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I declare that I worked independently on my Bachelor Thesis “Canadian First Nation, the History of Injustice” under the guidance of my supervisor and that I included the complete list of used and cited literature, and other sources.

In Olomouc.....

Signature.....

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Introduction

As the title suggests, injustice, racism and discrimination have afflicted Canadian First Nations from the very beginning. Despite being the first people to occupy the area, they were forced to change their way of living, abandon their territory and demand every remaining right with difficulty. The terms injustice and racism are defined in the first part of my work, although not all historians share the same opinion about it.

Another important issue is to make a distinction between Canadian First Nations, Indians and Aboriginals since membership to a particular group assigns special rights. The thesis is concerned mainly with the First Nations who are enrolled in the Indian Register and who primarily occupied British Columbia. What is common for all Canadian Indians is that they are all environmentally friendly. It is due to the fact that nature was the only source of food, shelter and formed the basis of religion.

Throughout history, the Whites tried to portray Indians as bad people. There are many invented stories about lazy and savage Indians which influenced their recognition in the world. It caused their division into Dead or noble Indians, and Live or unruly Indians.

In the next section I provide several examples of Aboriginals' harsh treatment, such as a civilizing plan, land confiscation, prohibition of common activities, peasant farming and concentration camps. Moreover, Indian children were taken from their families to foster care for assimilation and re-education. The worst position in society is held by Indian women who must cope with fewer rights and worse job opportunities.

The third chapter deals with the treaties that were signed between Canadian Whites and First Nations. The first treaty was signed in 1701 and ensured the peace between the Iroquois and Britain, which was mutually favourable. Soon after that the Indian Department was formed which protected boundaries of the Indian territory. The consequent period is called the British era, in which many important treaties, concerning the land ownership, were signed.

A crucial treaty, the Indian Act, which dealt with Indian classification, was signed in 1876. Treaty, Status and non-Status Indians were the three categories and each of them determined different rights and obligations. Many amendments were gradually added with the aim to assimilate as many Aboriginals as possible into Canadian society. One of the most influential creators of the amendments was Duncan Campbell Scott who wanted to eliminate all Indians living in Canada.

Aboriginal people were often betrayed by White people and they did not receive what they were promised. The turning point occurred in 1982 when Aboriginal rights were successfully negotiated in Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Later, in 1995, the Inherent Right to Self-Government Policy was launched, which enabled Aboriginals to increase the control over their lives.

The current situation of Aboriginals is described in the fourth chapter. Unfortunately, the living conditions are still very bad. Limited access to health care and poor hygiene lead to a variety of diseases and a high death rate. Another problem is poor education which results in illiteracy and unemployment. Consequently, many Aboriginal people opt to commit suicide rather than constantly fight for survival and human rights.

The last part of my work is concerned with the novel *Slash* and its historical and literary analysis. A short biography of the author Jeannette C. Armstrong is provided, followed by the story's description, comments by other artists and explanation of historical events. The book is divided into four chapters, each of them containing evidence of discrimination and racism. Thanks to the novel, readers of this work can get a better understanding of the difficult lives of Canadian First Nations accompanied by injustice and resistance to subordination.

1. Injustice and Racism

The terms injustice and racism should be defined at the beginning to truly understand the topic and the issue that I want to focus on. Basically, it is a situation in which someone restricts the freedom of someone else and acts against moral and other rules. A theory of group injustice has the following characteristics. It is applied to groups, it involves consequential harm, and an assessment of the power status of the parties is required within a historical and political context.¹ In our case, the social group involves Canadian Natives. The examples of consequential harm will be shown in the following chapters, as well as an assessment of the power status of the parties. There have been many treaties, restrictions and laws that adjusted Natives' rights and freedom and therefore we can declare that Canadian First Nations are truly marked by injustice.

A clear definition of racism is quite difficult to be found since many historians and philosophers have a different opinion about it. What they have in common is the fact that there must have been the term "race" at the beginning out of which "racism" developed. The modern use of the word, which is to designate one of the branches of humanity, developed in the scientific anthropology of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europe and America.² It is connected with the aim of European expansion, and thus the settlers in Canada had a big influence on using these terms.

One of the main points of various declarations dealing with human rights and independence is the statement that all people are equal. However, it is not always a valid rule, and if we notice some marks of inequality, then we are talking about racism. If scarce resources like jobs, wages, and education are not equally distributed, then this is the main evidence of discrimination that stems from racism. Alternatively, if some groups are concentrated in disadvantaged positions in Canadian society, then it is also attributed to unequal treatment, and it can be a case of racism as well.³

¹Thomas W. Simon, *Democracy and Social Injustice: Law, Politics and Philosophy* (United States of America: Rawman & Littlefield Publishers, 1995), 3.

²Kevin Reilly, Stephen Kaufmann and Angela Bodino, eds., *Racism: A Global Reader* (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 2003), 50.

³Vic Satzewich, *Racism in Canada* (Ontario: Oxford University Press, 2011), 15.

2 Historical Overview

2.1 Canadian First Nations, Indians and Aboriginals

To use the correct terminology, it is necessary to understand the difference between Indians, First Nations, and Aboriginals. Indians got their name by the European colonists who came to North America convinced that they were in India. “Many people who were misnamed "Indians" now prefer to be called First Nation. First Nations people identify themselves by the nation to which they belong to, for example, Mohawk, Cree, Oneida, and so on.”⁴ Aboriginal people are represented by Indians, Métis and Inuit people.

The membership in one of these groups matters for personal reasons but it has certain consequences as well. For First Nations, there are several special rights and limitations, attached to these identities.⁵ It can be summarized as the right to independence through self-determination regarding governance, land, resources and culture. For example, First Nations that have signed treaties with the federal government can obtain certain privileges (such as annual cash payments) that non-treaty nations do not.⁶ Therefore, Canadian government has endeavoured a lot to clarify who belongs to this group and who does not and treated these individuals in a particular way.

In this work, the main focus is put on First Nations and according to the Indian Register, there are approximately 901,000 Registered Indians living in Canada alongside 617 First Nation communities. The Indian Register is the official record identifying all Registered Indians in Canada who are also known as Status Indians.⁷ The most communities are situated in British Columbia with the total number of 198 and the fewest in Prince Edward Island where we can find only two communities. To accentuate cultural diversity of the Canadian country, many towns and cities were given names

⁴“First Nations People in Canada,” *Canada.ca*, <https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1303134042666/1303134337338> (accessed March 13, 2017).

⁵Satzewich. *Racism in Canada*, 55.

⁶“Indigenous People: Economic Conditions” *Historica Canada*, <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/aboriginal-rights/> (accessed March 14, 2017).

⁷“First Nations People in Canada.”

adapted from the original Aboriginal language that was spoken in the area.⁸ For example Coquitlam means “small red salmon” and it stands for British Columbia, or Oshawa translated as “crossing of a stream” stands for Ontario.⁹

One of the characteristics that is typical for Canadian First Nations is the effort to be environmentally friendly. Nature was a home for them and the only source of supplies necessary for survival, such as food obtained from fishing and hunting. Therefore, they revered nature and were very careful not to cause any great damage despite the harsh living conditions. Moreover, First Nations were able to develop complex culture and trading alliances. Pottery, silver, and copper tools were the main items of trade. The culture had its own local features and each group of Natives developed distinctive housing, tools, clothing, transportation, weapons, ceremonies, and had their own legends and stories about their origins including the interpretation of the world around them.¹⁰

Bearing in mind the magnitude of nature, it became the fundamental particle of their religion. According to First Nations, all creatures and all natural things were thought to be alive and have spirits. Native shamans were able to communicate between the natural and the spiritual world.¹¹ Supposedly, all living things were made by The Creator and the cycle of life was called Medicine Wheel. Another important aspect proving their intelligence and common sense is the seasonal migration. Natives knew where the sources of food would be better at a particular time of the year, thus they migrated to these places, following the same pattern. It became known as the sacred circle of life since the movement did not have a beginning or an end. Climate changes, diseases and warfares were the other reasons for major migrations which were different from seasonal migrations.

To set some basic rules which would define their unique institution, Natives chose their own leaders and government. The “potlatch” system that followed on the West Coast was known as a gathering of people, who selected their leaders and chiefs

⁸“First Nations People in Canada.”

⁹“First Nations People in Canada.”

¹⁰“Canada's First Nations: An Introduction,” Canada's First Peoples, http://firstpeoplesofcanada.com/fp_groups/fp_groups_overview.html (accessed March 30, 2017).

¹¹ Bobbie Kalman, *Canada: The Culture* (New York: Crabtree Publishing Company, 2009), 6.

during ceremonies and made decisions affecting the tribe.¹² The system on the East coast was introduced by the Iroquois and it is called “longhouse” which means a formalized constitution and a code of laws where male and female leaders were chosen from each family clan and decisions were consequently reached through consensus.¹³ The Natives simply developed a working system that was based on democracy, justice and usage of natural resources. They would never betray each other and their aim was to live peacefully without any outside interference.

2.2 Mistaken Prejudice

Colonists and other Whites were always trying to make First Nations look dangerous, savage, maladjusted or indolent. The purpose of it was to justify their measures. The Whites wanted to show other countries that, in fact, the bad ones were the Natives. It is said that Canada is one of the best countries to live in. The problem here is that the Natives cannot succeed because of their susceptibility to alcohol, preference of welfare, and culture that encourages laziness.¹⁴ Moreover, they are pictured as less civilized, less human and more liable to commit a crime.

This wrong opinion about the Natives can be called a vicious circle since it is the Canadian government which at first imposes some restrictions on the Indians and immediately blames them for having special rules and rights. The reserve or apartheid system which separated the Indians from the Whites was another cause of prejudice. It exempted them from the taxes that their white neighbours paid and released them from any law-suits for debt.¹⁵ Other aspects of the apartheid system include the suppression of Native nationalism, reserve programs controlled by white bureaucrats only, or external legislation that controls the separation of Natives and whites.

However, if some Natives make an effort to assert their rights and power, they are perceived as threatening. There is no way to induce the Whites to change their minds. The fact is that they do not try to change it since they do not want the Indians to

¹²Pauline Comeau and Also Santin, *The First Canadians: A Profile of Canada's Native People Today* (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 1995), 70.

¹³Comeau and Santin, *The First Canadians*, 70.

¹⁴Satzewich, *Racism in Canada*, 63.

¹⁵Ian. A. L. Getty and Antoine S. Lussier, eds., *As Long As the Sun Shines And Waters Flows: A Reader in Canadian Native Studies* (Vancouver: The University of British Columbia Press, 1983), 158.

have the same rights and opportunities as the non-Natives have. And even if some White people understand the lack of job opportunities in the northern reserves, they blame Indigenous people for not moving south and assimilating, with a seeming lack of appreciation and understanding for how Indigenous identities are tied to the land.¹⁶ The relationship to the land is spiritual since the Indians feel responsibility for the land and the nature of the tie which is rather stewardship than ownership. Moreover, the Royal Proclamation from 1763 recognized the relationship as constitutionally protected and legal.

The so called Native self-government might be another reason for the Canadians' dislike for the Natives. Without making an active effort to learn about the fact what the Native self-government actually entails, many Canadians tend to adopt a negative attitude, because it is about Aboriginal people and they are confused by this misconception.¹⁷ The evolution of the Native self-government was not easy. The White Paper on Indian Policy in 1969 wanted to abolish band governments and use only the provincial governments. Later, the Special Committee of the House of Commons started to negotiate self-government issues with Indian bands. The inherent right of the self-government was finally recognized in 1995 by the Liberal Government but its implementation is still limited.

