***A Resource for***

***A Mind Spread out on the Ground***

***By Alicia Elliott***

***Spring 2020 CTE Book Club Selection***

***The author of this book, Alicia Elliott, a Tuscarora writer from Six Nations of the Grand River, offers compelling narratives that prompt the reader to ponder, examine, discuss, and address the many challenges facing Indigenous peoples today. She also celebrates the survival of Indigenous Peoples and revival of their culture with this book being one example.***

***This resource is organized by chapters - each chapter includes the themes that are present in each narrative, offers a suggested list of disciplines that naturally align with the narrative, and provides a list of guiding questions to engage the reader.***

***This book was a CTE Book Club selection for Spring 2020 and engaged book club members in deep, thoughtful, and sometimes difficult conversations. The CTE Spring 2020 Book Club offers this resource to you, our colleagues at Capilano University, to encourage you to create opportunities in your courses for important conversations around the many themes that this book presents.***

***A Mind Spread out on the Ground (2019) is published by Penguin Random House, Doubleday Canada and is available at the library and the CTE. Alicia Elliot has a presence in the Twitterverse and can be followed @wordsandguitar***

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# Chapter 1:  A Mind Spread out on the Ground

**Themes:**

Intersection between Colonialism and Mental Health in Indigenous Communities, Social Determinants of Mental Health, Culture as Resilience Factor, Impact of Language, Doctrine of Discovery/Colonialism, Grief (role of grief in society/different cultures)

**Disciplines:**

Counselling, Music Therapy, HCA, ECCE, EA, Humanities (English, linguistics, FNLG), Social Sciences, (history, sociology, psychology), Communications, Community Development, (Documentary Film)

**Guiding Questions:**

1. For what reasons do you think Elliot describes the therapist as ‘particularly unqualified’ to address her depression?
2. Review pages 6-7. Respond to the question, ‘What does that type of pain, mourning and loss do to you?” through an image, poem, song or story.
3. Research the Doctrine of Discovery. Journal your responses to what you learn.
4. Elliott describes Canada as an abusive father.
   1. What is the relationship of macro and micro abuse? What are the impacts?
   2. Why did the author choose this wording?
   3. What do those words make you think of?

1. On page 11, Elliott writes, “In fact, the Mind over Mood Depression Inventory could double as a checklist for the effects of colonialism on our people.” Who would you write a letter to in response to this paragraph and what would you want to say?
2. On page 12, Elliott describes the Haudenonsaunee condolence ceremony. What is the relation between grief and depression? What is your own experience of grief in reading this chapter? What practices do/could help you attend to and process grief more fully?
3. Elliott challenges the construction of depression as separate from social determinants. How does language shape your understanding of mental health? In a group, create a list of terms and phrases you are most familiar with when describing mental health and illness. Create a wordle.
4. Why do you think the author wrote this chapter? What surprised you about this chapter? Explore what has changed/shifted for you after reading this chapter in your understanding of history/depression/Indigenous people/mental health through a poem, drawing, graphic illustration or other expressive medium.

# Chapter 2: Half-Breed: A Racial Biography in Five Parts

**Themes:**

Racism, Internalized Racism, Religion, White-passing, Identity, Decolonizing the Mind

**Disciplines:**

Humanities, Social Sciences, Education, Health, International Business

**Guiding Questions:**

1. How would you define “*collective amnesia*” that Elliot refers to on page 14? What is your experience of *collective amnesia* in other contexts; for instance, the writing of the history of nations? OR even family history?
2. On page 16, the author’s Catholic mother is reported as saying that roots were *nothing if they lead to Hell*. This is in relation to the author’s father’s desire to connect to his Haudenosaunee Six Nations Indigenous roots. Use this as a starting point to discuss how Christianity feels threatened by, and demonizes, Indigenous culture and spirituality.
3. On page 18, the author experiences bullying on the bus from another girl. Why do you think the author chooses to ignore it? How does it affect her?

