminal justice system, as a friend of mine likes to say the criminal injustice system. We need to look at why is it the incarceration of First Nation people? Why is it so easy to do to other people? Why is, for example, the distribution of wealth, the way it is?

What happened in the residential school? What happened around land claim issues? The land issues are very, very, very huge for First Nation people. In fact all the land belongs to them. Those are complex legal issues that must be worked out. The land issue is a very important one. The health care issue, housing, jobs, the criminal justice system, all of those are key components for First Nation people, and one that we all should, at least people of African descent should be sensitive to.

We must be sensitive to it because the Western World certainly would not have been what it is. Don't forget that what the Europeans did was steal people's land and then stole us to develop this land as well. We are akin as settlers should be in solidarity with First Nation people as we have been and work towards that common objective of seeking reparative justice.

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Speaker 10: Personally, I'm not really for the idea of reparations. I believe that we need equality and equity. I feel that reparations, because it's about capital and it's about land, that it only serves to -- if groups are not intersectional and if they're not working with each other, then it only creates class, in a way. It's because it's capital and resources, I feel like it only, in a capitalist, an overarching capitalist society that only serves to repeat the system and repeat the cycle of separating, of minorities fighting for capital, minorities fighting each other, minorities arguing with each other over capital. We're fighting for a give-back. I guess, per se, I don't feel like that's what our fight should be for. We talk about reparations but there are a lot of things going on. I guess I'm so concerned about folks asking for reparations and then just continuing to create divides.

Speaker 11: As an individual, I take a special interest in learning about the Indigenous people. You know nothing about their languages or their culture. Considering that they were here before, we, all of us came and saw them here, and more so, the colonizers came and took their land. I say the thieves came and took their land, took their property, took everything from them.

I think more could and should and would be good to do to recognize the importance of their language. You need to recognize the importance that that plays in my life and not come and impose what you think is best for me, without recognizing that before you came along, centuries, years before you came along, I had an identity, an identity that identifies me linguistically, that identifies me physically, morally, and all the components that go together.

So, again, I don't think that Indigenous languages have any kind of a value in a Canadian system. It's almost nonexistent. You look at it as really such an injustice to them, and it's like they're living in their own territory from time to time and yet to them, they're the outsiders. They're the ones who came and so they should adapt.

Speaker 12: It's not up to the government to decide what they should do for them. I think the Indigenous people should tell the government what the government needs to do for them. That's how I see reparations as. It's not necessarily monetary. The Indigenous people may not ask that. I don't know exactly what they want. Each First Nations tribe may have different needs, different ways to address this reparation issue so, yes, the government definitely has something.

Fizza: Hi. I'm Fizza. I'm a Muslim woman who was born in Pakistan and immigrated to Toronto as a young child. I have a strong understanding of how colonial violence impacted my homeland, and I'm recognizing my responsibility as a settler to resist and oppose colonial violence on Canada's First Nations.

The topic of reparations is particularly important to understanding how we can begin the process of decolonization and what that might look like in a very material way. We're grateful to Rebecca and Jeff for speaking with us about the problems, complexities and rampant misinformation that has and continues to surround conversations around reparations for First Nation communities.

Amidst much fervor, in 2015, the findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission forced Canadians to confront the systemic violence and erasure that Canada's Indigenous people endured and continue to endure every single day. Despite an apparent willingness by the current government of Canada to reassess and repair its strainful and oppressive policies towards First Nation communities, Rebecca and Jeff offer a critical insight into misrepresentations of the reconciliation narrative and the glaring deficiencies in current reparation discourses.

Rebecca: [*Anishinaabemowin Greeting*]. My name is Naawakwegiizhigookwe. My name is also Rebecca. My clan is the Eagle, and I'm a Métis Anishinaabe woman. I'm also a first degree Midewiwin woman.

Jeff: [*Traditional Greeting*]. I grew up in Phoenix, Arizona, mother is from Walpole Island, father is from St. Vincent, taught for a few years up in fly-in communities. I have an interesting perspective on a lot of different things and being proud, two very distinct and vibrant cultures, grown up here in United States, in a very impoverished neighborhood, and being bused to another part of the city to receive education. Miigwech.

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Rebecca: First off, there is misinformation about the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement with all of the recent attention around the Truth and Reconciliation Commission which was established as part of that settlement. People think that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was funded by the government as if it's some kind of benevolence, but this was part of the largest class action settlement in Canadian history. That needs to be cleared up, first of all.

Just to say this was not the result of some government that was really sorry for what they did. This was very hard work and tireless work of residential school survivors and advocates and lawyers, who also profited. Yeah, that settlement took a long time and was very hard. It was very limited in its scope too. It was 86,000 survivors of Indian residential schools were part of that settlement, but that did not include any Métis survivors and many Inuit survivors.

The public sees that as Canada giving money to native people. Again, there are all of those stereotypes, and thinking that as if somehow that money is actually directly going into people's hands when we really have to think about how much money went to lawyers and the number of things that actually were involved in that settlement.