The Canadian Indians are according to the Whites divided into Live Indians and Dead Indians. The Live Indians are seen as invisible, unruly and disappointing. The Dead ones are seen as dignified, noble, silent, and suitably garbed. The first one is an unpleasant, contemporary surprise. The other is a romantic reminder of a heroic but fictional past which would be much more preferred.¹⁸ The Dead Indians are what Canada wants to have. There are various hobbyist clubs and social organisations which display the Indian way of live.

¹⁶Jeffrey S. Denis, "Contact Theory in a Small-Town Settler-Colonial Context: The Reproduction of Laissez-Faire Racism in Indigenous-White Canadian Relations," *American Sociological Review* 80 (2015): 22, doi.org/10.1177/0003122414564998 (accessed May 15, 2017).

¹⁷ Senada Delic, "Factors Fostering Prejudice Against Aboriginal Peoples in Canada: Evidence from the 2000 and the 2004 Canadian Election Surveys," *International Journal Of Diversity In Organisations, Communities & Nations* 8 (2008): 123, <http://eds.b.ebscohost.com/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=d18b662b-1095-4f19-8afa-06ebca7d0399%40sessionmgr120&vid=1&hid=126> (accessed May 25, 2017).

¹⁸Thomas King, *The Inconvenient Indian: a curious account of native people in North America*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 6.

Having considered all the above mentioned information we can say that the Whites do not have very good attitudes towards the Indians and it is the reason for their racial discrimination. In pre-Confederation time, governments even isolated Indians in reserves since they were seen as a blocks to progress, and attempted to assimilate them through the introduction to European agriculture, education and Christianity. Thousands Indigenous children were abused in residential schools, sometimes physically and sexually, and many more lost their language and culture at schools. As with the new immigrants, it was thought that Indigenous languages and cultures had to be eradicated and that they would have to be assimilated into a superior way of life. After the First World War, Indigenous peoples were forbidden to vote, were relegated to the bottom rungs of the economic order and were socially stigmatized.¹⁹

2.3 Harsh Treatment

There were many occasions in the past when the Natives were not treated very well. The major dispute has always happened because of the land. The Whites were convinced that the Natives possessed unnecessarily too much of the land and they were trying to steal or purchase it from the Natives from the very beginning of the Canadian history. Only a proportion of those lands perceived by the aboriginal people as being subject to aboriginal title is explicitly recognized as such by law. In most of Canada, aboriginal title as claimed by the native groups has neither been recognized by the provincial government nor verified by the courts.²⁰ It is also connected with limited rights for resources found in those areas. The communities were relocated to clear the way for economic development or to assert Canadian sovereignty. Additionally, treaty obligations have been reneged.²¹

There have been many occasions when Indians were forced to move and leave the land for the benefit of the European Canadians under illegal circumstances. One of the cases happened in the year 1967 when the construction of the hydroelectric project at Churchill Falls in Newfoundland began. This happened in spite of the objections of

¹⁹“Prejudice and Discrimination in Canada.”

²⁰Claudia Notzke, *Aboriginal Peoples and Natural Resources in Canada* (Ontario: Captus Press, 1994), 176.

²¹Satzewich, *Racism in Canada*, 58.

the Innu, who lost over 1,900 square miles of their traditional hunting and trapping land to the subsequent flooding.²² Innu had to find a new land but nobody helped them and nobody was truly concerned if they had a place to live in.

The land represents something more for the Natives, it determines their membership of the tribe. Land is the most important source of self-identification for the Native people. The elimination of reserve lands means the termination of status and rights for them. The forced change of status of Indian Governments to that of municipal governments and the change of reserve land status from federal crown land to provincial crown land is a sure means of termination of Indian rights and status and elimination of a land base.²³ Therefore, Indians' main concern was to keep their territory. They raised their children to fight for the land as it was their life mission.

Furthermore, it was quite difficult to visit their relatives and friends, especially for the Status Indians. Permission for common activities, such as a visit to relatives in another reserve, shopping in town, even selling eggs at a local market, was required.²⁴ Voting, liquor consumption, and pool hall attendance were also restricted. Even today, there are some special restriction on the Status Indians defined by the Indian Act. The Potlach ceremony was banned in 1885. In 1927, Status Indians were forbidden to be represented by a lawyer if they meant to make a claim against Canada.

In 1889, the commissioner Hayter Reed approved a new system of farming based on separation reserves into farms and usage of simple tools. According to Read, labour saving machinery was not required by the Indians. They should be able to cultivate root crops rather than concentrate upon extensive grain growing.²⁵ This system was called peasant farming. Indians owned only a small acreage since they were believed to succeed in proper cultivation of a small area rather than in cultivation of a larger one.

As a result of that, the Indians did not have enough place where to grow their crops and breed their animals and they were not able to compete with the Whites on the market. They were not supposed to be good enough to operate farms as business

²²King, *The Inconvenient Indian*, 96.

²³Notzke, *Aboriginal Peoples and Natural Resources in Canada*, 173.

²⁴ Satzewich, *Racism in Canada*, 61.

²⁵Barrington Walker, *The History of Immigration and Racism in Canada: Essential Readings* (Toronto: Canadian Scholar's Press, 2008), 111.

enterprises. Despite many complaints to the Department of Indian Affairs about unfair subsidies, Aboriginal farming and its technology was not improved. Land was sold to non-Indians and mechanized farming equipment was taken away. With this policy, Canadian officials succeeded in dramatically reducing the total land under Indian cultivation and in maintaining the reserves in poverty.²⁶

The peasant farming policy also meant destruction of the community ownership system on reserves and improvement of individualism and self-support. Private property defined in The Dawes Act was a major triumph for humanitarian reformers who believed that individual ownership was the key to the civilization and assimilation of the Indians, but it also appealed to those with overt self-interest in mind.²⁷ Native adults were encouraged to take up agriculture which would lead to a more settled lifestyle, a greater sense of demanded responsibility, and capitalist work ethic.²⁸ Thus, they would not be rebellious and they would respect all the rules.

2.4 Native Women and Children

Discrimination against Native women happened as well and they might have been treated even worse than Native men. Women in general had fewer rights than men and it was very difficult to fight for their place in society. Worse job opportunities, restricted freedom and sexual harassment are only a few examples of injustice. When Aboriginal women were victimized, there was less sympathy and professionalism, from the police and other justice-system authorities like prosecutors and judges.²⁹ This statement can be proved by the fact that although Aboriginal women make up 4.3 per cent of the female Canadian population, they are significantly overrepresented among missing and murdered women. In 2011, the NWAC database included 582 known cases, most of which had occurred between 1990 and 2010.³⁰ Their lives are not taken as important as the White women's lives.

²⁶Barry M. Pritzker, *A Native American Encyclopedia: History, Culture, and Peoples* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 312.

²⁷Walker, *The History of Immigration and Racism in Canada*, 114.

²⁸Satzewich, *Racism in Canada*, 59.

²⁹Satzewich, *Racism in Canada*, 72.

³⁰“Indigenous Women's Issue.”

Native women had almost no rights in hospitals or other state institutions. Doctors could examine and operate them in whichever way they found acceptable. However, they did not really care if they would hurt the Native patients. In the late 1970s Native women were sterilized without their knowledge. Tubal ligations were performed on older multiparous women when the obstetrician determined that it was in the patient's medical interest. The women simply agreed to whatever the doctor told them to do, because they had always done so in the past.³¹ The Natives could not be sure if the authority was trustworthy or not and they realized their disadvantaged position.

A lot of Indian women would like to improve their situation and working conditions by being employed as domestic workers. Their attempts are hindered by the prejudice against them and consequent discrimination. West Indian women in search of domestic service are no longer readily welcomed in Canada.³² Canadian families have been always believed to prefer White workers since they consider them to be more trustworthy and hardworking. So not only worse medical treatment and limited human rights are the issues they have had to face, but also job opportunities are restricted. Moreover, in 1869 the Indian Act introduced a law that made Aboriginal women lose their treaty and Aboriginal rights if they married someone without the status. This law was not cancelled until 1985 when Bill C-31 amended the Indian Act.

Native children were discriminated against as well. Either by other children or state institutions such as schools. Research showed that there was high mortality of Native children in many schools. In 1907, there was an attempt to notify Duncan Campbell Scott, the Superintendent of the Department of Indian Affairs, of the high mortality rate of the Native students but Scott dismissed the high death rate at schools and insisted that this alone did not justify a change in the policy of this Department, which is geared towards the final solution of our Indian Problem.³³ And if the government did not provide any help there were not many options left how to solve this problem.

³¹ George Weisz, ed., *Social Science Perspectives on Medical Ethics* (Montreal: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2012), 58.

³² Walker, *The History of Immigration and Racism in Canada*, 266.

³³ King, *The Inconvenient Indian*, 115.

The harsh treatment of the Native children usually had an impact on them in the future. They could not defend themselves since they were considered as an undesirable minority. Their inner fear and depression had been hidden inside for many years and they tried to suppress it. To remedy the psychological trauma resulting from time spent in residential schools, many Aboriginal people have chosen to self-medicate with drugs, alcohol, and other destructive diversions in attempt to stop internal demons.³⁴ In 2008, the government apologised for the wrong school system and discrimination at schools. However, there was no apology concerning the other ways of oppressions, such as worse living conditions or theft of land and natural resources.

Moreover, poverty and family problems caused that Aboriginal children are up to six times more likely than non-Aboriginal children to be removed from their Native families and placed in foster care.³⁵ By 1985, 6,4 per cent of all status children were in care, while the overall Canadian rate remained at 1 per cent. These children, once placed in care, usually never returned home. For non-native children, placement in foster homes is usually a temporary solution. In contrast, for most of native children, the new living situation becomes permanent, as they are shuffled between foster homes for years.³⁶ They are supposed to find there a better place to live, but the real aim is assimilation and re-education so that they will become more similar to non-Aboriginal children. There is not much chance to fight against the removal.

³⁴Kerstin Knopf, *Aboriginal Canada revisited* (Ottawa : University of Ottawa Press, 2008), 33-34.

³⁵Knopf, *Aboriginal Canada revisited*, 12.

³⁶Comeau and Santin, *The First Canadians*, 143.

3 Treaties between Native and non-Native Canadians

3.1 Arriving Colonists

Throughout history, treaties between the Canadian Natives and non-Natives played an important legal role. They were the only means of maintaining Indian rights and the only chance of survival. Treaties can be defined as a way of arranging a peaceful solution to a problem. The parties firstly discuss the problem, then ideally each make concessions to agree on a solution. The solution is written down and then signed. Many treaties concluded between the Aboriginal peoples and settlers to Canada usually involved the transference of land from Aboriginal peoples to settlers in exchange for money, hunting and fishing rights and blocks of land for Native settlement called Indian Reserves.³⁷

The earliest treaties developed due to the trade between Europeans and Native Canadians, especially fur trade provided by the Natives and exported to Europe. As colonies grew and European conflicts spread to North America, both French and British colonial leaders began to depend heavily upon their new Aboriginal allies for help in defending their colonies and attacking their enemies.³⁸

The first treaty, which was signed in 1701, was called The Treaty of Albany. At that time, Britain formed an alliance with the Iroquois, which was mutually advantageous since it helped Britain in the colonial war against France and the Iroquois gained control over the fur trade. They were competing with the Hurons who were in alliance with France. The treaty, known as The Great Peace, ensured the Iroquois peace with other Aboriginals from the Great Lakes and British protection for the same lands. Soon after that, the Iroquois leaders agreed in Albany to sell all the lands of the Great Lakes to Britain in return for British protection from the French attack and the right to hunt in that territory. This treaty was peaceful and favourable for both sides. This trend, unfortunately, did not continue for a long time.