1. In your own experience, why does bullying happen? How can we respond to it? What if you’re identified as being bullied by others, or as a bully?
2. The author struggles with her mixed-race identity, and being able to pass as white or other non-Native identities, like Puerto Rican. At first she considers she can be a Cheshire Cat or Trickster that can perhaps move between worlds, but later she worries that she is drowning between identities. At the conclusion of the chapter, however, she reconciles with her identity and the responsibilities it brings. How does she articulate this?

1. In your own experience of being mixed-race or having mixed-identities, or observing or researching others who have dealt or are dealing with this, how have you or they expressed this struggle, and overcome it…or not?

# Chapter 3: On Seeing and Being Seen

**Themes:**

Appropriation, Free Speech, Diversity, Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, Empathy, Love

**Disciplines:**

Creative Writing, Literary Criticism, Fine Arts, Social Sciences, Humanities, Education, Health, Business

**Guiding Questions:**

1. The author’s life is changed by reading the work of Leanne Betasamosake Simpson. It is the first time she has read another author who has captured Indigenous experience as she knows it. Describe a similar experience you’ve had reading an author who wrote of a world you’d previously not found represented. How did it change you?
2. Appropriation of Indigenous characters and stories by non-Indigenous writers is a theme in the chapter. What are the two examples the author cites?
3. In this chapter, a non-Indigenous author claims people concerned about inaccurate representations and cultural appropriation were stifling free speech. What is your opinion of this defence?
4. In 1993, Mohawk writer Pauline Johnson criticized how white writers portrayed native women. Who was Pauline Johnson? What is her significance in Canadian and Indigenous literature? Do you think this criticism is still valid? Why? Why not?
5. Elliot writes: “… *writing with empathy is not enough… Empathy has its limits – and contrary to what some may think, it is possible to have both empathy for a person and still hold inherited, unacknowledged racist views about them.”* Do you think this is true? If so, what can you do about your inherited, unacknowledged racist views to become a better writer and human being?
6. Elliot writes: “*To truly write from another experience in an authentic way, you need more than empathy. You need to write with love.”*And*“If you can’t write about us with a love for who we are as people, what we’ve survived, what we’ve accomplished despite all attempts to keep us from doing so; if you can’t look at us as we are and feel your pupils go wide, rendering all stereotypes a sham, a poor copy, a disgrace – then why are you writing about us at all?*”  What is your response to this? Are you now afraid to include any Indigenous characters or content in your work? How might this challenge also be laid down to writers who wish to write about any other experience other than their own?
7. On page 26, Elliot writes… “*I shudder to think of how their grandchildren would react if they read the story and saw how the powerful ceremony their ancestors fought for was turned into racist, colonial poverty porn.*”  What ceremony is Elliot referring to? What is “*poverty porn*”? What are other examples of this?
8. The 2019 film *The Body Remembers When The World Broke Open* has also been criticized by some as poverty porn, but the makers (and many others) believe it is portraying a reality. “Trauma Drama” is another term that is used to dismiss such work. What does it mean? How can trauma and poverty be presented in responsible and human ways, with empathy? What context does it need?
9. On page 27, Elliot brings up the thorny topic of “diversity”. She quotes Tania Canas as saying that “*Diversity is a White Word*”. Elliot explains this in terms of white people wanting *ethnic*restaurants that offer *exotic* flavours. Do you agree? What does diversity mean to you? How can we achieve more diverse representation, communities, literature?

