

TOWARD A THEORY OF COLLECTIVE RESENTMENT

by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this project is to develop a theory of collective resentment. Collective resentment, on my view, is resentment that is felt and expressed by individuals in response to a perceived threat to a collective to which they belong. This is particularly important for understanding resentments that arise from social vulnerability, resentments which are often about membership within a particular social group. In this thesis, I develop my theory of collective resentment and apply it to understand the resentments of indigenous and settler Canadians in response to the Indian Residential Schools. I then explore the relationship between resentment and different kinds of responsibility, including the responsibility to relinquish inappropriate resentment and the responsibility to give resentments uptake. I conclude that focusing on the resentments that persist in indigenous-settler relations, and specifically the *collective* resentments that dominate the political landscape, brings us a lot further in understanding how to move from hostility and hopelessness toward peaceful coexistence.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In a public talk entitled “Recognition, Reconciliation, and Resentment,” Glen Coulthard, indigenous political scientist and assistant professor of First Nations studies at the University of British Columbia, challenged the conception of resentment as a slave-like condition of the weak and pitiful left to fester and simmer rather than turn into action.¹ The problem with this account of resentment, he argued, is that it characterizes the emotion as hopelessly backwards looking, focusing on an event rather than on a structure as what is resented.² Coulthard claimed that indigenous peoples’ resentment signifies their ‘critical consciousness’ of a sense of justice and injustice, and their unwillingness to reconcile with settlers so long as structural violence remains in place.³ The resentment of indigenous peoples is therefore defensible and righteous; and they should resent, specifically, colonialism and the institutions and people implicit in its reproduction.⁴ Coulthard argued that resentment is a pathway to self-determination that lies in “personal and collective self-affirmation” which moves away from indigenous peoples’ dependency on the actions of colonizers for freedom and self-worth.⁵

Philosophers have come a long way in moving beyond the idea that resentment is a destructive, unhealthy, self-defeating sentiment that only the dependent weak experience. Moral philosophers like Peter Strawson, Jeffrie G. Murphy and Pamela Hieronymi have argued that resentment can be rational, appropriate, and that it signifies one’s respect for oneself, others, and morality. Alice MacLachlan and Margaret Urban

¹ Glen Coulthard, “Recognition, Reconciliation, and Resentment in Indigenous Politics,” Goldcorp Centre for the Arts. Vancouver BC. November 16 2011.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

Walker have broadened the philosophical conversation even further, arguing that resentment can be social and political just as much as it can be about distinct moral injuries. But we have not, as far as I have read, yet understood what it might mean for individuals to share resentment or for an individual to resent in response to a perceived threat to a collective that she belongs to. The purpose of this project is to move beyond conceptions of individual resentment to develop an account of collective resentment that better captures the character and effects of the emotion situations of social and political injustice.

In chapter two, I discuss a notion of moral resentment that begins to make sense of the kind of defensive and righteous resentment Coulthard has in mind, by drawing upon Peter Strawson's "Freedom and Resentment," Jeffrie G. Murphy's "Forgiveness and Resentment," and Pamela Hieronymi's "Articulating an Uncompromising Forgiveness." In the third chapter, I discuss Alice MacLachlan's "Unreasonable Resentments," Margaret Urban Walker's chapter "Resentment and Assurance" in her *Moral Repair* and R. J. Wallace's "Emotions, Expectations, and Responsibility" to show that there can be broader social and political resentments that are not just about distinct moral injuries. I then build on their work, developing an account of shared resentment that explains how individuals' social experiences can give rise to shared resentments between them. I argue that what is shared about the resentment is the *reasons* underlying them.

This raises the question of whether individualistic or even shared conceptions of resentment can adequately capture the resentments of individuals that are about injustices that affect their social group. I argue that there is a kind of resentment that is distinct from

individual and shared resentments in that it is grounded in different reasons. I call this collective resentment. In chapter five, I discuss Daniel Bar-Tal, Eran Halperin, and Joseph De Rivera's "Collective Emotions in Conflict Situations: Societal Implications" to explore the concept of collective emotion in social science literature. I then argue that the conception of collective emotion they have in mind is right in that a collective emotion must be about social context rather than a distinct moral injury, but wrong in that a collective emotion is an accumulation of shared emotions rather than an emotion grounded in different reasons. I explain that the difference between shared and collective emotions is the kind of reasons underlying them. In this chapter, I also explain why an individual's experiencing collective resentment does not entail that each member of the collective must also feel resentful.

The second part of this thesis explores the different kinds of resentment in context, and why it is not only conceptually precise but also useful from a practical and political perspective to differentiate between kinds of resentment. I do this by exploring the resentments of indigenous and settler Canadians in response to the Indian Residential Schools. In Chapter six, I discuss Walker's and especially MacLachlan's arguments that anticipate a move toward theories of shared and collective resentment. I hope to demonstrate the importance of making this move, and in particular how understanding the difference between individual, shared, and collective resentment is crucial for understanding the reasons underlying them. I will argue that a failure to notice and thus address all of these reasons results in our failure to understand how to respond appropriately to different resentments. Chapter seven explores indigenous Canadians' resentment, and chapter eight explores the resentment of settler Canadians.

The third part of this thesis identifies the relationship between collective resentment and moral responsibility. In addition to the idea that resentment is a reactive attitude that is equivalent to holding others morally responsible (following Peter Strawson), I see two additional responsibilities that can emerge when individuals express resentment: (1) the obligation on the part of the resenter to relinquish his or her resentment if the emotion is rationally inappropriate, and (2) the obligation on the part of those resented or the surrounding community to give rationally appropriate resentments uptake. In chapter nine, I define what I mean by the terms reasonable, unreasonable, rational, irrational, appropriate, inappropriate, justified, and unjustified. I also introduce the terms ‘genuine’ and ‘not genuine.’ The definitions will set up the possibility of using these terms to evaluate resentments.

In chapter ten, I discuss the first kind of responsibility that emerges: that of the resenter’s obligation to relinquish his resentment. Chapter eleven evaluates settler resentment. In this chapter I point out how settlers’ resentments are sometimes both genuine and irrational, and how the genuine and rational resentments of settler Canadians are based in unjustified reasons, something that calls for consciousness-raising to help settlers eliminate their problematic attitudes. Chapter twelve discusses for the Canadian context the obligation of settler Canadians to give indigenous Canadians’ resentments uptake.

Given the scope of this thesis, I do not provide an independent argument that defends a particular account of collective responsibility. But I acknowledge that there is room for discussion in this area. Chapter thirteen considers an objection raised by Jan Narveson in his paper “Collective Responsibility” in which he argues that the concept is

dangerous, entailing the mistreatment of individual people. I respond by pointing out how Narveson's worries seem to capture many settler Canadians' attitudes toward responsibility for the Indian Residential Schools; in particular, how many of us resent being burdened with responsibility for past harms when it is unclear just how we can be individually blamed for them. I then address Narveson's worries, suggesting that failing to recognize the presence of collective responsibility in the context in question encourages colonial attitudes that are at the heart of the settler problem. Narveson's discussion, I argue, represents the need for a theory of collective responsibility rather than an objection to it.

In the Canadian context, focusing on the resentments that persist in indigenous-settler relations, and specifically on the shared and *collective* resentments that dominate the political landscape, brings us a lot further in understanding how to move from hostility and hopelessness toward peaceful coexistence.

Chapter 2: Resentment as a Moral Emotion

In a footnote in her paper “Unreasonable Resentments,” MacLachlan points out that resentment ‘re-emerged’ in moral philosophy following Strawson’s ‘groundbreaking’ theory of participant reactive attitudes in his paper “Freedom and Resentment.”⁶ In this paper, Strawson explores the attitudes and reactions of offended parties and beneficiaries that are *attached* to the agent or actions that are their objects, attitudes and reactions such as gratitude, resentment, forgiveness, love, and hurt feelings. These attitudes are attached to their objects in the sense that they depend upon the attitudes and intentions of other human beings toward us.⁷ These emotional reactions are what Strawson calls ‘participant reactive attitudes’ which are “natural human reactions to the good or ill will or indifference of others towards us, as displayed in *their* attitudes and actions.”⁸ Strawson thinks that reactive attitudes we have toward others are equivalent to holding agents morally responsible, and his project is to show that we can make sense of how it is rational to respond to events with reactive attitudes independent from whether the thesis of determinism is true.⁹

Prior to Strawson, the possibility that the thesis of determinism is true threatened the legitimacy of our practices of holding agents morally responsible for their actions; and this is because of the belief that agents who are blamed, condemned, or praised for their actions must *deserve* our blame or praise.¹⁰ Determinism, if true, would mean that

⁶ Alice MacLachlan, “Unreasonable Resentments” in *Journal of Social Philosophy* 41, no.4 (2012):439 footnote 10.

⁷ Peter Strawson, “Freedom and Resentment” in *Freedom & Resentment and Other Essays* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2008), 5.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 13.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 3.

all behaviour whatever is determined¹¹ (i.e., caused to happen by forces outside the control of the agent), and is unclear just how we can hold agents morally responsible for their actions if they did not really ‘choose’ them. But Strawson thinks that his argument avoids this problem: since our commitment to participating in interpersonal relationships is natural and unavoidable, our practices of holding agents morally responsible are also unavoidable. He states:

The human commitment to participation in ordinary inter-personal relationships is, I think, too thoroughly and deeply rooted for us to take seriously the thought that a general theoretical conviction might so change our world that, in it, there were no longer any such things as inter-personal relationships as we normally understand them; and being involved in inter-personal relationships as we normally understand them is precisely being exposed to the range of reactive attitudes and feelings that is in question.¹²

So, on Strawson’s view, to hold an agent morally responsible for her actions is to experience a participant reactive attitude toward her; and insofar as this practice is unavoidable, blaming and praising agents for their actions is unavoidable. The participant reactive attitude that Strawson uses to demonstrate his argument is *resentment*, which arises in “situations in which one person is offended or injured by the action of another.”¹³ So when you, a morally responsible agent, perpetrate a moral injury directed towards me, I naturally respond with resentment that expresses my disapproval of your ill will toward me. On Strawson’s account, there are two special considerations that ‘mollify’ resentment: (1) cases where the circumstances were abnormal such that the agent ‘couldn’t help it’ or ‘was pushed,’ for example; and (2) cases where the

¹¹ Strawson, 10.

¹² Ibid., 11.

¹³ Ibid., 7.

circumstances were normal, but the agent is psychologically abnormal or morally undeveloped—e.g. schizophrenic, warped, deranged, or a child.¹⁴

In the former case, we acknowledge that our participant reactive attitudes are normally appropriately held toward the particular agent, but that in this particular case she was not fully or at all responsible for her behaviour.¹⁵ In the latter, we view the agent as incapable of meeting our demands for goodwill; so we adopt an ‘objective’ attitude toward the agent, seeing him as an object of social policy in need of treatment instead of as a morally responsible agent.¹⁶ In these cases, the agent is not morally responsible for the moral injury; and since resentment *just is* holding agents responsible, resentment is not appropriate. We adopt an objective attitude in these cases not because of a ‘theoretical conviction’ that the thesis of determinism is true, but for different reasons in different cases that stem from our ordinary interpersonal attitudes in which we recognize that the actor’s behaviour really was, for some reason or another, beyond his control.¹⁷

So Strawson thinks that we do not have a choice as to whether we will hold agents morally responsible, that is, react *emotionally* to all kinds of events in which circumstances are normal and agents are not incapacitated in some way; and the reason is that holding others morally responsible by our reactive attitudes is to engage in part of the general human framework of human life.¹⁸ This means that even if we think everything is determined or inevitable, we do not have the choice to eschew reactive attitudes like resentment. So the question of whether it is rational to respond with resentment and other reactive attitudes when circumstances are normal and the person is a culpable moral

¹⁴ Strawson, 8.

¹⁵ Ibid., 7.

¹⁶ Ibid., 9.

¹⁷ Ibid., 13.

agent is therefore useless; we cannot rationally criticize people for doing what is built into their very nature.¹⁹

So, on this account, to hold a person morally responsible just is to experience a participant reactive attitude toward him. And reactive attitudes, including resentment, are themselves *moral* attitudes or emotions by virtue of being tied up with moral concepts like disapprobation, condemnation, and punishment and by signifying an agent's acknowledgement of his own membership within a moral community.²⁰ When we feel resentment or some other negative reactive attitude, we are expressing a moral demand for goodwill that we think has been disregarded by a member of the moral community; and our emotion involves temporarily withholding our own goodwill toward whoever has wronged us.²¹

Following Strawson, contemporary moral philosophers have characterized resentment as a *moral* emotion. Alice MacLachlan calls this view the 'standard' account of resentment, which understands it to be a kind of anger that is experienced in response to a kind of threat: an injury, insult, or harm that violates one's moral rights. She explains that on Jeffrie G. Murphy's widely accepted account, resentment is a protest that expresses the resenter's commitment to the Kantian value of respect for persons, the demand that she herself ought to be respected, and respect for morality in general.²² The emotion calls upon the perpetrator to acknowledge the injury as a wrong, and to apologize or make reparations; and it calls upon the surrounding community to affirm the

¹⁸ Strawson, 13.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 21.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 22.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Alice MacLachlan, "Unreasonable Resentments" in *Journal of Social Philosophy* 41, no.4 (2012):425

resenter's moral worth through mechanisms of justice.²³ So the *object* of resentment, according to the standard account, is the perpetrator of a distinct moral injury.

Jeffrie G. Murphy's "Forgiveness and Resentment" explores the nature of forgiveness and resentment with Strawson's account of participant reactive attitudes in mind. In Murphy's account resentment is a negative feeling and in particular a kind of anger or hatred directed toward another person who is responsible for perpetrating a moral injury or harm.²⁴ It signifies that one has self-respect and that one cares about and appreciates morality in general; and it expresses one's acknowledgement that others are also moral agents deserving of respect.²⁵ So in resenting you stand up for the judgments that you ought not to be wronged, that you respect the moral value that people ought to treat others with goodwill, and that you care about or value the opinion of the agent who has wronged you (or, in Strawson's language, you expect that other moral agents will treat you with goodwill, and you *care* that they do). In Pamela Hieronymi's terms, resentment is a *protest* against the wrongfulness of a deed and an insistence upon the moral significance of both oneself and the perpetrator.²⁶

Hieronymi uses the language of 'rationally undermining justified resentment,' which she thinks constitutes genuine forgiveness. If the threatening claim against the victim's moral worth communicated by the moral injury no longer persists (e.g. because the wrongdoer apologizes), then the reasons grounding the victim's resentment are undermined (i.e., the resentment is *rationally undermined*). Resentment, then, loses its

²³ MacLachlan, 426.