³⁷S&S Learning Materials, *Aboriginal Peoples of Canada Gr. 7-8* (Canada: On The Mark Press. 1993), 58.

³⁸“A History of Treaty-Making in Canada.”

To support the alliance with the Iroquois, the British created the Indian Department in 1755. Its superintendent was William Johnson who ensured a relatively peaceful relationship with the First Nations. Recognizing the role of the First Nations as allies in Great Britain's military struggle against France, the Royal proclamation of 1763 promised not to allow agricultural settlement of Indian territories until Aboriginal peoples first ceded land to the Crown through treaties.³⁹ This treaty helped to establish boundaries for the Indian territory which was governed and protected by the Indian Department. It was also the first time when the First Nations rights to land were recognized.

3.2 British Era

The end of the War of Independence in 1783 brought legal recognition of the United States. Consequently, British policy in North America was distinguished by two contradictory objectives: to assure friendship of the tribes and to avoid hostilities with the United States. The key issue in British-American relationship was Britain's retention of the military posts on the northwest frontier. These posts were back then situated within the U.S. territory and under the 1783 treaty terms were to be relinquished. However, the evacuation of the posts would be the first manifestation of Britain's betrayal of its native allies.⁴⁰ More English settlers poured into that area displacing Native people from the most desirable locations and reducing them to squatters on their own land. As the fur trade declined and traditional lands for hunting and fishing were lost, many starved or died as the epidemic outbreaks of disease continued.⁴¹ To compensate the loss of the territory, the Indian Department found new parcels around the Great Lakes and along the Lawrence River, where Indian were allowed move. By maintaining the military alliance with the Indians, Britain was able to fight against the Americans in the War of 1812.

³⁹Paul W. DePasquale, ed., *Natives and Settlers Now and Then: Historical Issues and Current Perspectives on Treaties and Land Claims in Canada* (Alberta: University of Alberta Press, 2012), xxv.

⁴⁰Celia Barnes, *Native American Power in the United States, 1783-1795* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2003), 78.

⁴¹Alan D. McMillan and Eldon Yellowhorn, *First Peoples in Canada* (Vancouver: D & M Publishers, 2004), 63.

The year 1783 is connected yet with another issue and it is the recognition of aboriginal people either as natives or aliens, in other words, Late Loyalists or Early Immigrants. Was residence in the United States before 1783, or subsequent birth to British-born parents there, a reason for them to claim to be British after a seven-year residence in Canada? If this was not the case, those who found themselves in such a situation could not inherit lands, vote, or sit in the Assembly.⁴² The mass of Loyalists were considered aliens by historians but the division is very unclear.

Following agreements played an important role in land distribution. The Douglas treaties were concluded between the years 1850 and 1854 and their aim was to purchase Aboriginal territory on Vancouver Islands where the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) was relocated. The treaties were called after James Douglas, the HBC's chief Factor. The treaties provided some support for the recognition by imperial and colonial authorities of the pre-existing land rights of Native peoples.⁴³ However, it is still unclear if the Native leaders knew exactly the real content of the treaties and Douglas's intention.

In 1950s, the attention was turned to Lake Superior and Lake Huron. Consequently, the Robinson treaties of Upper Canada were signed between the Crown and Ojibwa people and included provisions of annuities, reserves, and the freedom of Native people to hunt and fish over unoccupied Crown lands. The Ojibwa people refused to sell all their reservations but they were threatened by the British government. Both the Robinson treaties and the Douglas treaties meant to extinguish Aboriginal title to large territories, reserving Native ownership to small tracts.⁴⁴

Native people were forced to leave their territories throughout the whole Canadian history. Unfortunately, they had hardly any power and the moving was thus inevitable. If a tribe refused to sign a removal treaty, government officials would find a few members who could be convinced to sign, and then the treaty would be applied to

⁴²Walker, *The History of Immigration and Racism in Canada*, 46-47.

⁴³Christopher McKee, *Treaty Talks in British Columbia: Building a New Relationship* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2000), 13.

⁴⁴McKee, *Treaty Talks in British Columbia*, 13

the entire tribe.⁴⁵ In Canada, relocations were employed to further the official goals - protection, civilization, and assimilation of Canadian Native policy.⁴⁶

3.3 Confederation and the Indian Act

The Canadian power in the nineteenth century was immense as well as the Crown's impact on the Indians. On July 1, 1867 the Canadian Confederation was established and the Crown colonies of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island became provinces of Canada and administrative responsibility for Aboriginal People shifted to the federal government in Ottawa.⁴⁷ The main document of the new Dominion of Canada was the British North America Act. It served to resolve different issues.

The section 91 (24) of the British North America Act was put into effect the same year in order to adjust the relationship with Aboriginal peoples. Although this Act, creating special federal government legislative authority over the Indians and the lands reserved for Indians, has been constructed as policy in the Indian interest, to protect Indians from provincial and private exploitation, the facts don't support this construction.⁴⁸ The genuine intention was to use Natives' weak position and trustfulness for the Crown's needs. Arguably, section 91 (24) has afforded some protection to the Indians, but the primary reason it was enacted in 1867 was to serve the fledgling national interest by creating central federal control and jurisdiction over the Indians and their territories.⁴⁹

Indians were governed by the Department of Indian Affairs which endeavoured to consolidate local policies. The consolidation took place between 1868 and 1876, resulting in formation of the Indian Act. It defined the relationship between the Natives and the federal government by setting up an Indian Department, and creating the legal

⁴⁵ King, *The Inconvenient Indian*, 89.

⁴⁶ King, *The Inconvenient Indian*, 89.

⁴⁷ McMillan and Yellowhorn, *First Peoples in Canada*, 63.

⁴⁸ Menno Boldt, *Surviving as Indians: The Challenge of Self-government* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 68.

⁴⁹ Boldt, *Surviving as Indians*, 68.

machinery for colonial management.⁵⁰ One part of the Indian Act dealt with Indian classification. There are three categories which regulate Aboriginal rights.

The three categories are: Status, Treaty, and non-Status. A Status Indian is a person registered as an Indian for the purposes of the 1876 Indian Act which sets forth a policy of assimilation.⁵¹ The term Treaty Indian refers to a person who is a signatory, or a descendant of a signatory, to an Indian treaty. Such a person might or might not be a Status Indian under the Indian Act and is affiliated with a First Nation, which has treaties with the Crown.⁵² Although the Indian Act refers in section 72 to the payment of treaty money “to Indians or Indian bands,” it provides no definition of a Treaty Indian.

It is questionable how treaty descendants who lack status or band membership can receive treaty benefits.⁵³ The last group consists of non-Status Indians. The only difference from their Status counterparts is the fact they are not registered in the federal Indian Register. Therefore, their rights are limited. The requirement of being a part of Status or non-Status Indians is requisite blood quantum. Despite popular stereotypes of the economic benefits of state paternalism towards Indians, Status Indians emerge as consistently disadvantaged compared to their non-Status counterparts.⁵⁴

The Indian Act in 1876 has never had a final form. There have been many modifications and amendments to the Act since the members of the Indian Department intended to limit Aboriginal rights and influence at the most. They did not do it at once in order to conceal their purpose and to be constantly able to control the lives of the Indians. Duncan Campbell Scott was one of the people who introduced an important amendment. He worked as a deputy superintendent of Indian Affairs Department from 1913 to 1932, and specialized in the issue of assimilating Indigenous people into mainstream Canadian society.

⁵⁰Susan Lobo, Steve Talbot and Traci Morris, *Native American Voices: A Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 38.

⁵¹Lobo, Talbot and Morris, *Native American Voices*, 38.

⁵²Pamela D. Palmater, *Beyond Blood: Rethinking Indigenous Identity* (Saskatoon: UBC Press, 2011), 34.

⁵³E. J. Dickson-Gilmore and Carol La Prairie, *Will the Circle be Unbroken?: Aboriginal Communities, Restorative Justice, and the Challenges of Conflict and Change* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 15.

⁵⁴Dickson-Gilmore and La Prairie, *Will the Circle be Unbroken*, 15.

The education of children was a key element in the assimilation project. In 1920, Scott introduced amendments to the Indian Act that made residential school attendance compulsory. In recommending such measures, Scott explained he wanted to get rid of the Indian problem and continue until there was no Indian in Canada that had not been absorbed into the body politic and there was no Indian Department.⁵⁵ However, with these amendments, parents could not hold their children back from attending schools and a great number of Aboriginal children was removed from their homes.⁵⁶ Unfortunately, the residential schools were infamous for the high rate of students' deaths and Scott refused to try to improve the situation despite being notified of it.

3.4 Post-Confederation Treaties

As has been mentioned above, most treaties concerned Indian land. It was an unfair fight since the Whites had control over the country. Thus, they introduced series of eleven treaties called Numbered treaties, these treaties were basically agreements between First Nations and the Crown signed across Canada from 1871 to 1921 and modelled on the Robinson Treaty of 1850 which introduced the idea of total surrender of land in exchange for little money.⁵⁷ The Natives surrendered their land for almost nothing despite being promised to get resources, money and jobs. Whether the Crown's representatives deliberately deceived the indigenous people is difficult to say. But the certain thing is that the government did not make any attempts to clarify any misunderstandings. The Indians were not sure what they were signing since the document was not translated into their language.⁵⁸ A tragic example of such misunderstanding occurred at Fort Pitt, the second part of Treaty 6, when Big Bear told Morris that he wanted to make a request to be saved from the rope around his neck. Morris's interpreter translated this statement as hanging, thereby distorted Big Bear's

⁵⁵Paulette Regan, *Unsettling the Settler Within: Indian Residential Schools, Truth Telling, and Reconciliation in Canada* (Toronto: UBC Press, 2010), 238.

⁵⁶Jocelyn Wattam, "The Legacy of Duncan Campbell Scott: More than just a Canadian Poet," *First Nations Child & Family Caring Society of Canada* (2016), https://fncaringsociety.com/sites/default/files/Duncan%20Campbell%20Scott%20Information%20Sheet_FINAL.pdf (accessed May 30, 2017).

⁵⁷Aexandra Shimo, *Invisible North: The Search for Answers on a Troubled Reserve* (Toronto: Dundurn, 2016), 68.

⁵⁸Shimo, *Invisible North*, 69.

meaning. In fact, Big Bear was saying metaphorically that he wanted to retain autonomy for his people.⁵⁹

Although the Natives surrendered a significant area of land, the government felt they did not own enough. Six years after Treaty Nine was signed, an act of Parliament was introduced to undermine the promises given to the Indians. The 1911 Oliver Act allowed towns and companies to expropriate First Nations land without surrender, so long as the dispossession was used for roads or other public works. Still, it was not enough. That year, it was further amended to allow a judge to move a reserve for any purpose whatsoever, as long as it was expedient.⁶⁰ When the Native people were given the vote, they believed it meant better control of their land. Unfortunately, their land and destiny were still governed by the Crown.