# Chapter 4:  Weight

**Themes:**

Gendered Experience of Adolescent Sexuality, Stereotypes of Parenting and Motherhood

**Disciplines:**ECCE, EA, Music Therapy, HCA, Women & Gender Studies, Sociology; Counselling, Accessibility and Learning Services

**Guiding Questions:**

1. Reflect on a time when you have had your own experience of “Why me” or a moment that had changed your life’s course and express through a medium that best illustrates that moment for you.
2. On page 39, Elliott compares what she perceives of as normal shame with her own experience as “not normal shame”. Journal your own emotional response reading this passage and your reflections on experiences of shame.
3. Find three examples (sentence, paragraphs) of gender stereotypes described in the text. Explain why you picked those three.
4. What impact do those stereotypes have on different people’s sense of identity, self, opportunities/experiences in life?
5. Describe a time when you felt stereotyped and a time when you were freed from a stereotype. Compare and contrast those experiences through an expressive medium.
6. Are there examples in your discipline of study where checklists are used to collect information about a person who is a student, family member or client? What critique might you provide for “standard practice” in your own field as a result of Elliott’s rendering of her experience of an “intake” interview? What promising changes are emerging in your field?

1. Journal your responses to her depiction of motherhood, including the ways women experience being or naming a “bad mother” versus being “enough”. How does this parallel your own experience in a significant social role?

# Chapter 5: The Same Space

**Themes:**

Fake Intimacy, Gentrification, Toronto vs. Tkaronto, Diaspora, Capitalism

**Disciplines:**

Counselling, Creative Non-fiction, Land Law, City Planning, Economics

**Guiding Questions:**

1. Elliot’s university professor asked her class: *Why do you think I included Indigenous literature in a diaspora course?*Elliot’s answer was, *Because Indigenous people are almost always put in a position where they’re displaced on their own lands*.Do you agree with her answer? Why? Why not? What does “diaspora” mean to you?
2. Elliot talks about “*fake intimacy*” and leading a “*double life*” making it hard to talk to her friends about her problems.  What is your experience of this? How can you avoid *fake intimacy*?
3. On page 49, Elliot writes about how Toronto was once Tkaronto that was *Dish With One Spoon territory*. What does this mean? On the same page, she writes about the different way settlers look at land/space? How do these views differ? Can they ever be reconciled?
4. The animated short by Amanda Strong, *Biidaaban (The Dawn Comes)* (2018), based on Leanne Betasamosake Simpson’s writing, features a character from the old Tkaronto world when an Indigenous youth joins forces with a 10 000-year-old Sasquatch to revive ceremonial sap harvesting in suburban Ontario. How does it portray the old history amongst the new? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vWjnYKyiUB8>
5. How can Indigenous people survive and thrive in the “*shiny neon and collapsed boundaries of big city capitalism*”?
6. The chapter ends with a call: *Perhaps one day this neighbourhood, this city, this country, will finally hear its neglected past whispering… Acknowledge it, then make something new, something beautiful, something that will make everyone proud (page 51).* How could this ever happen? What would it look like? How can cities and countries plan for this?

1. Elliot refers to one of her writings as not so much being a piece of creative non-fiction as it was an *exorcism*? What does she mean?
2. Is some work too personal, too private to be shared? Would this fall under the category of “*I suffered for my art and now it’s your turn?”*
3. How could some of your own creative non-fiction be considered an exorcism? What could be some of the positives and negatives of this?

# Chapter 6:  Dark Matters

**Themes:**

Race, Construction of Race, Racism, Whiteness as Protection, Poverty, Intergenerational Trauma

**Disciplines:**

Motion Picture Arts, Fine Art, Art History, Canadian History, Law, Sociology, Anthropology, Psychology, Global Stewardship, Public Administration, Communication, Business

**Guiding Questions:**

1. What is the difference between “craft” and “art”? What factors contribute to how each are perceived and received by the dominant culture?
2. How do you define “art” juxtaposed to “cultural artifact”?
3. How does the lens of race determine (or contribute to) our interpretation of events, actions, and behaviours?
4. Discuss an event or incident in the news where race was a factor (or was not made a factor and perhaps should have been). Consider the context of the event from both an individual, cultural, and historical perspective. How much of this context was considered/covered by the media? Consider if the event can be understood without the discussion of race. Consider what else you might like to have understood about the situation in order to get a fuller sense of the event.
5. Can context (cultural and personal) be removed from our interpretation of any single event?
6. How often do you witness and/or experience racism? What does racism look like to you? Examine your answer: what does it reveal about your own experience of privilege or lack of privilege?