²⁴ Jeffrie G. Murphy, "Forgiveness and Resentment" In *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* (1982):504, 506.

²⁵ Murphy, 505.

²⁶ Pamela Hieronymi, "Articulating an Uncompromising Forgiveness" in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* LXII, no. 3 (2001):530.

point; it is no longer rationally appropriate to have. When someone genuinely forgives, she notices that resentment is no longer appropriate and makes the rational move from resentment to forgiveness for moral reasons, e.g. the reason that a sufficient apology has been made. But, importantly, she still remains committed to the three judgments expressed by her resentment: that she ought not to be wronged, that she respects the moral value that others ought to be treated with good will, and that she cares about the opinion of the wrongdoer.

Hieronymi also uses the language of the ‘rational justification’ for resentment,²⁷ implying that there can be rational and irrational resentments. And her assessment of the rationality of resentment is a *moral* assessment: if a threat to the victim’s moral worth persists, then she ought to continue to protest that threat by continuing to express resentment; otherwise, not.²⁸ So when we say of a moral agent that she ‘ought to resent’ or ‘ought to forgive,’ we are making moral judgments about what response we think is morally appropriate in some situation or another.

Like Hieronymi, Murphy thinks we can rationally criticize people’s resentment and forgiveness. He argues that resentment can be inappropriate in a way similar to the way in which agents are irrational when they have false or unreasonable beliefs, or because of the resenter’s *standing*. For example, Murphy states, “I do not have *standing* to resent or forgive you unless I have myself been the victim of your wrongdoing.”²⁹ He thinks that it would be ‘ludicrous’ for him to claim that he has decided to forgive Hitler for his treatment of the Jews; that’s not the sort of thing Jeffrie G. Murphy has standing to

²⁷ Hieronymi, 535.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Murphy, 506.

resent and thus forgive.³⁰ Resentment and forgiveness in these cases are rationally inappropriate.

But resentment on these accounts can also be rationally *appropriate*: one's failing to have the reactive attitude of resentment in certain cases demonstrates a lack of self-respect, and conveys emotionally that one either does not think one has rights or does not take them seriously.³¹ It is also a failure to care about moral rules in general, and about one's own moral personality as an end-in-oneself.³² The thought is that, in cases where you have been morally wronged in some way, resentment is the appropriate response; and failing to resent or forgiving too quickly warrants some kind of criticism.

More specifically, Murphy suggests and Hieronymi agrees that forgiveness is only rationally appropriate when the wrongdoer is separated from the act in a way that restores moral equality between the agent and victim of moral injury (i.e. that restores respect for oneself, morality, and others). He argues that we can salvage the goal for 'moral order' in forgiving "if we can draw some distinction between the immoral *act* and the *agent*: for then we can follow St. Augustine's counsel and 'hate the sin but not the sinner.'"³³ For example, in repentance, the insulting message communicated by the immoral act is no longer present because the wrongdoer no longer endorses it; and so the victim of moral injury can join the wrongdoer in "condemning the very act from which he now stands emotionally separated."³⁴

Murphy's and Hieronymi's projects are to articulate the conditions for genuine forgiveness: to actually forgive, one must forswear resentment for moral *reasons*

³⁰ Murphy, 506.

³¹ Ibid., 505.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

compatible with self-respect, respect for morality, and respect for other moral agents.³⁵ Moral reasons that Murphy thinks rationally justify an agent's forgiving other than repentance include (1) that the wrongdoer didn't really feel contempt or ill will toward you, but really had good motives and (2) the wrongdoer has endured enough suffering, and he has been brought low and humbled.³⁶ But the important point is that what makes the emotion of 'forgiveness' appropriate on Murphy's account is one's *reasons* for forgiving. If I forgive an unrepentant abuser of domestic violence for the reason that I want him to *love* me, then I do not have good moral reasons for forgiving. I have forgiven not because there no longer exists a threat to my moral worth communicated by the moral injury, or because the abuser feels genuine remorse and has apologized, or because the surrounding community has affirmed my equal membership within the moral community by condemning the abuser's actions toward me; rather, I have forgiven for non-moral reasons and perhaps morally inappropriate reasons, reasons that communicate my desire to be loved over expressing and standing up for my self-respect.

Although my project is to explore and broaden our understanding of the nature of resentment, Murphy's account of how we can criticize people's forgiveness anticipates my argument about how we can rationally criticize resentment: by assessing whether the reasons underlying the resentment are justified. And in a similar way, I think that what makes resentment rationally appropriate is one's *reasons* for experiencing it. But I first want to address recent literature by Alice MacLachlan, Margaret Urban Walker, and R. J.

³⁴ Murphy, 509

³⁵ Ibid., 508.

³⁶ Ibid., 509. Another reason that Murphy mentions is *humiliation* where the wrongdoer brings himself low or raises the victim of moral injury up so that the victim who has been degraded is now on the same 'level' as the wrongdoer, and moral equality has been restored.

Wallace that suggests that resentment is a broader social and political emotion and can signify non-moral values and respond to non-moral violations. Resentment, on these authors' views, is not always about a distinct moral injury.

Chapter 3: Expanding Resentment

Peter Strawson, Jeffrie G. Murphy, Pamela Hieronymi, and others understand resentment to be a moral emotion that involves standing up for one's moral commitments. As Alice MacLachlan puts it, these philosophers have demonstrated how resentment "can be good and even virtuous, both an emotional 'commitment to certain moral standards' and, simultaneously, a testimony to that commitment."³⁷ MacLachlan and Margaret Urban Walker have challenged this view in similar ways. They have argued that resentment can be social and political, signifying an agent's normative commitments and expectations that are not merely moral in nature. In "Unreasonable Resentments," MacLachlan distinguishes between moral and other forms of resentment that deserve our attention. She argues that resentments that meet Murphy's or similar criteria are often considered 'reasonable'—meaning that we should take instances of these things seriously as resentments—and resentments that share the phenomenology of 'moralized resentment' but do not meet the distinctly moral criteria 'unreasonable.'³⁸

MacLachlan argues that we need to take seriously the forms of resentment which philosophers typically have classified as 'unreasonable,' broadening our conception of what resentment involves.³⁹ The first reason we need to do this is that the standard account is descriptively inadequate; it requires three conditions that anger must meet in order for it to qualify as 'resentment,' and there are plausible counter-examples to each of these conditions.⁴⁰ Resentment, to meet the conditions of the standard account, is necessarily self-pertaining, concerns itself only with moral rights, and responds to distinct

³⁷ MacLachlan, 422.

³⁸ Ibid, 423.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 428.

occasions of injury.⁴¹ But MacLachlan points out that we do not always resent injuries that are to ourselves. Sometimes we resent injuries to others, but injuries that we take *personally*.⁴² Second, resentment does not always express moral norms. We sometimes resent social and political norms and expectations, some of which include expectations about our membership within a particular community, stability, and security; and even norms about social etiquette, custom, and fashion.⁴³ MacLachlan states:

There is a danger in collapsing all norms to moral norms, both for the integrity of the moral and the integrity of the political or social. In a rich life, other kinds of value will have hold on us and will govern the expectations we have of our surrounding environment.⁴⁴

And later:

To insist that underneath every vague sense of unfairness or grievance is a moralized claim about a right violated or an injury done stretches these words past their useful meanings.⁴⁵

R.J. Wallace shares similar worries with ‘overmoralizing’ resentment and other reactive attitudes. He argues that even though these emotions are typically caused by distinctly moral beliefs, they need not be so caused.⁴⁶ So, Wallace thinks, we should distinguish between moral reactive attitudes and nonmoral reactive attitudes by examining what kind of beliefs underlies them.⁴⁷ Moral resentment, then, can be explained by moral beliefs, and nonmoral resentments can be explained by nonmoral beliefs.⁴⁸ The beliefs underlying the resentments are what gives the emotions

⁴¹ MacLachlan, 428.

⁴² Ibid., 429.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 435.

⁴⁶ R.J. Wallace, “Emotions, Expectations, and Responsibility,” in *Free Will and Reactive Attitudes: Perspectives on P.F. Strawson’s “Freedom and Resentment,”* ed. Michael McKenna and Paul Russel (Surrey, England: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2008), 158.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 164.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

propositional content and are what we evaluate in considering whether the emotions are moral or nonmoral.

So, these authors agree, it is not just moral norms and expectations but also social and political norms and expectations that can give rise to resentment. The second condition, that resentment necessarily concerns itself with *moral* rights, is one that they reject. MacLachlan's worry with the *third* condition resentment must meet to be counted as 'reasonable' on the standard account, that it responds to distinct occasions of moral injury, is that this type of injury is not the only kind of thing that we resent. For example, one can resent needing care and the vulnerability that goes along with it, a painful disease, changes to one's home or neighbourhood, a difficult or unrewarding job, and even foreign accents.⁴⁹ It is also possible to resent circumstances, the culmination of events over time, such things as practices that marginalize women in a patriarchal society—all of which are things not reducible to specific acts of wrongdoing.⁵⁰

Moreover, as Walker argues, resentment's anger can be expressed toward individuals other than the wrongdoer who are in a position to reaffirm the standards underlying the resenter's anger, and to ratify the judgment that he or she has been wronged or that a normative expectation has been violated.⁵¹ So unlike Murphy who thinks that members of the surrounding community are involved in individuals' resentment in the sense that they can *address* them, Walker thinks that the surrounding community can actually be the objects of resentment when they fail to respond appropriately to the perceived wrong.

⁴⁹ MacLachlan, 428.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

It is also possible to resent another person's 'riding free' or profiting in excessive ways from the roles, systems, or cooperative practices that others who do not enjoy such profits comply with.⁵² For example, I might experience resentment that arises from my position as a poor student struggling to make ends meet amongst other students whose parents pay for their education. Walker worries that describing the objects of resentment as "harmful and insulting treatment intentionally inflicted" brings to mind images of abusive and disrespectful treatment, pushing aside the pervasiveness of resentment in everyday life.⁵³ In the student case, there is no moral injury that is inflicted by a perpetrator, but surely there is a *resentment*.

In the foregoing ways, the standard account of resentment overlooks socially and politically motivated forms of resentment, and MacLachlan thinks that this is especially the case with resentments that arise from social vulnerability and experiences of injustice.⁵⁴ On the standard account, one's resenting social and political circumstances that are not inflicted intentionally by perpetrators would not count as a reasonable resentment. MacLachlan argues that the failure of the standard account to make sense of these resentments as 'reasonable,' or resentments that we should take seriously, contributes to the fact that injustices are maintained by good-intentioned members of dominant social groups who lack the "imaginative and conceptual resources" to recognize the situations as *unjust*.⁵⁵ What's more, MacLachlan argues, the failure of dominant groups to recognize injustices generates *more* resentment experienced by

⁵¹ Margaret Urban Walker, "Resentment and Assurance" in *Moral Repair: Reconstructing Moral Relations after Wrongdoing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 135.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 123.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 122.

⁵⁴ MacLachlan, 431.

marginalized members of society such as undocumented immigrants, those suffering from mental illness, and indigenous Residential School survivors and their descendants.⁵⁶

In these cases, according to Walker, resentment can be accompanied by what she calls ‘second-order fear’: fear of the threat of continuous injury or affront, since what ‘protected’ the resenter from being threatened is “destroyed, ineffective, or in doubt.”⁵⁷ Often, when an individual from a vulnerable group resents, she is alienated and marginalized; and protesting places her outside of our consideration as “an old fogie, a wacko, a malcontent, a whiner, a bitch.”⁵⁸ In other words, the resentments arising from a position of social vulnerability are not taken seriously; they are, in MacLachlan’s terms, ‘unreasonable.’

So MacLachlan and Walker think that we must move beyond our standard conception of what counts as reasonable resentment, recognizing the social and political norms and expectations that ground individuals’ experiences of the emotion. Resentment, then, not only signifies one’s moral values and self-respect, but what ‘matters’ to us generally, what we take to be acceptable treatment, and what we believe we are ‘entitled to’—even if these resentments cannot be articulated as responses to distinct moral injuries.⁵⁹ For example, I might experience resentment because I believe that I am entitled to a nicer apartment, though this resentment cannot be articulated as resentment toward a moral agent who is responsible for my not having a nicer apartment. Or, I might resent coffee shop staff for not meeting my expectation to provide quick rather than friendly service. But I cannot articulate this resentment as an expression of a *moral*

⁵⁵ MacLachlan, 432.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 434.

⁵⁷ Walker, 132.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 133.

expectation that culpable moral agents intentionally did not meet. It is a normative expectation about what sort of customer service I expect.

Walker calls these ‘normative expectations’, i.e., our expectations of people to comply with the norms we accept; and in cases where the object of resentment is a *person*, resenting implies the belief that those who transgress one’s norms and expectations should and *could* have done otherwise.⁶⁰ Following Peter Strawson, by expecting that others treat us in ways that we think are appropriate, we are expressing that we think they are *responsible* for doing so; and we ‘hold’ them responsible for failing to live up to these expectations.⁶¹

But now it is unclear whether one’s failure to live up to a normative expectation when the expectation is not distinctly moral is a *moral* failure, and so talk of moral responsibility in the sense of being morally *blameworthy* for the reasons grounding individuals’ resentment in these cases might be misguided. But while philosophers like Strawson, Murphy, and Hieronymi may have ‘overmoralized’ resentment by suggesting that it *always* responds to a distinct moral injury and is equivalent to holding some agent morally responsible, I think that MacLachlan, Walker, and Wallace have *undermoralized* resentment, eliminating part of what makes resentment more than just anger: the perception of a threat to oneself or to a group that one belongs to. So although these authors are right that resentment is not only about distinct moral injuries, they are wrong to suggest that resentments about feelings of being treated unfairly or unjustly are not expressions of *moral* expectations. Broader social and political resentments grounded in

⁵⁹ MacLachlan, 435-6.

⁶⁰ Walker, 125.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

feelings that circumstances are ‘unjust’ or ‘unfair’ express one’s *moral* commitment to fair treatment of all.

These resentments also call our attention to moral responsibilities on the part of individuals and collectives to address the reasons for the resentment. So although they are not always directed toward perpetrators of moral injuries, they call for a response by individuals and sometimes collectives. As Murphy suggests, these resentments will often call for the surrounding community to affirm the standards underlying the resenter’s anger and address the resentment through mechanisms of justice. So there is an important relationship between resentments about broader social and political circumstances and our moral responsibilities as individual and collective agents to take those resentments seriously, and to give them an appropriate response.

I wish to build on MacLachlan’s and Walker’s work, especially their focus on resentments arising from social vulnerability. I part ways with them in that I think resentment is always moral, but I remain committed to their projects of expanding our conception of resentment to understand broader social and political resentments that are not always responses to distinct moral injuries. These resentments are ones that are often common amongst individuals who share the same social position, and we might best understand them as *shared*. So in the following section, I develop an account of shared resentment.