In 1973, the Government of Canada started to negotiate land claims with Aboriginal peoples who had not signed historic treaties or whose title to land and natural resources had not been superseded by law. The First Nations claims were further specified in 1974 when the Office of Native Claims was established. The new office created a basis on which the federal government considered two broad categories of native claims – comprehensive (known as modern treaties) and specific. Comprehensive claims were identified as claims based upon the traditional native occupancy of lands not previously dealt with by treaty or other means. Specific claims were defined as those which occurred where an existing act or treaty was allegedly violated.⁶¹ In 2008, the Specific Claims Tribunal Act was established which is currently making important decisions concerning the claims.

James Bay Agreement from the year 1975 is considered to be the first modern treaty. The event that preceded the agreement was the 1971 decision of the Province of Quebec to create the James Bay Development Corporation that would develop all the territory's resources. Understandably, the Aboriginals who had occupied the region – the Cree, Inuit and Naskapi – objected to the failure of the province to recognize their

⁵⁹ James R. Miller, *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens: A History of Indian-White Relations in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017), 112.

⁶⁰ Shimo, *Invisible North*, 70.

⁶¹ Frank Cassidy, Norman Dale, *After Native Claims?: The Implications of Comprehensive Claims Settlements for Natural Resources in British Columbia* (Halifax: Institute for Research on Public Policy, 1988), 9.

rights on these lands. In 1972, they petitioned in the Quebec Superior Court for an injunction – a court order stopping all the work on the James Bay hydroelectric project until their land claims were settled.⁶² The final agreement was signed in 1975. The total amount of \$225 had to be paid as a compensation to the Cree and Inuit over a ten-year period. They also received an outright ownership of 13,300 km². Protection of Indian interests and an adequate share of political-economic power were the main subjects of this and the following modern treaties.

The Indian rights and claims were continuously modified and restricted. In 1982, First Nations, Métis and Inuit leaders successfully negotiated the recognition of the treaty and Aboriginal rights in Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It was considered a turning point in history but also empty words since the rights were undefined.⁶³ The leaders made a considerable effort and managed to add two clauses to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The clauses were included in Section 35 of the Charter. The first group of rights goes back to over a century ago when Canada was expanding westward. These treaties guaranteed education, health care, and economic assistance, among other rights. The second group includes rights such as preserving Indian language, culture and religion. It also indicates recognition of leadership.⁶⁴ The existing Aboriginal and treaty rights were consequently turned to courts to assure their validity and protection.

Bill C-31, which adjusted Indian Status, came into effect in 1985. It addressed inequity between Status native men and women. Before the Bill, when Native men with Status married non-Status women, Native or non-Native, the women and children gained Status. Nevertheless, when Native women with Status married non-Status men, Native or non-Native, they and their children lost Status. In this regard, the Indian Act was discriminatory and sexist. When Bill C-31 was passed, Native women who had lost Status because of marriage were able to get Status reinstated. The bill also closed the gap of law in which non-Native women gained Status through marriage by legislating that no one could gain or lose Status through marriage.⁶⁵ That was a very deceptive situation since in case Status Indians started marrying non-Status Indians, the Status of

⁶²Robert B. Anderson, *Economic Development Among the Aboriginal Peoples of Canada: The Hope for the Future* (Ontario: Captus Press, 1999), 62.

⁶³Doug Cuthand, *Askiwina: A Cree World* (Regina: Coteau Books, 2007), 72.

⁶⁴Cuthand, *Askiwina*, 72.

⁶⁵King, *The Inconvenient Indian*, 93.

their descendants might be changed. It is called "two-generation cut-off clause" when Indians marry out of Status for two generations, and the children of the second union are non-Status.⁶⁶ If this continued there would not be any Status Indians left in Canada. It is a brilliant plan as there is no need to improve the living conditions on reserves and no reason to build the new health centre that has been promised for the last thirty years.⁶⁷

The year 1995 was crucial because the Inherent Right to Self-Government Policy was launched. It gave Aboriginal communities the tools they needed to exercise greater control over their lives. Self-government arrangements will recognise the Indian rights to make decisions about matters internal to their communities, unique cultures and languages, and there will be a connection regarding their relationship to the land and resources.⁶⁸ The current and mutual interest of the Natives and the Whites is to improve their working and living conditions.

We can assume that Aboriginals have managed to find ways how to defend their rights since 1973. They have settled their land claims, status rights, and improved living conditions. There were mass losses of land, working, educational and medical opportunities for the Indians but thanks to courts, they are able to maintain their community and Indian way of life.

⁶⁶King, *The Inconvenient Indian*, 94.

⁶⁷King, *The Inconvenient Indian*, 95.

⁶⁸*The Canadian Experience of Public Sector Management Reform (1995-2002)* (London: Commonwealth Secretariat, 2003), 131.

4 Current Situation

4.1 Poorer Health

Having mentioned examples of racism from the past, it is necessary to compare them to the present situation. Despite having their own self-government, native people must cope with unjust conditions which lead to several issues such as poorer health. They suffer from lack of medicine, medical service and doctors. Therefore, Aboriginal people with serious illnesses are often sent, unaccompanied, for treatment to distant medical facilities in strange and sometimes hostile environments.⁶⁹ The low salary is another reason why the Aboriginals cannot afford the required and often expensive medicine or hospital stay.

The hygiene there is limited as well as proper health care and accountability. Thus, AIDS is a growing and widespread problem among the Natives. The percentage of AIDS cases in Canada represented by Aboriginal women (23.1 percent) is almost three times higher than the percentage of their non-Aboriginal counterparts (8.2 percent). About 66 percent of new HIV cases result from injection drug use in the Aboriginal population.⁷⁰ There is no cure for this illness and its consequences are fatal.

Due to inadequate health care, the Natives do not live to a ripe old age. In 2000, the average life expectancy for Canadian males was 7.4 years higher than that of the Indian male population; for women, it was 5.2 years higher than that of the Indian female population.⁷¹ A little improvement is visible in reserves where the federal government pays for health services for First Nations and Inuit and for medically necessary health-related goods and services through the Non-Insured Health Benefit Program. Aboriginal people living off-reserve receive their health services through the provincial health programs.⁷² The difference is significant and the government does not plan to make any changes. Moreover, not all Indians can live on reserves owing to lack of space.

⁶⁹Knopf, *Aboriginal Canada revisited*, 11.

⁷⁰Gail Guthrie Valaskakis, Madeleine Dion Stout and Eric Guimond, eds., *Restoring the Balance: First Nations Women, Community, and Culture* (Manitoba: University of Manitoba Press, 2009), 180.

⁷¹Knopf, *Aboriginal Canada revisited*, 51.

⁷²Knopf, *Aboriginal Canada revisited*, 54.

4.2 Unemployment and Illiteracy

Many Aboriginal children do not have access to proper education. Their school might be too far away from their homes or they might not be accepted by the school which is supposed to be for the Whites. Another reason is the lack of money in Aboriginal families and impossibility to afford a proper education. And if some Indians manage to attend school, they are often discriminated against and mistreated. Due to poor education, Indians do not have many job opportunities and a large number of them ends up unemployed. The problem should be solved by improved education and equal treatment but there is a slim likelihood that it would ever happen. Therefore, the unemployment and poverty cause serious problems among Canadian Aboriginals. The majority of the Aboriginal population lives at or below the poverty line. In Western cities, the rate of Aboriginal people below the poverty line is four times higher than that of the non-Aboriginal population.⁷³

In general, the employment rate for Aboriginal people is much lower than for the general Canadian population, while the unemployment rate for Aboriginal people is much higher than for their non-Aboriginal counterparts. Data from the 2006 Census show that the employment rate for Aboriginal people of core working age (25 to 54) increased to 65.8 per cent. Despite this increase, the employment rate for Aboriginals is still much lower than for the general population (81.6 per cent). In addition, Aboriginals are twice as likely to be unemployed than non-Aboriginal people.⁷⁴ Even worse situation is there for Native women who have significant difficulties to find a job. In terms of income, Aboriginal workers make considerably less on average than the general population. According to 2006 Census data, the median income of Aboriginals (\$18,962) was considerably lower than that of non-Aboriginal people (\$27,097).⁷⁵

Another mentioned issue which is associated with unemployment is poor education. Many children are educated on the reserves where they can get only a limited amount of knowledge. They might have the option to study at city schools but it means a separation from their families. The rate of functional illiteracy among Aboriginals on

⁷³Knopf, *Aboriginal Canada revisited* (Ottawa : University of Ottawa Press, 2008), 5.

⁷⁴"Indigenous People: Economic Conditions."

⁷⁵"Indigenous People: Economic Conditions."

reserves is twice as high as that for other Canadians. Only 25 per cent of the on-reserve population earn high school diplomas, while among other Canadians over 50 per cent of the population attain similar levels of education. In terms of university participation, only 6.2 percent registered peoples attend university, compared to 18.5 per cent of other Canadians.⁷⁶ In October 2013, the government released the text of proposed First Nations Education Act. The bill itself did not provide any guarantee of increased or stable funding of First Nations schools, leaving such matters to be resolved through regulation, with no assurance of equity in the distribution of resources to educate Aboriginal children in the Native schools or provincial schools.⁷⁷ Moreover, Indian children are often discouraged to attend universities due to negative experiences at secondary schools.

4.3 High Rates of Suicide

Throughout this theses, there have been mentioned several examples of discrimination, oppression, injustice and villainy associated with Canadian First Nations. All these aspects have made living for the Indians much more difficult and not everybody has been strong enough to fight them. Researchers suggest that suicide rates of First Nations youth are even up to twenty times higher than for non-Aboriginal youth. Therefore, the rate of suicide among Canada's Aboriginal youth is the highest known suicide rate of any culturally identifiable group in the world.⁷⁸

What many of the young people who commit suicide have in common is a history of family negligence and violence. At the same time, they belong to the new generation with rising expectations through the schooling process. However, social promotion is at the same time hindered by the lack of jobs and most suicide cases are unemployed at the time of their death. Being the object of violence during childhood, these youths are later under the influence of rejecting girlfriends or in-laws. Besides,

⁷⁶Marie Battiste and Jean Barman, eds., *First Nations Education in Canada: The Circle Unfolds* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2011), 73.

⁷⁷The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, Volume One: Summary: Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future* By The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 2015), 149.

⁷⁸R. Brian Howe and Katherine Covell, eds., *A Question of Commitment: Children's Rights in Canada* (Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2009), 269.

they have no institution to reorient their frustration and energies.⁷⁹ With no one to help them, many Aboriginal youths commit suicide immediately after a triggering event under a sudden shock.

⁷⁹Dinesh Bhugra and Kamaldeep Bhui, eds., *Textbook of Cultural Psychiatry* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 36.