Part of that was the Truth in Reconciliation Commission. In that, money was not given to survivors. That was about documenting what happened and documenting survivor stories, those who wanted to share. I think it was only about 7,000, almost 7,000 survivors and their families who shared their stories. That's a very small number compared to the number of people who are part of that settlement.

There were two compensation streams or packages that individuals could access with lawyers helping them. There's one called the Common Experience Payment, and that would give money for each person who attended a residential school, based on the number of years, I think, and it did not account for those years.

There was another avenue for people who experienced extreme abuses, and they would have to prove what it is that happened to them. Also, to access the Common Experience Payment, you would have to be able to demonstrate some proof of where you were and what happened.

Jeff: I know people who had to go back and stand, and these are older people at this point in their lives, in their 50s and 60s. They end up going back, having to recall these horrible things. There's no healing in any part of this process given that First Nations people have never been about healing from a non-Indigenous place. The Canadian government does the most to make sure that's a very painful and slow process. So, reparations didn't come out of any kind of benevolence. It came out of the hard, hard work of Phil Fontaine and other people who put this forward.

Rebecca: Yes, so much work to even get this little bit that did happen but also then more broadly because understanding all of the harms that have been inflicted on native people.

Jeff: It also doesn't fix the real problem which is the misinformation and the racism in this country. When I lived in Thunder Bay, I've heard people say, "Well we give native people lots of opportunities to better themselves." Where? Where are these opportunities? Because I'm a native person, I understand native politics, I studied native things, and so was it somewhere during the British North America Act? Was it somewhere during residential school? Was it somewhere when they took away Nunavites to harvest? Was it when they allowed the potlach? When were we given these great opportunities to even practice our culture?

Rebecca: Thinking about that, over all of this time, all of the harm and how that impacts us now and continues to impact us, we still don't have our lands. We still don't have our languages. These things were taken, and any kind of reparations means we need to get those things back. Usually if we still have some land, we still have some language. Those are the two things that they've really done their best to get rid of. So there is not an amount of money that can account for these harms because they're still ongoing.

[0:40:10]

Jeff: Justin Trudeau says, "Here's a whole bunch of millions and millions of dollars." Now it incites nonnative people to now be more angry at First Nations people that might earmark post his tenure, right? Well, great.

Rebecca: Yeah, this idea that taxpayers' dollars are subsidizing native people's lives is another big misinformation that...

Jeff: People are so angry.

Rebecca: Yeah, that somehow the taxpayers are paying for us when it's native lands that had allowed Canada to exist, native lands that still allow Canada to enjoy the wealth that it enjoys.

Jeff: When this came out, this is a discussion that my native people were having. We're like, "Do we take this money?" It's a paltry sum considering what happened to a lot of people. It's a paltry sum, but it's better than nothing. I'll use my family as an example because this is a pretty common example. We're really poor, on the verge of being homeless. We were homeless for a little while. Any amount of money is a nice amount of money. Sure, we need that because we need to get by. If reparations, we're talking about different reparations, any amount of money, for an impoverished group of people, is the right amount of money. It's not a privilege. It's a necessity. It's survival.

Rebecca: I don't see reparations in the context of native people in Canada because we have treaties, because we have inherent rights. We have treaty rights. We have constitutionally protected rights. There are these things in place that our people have fought for, and we need our land back, but I wouldn't call that reparations because that's not --

Jeff: What did you say? Repatriation.

Rebecca: Repatriation, rematriation of land.

Jeff: Give stuff back.

Rebecca: Give stuff back because you took a hell of a lot of it. We're taking about reparation or repatriation. We're talking about repatriation earlier, and I spoke about that.

I've been to repatriation ceremonies. It took a lot of effort, but many native communities are repatriating remains of ancestors that have been stolen to be studied. There are communities repatriating ceremonial, sacred articles that have been stolen and sold and auctioned, put in museums owned by private collectors. Particularly in the United States, communities are able to get these articles back through their own revenue generation and they're buying them back. They're not getting them back.

So I think it's also thinking about what are the strategies that we need to be coming up with and just moving ahead on when it has to be for us and on our own terms, and it's not always going to be about this relationship because our interests and what it is that we need to be nations and to succeed and to be well again are contrary to the interests of Canada. So, reparations, if that means giving things up, giving stuff back but on our own terms, then, sure. I don't know if there's a word for it. I don't know if there's a word for it.

Jeff: So nothing will pay for that. So I don't think it's money. It's never money. It's going to be education, simply educating non-Indigenous, simply educating Indigenous people because a lot of Indigenous people don't also have the knowledge about where they're from and what happened to them. They don't understand where their anger is coming from and can't articulate it.

Rebecca: We also need to learn about what has happened so that we can contextualize the shit that's still going on, and that's still not happening. That's still not happening, and that's just understanding the history of colonialism in this part of the world. That's not even learning about who we actually are. That's only learning about what's happened to us. If we're only learning about that, that also isn't good enough.