Chapter 4: Sharing Resentment

It should be noticed that broader social and political resentments often arise from *group* vulnerability. Women, individuals suffering from mental illness, or indigenous Canadians might experience resentment that arises from their social vulnerability as members of a particular group in which others belong too. The cause of resentment is what is common amongst individuals who share resentment. For example, *women* might share feelings of resentment that arise from being vulnerable to domestic violence, being paid less than men for work, being denied reproductive rights, and so on. *Mentally ill* individuals might share feelings of resentment that arise from being stigmatized as “crazy” or “unstable,” and being denied decision-making capabilities about their own lives and medical treatment. So resentment is not limited to individual experiences of anger directed toward a particular agent responsible for perpetrating a moral injury; members of groups who are in the same social or political position can *share* resentment because their resentments are *caused* by their shared social experiences.

Understanding resentment becomes even more complicated when we notice that individuals are often part of more than one vulnerable group. One might be a disabled elderly woman, a black woman, or a mentally ill black person. The experiences of these individuals, including their resentments, cannot be captured by pointing to their shared experiences with members of just one of the groups to which they belong, or by adding up their reasons for resentment arising from their experiences as a part of each group. The problem is similar to what feminists have called the ‘additive analysis’ of sexism and racism. This method simply adds up the sources of an individual’s oppression, for example, a black woman’s experiences of being both black and a woman. But as

Elizabeth Spelman has argued, the additive method distorts black women's experiences of oppression by misunderstanding the important differences between contexts in which black and white women experience sexism.⁶² The resentments of multiply vulnerable individuals are likely complex in a similar way. But the difficulty of understanding intersecting resentments should not deter us from attempting to make sense of what resentment can look like in these cases. Although this is important, I will not attempt to do it here. My purpose here is to develop an account collective resentment to understand what the emotion is expressing in situations of social and political injustice.

I have argued that individuals share resentment when it is caused by shared experiences. Shared resentment also expresses shared norms, beliefs and expectations in the way that MacLachlan and Walker have described. I and another woman might think that the *norm* that women "ask for it" when they are subject to sexual exploitation is harmful, and if we are both targets of sexual exploitation our shared resentment will express our disapproval of that norm. Or, we might believe that women and men ought to be treated equally in the workplace, and if we are not treated as such our resentments will express our shared belief. Of course, what resentment expresses can also be moral commitments like the Kantian respect for persons, self-respect, and respect for moral values as in Murphy's version of the standard account. More generally, when individuals or groups fail to abide by the normative expectations held by other individuals or groups, resentment ensues.

⁶² Elizabeth V. Spelman, "Gender & Race: The Ampersand Problem in Feminist Thought," in *Oppression, Privilege, & Resistance: Theoretical Perspectives on Racism, Sexism, and Heterosexism*, ed. Lisa Heldke and Peg O'Connor (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill 2004), 493.

The cause of resentment in cases of individual or shared resentment is what individuals could appeal to in explaining why they feel resentment, or what philosophers would say ‘grounds’ their resentment. If you ask me why I resent living in a patriarchal society, I might respond by saying “for the reason that I have been subject to sexual exploitation.” So whatever causes a person’s resentment can become for that person a *reason* for experiencing it. We might also add that if I have in *fact* been subject to sexual exploitation—the thing that caused my resentment—my reason is legitimate or justified. In shared resentment, the cause of and thus reasons for experiencing resentment are the same as the causes and reasons that might induce others belonging to the same group to experience resentment. In other words, what is *shared* about the resentment are the reasons underlying it.

So I take reasons to be what is constant in these cases; that is, what individuals sharing resentment over time in fact *share*. And my concern for the purpose of this particular discussion is the shared resentments of individuals belonging to the same social group. But shared resentment is not always caused by common experiences of social vulnerability. For example, if a stranger steals my backpack and your wallet while we are sitting in a coffee shop, we will resent the stranger together and our resentment will be shared. This is because our resentment was caused by the same experience: that of having our property stolen. Our resentment is thus explained by the same reason, and we would say, “We resent that person for the reason that he stole our belongings.” So shared resentment need not arise from individuals’ shared position of social vulnerability; two or more individuals who do not belong to the same social group can share resentment if their resentment is grounded in the same reasons.

Resentment is based in reasons, but it is also intentional: it is about something, and it has an object or objects. MacLachlan and Walker have explained that resentment's *objects* can be distinct moral injuries, social and political circumstances, or even the surrounding community that fails to affirm the resenter's judgment expressed by his anger. In shared resentment, the object of resentment need not be constant. One mentally ill person might resent his doctor for not taking him seriously, another might resent his family for having him diagnosed as a child, or one might even resent the pharmaceutical industry for shaping the 'norm' that psychotropic drugs are the most appropriate form of treatment for mental disorders in North America. Although all three mentally ill individuals might share the same resentment because it is grounded in the same reason—that they have been discriminated against because of their mental illnesses—the *objects* of their resentment differ. For the first mentally ill person, the object of his resentment is his doctor, for the second, the object of his resentment is his parents, and for the third, the pharmaceutical industry. The reason individuals sharing the same resentment can express the emotion toward different objects is that people's lives are different; the objects of an individual's resentment can depend on whom she comes into contact with, her life history, and her social and economic position.

Martha Nussbaum has suggested something similar. In "Emotions as Judgments of Value and Importance," she points out that emotions are 'localized' in the sense that their objects are seen as important for the role they play in one's own life.⁶³ For example, in her paper Nussbaum describes her own grief about the death of her mother, the *object* of her emotion, but my grief's object might be a failed relationship or my grandfather's

death. Similarly, a homeless mentally ill person might resent “falling through the system,” while a middle class mentally ill person might resent being stigmatized in the workplace. But these mentally ill individuals share resentment based in the reason that they are discriminated against. Or one woman might resent her husband for subjecting her to sexual violence, while another woman might resent being sexually harassed by her male colleague at work. But their resentment is shared because it is based in the reason that they were subject to sexual exploitation. So the objects of shared resentment can differ between individuals who share it based on their unique life histories, projects, and statuses; and this is because emotions are the kind of thing that reflect what we experience and what is important to us in our own lives. But if the reasons grounding individuals’ resentment is the same, connecting them in their emotional experiences, then the resentment is *shared*.

The project of moving beyond the standard account of resentment to understand broader social and political resentments, and in particular resentments arising from social vulnerability, raises the question of whether individualistic or even shared conceptions of the emotion are adequate to make sense of what it is expressing in situations of perceived injustice. Often, one’s membership within a socially vulnerable *group* is what these resentments are about: being marginalized *because of* being a woman, a mentally ill person, or an indigenous Canadian. I think that understanding these resentments as individual or even shared cannot adequately capture what grounds them. So in the following section, I develop an account of collective resentment that is distinct from individual and shared resentment in that it is grounded in different *reasons*.

⁶³ Martha Nussbaum, “Emotions as Judgments of Value and Importance,” in *Thinking about Feeling: Contemporary Philosophers on Emotions*, ed. Robert C. Solomon (New

Chapter 5: Collective Resentment

With shared resentment, the agents are individuals who share the emotion with other individuals because of their shared reasons. Often, individuals will share experiences that cause them to have the same reasons for resentment because they are members of a particular social group. But it is not shared resentment that unites individuals as a group; in other words, group identification comes first and resentment comes *out* of it. What individuates groups, particularly *socially vulnerable* groups, is individuals' membership in particular social categories. These social categories, like that of 'women' and 'mentally ill' are not dichotomous; they do not, in Marilyn Frye's terms, "divide a certain domain into two groups which are mutually exclusive and exhaustive, and the two groups are seen as each other's opposite."⁶⁴ So it's not that women and men, mentally ill and mentally healthy individuals are opposite categories in the sense that each person is either wholly in one and thus necessarily not in the other, having the necessary and sufficient conditions of one and not having any of the necessary and sufficient conditions of the other. There are no 'essence' of women such that all women have the essential properties that constitute a 'woman'; there is no 'essence' of mentally ill either such that all individuals that fit into this category has the essential properties that *define* it.

There is a danger that the ambiguity about how to individuate between groups will lead us to the conclusion that we must reject the existence or practical significance of recognizing social categories. These social categories are *constructed*, that is, they do not exist prior to our organizing and classifying them by recognizing patterns of similarities

York, NY: Oxford University Press 2004), 189.

and differences between what we end up calling ‘groups’ or ‘collectives.’ But we do identify with these social categories, and I want to argue with Frye that they “serve as loci of political solidarity and coalition.”⁶⁵ So I would like to acknowledge the problem that there will be tough cases, cases in which it is unclear just how to define the collectives that we are talking about.⁶⁶ For the examples that follow, I will set these issues aside for the purpose of argument. But I come back to this issue later, addressing the question of how we can define the collective ‘settler Canadian,’ which as we will see, is particularly difficult and important for our purpose.

I am prepared to accept that the concept of collective resentment is perhaps even more counter-intuitive and metaphysically troubling than notions of collective intention and collective responsibility. I *am* arguing that in collective resentment, the resentment belongs to the *group*, not merely to the individuals that constitute it. I am *not*, however, arguing that a collective can have an emotional experience independent from members of the collective. Rather, collective resentment is resentment that is felt and expressed by individuals in response to a perceived threat to a collective to which they belong.

Social scientists have at least begun to talk about collective emotions. In “Collective Emotions in Conflict Situations: Societal Implications,” social psychologist Daniel Bar-Tal, PhD student Eran Halperin, and psychologist Joseph De Rivera provide a

⁶⁴ Marilyn Frye, “Categories and Dichotomies” in *Encyclopedia of Feminist Theories* ed. Loraine Code (New York, NY: Routledge, 2000), 74.

⁶⁵ Marilyn Frye, “Category Skepticism and its Cure: A Comment on Jose Medina’s ‘Identity Trouble: Disidentification and the *Problem of Difference in Symposia on Gender, Race, and Philosophy* 1, no. 1 2005:2.

⁶⁶ For a discussion of the ambiguities surrounding the identifications of black people in Canada as settlers or indigenous allies, see Zainab Amadahy and Bonita Lawrence, “Indigenous People and Black People in Canada: Settlers or Allies?” in *Breaching the Colonial Contract: Anti-Colonialism in the US and Canada* ed. Arlo Kempf (Springer Science and Business Media, 2009), 105-136.

conceptual framework for thinking about collective emotions, one which they acknowledge is at only its ‘primary stages’ in social science research.⁶⁷ A collective emotion, on their view, is the accumulation of shared emotional responses to a societal event or sociopolitical conditions.⁶⁸ Unlike individual emotions, which are related to physiological mechanisms, collective emotions are formed in response to experiences in a particular *social context*, experiences of a threatening, stressful, or unjust nature; and elements involved in creating the social context include the physical environment, social, political and cultural elements, ideas, shared beliefs, economic systems, and institutions that constitute a society.⁶⁹ Examples of collective emotions that the authors discuss include fear, hatred, and hope; and I suggest that resentment can be another. But crucially, Bar-Tal, Halperin, and De Rivera suggest that the emotion that prevails becomes a “part of the lens through which group members interpret conflictive or peaceful events.”⁷⁰

I think that these authors’ approach to understanding how emotions can be collective is a good start to understanding collective resentment. It seems that collective resentment can be distinguished from individual resentment in that it is grounded in social conditions rather than in particular slights against individual persons. But it is somewhat unclear, on Bar-Tal, Halperin, and De Rivera’s account, how we can distinguish between shared and collective emotions.⁷¹ On their view, it seems that

⁶⁷ Daniel Bar-Tal, Eran Halperin, and Joseph De Rivera, “Collective Emotions in Conflict Situations: Societal Implications” in *Journal of Social Issues* 63, no. 2 (2007):442.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 446.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 447.

⁷¹ To be fair, the authors are examining collective emotion not from the philosopher’s position of trying to understand whether or how we can make sense of collective agency

collective emotion somehow arises from shared emotion that *accumulates* and becomes characteristic of the group, but that both shared emotions and collective emotions arise from social context. But I wish to distinguish further between shared emotions and collective emotions to understand how the reasons underlying them are different. So I will clarify what I take to be the difference between shared and collective resentment before illustrating how indigenous-settler relations in Canada are dominated by reciprocal collective resentments.

Recall that it is the *causes* of shared resentment that individuals experience together, and those causes become reasons when individuals appeal to them in explaining why they feel resentment. If the reasons for resentment are legitimate, that is, if they are not based in things like false beliefs and distorted memories, then the resentment is appropriate. So, similar to Murphy's and Hieronymi's accounts of resentment and forgiveness that allow us to criticize the appropriateness of these emotions based on whether the agent has *moral* reasons for resenting or forgiving, I think that we can evaluate the appropriateness of resentment based on the reasons, moral or otherwise, underlying it. But importantly, the reasons grounding individual and shared resentment are reasons for *individuals*.

In collective resentment, what causes and hence what can be appealed to as reasons for resentment are reasons for a *collective*, not reducible to reasons for individual victims of mistreatment. The reasons individuals can appeal to in explaining their collective resentment will therefore not make sense independent from appealing to

or the causes and objects of emotion, but from a psychological and sociological framework based on empirical data. I do not mean to criticize their account, but to add to it, making sense of just where the distinction between shared and collective resentment lies.

features of the collective. To illustrate this, suppose two women are victims of sexual violence and they feel resentment toward the perpetrators. Their resentments are caused by ‘being the target of sexual violence,’ thus the reason each woman would appeal to in explaining her resentment is the reason *that* she was victimized in this way. Since these women’s resentments are based in the same reason, their resentment is shared.

Now suppose that both women appeal to a *second* reason for resentment. They say, “We resent not only that *we* were subject to sexual violence, but also living in a patriarchal society in which women are vulnerable to sexual violence and oppression.” While the first reason the women appeal to is a reason for each of them as individual women who were victims of sexual violence, the second reason is a reason for *all* women in virtue of their membership within a collective that is vulnerable to sexual exploitation in a patriarchal society; and resentment grounded in *this* reason does not make sense independent from one’s identifying as a member of the collective ‘women.’ So in the first case, the two women share resentment. In the second, the two women not only share resentment; they also resent because of their perception of a threat to women whose members face the same possibility of being subject to sexual violence.