5 Slash

5.1 Jeannette C. Armstrong

The first novel that will be analysed in a greater detail was written by Jeannette Armstrong. She is a Canadian author born in 1948 on the Penticton Indian reserve in British Columbia's Okanagan Valley. Jeannette spoke both Okanagan and English fluently and as a child she acted as a translator for members of her community. She attended Penticton Indian Day School on the reserve until grade seven. Then she had to adapt to a new environment at a public school with 2,500 children with non-Native rules and culture. She reflects her bad feelings from that time in her work *Slash*.⁸⁰

In 1978, she continued in her studies of visual arts, completing a Diploma in Fine Arts at Okanagan University College. She received a Bachelor's degree in Fine Arts in 1978 at the University of Virginia. Armstrong also participated in development of education strategy in Okanagan and helped to found the En'owkin Centre in 1979, and Okanagan Indian Curriculum Project. Later, the Theytus Books was established and the En'owkin Centre became International School of Writing in 1989. It was the only Canadian writing program designed for Native people. Armstrong also serves as a spokesperson of her community's traditional council. She is internationally known as an advocate of justice for indigenous people.⁸¹

Armstrong's publications include two children's books, the most famous novel *Slash*, the collection of poems *BreathTracks* and the novel *Whispering in Shadows*. She collaborated with the Native architect Douglas Cardinal on the book *The Native Creative Process* and edited the book of essays *Looking at the Words of Our People: First Nations Analysis of Literature*. Armstrong was also distinguished with an Honorary Doctorate of Letters from St. Thomas University in 2000.⁸² Her interest in the destiny of Native people is immense and she wants to inform the public about the injustice that is happening in Canada.

⁸⁰Jeannette Armstrong and Lally Graue, eds., *Native Poetry in Canada: A Contemporary Anthology* (Ontario: Broadview Press, 2001), 106.

⁸¹Armstrong and Graue, eds., *Native Poetry in Canada*, 106-107.

⁸²Armstrong and Graue, eds., *Native Poetry in Canada*, 107.

5.2 Story Analysis, Historical Background

The work *Slash* is a bildungsroman and a fictional biography of a native man Thomas Kelasket (nicknamed Slash) tracking his personal development from childhood to fatherhood within four chapters. His experiences point to the bad attitude of the Canadian Whites to the Natives. The book starts with an opening poem in the prologue and finishes with another poem in the epilogue. It is written in the first person narrative with Thomas as a narrator. He is not a hero in a traditional sense and his personal development is not that important as the development of the community as a whole. On the whole, there is a weak character description and development and the primary concern is to depict historical events which take place both in Canada and the United States. However, even the events are not described properly since many important historical persons and dates are missing. Theology, political and cultural struggle are also implied in the text.

What is noticeable is the development of the language. At the beginning Thomas speaks informal English but the older he is, the more formal and complex his manner of speech is. Moreover, Thomas speaks Okanagan language when he talks to his family. The book is also full of contrasts and distinction between the good and bad, between the Indians and Whites, and between the individual characters. There is also a clear dominance of male protagonists who increase their superiority when both significant women die. The novel was written in 1985 and it is thus considered to be one of the first novels by a female Native.

The events in the book are based on actual events but they are not meant to be portrayed as historically accurate.⁸³ In the story, Slash grows up with the Okanagan language and educative myths as well as strong family values and work ethic. His life is complicated by the legacy of colonization, and, too soon, Slash finds himself adrift. The Natives are not sure if it is better to blindly follow the rules imposed on them by the white community, or be rebellious and fight for their rights. Thomas tries to protect the Indians but he does not have a sufficient support. Many times throughout the story, the smell of home cooking and the texture of the Okanagan hills lead Slash back to his

⁸³Jeannette C. Armstrong, *Slash* (Penticton: Theytus Books, 1990), 13.

home. In the end, Slash literally grounds himself by coming home to stay. By this, he is reclaiming his homeland, culture and Indian message.⁸⁴

5.2.1 The Awakening

The story starts with an incident when Jimmy Joseph and the narrator Thomas Kelasket are making fun of Mrs. Hosfah called Horseface. Unfortunately for them she hears their insults and they must visit her during their lunch break. This opening scene is supposed to show a strong friendship between Jimmy and Thomas as well as their attitude. They are both Indians and attend school with other Indians and white children. Thomas is in the last grade and he should continue his studies at residential school. However, it is not a certain fact because his brother Danny was forbidden to continue. Their parents were afraid he would only learn the bad things there. “Dad never let Danny go. I knew I wouldn’t go either. Dad said we would just learn how to steal and lie at that school.”⁸⁵ Their older cousin went to residential school and he was beaten up for stealing a piece of raw bacon, he also said kids were beaten up even for talking Indian.

One day, Thomas is asked to read an important paper which says that Indians can vote for the next leader of the whites. The right to vote in federal elections was not granted until 1960 and it was imposed by the organization Native Alliance for Red Power in Canada. Before that year, Indians who wanted to vote were required to forfeit aboriginal and treaty rights, thus ceasing to be Indian Act Indians.⁸⁶ The new law sounds promising because Indians could choose a suitable leader for them. Nevertheless, the headman to Indian talking people Pra-cwa is suspicious since the Whites never did anything beneficial for Indians. “They don’t really know what they are doing. They could be getting ready to sell us out of our reserves and make us like white people. You see that last one about paying tax. That’s what I mean. I don’t like it. I don’t agree. You tell the rest not to agree.”⁸⁷

⁸⁴Gail Guthrie Valaskakis, Madeleine Dion Stout and Eric Guimond, eds., *Restoring the Balance: First Nations Women, Community, and Culture* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2009), 165.

⁸⁵Armstrong, *Slash*, 16.

⁸⁶Boldt, Prologue to *Surviving as Indians*, xvi.

⁸⁷Armstrong, *Slash*, 18-19.

Thomas obeys Pra-cwa and his father a lot. It is important to respect the old ones in the Indian community. They trust each other and they would never betray or hurt other good Indians. According to Thomas's father: "The law don't mean much on paper. It's what's in your head that's the real law. If you learn good things and think good, no paper laws are needed for you. That's how we believe."⁸⁸ It is the difference between the Natives and the Whites. The Natives accept their authorities no matter what and obey their orders. The Whites, on the other hand, not only fight against the Indians but also against each other and they are much less trustworthy.

When the school starts again, dad tells the kids:

I want to talk to you kids about school. This year the day school is going to close because the Indian agent wants all Indian kids to go to town school. You are going to have to go to school with white kids. It's going to be hard, because you're different. They will probably treat you mean and make fun of how you talk and how you dress and how you look...⁸⁹

The words come partly true since the white kids stay away from the Indians at school, they wear brand new clothes but they ran around all over the place too. The discrimination is noticeable even from the side of the principal who speaks to the Indians about the rules: "You Indians are lucky to be here. We'll get along just fine as long as you don't steal from other kids. I want you all to wait here while the nurse comes here to check your heads and ask you some questions. Then I will assign you to classes."⁹⁰

Thomas does not understand why this is necessary. He thinks all kids are the same and they should be treated the same way. He learns the truth in the course of the story. The white kids sometimes tease the Indians and talk dirty. A white boy Humphrey once says: "you frigging Injuns are nothing but thieves, full of lice, everybody knows that!" An Indian kid Monty gets mad and beats Humphrey up. Unfortunately, it is the last day when Monty is at school. "Monty didn't come back to school after that. We heard the principal kicked him out for good, but Humphrey, who

⁸⁸Armstrong, *Slash*, 21.

⁸⁹Armstrong, *Slash*, 23

⁹⁰Armstrong, *Slash*, 23-24.

started everything, didn't even get a detention.”⁹¹The Indian kids cannot complain if someone insults or attacks them since the Whites are always in the right.

When British Columbia joined the Confederation, it became subject to the provisions of the British North America Act which made Aboriginals wards of the federal government, eligible for federally sponsored schooling, health care and other services on their agreeing to treaties that surrendered lands for much smaller reserves. The policy combined economy with racism. When the Canadian Confederation was created in 1867, which is the turning point in the Native history, Aboriginal people still occupied much of the land on which the newcomers wanted to settle.⁹² The Act did not differentiate between Aboriginal people but restrict them to one dependent status. Sending Aboriginal children to residential school was an easy way how to force the Indians to assimilate into Canadian society.

After awhile, Indians start to notice that the whites are richer and they want to be richer too. It influences the behaviour of some of them in the future, they envy the whites their independence and various possibilities. One day, Indian kids are allowed to go to a party organized by the white community and they like it. Thomas meets a priest there and he is encouraged to continue studying.

5.2.2 Trying It On

The priest asks the Indian kids if they are discriminated against and he really wants to hear the truth. The kids mention some kinds of discrimination. Tommy is also asked why he does not go to church and he replies that he and his family think that the whole world is a church so they do not need to go there.

In the course of the story, most Indians quit school as they usually feel they do not fit there and they are underestimated all the time.

Sometimes, I think the teachers really got mad at me because I always knew all the answers. Sometimes I knew it was because they didn't like an Indian to do better than some of their favourite white kids. Most of the time, when I got into a new class the teacher would automatically think I

⁹¹Armstrong, *Slash*, 24.

⁹²Jean Barman and Mona Gleason, *Children, Teachers and Schools in the History of British Columbia* (Edmonton: Brush Education, 2003), 56.

was dumb. I knew that by their remarks. Like one teacher, who explained what she wanted in slow Hollywood talk. She said, 'You fix'um little story, Tommy, about how you live.' To the other kids she asked, 'Please prepare a short biographical sketch of yourself.' Man, that time everybody in the class looked sick. You can guess how I felt.⁹³

Not even the teachers try to encourage Indians to study and become educated. They treat them as inferior human beings.

In 1969, the Native Alliance for Red Power released their mission statement for Red Power Now. Its eight points refused the taxation of the racist government that has robbed the Indians; demanded education that exposed the true history of decadent Canadian society; called for an immediate end to the arrest of Native people since freedom for all Indigenous people who were unjustly held in the prisons of the country; and a trial for Native people to be conducted before judges and officials of their Aboriginal peers. Moreover, Red Power insisted that Aboriginals should be paid foreign aid to allow them to develop territories.⁹⁴

Consequently, new young leaders are elected and they want to make their reserves and ways of living more modern. However, Dad and Pra-cwa do not like that idea, they blame schooling and sending children to town schools for forgetting how to cultivate the land and take care of animals. The threat is that all Indians would just be drinking all the time because they would not have anything else to do. Eventually, they will all die from drinking. This is exactly what the Whites intended to do. They want the Indians to bring about their own destruction.

Those who feel that traditions are useless in the twentieth century and who think that development will bring equality fail to see that proposed solutions do not account for tradition and history and they also seem to benefit from the development of the surrounding white community at the expense of the reserves. The issue of Indian access to alcohol provides a case in point. The assimilationist claims that giving Indians equality of access to something that white society takes for granted will increase their rights. However, as old Pra-cwa and the adults know, the issue at stake is the ability of

⁹³Armstrong, *Slash*, 38-39.

⁹⁴Bryan D. Palmer, *Canada's 1960s: The Ironies of Identity in a Rebellious Era* (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2009), 406.

Indians to control their own destinies and the result of the new rights, as much as the old lack of them, is often rather assimilation or extinction.⁹⁵

There are various opinions about the modern way of living of the whites. Thomas is no longer sure who is right about it and his friend Jimmy starts to hate being an Indian. The reasons are a lack of food, a dirty house, parents who drink and argue, no new clothes or a bike. Thomas begins to be desperate and tries drinking. He feels good at that moment but very bad the next day. Moreover, Indians are interested in marijuana and try it. Tommy's dad is wondering why Tommy has behaved so badly and weirdly recently, he tells him to quit school and work at home. However, it does not satisfy Tommy and he starts to smoke more and drink a lot. He wears dirty and smelly clothes but he does not care for himself at all. It is difficult to stay proud of being an Indian when the advantages of Whites are so visible. That is the reason why many Native children start using drugs and drinking alcohol – to forget their unjust destiny.