1. Do the Privilege Walk: discuss the outcome. How did it make you feel? What did you learn about yourself? What did you learn about each other? (\*Privilege Walks take several forms. Here are two resources to begin your research into them: A. <https://www.buzzfeed.com/dayshavedewi/what-is-privilege> B. <https://opensource.com/open-organization/17/11/privilege-walk-exercise> They are, in essence, a social experiment. Are they effect? How would you critique them? Make them better? What are the flaws and dangers in them? How else could we examine how privilege works in our society?
2. Discuss the criminal justice system and the media in terms of each’s ability to fully understand the multiple (and hidden) forces that played a role in both shaping an event and shaping our perception of an event.
3. What is the “social purpose” of a GoFundMe campaign?
4. What is your “worldview” or “view of the world”?
5. How does Alicia interplay between “dark matter” facts (science) and examples of racism?  Why does she do it?
6. “[D]espite over forty-five years of vigorous research since 1973 we are much more certain what dark matter is not than we are what it is” (p. 62)”Is Alicia speaking about dark matter? Racism? Or Both?

1. “I wondered how something could be so pervasive, so all encompassing, responsible for the world as we know it and still not be able to be clearly seen” (p. 67).  Is this statement speaking about Dark Matter or racism or something else altogether?
2. “Racism, for many people, seems to occupy space in very much the same way as dark matter; it forms the skeleton of our world, yet remains ultimately invisible, undetectable.  This is convenient. If nothing is racism, then nothing needs to be done to address it” (p. 70). How can we address racism if we believe it is nothing?

# Chapter 7: Scratch

**Themes:**

Family and Personal Trauma, Being an Outsider versus Belonging, Family and Institutions, Otherness, Toxic Relationships, Religion and Magic

**Disciplines:**

Creative Writing, Social Justice, Family Therapy

**Guiding Questions:**

1. The chapter opens with a story about catching head lice for the first of many times. Elliot picks up lice from a young cousin at a family gathering, where Elliot is struggling to fit in. How is the idea of belonging to a family connected to the idea of sacrifice?
2. Head lice is a dominant motif in the chapter, which Elliot lives with for many years. Do you think it is a metaphor for disease among First Nations in the post contact world? Why or Why not?
3. To finally get rid of the head lice, Elliot has to leave her family’s home. Was getting rid of the lice an act of self-sacrifice or survival, or both? Why?
4. When Elliott calls 911 during a family fight, she learns that she is an outsider to the world of government institutions. Thinking about the narrative shift in the chapter from young girl to adult mother, how does Elliot’s perspective change in relation to institutions and social systems such as family, medicine, policing, education?
5. What are some of ways otherness is outlined in the stories about family and community? How is that contrasted with ways of belonging?
6. What are some of the ways that religion and magic are contrasted?
7. What are the causes of the toxic relationships in the family? What ultimately holds the family together?
8. Hiding is a theme that appears in several ways. How is the theme of hiding used to describe her family and personal life?
9. In her approach to writing, how does Elliot walk the line between tragedy and humour?

# Chapter 8: 34 grams per dose

**Themes:**

Food/Nutrition/Health and social determinants, food sustainability incl. traditional/indigenous understandings; Body Image, Epigenetics (DNA/Genetics); Cultural Genocide and Intergenerational Trauma, Residential Schools, Reconciliation and Allyship; Privilege and Social Status; ‘Traditional’ Wellness practices

**Disciplines:**

English, History, Sociology, ECCE, EA, HCA, HKIN, Counselling, Biology, Human Geography, Economics, (Tourism-Food sustainability), Acting for Stage and Screen, Performing Arts Degree, Legal Studies, Business