Now suppose a third woman who hears of the two being victimized feels resentment. This woman was not a target of sexual violence; she cannot appeal to the *first* reason—that of being the target of sexual violence—to explain or justify her resentment. But she *can* appeal to the second reason the two women gave in explaining their resentment; she can say, specifically, that although she has not been victimized herself she resents these instances of victimization because she too is a woman vulnerable to sexual violence, and *no* woman ought to be in a position to be treated in such a way. The

third woman's resentment is collective because, although she was not herself victimized, she is a member of a collective that is disproportionately vulnerable to sexual violence; and her resentment is a response to the particular instance of violence toward other women that represents a broader threat to all women.

But now we might ask whether a man who feels anger toward the perpetrator of sexual violence can genuinely *resent* in this case. There is a question of whether men who do not subject women to sexual exploitation, who do not endorse attitudes like “women ask for it” or “women are objects of sexual gratification” can resent other men who exploit women in such a way. MacLachlan, recall, argues that one can resent injuries that one takes personally *even if* such an injury was not done to oneself. I think, though, that we must be careful about what sorts of injuries done to others we can take personally in a way that makes our angers justified resentments. For example, it seems too strong to say that a man can resent a perpetrator of sexual violence who victimized his friend's relative that he has never met. The man might disapprove of the offender's behaviour and even feel angry about it. But his anger is indignation and not resentment; and this is because the injury done to the friend's relative is not one that he can take personally in a way that would ground resentment. That is to say, he is not *connected* to the victim in a way that injuries done to her feel like slights against *him*—ones that he can take personally by virtue of the nature of his relationship with the victim. The sort of connection I am imagining is one in which the victim is part of the resenter's life, affects who he is, and whom without he would not be the same.

I think that a man's anger whose wife, sister, or close female friend is the victim of sexual violence *can* be accurately called ‘resentment’ insofar as he is connected to his

loved one in such a way that the injury done to her feels like a slight against him. This is not because he is the *victim*, or thinks that the wrong was done to *him*, but for the reason that his loved one is a *part* of him and his life in the ways suggested above, not just a person he stands in relation to. The resentment is not shared with his loved one based in the reason of being a victim of sexual violence, or collective based in the reason of ‘being a member of a collective that is vulnerable to sexual violence and oppression’; rather, it is *individual*, based in the reason that someone he cares about deeply and shares himself with was subject to sexual violence.

There will be cases in which men who *have* been victims of sexual violence respond with anger when they hear about other cases of victimization. These men can *share* resentment with victimized women and victimized men grounded in the reason of ‘being the victim of sexual violence.’ That’s because they share the same experience that causes their resentment and thus the *reason* grounding it. But while victimized women can share resentment and experience collective resentment, men can only share resentment in this case; they cannot appeal to the reason ‘being disproportionately vulnerable to sexual violence and oppression *because* of being a woman in a patriarchal society’ to explain their resentment. Only the women’s resentment can be *collective*.

Other men who are not close to victims of sexual violence and those who have not themselves been victims of sexual violence might have shameful resentment, resentment based in reasons that have to do with the ‘image’ of men that the perpetrator represents which affects his own identity as a man living in a patriarchal society. This raises the interesting question of whether there might be such a thing as self-collective resentment, or collective resentment that is felt and expressed toward individuals of one’s own

collective based in a perceived threat to the *identity* of the collective. In this case, the man might experience self-collective resentment that is expressed by his saying things like, “the perpetrator of sexual violence reproduces the image of *all men* as aggressive, violent, disrespectful people who think that women are the objects of our sexual gratification. I *resent* him for this.” The possibility of self-collective resentment is perhaps another kind of resentment that is worth exploring. But I will set this issue aside and focus instead on the standard case of collective resentment in which an individual feels and expresses resentment because she perceives that a collective to which she belongs is threatened in some way.

It is important to note that, even if there is such a thing as self-collective resentment, this would be very different from the collective resentment of women in this case, resentment that expresses women’s perception that there is a threat to all women who are vulnerable to sexual violence and oppression in a patriarchal society. So, importantly, one cannot experience collective resentment because of a perceived threat to a collective that one does not belong to. When these parties react emotionally, and in particular *angrily* for the reason that they see a threat to a collective to which they do *not* belong (not a threat to oneself, a loved one, or a collective to which they *do* belong), they are experiencing a kind of anger that is not resentment. Their anger is *indignation*. That is, disapprobation of some action or event; but it is not the expression of the angry party’s own personal connection to the mistreatment, injustice, or offense.

Resentment, then, can be individual, shared, or collective. And the presence of one kind of resentment does not mean that there is not also the presence of another kind of resentment. It is perfectly consistent to hold both that individuals can resent and share

resentment with other individuals, *and* that they experience collective resentment (as in the case of the two women who were subject to sexual exploitation and appeal to both *reasons*.) But shared and collective resentment are different, and in an *important way*, because each guides us toward different causes that give rise to the resentments and hence the reasons grounding them. The reasons underlying collective resentment can be legitimate or justified in the same way that the reasons grounding individual and shared resentment can be legitimate or justified. And as we will see, understanding whether reasons are for individuals or collectives is crucial for making sense of what the emotion is expressing in social and political contexts, and what reasons ought to be addressed if the resentments are to receive an appropriate response.

But there is another difference between shared and collective resentment. In shared resentment, obviously each individual that we refer to as ‘sharing’ the emotion actually experiences it. But in *collective* resentment, each member of the collective need not feel it. We might say that the social context characteristically causes individuals of a collective to experience resentment because of their common experiences *in* that social context, but that the social context will not trigger everyone in the group to feel resentment. We could account for this in many ways based on the diversity of life histories, values, and commitments of individuals even within a common group. In some cases, we might also be able to say that individuals who are members of a collective and do not resent are subject to being criticized as having a ‘rational failing’ of some sort. But this is a task that would have to involve careful consideration of all of the relevant details; and to rationally criticize individuals for not resenting because of a threat to a collective to which they belong we first need to understand collective resentment.

The important point is that the concept of collective resentment does *not* entail that all members of the collective experience it. Collective resentment is resentment that is felt and expressed by individuals and is grounded in reasons that *could* be reasons (justified or not) for all members of the collective. So on one hand, collective resentment is less expansive than shared resentment: it is possible for only one person to experience it, while shared resentment requires at least two individuals experiencing the emotion together. On the other, it is more expansive than shared resentment: in shared resentment, one's identification within a group does not matter at all, while collective resentment seeks to be the resentment *of* all.

Chapter 6: Reciprocal Resentments in Indigenous-Settler Relations in Canada

I think that the resentments of indigenous Canadians and settler Canadians are not only individual and shared, but collective: they express the kind of anger we can accurately call ‘resentment,’ and some of the *reasons* underlying these resentments are reasons for a collective. My argument does not deny that indigenous and settler Canadians experience individual and shared resentments toward each other; rather, it adds to them, recognizing the presence of resentment grounded in reasons for both individuals and collectives. And there is merit in making sense of these additional reasons. If we think, as Hieronymi does, that resentment is no longer appropriate when the reasons underlying it are undermined, then the only way to meaningfully make sense of resentments in social and political contexts is by figuring out the reasons, individual and collective, underlying them. Only then can we *evaluate* these reasons, figure out just what they are communicating, and address them.

It should be noted that MacLachlan and Walker both suggest the possibility of shared resentment, although their primary purpose is to expose the social and political resentments left out of the standard moral account. Walker discusses the example of resentments “common to the aged” grounded in shared perceptions of the world as different from what it used to be, and the feeling of being pushed out of the community.⁷² MacLachlan, however, explicitly but carefully suggests the possibility of collective resentment. She argues that the possibility of collective resentment makes it more difficult to distinguish between reasonable and unreasonable cases, and illustrates this

⁷² Walker, 146.

problem by referring to indigenous and settler Canadians' resentments. She explains that government apologies and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Canada have provided a space where settler Canadians are forced to face indigenous Canadians' resentment, which in turn causes settler Canadians to experience resentment toward indigenous Canadians. They resent, specifically, hearing indigenous peoples' stories that conflict with myths about Canada's peacemaking identity.⁷³ MacLachlan suggests that part of the reason settler Canadians resent is that they cannot comprehend just how they can be held responsible for the Indian Residential Schools, which caused the destruction of whole lives and generations of broken communities.⁷⁴ Settler Canadians' refusal to acknowledge the grounds for indigenous resentment generates even *more* resentment on the part of indigenous Canadians.⁷⁵ MacLachlan acknowledges that our description of these resentments as *individual* might distort the phenomenology of this anger, or its objects.⁷⁶

But we need not attempt to disentangle each indigenous and settler individual's unique feelings of resentment to accurately understand the emotion in this context. My project is to show why and how MacLachlan is right: in Canada, resentment as a response of both indigenous and settler Canadians dominates the political landscape and we cannot reduce it to individual or shared resentment. But it is not the objects of resentments, as MacLachlan postulates, but the reasons grounding them that are what distinguishes between cases of individual or shared and *collective* resentment.

⁷³ MacLachlan, 430.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 431.

In the following chapter, I begin to explore these different resentments in context, drawing upon indigenous Canadian scholar Taiaiake Alfred's "Colonial Stains On Our Existence" to illustrate what indigenous resentment looks like.

Chapter 7: Indigenous Canadians' Resentment

Alfred boldly states:

As Onkwehonwe who are committed to the Original Teachings, there is not supposed to be any space between the principles we hold and the practice of our lives. This is the very meaning of integrity: having the mental toughness and emotional strength to stand up for what we believe is right. The Challenge is to master, not conquer, fear and to engage in the constant fight to resist both the corrupting effects of the financial, sensual, and psychological weapons used by the colonial authorities to undermine Onkwehonwe people and the corrosive effect on the Onkwehonwe mind and soul of Euroamerican culture and society.⁷⁷

If resentment as a reactive attitude is a kind of defense or protest that communicates what we feel entitled to, then Alfred's words express resentment. They reflect the underlying beliefs about what indigenous peoples feel is right, and the judgment that settler Canadians have violated them, damaging indigenous peoples' minds and souls. His discussion, therefore, is an expression of the *resentment* of indigenous Canadians. It is not merely anger because anger does not entail specific judgments about being wronged or violated at the hands of others.⁷⁸ It is the kind of resentment that MacLachlan's and Walker's broader accounts recognize: not merely moral but social and political reasons grounding resentments about past injuries and persistent injustices which settler Canadians as perpetrators have the power to address. Once again, we are challenged to look beyond the standard moral account.

Alfred identifies the 'enemy,' or what I identify as the objects of his resentment, in many different ways. He says that the enemy of indigenous peoples' struggle is monotheistic religiosity, liberal political theory, neoliberal capitalist economics, presumptions of racial superiority, and false assumptions about Euroamerican cultural

⁷⁷ Taiaiake Alfred, "Colonial Stains on Our Existence" in *Wasáse: Indigenous Pathways of Action and Freedom* (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, Ltd), 114.

⁷⁸ Walker, 110.

superiority.⁷⁹ Thus religion, social and political structures, and beliefs constitute the enemy of indigenous Canadians. The colonizers themselves are also the ‘enemy,’ especially those who “refuse to accept their position and role in the unjust state, usually left-wing intellectuals.”⁸⁰ These are the settlers who express indignation toward historical injustices with a special focus on those of foreign countries, and whose indignation does not turn into action.⁸¹ Alfred argues that settlers’ indignation is evidence of our privilege and power to judge those ‘crude colonizers’ of the past—and this, he thinks, is a strategy of deflecting responsibility away from ourselves.⁸²

The enemy is also myths about Canada’s superiority over the United States based on our healthcare system, and assumptions about our non-violent history. It is also the false stereotypes about Onkwehonwe people and the glorified ‘pioneer spirit’ portrayed on television and in film, the specific acts of police brutality against non-whites and especially Onkwehonwe people, and the murders of Onkwehonwe women by white men.⁸³ The enemy is settler values, including our rejection of socialism in favour of individualism and material wealth, the norm that selfishness and competitiveness are good, and our exploitation of the natural world for capitalism.⁸⁴ It is also the language we use, and in particular the term ‘aboriginal’ which has been imposed on indigenous Canadians as a blanket term that displaces authentic indigenous identities, beliefs, and behaviours.⁸⁵

⁷⁹ Alfred, 103.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 105.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid., 106.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 109.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 126.

These are just some of the examples of the ‘enemy’ of indigenous Canadians that Alfred identifies in his discussion of colonialism. If we as settlers are ever to understand the resentments of indigenous Canadians, the standard account of resentment will not do. The enemies Alfred identifies or what I have called the *objects* of his resentment include liberalism, capitalist values, settler Canadians themselves, settlers’ indignation, myths about Canada, stereotypes of indigenous Canadians, distinct moral injuries, and more. Our common understanding that indigenous Canadians resent the past literal injuries of abuse in Residential Schools *does not even come close* to affirming their claims. Their resentment is grounded in the entire social and political structure of settler society that does not allow indigenous spirituality, culture, and ways of living to thrive. We are indebted to MacLachlan’s and Walker’s projects of expanding our conception of resentment, which provides a framework for understanding the true ‘enemy’ or objects of indigenous peoples’ resentment.

As Walker tells us, resentment “arises to meet a threat.”⁸⁶ The resentment expressed by Alfred challenges the idea that indigenous ways of living are primitive ways of the past without a place in the modern world. So the past injustices that targeted indigenous children in the Indian Residential Schools persist as *present* injustices that take the form not only of distinct moral injuries like sexual, physical, and psychological abuse, but of ignorance and a refusal to change the social structures that marginalize indigenous Canadians now.

It is clear that there are many objects of Alfred’s resentment, but it is not objects but *reasons* that tell us whether the resentment is shared with other indigenous Canadians like Coulthard, or collective. To understand this, we must remember what the

assimilationist project involved; what the goal of settler Canadians really was in sending indigenous children to Residential Schools. Cree scholar Neal McLeod describes the project as “the colonization of Indigenous Being”: imposing on ‘ancient people’ a new order and understanding of the world.⁸⁷ In “Memory, Reparation, and Relation: Starting in the Right Places,” philosopher Sue Campbell explains that one motivation behind targeting indigenous children was that they were ‘vulnerable rememberers’ who could be socialized to *forget* their associations, traditions, languages, and authentic identities.⁸⁸ The target of harm was *indigenous existence*, not merely individuals. This includes cultures, histories, traditions, languages, spiritualities, and sovereignties of all indigenous groups *in addition to* the particular indigenous individuals abused in the schools. And although the Indian Residential School System has ended, the threat to indigenous existence persists. Paulette Regan discusses many ways in which institutions continue to marginalize indigenous peoples; for example, our commitment to a superior Western “one law for all” means that they are still deprived of self-governance⁸⁹, instances of racism and discrimination still take place⁹⁰, and indigenous-settler relations remain dominated by settler power and privilege.⁹¹

I think that reducing Alfred’s resentment to individual or shared resentment cannot adequately capture what grounds his resentment: the assimilationist project of

⁸⁶ Walker, 125.