At some point, Tommy goes to Turkey Tom's, which is full of Indians, and two guys with a knife grab him, they fight and Tommy is stabbed in the shoulder. He does not remember what happened next very well, he wakes up in the hospital and a lady, called Mardi from the Friendship centre, tells him he put 10 policemen on their backs and he is cut up quite badly. She wants to know some information about him. He is charged with assault and resisting arrest. This incident changes Tommy's life and he decides to fight for Indian rights.

He also starts reading to pass the time.

I read in one of them bulletins about that the Government of Canada was proposing a new policy that would phase out Indian reserves in five to ten years. A lot of Indian people were pretty angry about that because they had been led to believe that consultations with them had been held to actually listen to their recommendations and do some good for Indians. The bulletin referred to this policy as the White Paper.⁹⁶

The White Paper was proposed by Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development Jean Chrétien and Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau and subsequently delivered on the Indian Policy to the House of Commons on 25 June 1969. It managed

⁹⁵William H. New, ed., *Native Writers and Canadian Writing* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1990), 141.

⁹⁶Armstrong, *Slash*, 60.

to do what centuries of past oppression could not: it brought Canada's Indigenous people together in a broad consensual opposition to the white state. But this shift also tended to drown the young and militant voices of Red Power into deeper waters of Aboriginal negotiation with various levels of government. The Red Power momentum of 1967–1969 sank in the post-White Paper Aboriginal activism, which moved increasingly back into a state funded series of chiefs' conferences and other usual developments.⁹⁷ The paper meant to depict Aboriginals and Canadians as fully equal by eliminating "Indian" as a distinct legal status.

Tommy hopes it could help to bring the Indian people together. He talks to Mardi about that and he realizes he really likes her. She provides him a lawyer and Tommy is put at Mardi's care when he comes home. In the end, he gets an 18-month sentence in jail where Indians are treated like dogs. Thomas even thinks about hanging himself because he feels awful. Mardi regularly writes him letters and informs him about the news outside. "Inside the prison there was a rehabilitation program but it was mostly bullshit. We were treated like animals in lots of ways. To me it was that we were denied all kinds of things that were just basic to humans. It sure didn't have any bearing on rehabilitation."⁹⁸ Indians usually got maximum time in jail because they could not afford a lawyer. Moreover, the prison conditions were much worse for the Indians than for the Whites. The aim was to make the Native prisoners kill themselves or to change their rebellious character completely.

Thomas gets out of prison in spring and goes to a restaurant to eat properly, he is suspicious that everybody stares at him, and feels different. He starts drinking a lot, then he gets to Red Power Center in the United States, where they feed him and tell him about the war they are fighting. Tommy asks if they know Mardi and they talk about her activities.

Later, he decides to go home. Everybody there gives him a warm welcome and hugs him, they talk about everything that happened recently. He notices that his younger siblings can do almost whatever they want and they do not help the parents very much. The mother says that she wants to make their childhood easier because she thinks she failed with Tommy and Danny.

⁹⁷Palmer, *Canada's 1960s*, 407.

⁹⁸Armstrong, *Slash*, 72.

Tommy encourages the others to fight against the passive discrimination and claims:

Heck, I know that there was more than passive discrimination in the schools and everywhere else for that matter. The only time there is less is if you dress up like Jimmy does and change your voice to a higher pitch and use different English with big words mixed in, and even then there is some. In itself, to me, that is more than passive discrimination. It is an insult to a whole race of people thousands of generations old.⁹⁹

Tommy decides to attend an inquiry which deals with an Indian who was brutally killed by the police. On February 6, 1973, 200 American Indian Movement (AIM) members and the police confronted each other at the courthouse in Custer. A local Angloman Schmitz stabbed Wesley Bad Heart Bull to death and Schmitz was charged only with manslaughter rather than first-degree murder. When the local officers refused AIM request to alter the charge, violence ensued and several AIM members were arrested but not Schmitz who never went to jail. It led to a 71-day armed confrontation at Wounded Knee, the site of 1890 Wounded Knee massacre.¹⁰⁰ It is an incident that is related to American Indians but it still clearly points to injustice against Indians in general. Tommy meets his friends from the Red Power Center there and they all together head to Denver for a meeting. The meeting deals with common problems that the Indians have and the government that misuses Bureau of Indians Affairs.

5.2.3 Mixing It Up

Tommy wants to help the American Natives and starts the recapitulation of the Trial of Tears. The aim of the trip is to educate themselves as Indians since a lot of people died on that journey. They want to make the public aware of these horrible things that happened in the United States and vote for a different leader. The group contains Indians from different parts of America. They even sing a victory song at the White House and go to B.I.A building but they barricade themselves there. Tommy meets Mardi and they hug and talk. They want to wait until they are listened to by the

⁹⁹Armstrong, *Slash*, 86.

¹⁰⁰Richard T. Schaefer, ed., *Encyclopedia of Race, Ethnicity, and Society* (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 2008), 60.

government. Finally, they are promised that a task force will be set up to review the demands.

After that Tommy wants to go back to Canada to fix the things there but Mardi cannot go with him since she has to help somewhere else and they split up. She is killed a few months later because she was an obstacle in the Canadian government program. Many Indians were wrongfully killed if they had not obeyed the government program and the Indians could not stop it. Tommy hears on the radio that AIM leaders are calling Indians from all over North America to converge at Wounded Knee. He goes there with his friends but then they are suddenly stopped by the police with guns and they are asked where they are going. The police do not want to allow them to go to the US at first but then let them go.

Armed ranchers roamed between roadblocks hoping to get an Indian trying to sneak in. They called it “rabbit-hunting” and joked about it, over their citizen’s band radios, while we listened. A lot of people got their heads busted in that way. A lot of Indian women were raped and beaten and old people battered around. Many of them were even not connected with Wounded Knee, but they were Indian.¹⁰¹

Officials threaten Indians to starve them out. Indians are constantly treated worse and worse and they do not have support. “One night as I was heading out with a few others towards another part of the reservation we were chased and shot at by an unmarked car. Finally, our car flipped over beside the road and some police jumped out and pointed rifles at us. They beat the shit out of us.”¹⁰² They wake up in jail and they are told to leave the US immediately.

Tommy encourages people to do something and stop complaining at a lot of meetings. Later, the agreement is reached at Wounded Knee and investigation of B.I.A is initiated. The government transfers a huge amount of money to the province to educate Indians in public schools but it means a control over the money without the obligation to provide anything special to make sure that the problem of Indian kids in public schools is addressed.

¹⁰¹Armstrong, *Slash*, 115.

¹⁰²Armstrong, *Slash*, 118.

Tommy goes back home after a long time and it is changed, the roof is repaired and there is electricity. He is happy to be home and attends meetings where they talk about cut-off lands which are taken away from Indians without their permission. “All lands have been cut-off from us. Not just them little pieces off the reserve. There never was a good agreement on any of our lands. They lied to us. They never kept their promises. They make laws and they break them.”¹⁰³ There have not been any land treaties that would fully ensure Indians’ land claims. On the contrary, Indians have been always deceived and lost their territory. Tommy has mixed feelings from the meetings. He is happy that even non-Indians are interested in their story but also angry that some Indians do not realize the threat from the Whites.

Many claims related to the lands removed from Indian reserves were confiscated to make room for the expansion of towns or the construction of public works for the benefit of non-Aboriginals. Fishing or hunting regulations were enforced against Native uses. Unsurrendered lands were taken without compensation even though Native people had always lived on the land and harvested its resources. Historically, land had usually been surrendered and Indian reserves established only when non-Aboriginals wanted the land and its resources.¹⁰⁴

In the end of this chapter, Tommy’s sister tells him that Danny has died. He was drunk and hit by a car on the highway hence Tommy is very sad and depressed about it. The family has changed because of the death, the parents think they have failed.

5.2.4 We Are a People

Things slow down with no easy way to money and everybody begins to be suspicious of everybody else. “The leaders were busy blaming one another over everything that went wrong. Many people accused the Movement renegades of acting without direction from duly elected Chiefs and Councils.”¹⁰⁵ Tommy is in the situation when he loses hope again, he drinks too much alcohol and ends up in jail or detox centres.

¹⁰³Armstrong, *Slash*, 134.

¹⁰⁴Jeremy Webber, *Reimagining Canada: Language, Culture, Community, and the Canadian Constitution* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's Press, 1994), 70.

¹⁰⁵Armstrong, *Slash*, 188.

Then he meets Joe who offers him a helping hand and sends him to a centre where Tommy is supposed to stop drinking completely. There is a medicine man who encourages Tommy to continue fighting because the whole Indian community needs him. Tommy comes home and a man says to him:

You know, in every Indian family, it don't matter how modernized the family has become, there is always one who is a keeper of the ways. That person is drawn to Indian ways like a magnet. That person sometimes suffers the worst because of it, but inside that person knows the rightness of it. I can't explain it to good, but I have seen it to be true, no matter where in the country you go as long as there are Indians, it is true. These ones find their way eventually, to the things that they need to help them be what they are intended to be. Some of them don't even know it and spend much of their lives in frustration because things pull them in other directions. You are one of those.¹⁰⁶

Tommy finds out his dad got a heart attack and his situation is bad, he invites the medicine people from the centre and they help the dad feel better. There are several meetings where Slash is the main speaker and he is liked and listened to by everyone. It is important for the Natives to have at least few of these leaders who do not give up the hope for a better life. If there were no such leaders, Indians would surrender to the Whites immediately. At one of the meetings, Tommy meets Maeg and they like each other from the very first moment. He spends as much time with her as possible, they build their own house and later they have a son called Marlon.

The government starts taking Indian children and putting them into non-Indians homes so Indians protest against it. Tommy thinks that Indians protest in the wrong way.

What I think is, our people really want to have our rights recognized with our ownership over the land understood. That is what we mean by settlement of land claims and rights. That's not what the government means. They mean extinguishment and sell out. I, for one, am against that. If they never settle the land claims question, that's fine with me. It

¹⁰⁶Armstrong, *Slash*, 205.

still belongs to us. It leaves something for our descendants. Someday they will achieve their rightful inheritance if things are left that way.¹⁰⁷

It is one of the final moments of the novel that consists of a sustained discussion of whether Indigenous people should participate in the patriation of Canada's constitution of 1982. The people are not unanimous in opting for inclusion in the discussions, and Slash challenges the idea that indigenous people should be included in the constitution. Doing so would entail an acknowledgement that Canada has a right to exist.¹⁰⁸

Nevertheless, Maeg does not agree with him, she says it does not guarantee any rights for the Indians and from that time she attends the meetings alone. In the very end, Maeg is killed by a car, Tommy becomes desperate and wonders where he should find strength to fight again. The novel does not have a happy ending and we do not know what happens with Thomas and other Indians. Hopefully, the Indians do not lose the hope and continue fighting for their rights.

It is also important to mention the Vietnam War, which took place at the same time as the novel *Slash*. Canada was involved in that war from 1954 to 1975 and officially played the role of neutral peacemaker, but secretly backed the American effort. The aim was to discredit North Vietnam while exonerate South Vietnam from its obligations to uphold the Geneva Agreements. Ten thousand men were sent from Canada with a large representation of the Indians who could not protest against it.¹⁰⁹

Not surprisingly, the book was published through Theytus Books, a native Press located in Penticton, British Columbia. While Armstrong's choice to publish the novel through a Native Press might have limited the audience her novel would reach, she crystallized her commitment to protect Native writers, including herself, from exploitation and exclusion. In the project's planning stages, many non-Native writers expressed their interest in participating; Armstrong made clear that she would bury the project if Native writers were excluded, and after that she walked out on the initial

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 241-242.