**Guiding Questions:**

1. Elliott opens the chapter with describing “proper dosage”. What does that mean to you? Do you have a relationship with a substance or behaviour in which you seek the perfect dose?
2. What is your relationship between food, weight and worth?
3. On page 93, Elliott returns to an experience of shame. She describes it as failing the test. Again. What are the reasons for this experience? How does this move you? What experience of shame do you return to at this point in the book?
4. Elliott exposes the centrality of White Supremacy (the “standard”) in maintaining current economic models and violent systems of oppression (page 98). What impact has this had on your understanding of racialized communities?
5. Elliott writes on page 96, “Poor people can’t afford good health.” What does this chapter expose about the economics of food and social status?
6. How does Elliott describe health and the denial of access to traditional foods as tools of Indigenous destruction?
7. What are the short- and long-term impacts of hunger on a child? Use any medium to express the images, feelings, relationships evoked for you as you reflect on policies and practices that result in starvation for children and families.
8. In a letter to the author or someone else you would like to connect with, express what thoughts and feelings were evoked for you by this chapter?
9. Elliott ends the chapter on page 116, “And if intergenerational trauma can alter DNA, why can’t intergenerational love?”. Respond and expand.

# Chapter 9: Boundaries like Bruises

**Themes:**

Relationships, Indigenous Culture Artifacts, Colonialism, Income Inequality, Poverty, Cultural Genocide, Racism

**Disciplines:**

Economics, English, Counselling, History, Sociology, Education, Health, Business

**Guiding Questions:**

1. On page 117, Elliott describes the first and last time she kicked her future husband.  This experience created a self-awareness in her that changed her. Reflect on a moment in your life that through your actions you increased your self-awareness, which impacted your future actions.
2. Elliott describes the Two Row Wampum (p. 119-120).  Draw a picture, take a photograph, choose a poem, lyric, etc., that illustrates the message that the Two Row Wampum represents. Explain your selection and its connection to the Two Row Wampum.
3. Analyze the interpretation of the Two Row Wampum (p. 119-120).  What are the strengths of the interpretation?  What questions does the interpretation raise for you?
4. Elliot notes that boundaries don’t have to be bruises (p. 120). From your life experience, explain if you agree or disagree with her.
5. “We untangle the threads of history and treat the wounds we find underneath” (p. 120).  Make connections between this quote and economic policy or your discipline of study.
6. How does being raised in a family that lives below the poverty line affect worldview and life’s experiences?
7. Elliott deals with poverty and cultural genocide. How does racism affect Indigenous versus non-Indigenous peoples differently who are also experiencing poverty?

# Chapter 10: On Forbidden Rooms and Intentional Forgetting

**Themes:**

Dealing withSexual Assault,Trauma, Pain

**Disciplines:**

Education, Counselling, Psychology, Social Sciences, Law, Women and Gender Studies

**Guiding Questions:**

1. What is your reaction to Elliott’s take on Charles Perrault’s interpretation of the tale of Bluebeard (p. 123).  What is your interpretation of the tale?  Compare and contrast your interpretation to Elliott’s?
2. What are your forbidden rooms?
3. If Bluebeard’s story is a representation of *what if* occurring in society, what are Canada’s forbidden rooms?
4. Write a variation of the tale of Bluebeard that represents your values and incorporates a perspective that is reflective of today’s society.
5. What have you learned from Elliott’s approach to dealing with her sexual assault?
6. Discuss Elliott’s statement that “There is a performative nature to pain?” p. 129
7. Are we supposed to deal with trauma in prescribed ways that are acceptable to society?
8. How would you respond to someone who is close to you and who shares with you they have experienced a significant trauma in their life?
9. Image that you are an advice columnist for a major news outlet and you receive a request for advice on how to respond to a close friend who shares with you that they have experienced a significant trauma in their life.  Taking into consideration what Elliott has shared in this chapter, how would respond to this request.
10. “Though intentional forgetting is seen as a bad way to heal, there is mounting evidence that it is, in fact, a better alternative to intentionally remembering” (p. 125). Discuss the pros and cons of both approaches and relate to an event or experience in your life or someone close to you.
11. Select a painting or picture that reflects how you feel about what Elliott shared in this chapter.  Share the image of the painting or picture and explain your interpretation of it and how it relates to Elliott’s story.
12. “Sexual assault has one of the smallest conviction rates of violent crime in Canada” (p. 133).  Discuss this statistic and compare it to two other countries and explain the story behind the statistics.