⁸⁷ Neal McLeod, “Spatial and Spiritual Exile” in *Cree Native Memory: From Treaties to Contemporary Times* (Saskatoon, SK: Purich Publishing, Ltd., 2007), 56.

⁸⁸ Sue Campbell, “Memory, Reparation, and Relation: Starting in the Right Places” in *Being Relational: Reflections on Relational Theory and Health Law and Policy*, ed. Jocelyn Downie and Jennifer J. Llewellyn (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2012), 139.

⁸⁹ Regan, Paulette. *Unsettling the Settler Within: Indian Residential Schools, Truth Telling, and Reconciliation in Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010), 106.

⁹⁰ Regan, 108-9.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 112.

manipulating not only the identities of indigenous children, but of annihilating whole cultures, histories, traditions, languages, and spiritualities. These could not be reasons for resentment *at all* without a collective to which unique cultures, histories, traditions, languages, and spiritualities belong; so it only makes sense to say that Alfred's resentment in this case is based in his perception that there is a threat to indigenous Canadians as a collective: he might say, for example, "I resent the colonial structure of contemporary Canada for threatening *our* cultures, traditions, and ways of life."⁹²

Further, Glen Coulthard in his talk from the introduction and Taiaiake Alfred above use language that is consistent with my description of their resentment as collective. Each scholar calls upon other indigenous Canadians to recognize the importance of the claims communicated by their resentment. Coulthard argued that indigenous peoples should resent colonialism and the institutions and people implicit in its reproduction; and these are some of the 'enemies' of indigenous peoples according to Alfred, and what I have interpreted as *objects* of his resentment. Coulthard's claim that other indigenous Canadians should join him in his resentment implies that the resentment is not only appropriately felt by him as an individual or other individual indigenous Canadians who have been directly harmed by colonialism; but rather, there are reasons for all indigenous Canadians in virtue of being a member of the collective of indigenous Canadians to respond with resentment. And for those indigenous Canadians who don't resent, Alfred challenges them to *see* the grounds for it: for them to come to see colonizers and settler society as the enemy and to channel or use this judgment to demand

⁹² As I argued above, someone's experience collective resentment does not entail that the resenter's attitudes reflect the attitudes of all individual members of the collective. That is to say, Alfred's resentment signifies *his own perception* that there is a threat to the collective to which he belongs, not that all indigenous Canadians share that perception.

change. And as I have argued, each and every member of a collective need not feel resentful in order for one to experience collective resentment. So long as there are reasons for resentment that are reasons for a *collective* and at least one of the individuals' resentment who belongs to the collective is grounded in those reasons, we can identify the presence of collective resentment. Coulthard's expression of his collective resentment in his public talk, and Alfred's expression of his collective resentment in his chapter "Colonial Stains on Our Existence" are also projects that call out to indigenous Canadians to interpret the social and political position in the way that they do, meaning that they hope that other indigenous Canadians come to experience collective resentment.

So the resentment is *collective*. This is not to deny the authentic indigenous identities unique to various groups. Just like in shared resentment in which the objects of individuals' resentment will be different because of their own life histories, social or geographical position, beliefs, values, etc., so too will the objects of indigenous' groups resentments differ—based on their own cultures, geographic locations, unique traditions, and so on. But there does exist a collective, namely, *indigenous Canadians*, which unites the various indigenous groups together by the basic fact of being indigenous to Canada. And this is the target of injustice by colonizers who seek to annihilate *all of them* with their assimilationist agenda.

Walker also reminds us that resentment "invites a response."⁹³ The emotion calls upon others "bidding them to recognize the existence or possibility of a kind of relationship, the kind in which parties are responsible to each other," and specifically, invites protective, reassuring, and defensive responses from individuals and the

⁹³ Walker, 134.

community to affirm that the resenter is in the scope of their responsibilities.’⁹⁴ In other words, resentment calls upon others to give it uptake, and to act.

But seeing the resentments of indigenous Canadians might be terrifying for the settler Canadian struggling to understand her role in the conflict. There is a danger that indigenous expressions of resentment will silence us and make us doubt that our shared social world is one in which indigenous and settler Canadians can peacefully coexist. The ‘enemies’ of indigenous Canadians are not things many of us settlers believe we have the resources or even capacity to change, even if we wanted to. For example, we might question whether it is morally required of us or even *possible* to change the institution of capitalism, liberalism, settlers’ religious beliefs, and so on. But I want to emphasize that it is not the objects of resentment that the emotion calls upon others to address, but the reasons for the emotion. Capitalism is an object but not a reason of indigenous resentment; so it is not capitalism that must be changed, but the *reasons* grounding the resentment about capitalism.

However, addressing the object of ‘capitalism’ might tell us something important about the reason or reasons for resentment that some indigenous peoples like Alfred have. We might learn that the *reason* indigenous peoples resent capitalism is because capitalist practices have interfered with their inherent rights to land and resources, or that the decisions of corporations have caused environmental degradation in indigenous communities. Threats to the land on which indigenous peoples reside include flooding due to the construction of dams and hydroelectric projects, water contamination, acid rain, high water temperatures from large-scale forestry, the depletion of fisheries, and

⁹⁴ Walker, 134.

soils infused with toxic heavy metals from mining.⁹⁵ An extreme example is found in the Aamjiwnaang reserve in Ontario, where the sex ratios have been changing and the number of female babies born is significantly higher than the number of male babies born; and there is evidence that this is related to large industries nearby that produce chemicals that disrupt endocrine glands which are associated with the functioning of the immune system, organ and tissue growth, metabolism, behaviour, and sexuality.⁹⁶ Not only do these practices directly harm indigenous communities, they also directly conflict with indigenous peoples' values of conservation and sustainability.⁹⁷

Perhaps these reasons can be addressed without altering the entire economic structure of contemporary Canada, but perhaps not. If it's true that indigenous peoples have inherent rights to specific land and resources and that capitalism necessarily conflicts with these rights, then there might be something inherently wrong with capitalism. But whether or not that's true is unclear. The better approach might be to address indigenous peoples' reasons for resenting capitalism that might be possible to undermine without eliminating the institution of capitalism. The claim that we ought to address the resentments of indigenous Canadians does not automatically entail that we ought to change whatever the objects of their resentments are; and this makes addressing indigenous peoples' resentment and the injustices that persist far less daunting.⁹⁸

⁹⁵ Juaane Nancarrow Clark, "Social Inequity, Disease, and Death in Canada: Age, Gender, Racialization, and Ethnicity" in *Health Illness and Medicine in Canada* (Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press 2008), 161-2.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 161.

⁹⁷ Georges Erasmus, "Twenty Years of Disappointed Hope" in *Ethical Issues: Perspectives for Canadians* ed. Eldon Soifer (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press Ltd., 1992), 349.

⁹⁸ If the only way in which the reason or reasons for resentment can be undermined is by addressing the object or objects of resentment, then we must do so. For example, if the object of indigenous Canadians' resentment is capitalism and it turns out that the reason

Thus, as Alfred suggests, justice *can* be done, but it is important that we understand it as settlers' duty and not as a 'gift.'⁹⁹ To adequately address indigenous peoples' claims about what they feel is right, we must be 'decolonized' and admit our past wrongs, as well as the injustices we are a part of now.¹⁰⁰ We must also acknowledge and affirm the rights to land, culture, and community of indigenous peoples that are inherent, autonomous, and *collective*.

But this raises another problem, which is whether indigenous peoples have a *moral right* to demand that their culture be preserved even if their ways of life have become antithetical to the institutions of modern times; in other words, whether it is a *moral truth* that indigenous peoples have the collective rights Alfred claims that they have. Will Kymlicka has addressed this issue, suggesting that indigenous peoples of Canada are not only members of a political community defined by "individuals forming and revising their aims and ambitions" (as both indigenous peoples *and* settlers are); they are also members of a cultural community: a community in which people share a culture, a language, and history which defines their own cultural memberships.¹⁰¹ Kymlicka states:

If we respect Indians as Indians, that is to say, as members of a distinct cultural community, then we must recognize the importance to them of their cultural heritage,

for their resentment—that capitalist practices are harmful to their communities—can only be undermined if capitalism as a whole is relinquished (rather than, say, that we end capitalist practices near indigenous communities) then the only way in which this particular resentment can be undermined is by addressing the object, that is, capitalism. But this would only be because the persistence of capitalism is *incompatible* with the reason for resentment being undermined, not because we must address the objects of resentment for it to lose its point.

⁹⁹ Alfred, 113.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Will Kymlicka, "Liberalism in Culturally Plural Societies," in *Ethical Issues: Perspectives for Canadians* ed. Eldon Soifer (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press Ltd., 1992), 324.

and we must recognize the legitimacy of claims made by them for the protection of their culture. These claims deserve attention, even if they conflict with some of the requirements of the Charter of Rights.¹⁰²

So the cultures, traditions, and so on that we might worry conflict with modern times are part of the very *identity* of indigenous Canadians. The shift from individual rights to collective rights is counter-intuitive within a Western Liberal framework in which the fact that a community is not a ‘self-originating source of valid claims’ means that we do not think we are required to respect communities in the same way that we respect individuals.¹⁰³ At first glance, the liberal framework supports individual autonomy and denies collective rights; and so affirming their inherent collective rights to land and preservation of their unique cultures, languages, etc. seems like ‘granting’ them too much. But now we might have landed on the reason that many indigenous peoples resent *liberalism*: the political ideology as it stands cannot accommodate the *collective rights* that define what it means to be indigenous to Canada (or, in Kymlicka’s terms, a member of a cultural community). The reason indigenous peoples resent liberalism—an object of their resentment—is because liberal theories conflict with their own beliefs about what counts as a ‘right.’ But we might be able to address this issue by affirming their collective rights without doing away with liberalism altogether; and Kymlicka’s project is to defend liberalism *by* accommodating these rights. So we must not remain focused on the objects of indigenous resentment. Rather, we must assess the connection between them and the reasons *grounding* indigenous resentment. It is reasons, not objects that ought to be undermined in order for resentment to lose its point and make forgiveness possible.

¹⁰² Kymlicka, 324.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 318.

Since resentment communicates a judgment and invites a response from particular individuals or groups, it is necessarily *relational*; its presence involves others, and often depends on them to affirm its legitimacy if the reasons for resentment are to be undermined. In the Canadian context, indigenous resentment calls upon settler Canadians to affirm their judgments, become ‘decolonized,’ take responsibility for past harms and present injustices, and actively undermine the threat to indigenous existence through action. But the presence of resentment in the Canadian context is not limited to the resentments of indigenous Canadians; *settler* Canadians have responded to the aftermath of the Residential Schools with all kinds of resentment. The reciprocal resentments of indigenous and settler Canadians have resulted in a kind of emotional stalemate; and as I will argue, until our resentments are addressed, constructing positive relations cannot take place.

Chapter 8: Settler Canadians' Resentment

The collective 'settler Canadian' cannot be defined simply by referring to all non-indigenous peoples in Canada as settlers. I will briefly address this issue to clarify whom I mean when I refer to the term 'settler' in my discussion of settler resentment.

In note 14 from the Foreword in *Unsettling the Settler Within*, Paulette Regan defines 'settler Canadian' as "not only Euro-Canadians whose ancestors came to Canada during the colonial period but also to more recent immigrants from a variety of ethnic and cultural backgrounds who are part of contemporary settler society."¹⁰⁴ But we might question whether it makes sense to say that all immigrants or even individuals born in Canada who are not 'white' Canadians should be called 'settlers.' I am thinking specifically about non-white Canadians who, like indigenous Canadians, have their own history of being the colonized in a colonial relationship. It seems a contradiction to say of these Canadians that they are both 'colonized' and 'settlers.'

In "Indigenous Peoples and Black People in Canada: Settlers or Allies?" Zanaib Amadahy and Bonita Lawrence explore the relationship between blacks and indigenous peoples in Canada. They note that little attention has been paid to the definition 'settler,' but in the white supremacist sense of the word, blacks do not fit the quintessential definition.¹⁰⁵ Blacks who were brought to Canada as slaves in the 17th and 18th centuries cannot be said to be a part of the project of colonization, and those who did come to

¹⁰⁴ Regan, 240.

¹⁰⁵ Amadahy and Lawrence, "Indigenous Peoples and Black People in Canada: Settlers or Allies?" in *Breaching the Colonial Contract: Anti-Colonialism in the US and Canada* ed. A. Kemp (Springer Science+Business Media, 2009), 107.

Canada as ‘free people’ have been “fraught with dispossession and denial of access to land.”¹⁰⁶

But some scholars, such as Enakshi Dua, think that black Canadians *should* count as settlers. This is because some black Canadians participate in the colonial project by, for example, using anti-racist theory that excludes native realities and indigenous epistemologies.¹⁰⁷ Some also come to Canada because they have “bought into the myth” that Canada is “an empty land where they can remake themselves and their lives.”¹⁰⁸

On the other hand, Amadahy and Lawrence draw attention to the contradictory relationship that blacks have with indigenous peoples in the Canadian context. Some black Canadians come to Canada to flee homes that were devastated by colonialism, and they have little option but to struggle for power as ‘settlers’ despite also having their own distinct history of cultural genocide.¹⁰⁹ Canada’s multiculturalism policy treats all racialized communities as “new immigrants,” perpetuating the vision of Canada as a nation in which “Black people are forever marginal newcomers, always external to the nation.”¹¹⁰

So Amadahy and Lawrence call for black historians to revisit the past in order to examine whether the portrayal of black Canadians as settlers truly reflects the reality of black-indigenous relationships.¹¹¹ These authors seem to think that the question of whether black Canadians are ‘settlers’ is too difficult to sort out without better understanding the connections between these communities in Canada. They caution,

¹⁰⁶ Amadahy and Lawrence, 107.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 118.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 126.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 115.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 121.

though, that there is a danger that black Canadians will become settlers complicit in the extermination of indigenous peoples whose land they live on if they do not maintain or establish the right kind of relationship.

Since non-white Canadians do not share with white Canadians the same history of being the colonizers in a colonial relationship, and since we do not know enough about the true relationship between indigenous Canadians and non-whites in Canada, I exclude these individuals from the collective ‘settlers.’ To classify them as such for my purpose risks distorting the nature of colonial relationships in which one group is oppressive and the other is marginalized. Although there might be non-white Canadians that are complicit in contemporary colonial Canada, these individuals are culpable not as ‘settlers’ who have inherited colonial identities defined by power and privilege, but in *another* way: by joining forces with settlers in their assimilationist project and failing to recognize the importance of uniting with indigenous peoples as allies in their colonial struggles. My discussion, then, will be of the resentment of white Canadians.