¹⁰⁸ Kit Dobson, *Transnational Canadas: Anglo-Canadian Literature and Globalization* (Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2011), 116.

¹⁰⁹ "Vietnam War."

meeting, the non-Native writers and consultants left the project.¹¹⁰ Her primary worry is assumed to be the fact that non-Native writers create a false image of the contemporary Native people.

There were few people who criticised the book such as Helen Hoy. She claims that the novel itself is sufficiently inaccessible for many Western readers as to make glib professions of cross-cultural sensitivity difficult.¹¹¹ Moreover, she mentions the relative absence of women characters' stories and voices. Hoy further adds that *Slash* provides detailed elaboration of the arguments around development projects on reserve, violence as form of militancy, adoption or misuse of traditional Native symbols, closing versus commandeering the resources of DIA offices, demands for cut-off reserve land versus broader land claims, negotiation of land claims versus repudiation of that process, radical protest versus revival of traditional ways, and pursuit of constitutional rights versus inherent self-determination.¹¹² Therefore, the book necessitates a conflict for Canadian non-Native and feminist readers.

¹¹⁰Ericka A. Hoagland, *Postcolonializing the Bildungsroman: A Study of the Evolution of a Genre* (PhD diss., Purdue University, 2006), 79-80.

¹¹¹Helen Hoy, *How Should I Read These?: Native Women Writers in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 34.

¹¹²Hoy, *How Should I Read These*, 42.

Conclusion

The main topic of my Bachelor's thesis is the discrimination of the Native people in Canada. In my opinion, it is quite a miracle to still have some Native people left there since not many minorities would be able to face a similar oppression for such a long time and they would rather surrender to the majority. However, the Indians proved to be an exception and thanks to their persistence and reliance on each other, they have been able to survive until today.

The story *Slash* depicts the life of an Indian who experiences an unjust treatment during his whole life. It begins at school where the teachers and the White kids mock the Indians and where the Indians are excessively punished for things they have not even done. In institutions like schools, children hope to find support and help at least among the teachers. However, Indian kids cannot turn to anyone and they do not understand the reason why. It is obvious that their skin colour is different from the other kids' but the Indians think that everybody is equal. Not surprisingly, researchers proved that many Native children committed suicide or became drug-addict alcoholics. Therefore, I can imagine the fear that Thomas's parents must have felt when they sent their children to the town school. In my opinion, the government hoped either to assimilate Indians into the Canadian society or force the Indian children to destroy themselves. I think that the residential schools were not established to help the Indians at all and I can see Pracwa's point, he is rightfully suspicious of the government's intention. Moreover, if an Indian was arrested, it was likely that they would commit a suicide too, since they could not afford a lawyer and the prison conditions were unbearable.

In 1960, Indians got the right to vote and the new young leaders were elected. Thomas and his Indian friends think that young leaders could bring a new hope into their miserable lives but they do not realize that tradition and respect are the bases of their culture. Indians do not need any written law. It is what they have in their minds and they have learnt what is important. Culture like this, with an inherent respect for the elders, must be comprised of peaceful and kind-hearted people. As for me, the Whites could not live like that because they do not trust each other. Thus, we can claim, there

are two different nations in Canada. From my point of view, they could live peacefully together, if the Whites stopped trying to attack and oppress the Indians.

Thomas reads in a bulletin that a new policy called White Paper proposes to phase out Indian reserves in a few years. It rightfully makes the Indians angry since they believed that they had had an arranged agreement with the government. Throughout the history, the Native land has been the main subject matter of the Canadian government. The cases of the hydroelectric project of the Churchill Falls, the Great Lakes, the Douglas treaties, the Robinson treaty, and the Numbered treaties are only a few examples of the land agreements in which the Whites betrayed the Natives. On the one hand, I am quite surprised that the Indians have been so trustworthy, on the other hand, I realize that they have not had any another option. Even the people in the government who have been supposed to protect the Indian rights could not have been completely trusted. It is the advantageous solution for the Whites that matters. Thomas is also naive at the beginning because he thinks that the White Paper could help the Indians. As for me, all these treaties concerning land are only another example of the government's selfish and mean intentions.

In my opinion, Armstrong's description of the Indian lives is truly credible. She might not have used many women characters in her book but it was not the primary concern. The role of *Slash* is to show difficulties and unjust treatment that the Indians, both men and women, must have faced. I am a feminist but I think it is not crucial to examine the representation of the male and female characters in a book. Helen Hoy also mentions some contradiction in terms, for example negotiation of land claims versus repudiation of that process. From my point of view, the Indians have always wanted to fight for their land. However, they have been afraid of losing the whole territory therefore they have not dared to be too radical during the land negotiations. Fortunately, Indians like Thomas have managed to maintain the fighting spirit and thanks to them, the other Aborigines in Canada have their rights and better living conditions.

Summary

The final section of my work is intended to summarize and clarify the overall topic about injustice and racism. Despite the well-known rule “all people are equal”, Canadian First Nations were forced to confront injustice from the first time they encountered the Whites. Application to groups, harm involvement and an assessment of the power status of the parties within historical scope are the basic characteristics of injustice and all of them are related to Canadian Indians. This work is rich in evidence of discrimination and unjust treatment of the Indians as well as their constant effort for equality.

In the second chapter we have learnt that there is a difference between First Nations, Aboriginals and Indians and different rights and obligations are assigned to each group. Indians got their name by colonists who came to Canada with a conviction of being in India. Aboriginals are formed by Indians, the Inuit and Métis and First Nations are distinguished according to the nation they belong to. As to Indian Register, there are approximately 901,000 Registered Indians living in Canada. Those Indians are also called Status Indians and they are divided into 617 communities.

All Indians living in Canada have used nature as the only source of food, shelters, religion and home. They have realised its importance and protected it accordingly. They were even able to develop a complex culture and establish trading alliances. The discovery of seasonal food sources was truly profitable since they knew where they should move during the year. They also elected their leaders and government which is the sign of a developed and smart nation.

Further in the second chapter, several examples of false but global characteristics of the Aboriginal people is provided. The purpose was to make them look dangerous, savage and lazy, in other words, they should be perceived as people who deserve a special treatment. Unfortunately, the Indians could not really change that perception due to their susceptibility to alcohol and culture encouraging laziness. However, Aboriginals do not have many options to change their lifestyle since they must deal with many restrictions. Moreover, they are considered to be frightening if they attempt to fight for their rights. The only Indians that are appreciated by Canadian society are so called Dead Indians who are believed to be noble and dignified. Their

counterparts are Live Indians, who are rather seen as unruly and disappointing. It is related to the Canadian conviction that the only good Indian is a dead Indian.

Many Canadian politicians wanted to eliminate all the Live Indians and the rest had the intention to civilize them and make them behave like the Whites. Therefore, Canadian children were taken from their families and put into the foster care. The adults were meant to be assimilated through a new method of farming based on the usage of simple tools. They were supposed to invent new ways how to cultivate the ground but it was impossible to cope with. The praying towns were built for those Indians interested in converting and learning European agriculture. To make the Indian lives even harder, the Canadian government often stole Aboriginal land and allowed them to possess only a small area.

There were many pieces of evidence considering the discrimination of Aboriginal women and children. Native women had worse working possibilities and lacked rights in the state institutions, including hospitals. Doctors were not interested in their health and they were sterilizing them without the women's knowledge. Native children confronted injustice at school which led to high mortality. The ones who survived the bullying were proved to have serious mental problems later in their lives.

The third chapter summarizes the important treaties signed between Aboriginals and the Whites. The first treaties met all the legal requirements and were respected by both sides and their subject matter was a fur trade. The Iroquois formed an alliance with Britain and the Great Peace treaty assured their protection by the Crown. It was confirmed by the creation of the Indian Department in 1755. The Royal Proclamation treaty established boundaries for the Indian territory and for the first time, Indian rights to land were recognized.

The legal recognition of the United States in 1783 caused the loss of Aboriginal territory. New lands were found by the Indian Department around the Great Lakes and along the St. Lawrence River. From that time, the majority of treaties have dealt with land possession as the primary source of conflict between Aboriginal and White people. It was the case of Douglas treaties, Robinson treaties, Oliver Act and many others. The problem was that the documents were usually not translated into Native language and the Natives did not know what they signed.

A seemingly mutually advantageous treaty was signed in 1867, called the Indian Act. It was assumed to improve a protection of the Indians but the primary reason was to create a federal control over the Indians and their lands. This act also divided Indians into Status, Treaty, and non-Status Indians. The categories were assigned different rights and obligations. More amendments were further added which aggravated the lives of the Native people. Duncan Campbell Scott made residential school attendance compulsory, and thus caused removal of Aboriginal children from their families.

The Charter of Rights and Freedoms finally allowed First Nations, Métis and Inuit leaders to recognize their rights. However, not all promises came into effect. Another important document was Bill C-31 that reduced inequity between Status native men and women. 1995 is the year when the Inherent Right to Self-Government Policy was launched. It enabled Indians to control their own lives and make decisions related to their communities and cultures.

The fourth chapter describes current situation of Aboriginal people. Undoubtedly, their lives and social status were improved but they are confronted by injustice and inequity anyway. They suffer from lack of medical service and sufficient hygiene. Therefore, the mortality of Indians is much higher than non-Indians. AIDS is one of the most fatal illnesses among Indians. The second issue is high unemployment and illiteracy. Many Aboriginal children live too distanced from schools or their parents can not afford it, thus their education is very poor and the probability of finding a good job is very low. Aboriginals are twice as likely to be unemployed than non-Aboriginal people and most of them live in poverty. All the provided evidence of injustice and discrimination make the Indians abandon their hope for better life and leads to them committing suicide. Unfortunately, the rate of suicide among Aboriginal youth in Canada is among the highest suicide rates in the world.

The last chapter analyses the novel *Slash* and provides basic information about the author Jeannette C. Armstrong. She was born in British Columbia's Okanagan Valley and spoke both English and Okanagan. Armstrong helped to found the En'owkin Centre which became the International School of Writing in 1989. She became globally known as an advocate of justice for Native people and received an Honorary Doctorate of Letters from St. Thomas University in 2000. *Slash* is her most famous novel. It is a fictional biography of a native man Thomas Kelasket divided into

four chapters that follow his development from childhood to adulthood and accentuate important events at that time.

There is not much action in the book but Thomas's inner thoughts and dialogues with family members enable us to imagine the Indian way of living. On the one hand, moving to residential schools, harsh treatment by the white classmates and teachers, quitting the school, forming organizations demanding Indian rights, heavy drinking, groundless arresting, merciless murdering of Indians, fighting for equality but on the other hand, abandoning their hope. These all incidents occurred in the book and are typical examples of ordinary Indian lives. There is no happy ending in the novel and despite some criticisms, it is a trustworthy description of discrimination and injustice that the Native people have to face.

Canada might be a developed country but this opinion is not shared by the Native people. Several examples of a harsh treatment of Indians were provided in this work, concerning the Canadian historical development and the current situation. The Aboriginal situation might have improved but there is still much more work to do. Irreversible land possession, sufficient health care, access to education and equal working possibilities are the main issues that must be enhanced to guarantee Indian survival.