Jeff: Worldwide advisories, deaths in house fires, huffing gas, suicides, these have been created and controlled by government, and they continue to happen. The current

government continues to under fund First Nations is starve them off the land, kill off the food, the buffalo, starve them off the land, march them thousands of miles – Trail of Tears – put them into isolated places, now they’re starving us off the reserves. That’s what’s happening. Then their hope is we can’t stop First Nations people. We’re just too resilient, too strong, continue to be here. We’ll be here forever. The Creator gave us this land. They told us to take care of it. We’ll be here forever.

[0:45:04]

Lauren: I think it’s really interesting to consider reparations not as a universalizing kind of descriptive notion of this is what it means for everyone. I think there are so many different and beautiful voices throughout the podcast. It has become evident that reparations could mean different things for different people, and they can not necessarily be described as reparations, politically, but they can be okay.

Fizza: Yeah, what really came out in our interviews was that reparations still can be monetary, and the monetary part is so important, but not necessarily. In fact, that may not be enough because the systems of oppression are still in place.

Danielle: I also think that the monetary compensation will never replace negative impact of the colonial project, but it is necessary to have monetary compensation since there are so many profits, and we are still living on the stolen Indigenous land and people are taking advantage still today on the land, from the land.

Sefanit: A really important point for me is understanding that it can be monetary, it can be non-monetary. It can be called reparations, or you may want to call it something else. Whatever it is, that is not understood as remedy and not understood as something that can be taken as a solution by which the problem is no longer a problem, where everything then is okay. We’re talking about systems that, oppressive systems that took hundreds of years to be built and so no amount of money, no amount of compensation or immediate Band-Aid solution can immediately get rid of that.

Fizza: What we’re hearing from all of our guests is that decolonization and the project of decolonization have to happen first or at least simultaneously. Because reparations, there’s no genuineness to reparations unless decolonization happens first, and also the important point of recognizing that reparations are not something of the past. They’re not dealing with problems of that past, but it’s very current and still ongoing.

Lauren: I definitely think reparations are not disconnected from decolonization. I think that they go hand-in-hand in the projects that they wish to achieve. I think it’s really interesting to look at how things are packaged very nicely in Canada, how certain documents have been employed and how certain narratives have been employed as well to make it seem as though reparation projects have been successful, or they

are doing critical work when really they are masking the issues at hand and not necessarily allowing anything to progressively move forward.

Sefanit: So, what's new for the future?

Lauren: I think that's really interesting and thought-provoking for us to imagine the alternative futures, alternative perspectives, alternative possibilities, alternative ways forward instead of continuously taking steps backwards.

It's really interesting to think about a notion put forth by Lisa Lowe in one of her books, *The Intimacies of Four Continents*, the notion of a past conditional temporality, the understanding that there are other possibilities or alternative points of knowing that has been silenced or missed or repressed by dominant colonial narratives and to think about this alternative space away from the colonial projects. I think our podcast has been a way of imagining futurity and the henceforward and a way forward that is not necessarily implicated in that colonial project.

The voices in our podcast are creating that alternative space that we're talking about. They're imagining alternative ways of being and alternative ways of moving forward without taking steps back and without relying on the colonial states to do things for them. Because everything with reparations and reparation projects, they're all going to have the desire that the colonial project at the forefront, not what Indigenous people need, what is necessary to make our society better.

Fizza: The interviews really speak to the complexity of what this is, and I think thinking of future, to be honest, that seems really insurmountable in some ways, the complexities that are involved, the times in the past, the oppression that have occurred. How is that even going to be fixed? I guess it isn't going to be fixed. That's the point that was being made, but how do we move to something better?

[0:50:08]

Lauren: Listening to so many different understandings of what reparations are, what they look like, it's hard to envision a one-step project or a one-step design that is going to be successful.

Sefanit: I think, moving forward, it talks about, okay, how do we make reparations work, and how we think about reparations as politic or uhh... and useful politics to think about, imagining this concept of, again, giving stuff back, so essential to decolonization, as we mentioned. So, in imagining these possibilities, these alternative ways, the essence of reparations is a useful tool.

Lauren: I would like to imagine that people in dominant positions that they do privilege from are going to be willing to give things up.

Danielle: We mentioned earlier, we talked about decolonization, and I think the decolonization talks have to start in our minds. For example, expressions such as pioneers of Canada and our native lands, we have to acknowledge even into the narrative of the country, our history, who are the first inhabitants of the land. For me, it's a way to acknowledge and to give back and to be part of the reparation process by the wording of history in Canadian history.

Lauren: And to recognize what history has happened and forgotten.

Sefanit: The conversation is inconclusive. Right? And so what we're doing here is we hope that, moving forward, if you just continue to have conversations, continue to imagine and hope for the henceforward, create the henceforward in the moment. So, as an extension to you who are listening, we invite you to have this conversation among yourselves but also with us. We are on Twitter, so if you have any responses that you would like to share with us, we invite you to tweet at sefanith.

Danielle: Danielle, you may reach me at my Twitter account at reparations_911.

Lauren: You can also contact Lauren at lkhoward@lakeheadu.ca.

Fizza: We look forward to creating the henceforward together. Thank you.

All: Thank you for listening.

Eve: The Henceforward, Indigenous and Black life on Turtle Island.

Speaker: Next stop: Reconciliation.

[0:55:00] End of Audio