MacLachlan, recall, suggests that settler Canadians resent hearing stories about treatment in the schools, being held responsible for the past harms and present injustices that continue to marginalize indigenous Canadians, and claims about Canada that conflict with its reputation as a non-violent peacemaking nation when it comes to indigenous-settler relations. She cites an online comment on a blog entry titled “For Many Aboriginal Children, Residential Schools Were a Positive Experience.” On February 18, 2012, I read an article titled “Judge calls residential schools a form of genocide” which triggered a discussion in the comments section of the online page. Some settler Canadians agreed with the article to some degree, but most not. And the comments that stood against

Justice and Chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Murray Sinclair's major claim, that the Residential School System was an act of genocide, are loaded with *resentment*. So I will follow MacLachlan in her strategy of citing recent Internet posts by settler Canadians in illustrating what our resentment looks like.

Steevo: "Keep pickin' the scab so it never heals. Good job truth & reconciliation committee. Genocide? Hardly. Besides, what was the alternative? No education, at all? Believe the Church was only entity willing to take this one on... Living next to a native community as I do, talking to local elders about their experiences, none had anything bad to say until this T&R committee started up. Only THEN did the fantastic stories appear! Money does that to people. Doesn't matter what ethnic origin you may be."¹¹²

This comment cuts to the core of settler ignorance. It accuses the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of worsening the situation of indigenous Canadians by keeping the harm alive¹¹³, and denies that the Commission has a legitimate purpose—which is to facilitate truth telling and reconciliation, to make recommendations to the government based on its findings, and to 'restore'¹¹⁴ indigenous-settler relations.¹¹⁵ It also denies that indigenous Canadians even have a story to tell, and accuses them of being

¹¹² Comment on The Canadian Press. "Judge calls residential schools an act of genocide." *CTV News*, February 18, 2012. Retrieved from <http://www.ctv.ca/CTVNews/Canada/20120218/commission-chairman-residential-schools-120218/>.

¹¹³ One might think that advocating for assimilation is *not* an oppressing idea. The idea of bringing two groups together might seem to be the best way to aim at equality within a society. But in the Canadian context, assimilation is an oppressing idea even if it might not be in others. Will Kymlicka has pointed out that segregation in contrast to assimilation has been viewed as a 'highly valued' defense of a 'highly valued' cultural heritage, and that forced integration damages indigenous peoples' motivation (See Will Kymlicka, "Liberalism in Culturally Plural Societies" in *Ethical Issues: Perspectives for Canadians* ed. Eldon Soifer (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 1992), 320). For example, the dropout rate for indigenous children in integrated high schools was over 90% and was 100% in most post-secondary schools (320-1).

¹¹⁴ I put this word in quotations because it is a misnomer. Our goal, I think, is not to restore relations with indigenous Canadians. This suggests that we should go back to the "way things were"; but surely this is not our goal. We want to move toward forming or *constructing* positive relations—and this requires not looking to some past state in our relationship for guidance since there was no time at which our relationship was good or even adequate insofar as it was one of a colonizer and colonized, a relationship characterized by power, privilege, and oppression.

motivated by *material greed* to come forward with their stories. This settler Canadian resents both the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's existence, and indigenous Canadians themselves.

bc wayne: "The natives do not have the patent on hard luck stories. The taxpayers eventually came out the losers in this situation. For as long as the grass grows and the sun shines we will be on the hook for the welfare of the natives."¹¹⁶

This comment expresses refusal to affirm indigenous peoples' claims as legitimate, and blatantly denies the existence of serious past and persistent injustices. It also expresses resentment toward indigenous peoples because of the social assistance they receive, and because of the blame settler Canadians have been forced to endure for Residential Schools and the devastation in indigenous communities.

Hal Wood: "What is Native culture? I bet none of the people on the commission and probably the natives themselves cannot describe it. A people that cannot adapt will never succeed. Trying to drag the new generation of natives into the past just repeats history."¹¹⁷

This comment denies that indigenous Canadians even *have* recognizable cultures, and claims that they do not even know what they mean when they appeal to it. It also expresses colonial attitudes of racial and cultural superiority, and argues that addressing the past necessarily implies reliving it. This settler Canadian seems to resent the claim that indigenous Canadians have distinct and authentic identities, indigenous peoples for refusing to *assimilate*, and the entire project of addressing historical injustices.

I acknowledge that my method of quoting settler Canadians' recent comments about the Indian Residential Schools does not perfectly represent the resentments of settler Canadians, nor does it express the attitudes of *all* settler Canadians. But this method provides insights into the attitudes that are alive in settler society today, and I

¹¹⁵ Regan, 7.

¹¹⁶ Comment on "Judge calls residential schools a form of genocide." *CTV News*.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

suspect that expressions of these attitudes can be easily found elsewhere. As a settler Canadian, I can testify that these expressions of resentment are common in settler circles, where many of us are quick to point out the tax exemptions, free education, and income from the government indigenous groups receive. We are also quick to draw conclusions about “where that money is going” when we peer into indigenous communities and count the stereotypes of drug and alcohol abuse, theft, violence, and devastation. In other words, we are quick to *judge*, often accusatively, and to *compare*, citing what we think is ‘free riding’ of indigenous peoples in Canada in contrast to settler Canadians who are hard working citizens contributing to the capitalist economy.

So settler Canadians resent. The objects of our resentment are indigenous groups, the government (when it enacts policies that we perceive as unfair to *us*), claims that attribute genocide and violence to peaceful Canada, and being burdened with the responsibility of “fixing,” all over again, the Indian Problem.

Settler Canadians’ resentment arises from our shared history as colonizers, and from our social and political position in contemporary Canada. It also arises from our shared memories, or lack thereof, of the Indian Residential Schools. Paulette Regan deconstructs the myths and norms underlying what I have called settler Canadians’ resentment. She explains that most Canadians do not describe our relationship with indigenous peoples as violent, and we take pride in our belief that we are the peacemaking counterpart to the United States when it comes to indigenous-settler relations.¹¹⁸ We still consider indigenous peoples as inferior victims who must be civilized into Western culture to become happy, prosperous members of society.¹¹⁹ Regan

¹¹⁸ Regan, 83.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 86.

contends that when we face indigenous peoples' "accusations of genocide, racism, political non-recognition, and theft of land and resources, we comfort ourselves with the peacemaker myth...[that] assuages a fear that our real identity is not peacemaker but perpetrator."¹²⁰

When we interpret the history of Indian Residential Schools in this way, it is not surprising that we experience resentment. If we *really are* peaceful, benevolent Canadians who want what's best for indigenous groups, if we acknowledge the distinct abuses suffered by indigenous Canadians in Residential Schools whom we feel sympathy for, and if we think our beliefs and memories are accurate, then of course we will resent being called upon to '*give*' them more. But as Regan has elegantly argued, settlers as 'peacemakers' is a *myth*. The assimilationist project of which the Residential Schools were a part gave rise to physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, systemic racism, poverty, cultural domination, poor health and education outcomes, domestic violence, economic disadvantage, addiction, high rates of youth suicide, and unjust settler power and privilege.¹²¹ But some settlers blame the victim, and they resent.

Settler resentment is grounded in reasons that arise from the Peacemaker Myth. Or, as Taiaiake Alfred points out, *denial* about the truth, which stems from the privileges we have 'collectively' inherited as the colonizer in indigenous-settler relations.¹²² It is also *collective*: the reasons underlying settler resentment are related to but distinct from individual and shared resentment; they are grounded in a *social context* including cultural imperialism, capitalist economics, Western law, and the persisting colonial structure of

¹²⁰ Regan, 106.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹²² Alfred, 107.

settler society.¹²³ Settlers perceive indigenous peoples as *inferior* in their cultures, traditions, and ways of government in comparison to settler society. So what *causes* settlers' resentment is not only or perhaps ever personal encounters with indigenous Canadians that give rise to their individual and shared resentments; rather, what causes settlers' resentment is most often being a member of the collective 'settlers' which is the powerful and privileged group in the colonial relationship, a position of power and privilege that is perceived as threatened by indigenous peoples and their ways of life.

The reasons that settler Canadians could appeal to in explaining or justifying their collective resentment do not make sense independent from Canadian settler society as a whole, that is, our history, culture, law, and social structures; and so the reasons for settler resentment are reasons for settlers as a *collective*. Settlers perceive indigenous claims as a threat not to each of us individually, but to *settler society*—they resent indigenous peoples for “getting in the way of” the superior and economically prosperous Canada burdened with the ‘Indian Problem.’ Alfred identifies what I have called settler collective resentment in his discussion of colonialism. He states: “If the mere idea of difference threatens colonial societies and the liberal state in an existential sense, the capacity to act on collective differences is definitely seen as a very real threat to be suppressed.”¹²⁴ And again:

Myths of national identity and prejudicial attachments to colonial structures and symbols as the guarantors of social peace and “national unity” are sacred and always remained unexamined and unquestioned. This leads to a political climate in which radical notions of justice are seen as a threat to the very existence of countries supposedly seeking to transcend the legacy of colonialism.¹²⁵

¹²³ Regan, 94 & 106.

¹²⁴ Alfred, 112.

So when settlers express resentment, their reason for resenting is often that they perceive that indigenous peoples and their ways of life threaten settler society. Settler Canadians might also experience individual and shared resentments toward indigenous Canadians that are based in reasons for individuals, but these resentments can exist at the same time as and independently from their collective resentment. Reducing settler collective resentment to the resentment of each of us as individuals means that we think indigenous peoples are always a threat to us personally, and never to settler society as a whole. But the truth is the opposite: for most of us, indigenous peoples are not a threat to us personally; they are a threat (from the colonizer's lens) to *settler society*.

So there is a kind of stalemate. We cannot move forward and construct positive relations with indigenous Canadians so long as reciprocal resentments continue to dominate the political landscape. I use the phrase 'stalemate' figuratively to illustrate a fundamental breakage in our relations with indigenous peoples. I do not mean to suggest that progress has not been made, and the creation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is one of the ways in which settlers are trying to give indigenous Canadians' claims uptake. The stalemate I am imagining is an *emotional* stalemate at the level of collectives. Although individual acts of reparation have been done and some settlers' attitudes have changed, the longstanding conflicts between indigenous and settler perceptions of historical and present injustices persist. The presence of resentment between groups makes peaceful coexistence at the very least a constant struggle, and it certainly makes forgiveness on the part of indigenous Canadians impossible.

But if emotions can be rationally criticized in the way that Murphy and Hieronymi have argued, then evaluating the resentments of indigenous and settler

Canadians might guide us in understanding how we can break out of this state. Chapter nine clarifies what I mean by reasonable, unreasonable, rational, and irrational resentments as evaluative terms for understanding emotions so that we can be clear about what kinds of resentment indigenous and settler Canadians express. I also introduce the terms ‘genuine’ and ‘not genuine.’ This sets up my argument that settlers’ resentment is inappropriate, and that we ought to relinquish it. Doing so will create a space for listening to indigenous Canadians’ resentment, the capacity to give it uptake, and the possibility of taking genuine responsibility for past and present injustices.

Chapter 9: Reasonable and Unreasonable Resentments

Moral philosophers have been interested in the question of what makes having an emotion appropriate. If I resent you for being in a loving and happy relationship, my anger might be misplaced. If I am jealous because my partner goes for coffee with his childhood friend, my jealousy might be misplaced. I take for granted that we can in fact evaluate people's emotions in this way. We can, I think, make claims about what people should and should not feel rationally or appropriately as a response to some event. But the language we use in explaining whether resentment is rational, appropriate, irrational, inappropriate, justified, unjustified, reasonable, and unreasonable seems to need some sorting out.

As MacLachlan tells us, philosophers have typically thought that moral resentments are reasonable, meaning ones we should take seriously, and non-moral forms of resentment are unreasonable or ones we should *not* take seriously. Those resentments that are 'unreasonable' in MacLachlan's terms are not resentments because they do not meet the 'moral criteria' of the standard account. As we have seen, broader resentments that are motivated by moral, social, and political considerations and that are not always about distinct moral injuries deserve our attention and thus count as 'reasonable' in MacLachlan's terms. But not all kinds of anger can be accurately called resentment; for example, anger that does not have an *object* and cannot be called resentment.

But it seems to me unclear why MacLachlan uses the terms 'reasonable' and 'unreasonable' to distinguish between angers that are actually resentments and angers that are not. 'Reasonableness' signifies that one has good reasons for something, and 'unreasonableness' the opposite. But I might have good reasons to be angry even though

my anger does not count as resentment. I might be outraged by the treatment of indigenous peoples in Canada, but because I am a settler Canadian my anger is not resentment but *indignation*. It's not that my anger is unreasonable, just that it is not resentment. So I would like to replace MacLachlan's terms 'reasonable' and 'unreasonable' with the terms 'genuine' and 'not genuine.' *Genuine* resentments are angers that count as resentment that we ought to take seriously *as* resentment. Angers like my indignation about the treatment of indigenous peoples that do not meet the criteria for resentment are *not* genuine resentments.

But there is another way to evaluate existing resentments. For those resentments that are genuine, we can evaluate whether they are *rational*, that is, whether they are grounded in legitimate reasons such as true beliefs and accurate memories that one can appeal to in explaining or justifying his or her resentment. But there are also genuine *irrational* resentments. These resentments are ones that we should take seriously as resentments because they have reasons, objects, and the angry party has standing to resent the putative harm, injustice, or offence; but they are not rational ones because they are grounded in things like false beliefs and distorted memories. Or, there might be irrational resentments in which there is no *prima facie* logical connection between the reasons and objects of the emotion. For example, if I experience resentment toward my partner but my resentment is grounded in reasons that have to do with my parents' failed relationship then my resentment is irrational: it is misplaced, misdirected, and not (unless revised) appropriate. I might also have a genuine irrational resentment that is irrational because it is felt too harshly. For example, if I resent you for forgetting my birthday and

my resentment is so strong that I never want to speak to you again even when you apologize, my resentment is felt to a degree that is irrational given the moral wrong done.

So we can evaluate the rationality of emotions by evaluating the *reasons* underlying them.¹²⁶ And this is similar to how Murphy and Hieronymi evaluate the rational ‘appropriateness’ of forgiveness, specifically, by determining whether the victim of moral injury has good ‘moral’ *reasons* for forgiving. Resentment, then, is rational or appropriate just in case there are good reasons for it. Since genuine rational resentments are resentments that are based in good reasons, we can call them reasonable; and genuine irrational resentments that are based in bad reasons, unreasonable.