Resumé

Cílem mojí bakalářské práce bylo sepsat příklady diskriminace a bezpráví páchaném na kanadských původních národech. Přestože lidská práva se vztahují na všechny lidské bytosti bez výjimky, kanadští domorodci museli čelit krutému zacházení od první chvíle, kdy se dostali do kontaktu s bílými kolonisty. Definice skupinového rasismu se vztahuje na určité skupiny, zahrnuje působení škody a hodnocení síly společenského postavení dané skupiny v historickém a kulturním rozsahu. Můžeme tedy říci, že rasismus byl páchan i na kanadských původních národech, jelikož se na ně vztahují všechny části této definice. Tato práce je bohatým zdrojem důkazů dosvědčujících diskriminaci, nespravedlivé zacházení kanadských domorodců, stejně tak jako jejich nepřetržité snahy o rovnocennost.

Druhá kapitola vysvětluje rozdíl v názvosloví mezi kanadskými původními národy, domorodci a Indiány. Správné názvosloví je důležité, protože připisuje jednotlivým skupinám jiná práva a povinnosti. Indiáni dostali svoje jméno od kolonistů, kteří do Kanady přišli s přesvědčením, že se nachází v Indii. Domorodci jsou tvořeni Indiány, Inuity a Métisy a původní národy se rozlišují podle příslušnosti k určitému národu. Podle Indiánského registru žije na území Kanady přibližně 901 000 registrovaných Indiánů. Tito Indiáni se také nazývají Indiáni se statusem a tvoří dohromady 617 komunit.

Všechny kanadské původní národy využívaly přírodu, jako jediný zdroj potravy, přístřeší, náboženství a domova. Uvědomovaly si její důležitost a podle toho se o ni také staraly. Byly navíc schopny vyvinout komplexní kulturu a založit obchodní spojení při prodeji kožešin. Zjistily také, že se jim v průběhu roku vyplatí stěhovat, protože zdroje potravy byly sezonní, a tedy jejich lokalita pokaždé jinde. Důkazem jejich vyspělosti a progresivity bylo volení vůdců a vlády.

Ve stejné kapitole je sepsáno několik příkladů mylných, ale globálně rozšířených charakteristik těchto domorodců. Účelem této mystifikace bylo učinit domorodce nebezpečnými, divokými a línými lidmi, kteří si zaslouží speciální zacházení. Domorodci však nemohli změnit toto ztělesnění kvůli jejich sklonu k alkoholu a kultuře podporující záhalčivost. Naneštěstí, domorodci nemají mnoho možností změnit jejich životní styl, protože se potýkají s mnoha omezeními. Navíc jsou

považováni za nebezpečné, pokud se pokusí bojovat za svá práva. Jediní Indiáni, kteří jsou uznáváni kanadskou společností, se nazývají Mrtví Indiáni a jsou považováni za ušlechtilé a důstojné. Naproti tomu jsou Živí Indiáni, kteří jsou považováni za neukázněné a neuspokojivé. Toto pojetí je spojeno s přesvědčením bílých Kanadčanů, že jediný dobrý Indián je mrtvý Indián.

Většina kanadských politiků měla za cíl eliminovat všechny Živé Indiány a ostatní státníci je chtěli zcivilizovat a přimět je chovat se jako běloši. To je důvod proč domorodé děti byly odebírány z jejich rodin a posílány do pěstounské péče, kde měly být naučeny novým zvykům a způsobům chování. Dospělí Indiáni měli být do společnosti asimilováni prostřednictvím nových metod farmaření, které bylo založeno na používání výlučně jednoduchých strojů a nářadí. Předpokládalo se od nich, že vynalezou nové způsoby obdělávání půdy za použití tohoto jednoduchého nářadí, což bylo ovšem nesplnitelné. Pro Indiány, kteří měli zájem o přeměnu a učení se evropskému zemědělství, se stavěla modlíci města. Aby toho nebylo málo, kanadská vláda neustále zabavovala Indiánům půdu a dovolovala jim vlastnit pouze malá území.

Plno případů diskriminace se týká domorodých žen a dětí. Domorodé ženy měly vždy horší pracovní možnosti a nedostatek práv ve státních institucích, včetně nemocnic. Doktoři se příliš nezajímali o jejich zdravotní stav a dokonce je sterilizovali bez jejich souhlasu. Domorodé děti čelily bezpráví ve školách, což vedlo k velké úmrtnosti. Ty děti, které se dožily staršího věku, pak trpěly psychickými problémy.

Třetí kapitola shrnuje důležité smlouvy uzavřené mezi bělochy a kanadskými původními národy. Ze začátku byly všechny dohody vzájemně dodržovány a respektovány a jejich předmět zájmu byl obchod s kožešinou. Irokézové se spojili s Británií a jejich ochrana byla potvrzena smlouvou s názvem Velké smíření. Británie pak na důkaz spojenectví nechala v roce 1755 vybudovat Indiánský odbor. Královská proklamace pak stanovila hranice Indiánského území.

Právní uznání Spojených států amerických v roce 1783 způsobilo ztrátu teritoria domorodců. Indiánský odbor pak pro Indiány našel nová místa v oblasti Velkých jezer a povodí řeky svatého Vavřince. Od této doby většina dohod řešila vlastnictví pozemků, jakožto primární zdroj konfliktu mezi domorodci a bělochy. Problém byl v tom, že většina smluv nebyla přeložena do jazyka domorodců, a proto nevěděli, co vlastně podepisují.

Další důležitá a zdárně prospěšná smlouva byla podepsána roku 1867 a jmenovala se Indiánský zákon. Předpokládalo se, že tato smlouva zvýší ochranu Indiánů, ale hlavním záměrem byla větší kontrola jejich půdy. Tento zákon také rozdělil původní obyvatelstvo na Indiány se statusem, Indiány bez statusu a Indiány podle smlouvy. Jednotlivé skupiny pak musely dodržovat jiné zákony a měly jiné povinnosti. Postupem času se ke smlouvě přidávaly další dodatky, což ještě více ztížilo život všech Indiánů. Jeden z nejvýznamnějších autorů těchto dodatků byl Duncan Campbell Scott, který zavedl povinné internátní školy, a tím způsobil odebrání domorodých dětí z jejich rodin.

Listina základních lidských práv a svobod konečně umožnila vůdcům kanadských původních národů, Métisů a Inuitů uznat jejich práva. I když ne všechny sliby byly nakonec splněny. Dalším důležitým dokumentem byl takzvaný návrh zákona C-31, který redukoval nerovnosti mezi domorodými muži a ženami se statusem. V roce 1955 získali Indiáni vlastní právo na politiku samosprávy a mohli tak lépe řídit jejich životy a dělat vlastní rozhodnutí týkající se jejich kultur a komunit.

Čtvrtá kapitola popisuje současnou situaci původních obyvatel v Kanadě. Jejich život a společenský status se bezpochyby zlepšil, ale stále musí čelit diskriminaci a nerovnému zacházení. Trpí nedostatkem lékařské péče a hygieny, což vede k jejich zvýšené úmrtnosti. Nejrozšířenější smrtelná nemoc mezi Indiány je AIDS. Další problém týkající se domorodců je jejich vysoká ngramotnost a nezaměstnanost. Většina škol je umístěných příliš daleko od rezervací, nebo je příliš drahých, proto se plno domorodých dětí do vzdělávacích institucí vůbec nedostane. Kvůli jejich nedostatečnému vzdělání pak mají potíže s hledáním dobré práce a zůstávají často nezaměstnaní. Mezi domorodými obyvateli je dokonce dvakrát více nezaměstnaných než mezi kanadskými bělochy. Život v nouzi a bídě, rozšířená onemocnění a omezené vzdělání často nutí Indiány vzdát jejich naději na lepší zítřky a vedou k častým sebevraždám. Naneštěstí míra sebevražd mezi mladými domorodci v Kanadě je v rámci světa jedna z nejvyšších vůbec.

Poslední kapitola rozebírá a popisuje román *Slash* a poskytuje základní informace o jeho autorce Jeannete C. Armstrong. Jeannete se narodila roku 1948 v části Britské Kolumbie Okanagan Valley a mluví jak jazykem okanagan, tak anglicky. Zasloužila se o založení En'owkin centra, které se v roce 1989 stalo Mezinárodní

školou psaní. Proslavila se také jako obhájkyně spravedlnosti pro kanadské původní národy. Jejím nejznámějším dílem je fiktivní biografie *Slash*, která ve čtyřech kapitolách popisuje vývoj kanadského domorodce Thomase Kelasketa a zaznamenává významné historické události této doby.

Knihy neobsahuje příliš akčních scén, ale představu života Indiánů nám navozují Thomasovy vnitřní myšlenky a jeho rozhovory s rodinnými příslušníky. Z jejich běžného života zde najdeme typické příklady jako je stěhování do internátních škol, kruté zacházení bělošských spolužáků i učitelů, zanechání školy, formování organizací na podporu boje za indiánská práva, přílišné pití alkoholu, užívání drog, bezdůvodné zatýkání, jejich bezcitné vraždění bělochy a ztráta naděje na lepší život. Román nemá šťastný konec a bývá z různých důvodů často kritizován. Přesto je důvěryhodným zdrojem obrazu diskriminace a bezpráví, kterým domorodci musí čelit.

Kanada je proslulá jako země s nejlepšími podmínkami pro žití, ale tento názor určitě není sdílen jejím i původními obyvateli. V této práci bylo sepsáno několik důkazů tvrdého zacházení Indiánů, a to od nejstarší historie až po současnost. Ačkoliv se situace domorodců o něco zlepšila, stále je tu nezbytnost provedení několika změn. Mezi hlavní záležitosti patří nezvratné vlastnictví území, dostatečná lékařská péče, přístup ke vzdělání a rovnocenné pracovní možnosti. Toto všechno musí být splněno, aby se zabránilo vymírání Indiánů a jejich následnému celkovému zániku.

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Anotace

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Název práce: Kanadský původní název, historie bezpráví

Vedoucí práce: PhDr. Matthew Sweney, Ph.D.

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Cílem mojí bakalářské práce je doložit fakta, která potvrzují diskriminaci a bezpráví kanadských původních národů. První část práce se zabývá rozdělením těchto domorodých obyvatel a přiblížením jejich životního stylu. Následuje souhrn nejvýznamnějších historických dohod uzavřených mezi domorodci a kolonisty, které ovšem nebyly vždy dodržovány a nezaručovaly oboustranný prospěch. Výčet důkazů nespravedlivého zacházení domorodců je dovršen pohledem na současnou situaci, která nabízí jistá zlepšení, ale zároveň poukazuje na přetrvávající nerovnosti. Celá práce je zakončena analýzou románu *Slash* od autorky Jeannette C. Armstrong, který popisuje vývoj typického domorodého hocha a nejrůznější úskalí, se kterými se jako člen původních národů musí potýkat.

Annotation

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The aim of my Bachelor's thesis is to give evidence of discrimination and injustice of Canadian First Nations. The first part of the thesis deals with classification of those Aboriginal people and it describes their way of living. It is followed by a summary of the most important historical treaties, signed by both the Aboriginals and the colonists. However, those treaties were not always observed or mutually profitable. The enumeration of evidence of Aboriginal unjust treatment is completed by a look at the current situation. There are some certain improvements as well as persisting inequality. The whole thesis is concluded by analysis of the novel *Slash* written by Jeannette C. Armstrong. It is a description of development of a typical Aboriginal boy and various difficulties which he must contend with, since he is a member of First Nations.