# Chapter 11:  Crude Collages of My Mother

**Themes:**

Relationship between Language and Interpretation of the Individual, Mental Health, Motherhood, Denial and Repression

**Disciplines:**

Psychology, Sociology, Social Work, Women’s and Gender Studies, Health and Human Development, Public Administration, Communication, Motion Picture Arts (in conjunction with other essays about representation)

**Guiding Questions:**

1. Discuss how mental health can work as a lens through which the sufferer views themselves and the world, and through which the world views the sufferer.
2. Explore the concepts of acceptance and denial with respect to mental health.
3. Explore mental health labels (or diagnoses): when are they helpful when are they not?
4. How might we work towards greater empathy of folks with mental health challenges?
5. Consider cultural representations of mental health – both positive and negative – how do these representations shape our understanding? Create our own lens? Build or erode our ability to understand and empathize?

1. Examine your own sources of privilege and discuss how they have affected your perception of mental health issues and those who experience them.
2. Consider the concepts of “victim” and “perpetrator” in the context of Alicia’s relationship with her mother, the relationship between her mother and father, and mental health generally.
3. Can you think about an event or incident where mental health was a factor? How did it affect the general perception of the event, your personal perception of the event, and the perceptions of the individuals involved? Who or what were the victims? Who are what were the perpetrators?
4. Considering the title of this chapter, are all of us a collage of sorts?  If so, how?
5. How is Alicia’s perception of her mother “bi-polar”?  Normal Mom vs Bipolar Mom?
6. How could the realities of Alicia’s childhood be described as bipolar (p. 142)?

1. “[I]f you were to tell us that the excitement and energy we loved so much were part of Mom’s mania, that her hard work and hustle were at their height when she was manic, that she was at her most hilarious, fun and focused then, we’d probably say her bipolar was awesome too.  It was always awesome until it wasn’t (p. 143). Is this statement ‘bipolar’? Explain your answer fully.

# Chapter 12: Not Your Noble Savage

**Themes:** Reconciliation, Resource Development, Literature, Identity of Indigenous Writers

**Disciplines:** History, Women and Gender Studies, Social Sciences, Law, Counselling, Business

**Guiding Questions:**

1. Name an Indigenous author, actor, artist, musician, politician, public servant, business person, leader whom you admire?  Explain your choice.
2. What are three revelations that this short story this chapter? Or a story within it? Or the story about the person in Question 1? exposed that you were unaware prior to reading it and deeply affected by?
3. Margaret Atwood is a well-recognized Canadian author.  Write a message to Atwood to share your thoughts with her regarding her exclusion of Indigenous authors in *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature.*
4. Research two of the authors Elliott includes in this story and share what you learned about them.
5. Elliott notes, “True reconciliation with Native Peoples is paternalistic” (p. 163).  What actions are you taking to build on “True Reconciliation” with Metis, Inuit, First Nations?
6. How has Canada’s paternalistic relationship with Indigenous peoples been created, perpetuated, and reproduced?
7. How does identifying as both an author and an Indigenous person both expand and/or limit their recognition as writers.
8. Ultimately, books are commodities that have to be sold. Consider the message that underlies this statement. Choose words, images, etc., to exemplify what the message means to you, particularly in the context of what Elliott shared in this chapter.