Reasons, recall, are what we appeal to in explaining why a person feels resentment, or what philosophers will say ‘justifies’ it (i.e. *makes* the resentment appropriate). It seems to me that talk of ‘justified’ resentment is the same as talk of both reasonable and appropriate resentment—that these words are used interchangeably. Part three of this thesis applies these terms, explicating the relationship between them and resentment. The following two chapters explore the two responsibilities that can emerge when we evaluate instances of resentment: (1) the rational obligation to relinquish resentment when the resentment is inappropriate, and (2) the moral responsibility on the part of those resented and the surrounding community to give appropriate resentments uptake. I argue that both responsibilities apply to settler Canadians in response to the Indian Residential Schools: settler Canadians who resent and who are culpable for

¹²⁶ Margaret Urban Walker suggests something similar. She argues that resentment can be baseless, exaggerated, or misdirected. So resentment can be grounded in bad reasons, too strong, or directed at the wrong objects. She also suggests that there are questions about when resentment is justified, whether and how we should respond to resentments that are not reasonably based, and those that are morally objectionable (see Margaret

appealing to unjustified reasons grounding their resentments ought to relinquish them, and they ought also to give the rationally appropriate resentments of indigenous Canadians uptake.

Urban Walker, "Resentment and Assurance" in *Moral Repair: Reconstructing Moral Relations after Wrongdoing*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 136-7.

Chapter 10: The Obligation to Relinquish Resentment

Resentments based in false beliefs, distorted memories, and normative commitments that arise from an unjust social structure are inappropriate; and this is because the reasons underlying them are not justified. But we can only say of these resentments that they are rationally inappropriate if one's commitment to false beliefs, distorted memories, etc. is not *excusable*. If a person feels resentful for these (faulty) reasons but has not been (a) presented with evidence that demonstrates the falsity of the beliefs and inaccuracy of the memories, and (b) is not either culpably ignorant (i.e. willfully ignores the evidence) or self-deceptive (i.e. convinces herself that such and such beliefs and memories must be true and evidence contrary to them false), then that person cannot be rationally criticized for feeling resentful. But in the case where a person feels such resentment and *has* been presented with evidence that demonstrates the falsity of the beliefs, inaccuracy of memories, etc. underlying it or if the person is culpably ignorant or self-deceptive, then we can rationally criticize his or her resentment; we can say that the resentment is *irrational*. We must evaluate the rationality of resentments, then, on a case-by-case basis by evaluating the reasons underlying them and factors affecting whether the particular resenter is culpable for not abandoning false beliefs, fixing distorted memories, and so on.

But consider a rational agent who holds a belief and is given conclusive evidence that his belief is false. A fully rational agent would give up his belief in the face of this evidence, and his failing to do so would count as a rational failing. Now consider a rational agent who experiences resentment that is *grounded* in that false belief. A fully rational agent who gives up his false belief no longer has a reason to experience

resentment, and so he would cease feeling resentful. If he failed to relinquish his resentment and we asked him why he continues to resent, he would not be able to explain himself by pointing to any *reasons*, for his reason was the false belief that he no longer holds. Worse, we would criticize him; we would say, “You do not have any reasons to feel resentment, so your resentment is inappropriate. You should go to therapy to get rid of it,” or something of that nature.

And yet we might question whether this is fair to people, that is, whether it is psychologically possible to actively relinquish resentment. We tend to think that emotions are passive, and not the kind of things we have ‘power’ over to choose when and how much to experience. Elizabeth Spelman has pointed out that, in Western philosophy, emotions have typically been seen as *interfering* with the functioning of reason.¹²⁷ So emotions are thought to be arational or irrational by definition.¹²⁸ If that’s true, then it is unfair to make judgments about what people ought or ought not to feel *rationally* in response to some event or circumstances.

But Spelman explains that this sort of view cannot account for the aboutness of emotions or what they communicate.¹²⁹ It is unclear just how mere feelings could be about *anything*. So there has been a move toward cognitive theories of emotion: emotions are not mere feelings, but consist in part of beliefs and judgments; and we can explain what emotions are about by appealing to the cognitive state one is in when one is having an emotion.¹³⁰ I am jealous *that* you won the contest and I didn’t; I am angry *about* financial loss; I am sad *that* my grandfather passed away. Cognitivist theories can explain

¹²⁷ Elizabeth V. Spelman, “Anger and Insubordination” in *Women, Knowledge, and Reality* ed. Ann Garry and Marilyn Pearsall (Boston MA: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 264.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 265.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

what emotions are about, how they can be seen as a rational or irrational response to an event or circumstances, and how there is a sense in which we can say certain individuals do or do not have a right to be angry, or that they ought or ought not to be angry.¹³¹

Spelman claims that cognitivist theories of emotions are ‘eminently defensible,’ and that feeling theories have lost their hold on philosophical psychology.¹³²

Admittedly, if my argument that there is a rational obligation to relinquish resentment is persuasive at all, then the reader will have to accept some form of the cognitivist theory of emotions. Consistent with Spelman, I assume that some form of this view must be correct: emotions are not arational or irrational feelings; they consist in part of beliefs and judgments, and we can *rationally criticize* them. If a belief which partly constitutes a given emotion is made to change upon presentation of new evidence, then, ineluctably, the emotion would eventually have to change too—one of the parts essential to its identity would have disappeared.¹³³ And it is not psychologically impossible to intentionally engage in behaviours that result in changes in one’s emotions. Individuals attend psychotherapy to do just that: to relinquish their jealousy, to become happier, to stop resenting their father, and so on. There are indirect routes to get rid of emotions, so it is not problematic to claim that there can be rational obligations to use such routes to relinquish them.

¹³⁰ Spelman, 265.

¹³¹ Ibid., 265-266.

¹³² Ibid., 265.

¹³³ To clarify, I mean that the change is inevitable in the sense that the change in belief, for a rational person, would cause the emotion to change. But it is of course logically possible to hold on to resentment when the beliefs grounding it have changed. But a person who maintains the unjustified resentment would be irrational in doing so (i.e. it would be a genuine irrational and thus unreasonable resentment).

Chapter 11: Evaluating Settler Resentment: Unreasonable (Genuine, Irrational)

“The convenient way to deal with the founding injustice of Canada is to allow colonialism to continue by ignoring the truth, to erase it from our memory, to ban it from the schools, and suppress it in public.” - Taiaiake Alfred¹³⁴

Settler resentment is grounded in reasons that arise from the Peacemaker Myth. Or, as Taiaiake Alfred points out, it is based in *denial* about the truth, denial that stems from the privileges we have ‘collectively’ inherited as the colonizer in indigenous-settler relations.¹³⁵ The individual and shared resentments expressed by the three settler Canadians I quoted above are grounded in false beliefs about indigenous groups’ motivation for coming forward with their stories, denial that there exists authentic indigenous identities, colonial attitudes of cultural superiority, refusal to acknowledge the Indian Residential Schools as a ‘genocide,’ and false assumptions about the power and necessity of truth telling.

But these are not *legitimate* reasons for resentment; they are grounded in myths about Canada as a peacemaking nation when it comes to indigenous-settler relations, and colonizers as moral superiors who tried their very best to civilize primitive human beings into their world. If my argument that we can rationally criticize people’s emotions is correct, and that we must do so on a case-by-case basis to be fair to agents who are not culpable for holding false beliefs, distorted memories, etc. then we must assess the resentments of settler Canadians in this way. We must say of settler Canadians that if

¹³⁴ Taiaiake Alfred, “Foreword” in *Unsettling the Settler Within: Indian Residential Schools, Truth Telling, and Reconciliation in Canada* (Vancouver, BC: UBC Press, 2010), x.

their false understandings of history are due to poor education, if their false beliefs about indigenous peoples are due to the information provided to them by the media, and if their encounters with indigenous Canadians affirm the stereotypes that they think accurately represent the culture of indigenous groups (and if their education has not provided them with the appropriate critical thinking skills to *challenge* these stereotypes)¹³⁶, their resentments are rational. But these resentments are still morally problematic: they are evidence of the injustices against indigenous Canadians that settler Canadians benefit from now. Given that some of us *know* that settler Canadians' resentment toward indigenous Canadians are based in illegitimate or bad reasons even if the individual settlers who hold the resentment are *rational* in feeling that way and thus appropriate based on the incomplete and distorted information they have, the situation calls for consciousness-raising.

Sociologist Thomas E. DeGloma Jr. explains that consciousness-raising brings the counter-narrative or re-framed version of history into the public realm.¹³⁷ I suggest that Canadians can address the issue of some settlers harbouring morally problematic resentments that are only rational insofar as they are genuinely unaware of the 'truth' about what happened in Residential Schools and the injustices that persist by engaging in a process of consciousness-raising. One of the goals of the Truth and Reconciliation

¹³⁵ Taiaiake Alfred, "Colonial Stains on Our Existence," 107.

¹³⁶ I acknowledge that this is not an exhaustive list of reasons that might allow settler Canadians to feel rational resentment toward indigenous Canadians, and perhaps these examples are not enough to establish that this kind of settler in fact *is* rational in his resentment. But it is important to distinguish between agents who rationally experience resentment because they do not have the ability or resources to believe, think, and feel otherwise and agents who irrationally experience resentment because they maintain false beliefs, prejudicial thoughts, and problematic forms of anger in the face of evidence that contradicts what they should think, believe, and feel.

¹³⁷ Regan, 222.

Commission, recall, is to provide a space for *truth telling*. So the process of consciousness-raising in Canada has begun; and it is this process that we must engage in to undermine the ‘evidence’ supporting settlers’ unjustified beliefs, inaccurate memories, and colonial attitudes that ground their resentments.

But some settler Canadians experience *irrational* resentments. For example, settler Canadians who *know* that the Indian Residential Schools was a form of cultural annihilation yet think that it was *justified* (i.e., believes that destroying indigenous cultures and ways of life is a good and worthwhile project); or, settlers who deny that the Indian Residential Schools were in fact harmful by rationalizing the instances of abuse as isolated incidences and attributing good intentions to colonizers. Settlers who think that cultural annihilation is justified are culpably ignorant for holding such attitudes, and settlers who deny that the Residential Schools were harmful are engaging in self-deception about what really happened. We can rationally criticize these settler Canadians and demand of them that they relinquish their unreasonable resentments, and doing so requires them to face their colonial identities, re-remember their past, and re-think the present from the lens of de-colonized settlers.

The resentments that settlers ought to give up are *collective*: they stem from the persisting colonial structure of settler society including cultural imperialism, and the belief in moral, economic, and legal superiority of settlers over indigenous cultures and ways of life. The phrase ‘colonial structure’ is important here. I am not arguing that our culture, morality, economics, and law are bad or illegitimate systems; rather, that the colonial structure of settler society as a lens through which we interpret these systems as *superior* to what we perceive to be ‘primitive’ indigenous ways of life is morally

problematic, and reproduces our shared colonial attitudes, attitudes such as our thinking that there is a need to *assimilate* indigenous peoples into our world. The cause and thus reasons underlying our collective resentment are reasons for settler society within a *colonial* society; and it is a modern version of the one that tried to annihilate indigenous existence by corrupting¹³⁸ the minds and hearts of indigenous children in the Indian Residential Schools.

Settler resentment is not only rationally inappropriate; it is also *morally* inappropriate. Although I have followed MacLachlan and Walker by recognizing that resentment cannot be adequately captured by the standard moral account, it is not *merely* social and political. It expresses one's perception that there is a wrongful threat to oneself (individual or shared resentment) or a threat to a collective to which one belongs (collective resentment). Second, social and political forms of resentment are often tied to *injustice*: a fundamental question of morality. It seems that settler resentment has arisen from a position of privilege in a colonial relationship that is *unjust*; in other words, settlers' position of power and privilege *over* indigenous Canadians causes us to believe, perceive, and remember in ways that are shaped by our position in a morally problematic relationship.

The project of giving up our collective resentment toward indigenous peoples will require active participation on the part of individual settlers to begin to re-remember our history not as a peacemaking nation, but as perpetrators of injustice and persisting injustices. Our distorted *memories* of the Indian Residential Schools must be replaced with more accurate ones. Our colonial attitudes of cultural, moral, economic and legal

¹³⁸ By 'corrupting,' I mean that colonizers attempted to force indigenous children to see their original traditions, languages, cultures, and so on as inferior to those of settler

superiority must be replaced with attitudes of understanding and respect of other ways of life even if we do not endorse such ways for ourselves.¹³⁹ Our false beliefs must also be changed, such as the belief that devastation in indigenous communities today is a result of indigenous peoples' failure to become more 'civilized' members of Canadian society. Finally, our normative commitment to the assimilationist project must be put to an end.

If settlers replace their distorted memories, colonial attitudes, false beliefs, and normative commitment to assimilation with new memories, attitudes, beliefs and commitments, then the *reasons* for their resentment will be undermined. If the reasons underlying our collective resentment are undermined, then the resentment will lose its point. Rationally, we should no longer feel resentful toward indigenous Canadians.

society.

¹³⁹ If indigenous peoples' ways of life were obviously *unjust*, then there might be a case for settlers to step in. But we cannot point to indigenous groups' cultures, traditions, etc. and confidently say that they actually warrant our intervention. Insofar as every person is entitled to her values, at least as long as they are not oppressive, there are no grounds for forcing indigenous peoples to change theirs. There is something like a threshold for intervention, a threshold that has not at this point been crossed.

Chapter 12: The Relationship between Indigenous Resentment and Settler Responsibility

Recall that resentment is relational: the reasons grounding the emotion cannot be undermined unless others standing in relationships with the resenter affirm the legitimacy of his claim expressed by the resentment: that a normative expectation has been violated, that he should not have been the target of some moral injury, that he is marginalized in an unjust society, and so on. When genuine resentment is rational, we ought to both take the resentment seriously and listen to what it is communicating; that is to say, we ought to listen to what it *requires* to be rationally undermined. Although resentment plays an important role in communicating what we feel entitled to and when some expectation we have has been violated, it is still a *negative* emotion: it is unpleasant to experience and it prevents agents from going about their relationships the way they did before.¹⁴⁰ These genuine, rational and thus *reasonable* resentments require *uptake*. In the Canadian context, indigenous resentments call for uptake on the part of settler Canadians to actively undermine the threat to indigenous existence.

If settlers come to see that their resentment is inappropriate in the ways suggested above, *and* they relinquish it, then there will no longer be an emotional stalemate dominated by reciprocal resentments. Relinquishing their collective resentment is part of the process of decolonization, since it requires settlers to recognize the unjust colonial structure of settler society that gave rise to it. If settlers come to *see* indigenous existence

¹⁴⁰ For a discussion of the way in which emotions can be both “practically necessitated for surviving oppression or morally necessitated for opposing it” even though experiencing them is a cost to the agent in the sense that they are not pleasant and do not contribute to agents’ flourishing, at least in Aristotle’s original conception of the word,

not through the colonizer's lens of cultural, moral, economic, and legal superiority but from a decolonized lens of mere *difference* in culture, morality, economics, and law, then we will also be in a better position to see the grounds for indigenous resentment in the past and present injustices produced and reproduced by colonialism.

The settler project of decolonization and replacing our resentments with understanding and truth involves acknowledging that settler society is responsible for historical injustices, colonial policies, and the continuing social and political injustices that affect indigenous groups. We are *collectively* responsible to alleviate the problems caused by past harms and the injustices that persist: we have inherited the position of privilege that allowed past colonizers to perpetrate harms toward indigenous Canadians, and settler society as a whole continues to allow the injustices to persist. Regan applies Janna Thompson's notion of 'intergenerational communities' to the Canadian context to make sense of our current responsibilities. She argues consistently with Thompson that,

societies and nations have intergenerational moral responsibilities that encompass past, present, and future relationships... Just as we bind our successors to treaties and agreements that we make today, so too are we bound by those made, and sometimes broken, by our ancestors. We inherit moral as well as legal obligations, and thus historical claims "require a response from us as moral agents."¹⁴¹

Again, the 'injustice' involved here is not only a social and political problem; it is a *moral* problem in which persons who are by rights equal members of a moral community are not treated as such. So the social and political resentments grounded in the unjust social structure of Canadian society are not only a problem from a social and political perspective; they are also a moral problem at the *level* of society.

see Lisa Tessman's "The Burden of Political Resistance" in *Burdened Virtues: Virtue Ethics for Liberatory Struggles* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press 2005), 107.

¹⁴¹ Regan, 44.

So settler Canadians' responsibilities are not reducible to public acknowledgement and apologies for a historical event consisting of distinct moral injuries; they require actively changing the colonial structure of Canada and settler attitudes toward indigenous existence that reproduce injustice. This involves but is not limited to public education about what really happened in the Indian Residential Schools, taking responsibility for shifting colonial attitudes, moving away from apology and toward action, and affirming indigenous self-determination.¹⁴² And it is our *collective responsibility* as settlers to do so.

So the second kind of responsibility arises when individuals and collectives are required to give resentment uptake. The collective resentment of indigenous Canadians invites a response from settler society to affirm their judgments as legitimate, respect their inherent rights, and to take action in the ways suggested above. But many settler Canadians will resist. They will argue that, by casting responsibility in collective terms, we are including individual members of settler society *who are not blameworthy or*

¹⁴² Regan, 216-224. There is a worry that some indigenous communities are so damaged by colonialism that 'granting' (or, as I and others might argue, affirming indigenous peoples' rights to) them self-determination would be granting them or affirming their rights to something that they are no longer capable of carrying out. But indigenous scholars Jeff Corntassel and Cindy Holder have argued that we must acknowledge indigenous peoples' "inherent powers of self-determination" and that returning land to indigenous peoples and affirming their sovereignty are 'critical' to discussions about indigenous restitution and reconciliation (see Jeff Corntassel and Cindy Holder, "Who's Sorry Now? Government Apologies, Truth Commissions, and Indigenous Self-Determination in Australia, Canada, Guatemala and Peru" *Human Rights Rev* 2008:3, 7). To enter these communities with the intention of paternalistic rescue might be permissible and even morally praiseworthy if rescue by settlers is what indigenous peoples want. But *self-determination* is what indigenous peoples want, which is part of the process of 'decolonization': abandoning the belief that settlers are in a better position to fix the 'Indian Problem' than indigenous peoples themselves. It is also important to note that the issue of self-determination is more complex than I have talked about here, and the extent to which indigenous Canadians want to be independent from the Canadian

responsible for anything in the collective that holds the blame. The final chapter of this thesis explores the worry that understanding settler responsibility in collective terms is unfair to individual members of settler society who do not endorse colonial myths.

state is one part of the issue to consider. But for our purpose, it is sufficient that self-determination in some sense is what indigenous Canadians want.

Chapter 13: Blaming the Innocent?

I am not in a position to provide an independent argument in favour of some account of collective responsibility, and I acknowledge that there is room for discussion about if and how we can use the concept meaningfully. But I wish to point out some pragmatic rather than metaphysical reasons for using the term in the context of articulating the responsibilities of settlers Canadians in response to past harms and persistent injustices perpetrated against indigenous peoples. So I will address a common worry with collective responsibility raised by Jan Narveson in his paper titled “Collective Responsibility.”

Narveson argues that the concept of collective responsibility is a dangerous device that entails the mistreatment of individual people.¹⁴³ He thinks that it only makes sense to say that a group oppresses another group if many individuals characteristically or significantly often mistreat members of the oppressed group.¹⁴⁴ For example, in genocide, many individuals belonging to one group murder many individuals belonging to another; and individuals who are *not* involved in the murders and especially those who do what they can to prevent others from committing such acts cannot be said to be ‘guilty’ in any way.¹⁴⁵ In the Canadian context, Narveson might say that settler Canadians who do not endorse colonial myths, who acknowledge just how morally horrendous the Indian Residential School System was, and who do not express negative attitudes toward indigenous Canadians cannot be said to be guilty, blameworthy, or *responsible* for past or present injustices.

¹⁴³ Jan Narveson, “Collective Responsibility” in *Journal of Ethics* 6, no.2 (2002):179.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 182.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

Narveson's concern seems to capture many settler Canadians' attitudes toward responsibility for the Indian Residential Schools; in particular, how many settler Canadians *resent* being burdened with responsibility for past harms when it is unclear how we can be individually blamed—especially those of us who are 'socially aware,' and who feel indignant toward the colonizers of our past. But this is exactly the attitude that Alfred has identified as one which signifies hypocrisy and moral cowardice.¹⁴⁶ He says that this sense of moral superiority as the new, *liberal* settler Canadians is a colonial attitude in itself.¹⁴⁷

Paulette Regan shares similar worries with reducing collective responsibility to individuals. She discusses historian Bernhard Giesen's work in which he documents studies that show how ordinary German citizens denied their roles in the Holocaust by 'rationalizing' genocide as an act of a few evil people, creating an image in which ordinary German citizens were perceived as victims of government policies enacted on their behalf.¹⁴⁸ So by focusing on individual wrongdoing, German citizens can deny collective responsibility.¹⁴⁹ In the Canadian context, this means recognizing only that some settlers were individual perpetrators of harm, and are blameworthy in the backward looking sense, and failing to recognize the presence of collective responsibility on the part of settler society to address past harms and persistent injustices. And Regan notes that this strategy has been working in Canada; for example, in the 1990s when Residential School trials were held to publically acknowledge individual perpetrators

¹⁴⁶ Alfred, 105.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Regan, 35.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 36.

while failing to acknowledge systemic harms.¹⁵⁰ She also discusses what we can learn from conflicts scholar E. Franklin Dukes who criticizes failures to recognize collective responsibility. Regan states,

...whereas rights are socially constructed and legally granted (usually to individuals), responsibilities are more informal, carry more of a collective obligation, and can vary according to cultural teachings. Thus, it is not enough to treat Indigenous demands for justice for historical wrongs and harms as strictly legal obligations that need to be met only by the state and those institutions directly responsible. Rather, these wrongs also require a *moral response from society that goes beyond resolving individual claims*, which might satisfy black letter law but would fail to provide justice.¹⁵¹ (emphasis added)

Regan argues that the impetus behind the creation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is “a testament to this hard reality.”¹⁵² I take Regan to be saying that without acknowledging collective responsibility, constructing positive indigenous-settler relations is impossible. The idea that settlers as a collective are responsible for past harms and persistent injustices means recognizing that settler society is an ‘intergenerational community’ in the way that Thompson and Regan have argued; that we have inherited legal and moral obligations to address the problem of colonialism in Canada that goes beyond apologizing for our ancestors’ immoral actions. There is hope that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is a step in the right direction.

But for those who are not persuaded that there is such a thing as intergenerational communities, or that worry about notions of collective responsibility generally, there are still good reasons to think that settler Canadians are not off the hook when it comes to addressing injustices that harm indigenous peoples. Each and every settler Canadian might not be blameworthy for the Residential Schools, but they are members of a

¹⁵⁰ Regan, 36.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 44.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

collective which benefits from injustices that marginalize indigenous Canadians now¹⁵³; and since benefiting from injustices done to others is morally wrong¹⁵⁴, settler Canadians have moral obligations to stop benefiting from institutions and practices that benefit them *only* at the expense of others. We do not need to invoke the notion of collective responsibility to see that there are moral responsibilities to address the problems discussed.

So acknowledging and affirming indigenous rights in the legal sense will not achieve reconciliation. The apologies by individuals on behalf of the state also will not do. Justice requires a dramatic shift in the social and moral fabric of settler society as a *collective*. As we have seen, this involves deconstructing the myths upholding Canada as a peacemaking nation when it comes to indigenous-settler relations,¹⁵⁵ changing settler attitudes of cultural superiority, giving up our collective resentment, and actively changing the social and political injustices that continue to marginalize indigenous Canadians. We might say of individual settler Canadians to whom Narveson does not want to assign blame that they are *fulfilling* their own responsibilities as settler Canadians and that they should be morally praised for doing so, but not that they are somehow exempt from being part of the collective holding the blame for the Indian Residential Schools and present injustices.

¹⁵³ The issue of how exactly settler Canadians benefit from injustice that marginalize indigenous Canadians is a complicated matter, but one example is the ways in which individual settlers and corporations benefit from capitalist practices surrounding indigenous communities, such as their exploitation of the environment that affects indigenous communities noted above.

¹⁵⁴ I am assuming this is true for the purpose of this thesis.

¹⁵⁵ This is not to say that contemporary Canada is not at all a peacemaking nation. The creation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Canada is one way in which settler Canadians are actively moving towards peaceful coexistence with indigenous

Chapter 14: Conclusion

By moving beyond conceptions of individual resentment to develop an account of shared and collective resentment, we can better understand what the emotion is expressing in situations of social and political injustice. The concept of shared resentment allows us to make sense of the resentments arising from social vulnerability, and how individuals can experience the same resentments because they are grounded in the same reasons. In the Canadian context, many indigenous Canadians share resentment that is caused by their shared experiences in Indian Residential Schools, and the reasons they could appeal to in explaining and justifying their resentment is the reason that they were physically, sexually, and emotionally *abused* in the schools. But these shared resentments are still grounded in reasons for individuals, since it is individual indigenous Canadians that were the target of these direct harms.

But the project of making sense of the resentments arising from social vulnerability raised the question of whether individualistic or even shared conceptions of resentment best capture these resentments. I argued that there is a kind of resentment that is distinct from individual and shared resentments in that it is grounded in different reasons. I called this collective resentment. Collective resentment is resentment that is felt and expressed by individuals in response to a perceived threat to a collective to which they belong. I clarified that collective resentment need not be experienced by all members of the collective in order for one member to have collective resentment. The social context might be such that it characteristically causes individuals from the collective to experience collective resentment, but the diversity of values, life projects, and other

peoples. But the strong claim that Canada is and always has been a peacemaking nation *when it comes to indigenous-settler relations* is the myth that must be replaced.

factors might mean that some members of the collective do not experience resentment. But so long as there are reasons for resentment that are reasons for all individual members of a collective *in virtue* of their membership, and at least one member resents in response to his perception of a threat to the collective, we can identify the presence of collective resentment.

In part two, I explored what shared and collective resentments look like in context, and in particular, the resentments of indigenous and settler Canadians in response to the Indian Residential Schools. I argued that understanding the difference between individual, shared, and collective resentment is crucial for capturing the reasons underlying the different resentments, and that a failure to notice and thus address all of these reasons means that the resentment cannot be rationally undermined. Indigenous resentment is not only grounded in reasons for individuals who suffered abuse in Residential Schools, but reasons for all indigenous Canadians in virtue of ‘being indigenous’ to Canada and having one’s culture, traditions, spirituality, inherent rights, and self-determination threatened by settler society. Settler resentment is not only grounded in reasons for individuals who have had hostile encounters with indigenous Canadians, but reasons for all settler Canadians in virtue of being the colonizers in a colonial relationship whose society is perceived as ‘threatened’ by indigenous ways of life.

The third part of this thesis identified the relationship between resentment and moral responsibility. In addition to the idea that resentment is a reactive attitude that is equivalent to holding others morally responsible (following Peter Strawson), I argued that two additional responsibilities that can emerge when individuals express resentment: (1)

the obligation on the part of the resenter to relinquish his or her resentment if the emotion is inappropriate, and (2) the obligation on the part of those resented or the surrounding community to give rationally appropriate resentments uptake. In chapter nine, I discussed the evaluative language used by philosophers in assessing resentments including such terms as reasonable, unreasonable, rational, irrational, appropriate, inappropriate, justified, and unjustified. I replaced MacLachlan's terms 'reasonable' and 'unreasonable' with 'genuine' and 'not genuine.' I argued that genuine resentments are those we should take seriously as resentments, and that resentments that do not meet the criteria of resentment are not genuine, and we should not take them seriously as resentments even if we should take them seriously as other forms of anger. Rational resentments are genuine resentments that are grounded in true beliefs, accurate memories, etc. and hence are *reasonable* while irrational resentments are genuine resentments that are grounded in false beliefs, inaccurate memories, etc. and hence are *unreasonable*. In evaluating settler resentment, I concluded that most settler resentments are genuine but irrational and so unreasonable. If I am right, then settler Canadians have both responsibilities that emerge: they ought to relinquish their unreasonable resentments and give the resentments of indigenous Canadians uptake.

But in my talk of collectives, the question of whether these responsibilities are for individuals or collectives emerged. Given the scope of this thesis, I was not able to provide an independent argument that defends a particular account of collective responsibility. Instead, I provided pragmatic rather than metaphysical reasons as to why understanding settler responsibilities as not only individual but *collective* more adequately captures what is involved in fulfilling their responsibilities. Chapter fourteen

considered an objection raised by Jan Narveson in his paper “Collective Responsibility” in which he argues that the concept of collective responsibility is dangerous, entailing the mistreatment of individual people. I responded by pointing out that Narveson’s worries seem to capture many settler Canadians’ attitudes toward responsibility for the Indian Residential Schools; in particular, how many of us resent being burdened with responsibility for past harms when it is unclear just how we can be individually blamed. I then argued that failing to recognize the presence of collective responsibility in the context in question encourages colonial attitudes that are at the heart of the settler problem. Narveson’s discussion applied in *this* context seems to represent the need for a theory of collective responsibility rather than an objection to it.

So in the Canadian context, focusing on the resentments that persist in indigenous-settler relations, and specifically the shared and *collective* resentments that dominate the political landscape, brings us a lot further in understanding how to move from hostility and hopelessness toward peaceful coexistence.

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