# Chapter 13:  Sontag, in Snapshots

**Themes:** Photography, Art, Capitalism

**Disciplines:** Motion Picture Arts, Fine Arts, Communication, English, Economics

**Guiding Questions:**

1. “Photographs furnish evidence; the camera record incriminates,” page 169. Do you agree or disagree with this statement?  Does the camera lie or tell the truth? What are examples of each?
2. What is it about ... those who like to be photographed versus those that don’t (p. 165)? (Does the photo raise feelings of insecurity; fear; un-confidence; self-determination; distrust; unfamiliarity; modesty; control; selfishness; 2-D-ness; permanence; photo is past tense; promotes stereotypes; subjective?) In the world of the Selfie and Social Media, where do you sit? Why? And what is it like to see yourself on ZOOM all the time? Where does Narcissism start and end?
3. Discuss the role that photography/paintings have played in the misrepresentation of Indigenous peoples?
4. Choose a passage from this chapter and discuss why you chose it, what meaning it has for you, what personal connection you can make to the passage.
5. Choose a photograph or painting or sculpture and discuss its representation of its subject(s)? Compare and contrast your selection with the photos of Nadya Kwandibens or Dayna Danger or Alison Lapper or Aaron Huey, who are mentioned on p. 177.
6. Do we have a morbid fascination with photography and video footage of police/public interaction?  Does it truly serve a purpose? If so, what?
7. Is there any way to balance out the viewpoints (blatant or embedded) portrayed in photos/videos by publications like National Geographic, etc.  If so, how?
8. Can a ‘selfie’ portray our fundamental essence?  Explain your answer with examples. What can portray our fundamental essence?
9. Is there such a thing as ‘good’ photography and ‘bad’ photography?  If not, why? If so, what are the component parts?
10. “It’s important to remember that appealing to capitalism to fix the problems of racism, sexism, ageism, ableism, transphobia, and homophobia is problematic in its own way. Capitalism always relies upon exploitation to create profit, and therefore it must always rely upon differing valuations of people’s humanity” (p. 182). Do you agree with this statement? Defend you position with examples.

# Chapter 14: Extraction Mentalities

**Themes:** Abuse, Capitalism, Gaslighting, Criminal Justice System

**Disciplines:** Women and Gender Studies, Law, Social Sciences, Health, Economics, International Business

**Guiding Questions:**

1. Elliott is tempted by the two-dimensional villain and notes, “These dichotomies are seductive because they are so simple. But that’s why these sorts of dichotomies will never create the change we need. They’re too damn simple” (p. 197). What are effective means of creating change in our society to lessen abuse?
2. Answer the question Elliot poses, “Did you assume my father was the villain I was writing this essay about? Why or Why not?” (p. 200).
3. Choose a passage (paragraph) that surprised you, affirmed an idea for you, or one that you would like to challenge.  Type out the passage and include the chapter title and page number, then explain why you selected the passage, why you personally connected/did not connect with it, why the passage is meaningful.
4. Write three thoughts that you have after reading this chapter; two questions you would like to ask the author, and one analogy to describe this chapter.
5. What is your reaction to Elliott’s revelation that her father never abused people he didn’t like and that maybe for him love was a fire that could both warm and burn encouraging him to become his best self and his worst self?
6. Elliott uses the metaphor love was a fire that could both warm and burn.  Create your own metaphor to describe the type of love she describes.
7. What is another title that you would choose for this chapter?  Explain your choice of chapter title.
8. On page 215, Elliot lists ways in which the nation state abuses and gaslights non-Indigenous citizens. In what other ways than those listed on page 215 has the nation state of Canada been involved in abuse or gaslighting?
9. Choose one of the questions the author poses in this chapter and answer it.  In your answer, explain why you chose this question to answer.
10. What is your reaction to Leanne Betasamosake Simpson’s quote on page 213, “[E]xtration is the cornerstone of capitalism, colonialism, and settler colonialism. It’s stealing. It’s taking something, whether it’s a process, an object, a gift, or a person, out of the relationships that give it meaning, and placing it in a non-relational context for the purposes of accumulation.”
11. How have Canada’s economic and health policies affected Indigenous and non- Indigenous citizens positively and negatively?
12. Write a summary of what you have learned from reading this chapter, and what are three of the most valuable teachings for you from this chapter.
13. If you were running a Book Club, how would you introduce this book and persuade others that it is worthy of their attention?