

Some Practical and Epistemological Collaborative Possibilities Despite History

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Introduction

In this research paper I examine a historic overview of relationships between land and knowledge as they developed alongside the process of formation of the US education system. In particular I am interested in Native Peoples circumstances since contact with Europeans with regards to this topic. I find relationships between land and knowledge are signs and symptoms of larger cultural traits that particularly evidence the long-term functionality and health (or lack thereof) of any economic and socio-political system. Since my core research looks for ways to propose education as a transformation towards transitioning to an ecological economy, and given today's dominant (and mostly dysfunctional) relationship between land and knowledge, practice and theory, I am drawn to better understand onto-epistemological stances that have, historically and currently, been built on a reciprocity between land and human knowledge and praxis.

The purpose of this paper is twofold: a) to further make explicit the direct relationships that exist between historic policies of land use/extraction and educational endeavors towards 'civilizing' indigenous people; and b) to build bridges towards understanding indigenous relationalities with land that can aid in forwarding a land education. I am interested in exploring issues of land relationality and knowledge production in both extremes of this relationship's continuum—within the Western paradigm based on the idea of the university as *the* site of production of (academic) knowledge; within the indigenous paradigm as an oral, experiential, dialogical and interconnected relationship.

An itinerary of sources (methodology and literature)

The concept of ‘land’ as I refer to it throughout this paper includes all aspects from a bioregional standpoint where the human intersects and connects with other biotic and non-biotic elements present and remote in both space and time, dynamically. With regards to ‘knowledge’ I refer to a variety of epistemological systems, including their genealogies, operative and representational codes. One such system is the Western stance as found and understood historically and currently in the academy through formal written texts and practices that stem from these; the other is indigenous to Turtle Island as found through various written sources that represent a historically oral tradition. In all these, there is the difficulty of representation (oral-based traditions having to fill the gaps and be translated to writing-based traditions such as the Western), current interpretation (not only between languages and the different concepts that might exist or not in different languages/cultures but as well interpretations between the oral and the written), and historical interpretations (where the time elapsed between events and a more current revision of them might pose differential positionalities). Despite these difficulties of representation, in putting current and historical accounts of these praxes in conversation in this brief paper I hope to illuminate relationships between land and knowledge that are crucial to future public educational endeavors.

For the Western stance’s look into land-knowledge relationships I draw from Ecological Economic Thought (EET) and Environmental Education (EE) as frameworks with which to understand current and future possibilities for education. For the indigenous stances’ look into land-knowledge relationships I will draw from a recent

version of EE that calls itself Land Education (LE), and from what is understood as Traditional Ecological Knowledges (TEK).

In terms of a possible economic praxis that can effectively substitute or complement capitalism's lack of (or disinterest in) cognitive and practical ecological capacities, EET fills in the gaps. In the same language as the scientific and economic Western world, EET inverts the latter's logic to one of inclusivity of the non-human world as a paramount economic and ecological player. Yet EET is a field that stems, to my knowledge, mostly from Eurocentric research and thus can be posited for a similar post-colonial/decolonial critique as EE and all of Western environmentalism. I am attracted to LE in its radical stance, which I deem useful in further analyzing historical and current US land-use policies and its further implications in formal education. Indigenous educators Eve Tuck, Marcia McKenzie and Kate McCoy's suggestion of "...why and how education, including environmental education, might better account for the history, present, and future by attending to its embedded issues of colonialism and Indigenous rights and sovereignty," is key in today's overview and planning of environmental education.¹

As well I draw from TEKs and LE in trying to assess the degree of appropriateness to which some of their tenets are applicable to urban public education, and if so, how to transition to an education that takes land as teacher | learning space. An ecological economy is based on a different onto-epistemological stance than the one a capitalist economy sits on. EET is a field that looks at the economy, society's needs and

¹ Tuck, McKenzie, McCoy, Land education: Indigenous, post-colonial, and decolonizing perspectives on place and environmental education research, pg. 2

those of the environment in interconnected ways.² It understands that humans are part of this environment, which in turn sustains all of life, not just that of humans.³ Its primary assumption, in the words of educator Susan Santone, is “...that economic activity occurs within, and depends upon, larger ecological systems. In other words, *the economy is contained within the environment,*” adding that the latter is “not just a “factor” of production but is the *basis* of it.”⁴ Thus, EET takes into account all the stages of a natural material taken for production, including the waste byproduct at each stage of its extraction, production, distribution, consumption and expenditure in order to account for the energy produced vis-as-vis the energy used and ‘wasted’ as entropy. EET also accounts for the limits and capacity of the planet in terms of its resources.⁵ EET is based on an organic worldview that assumes a nonlinear interconnectedness of both biotic and non-biotic elements, where nature and society are a ‘collective phenomena,’ as opposed to a mechanistic, atomistic and reductive view based on an abstract, anthropocentric and divisive model of life.⁶

Because the field of EET is based on a symbiotic relationship with land, it is similar to indigenous onto-epistemological stances. Here I do not want to reduce all indigenous cultures or all of Native Americans’ identities into one undifferentiated category. Indigenous identities and cultures are complex issues, where there are multiple existing tribes with their differences even in the small territory of New York State. As scholar, educator and activist C. Pewewardy explains, “Indigenous Peoples are subjected to many political definitions even within their own dynamic levels of tribal politics as

² Environment here is understood as the all-encompassing biotic and abiotic surroundings with inherent values.

³ Ingebrigtsen & Jakobsen, *Utopias and realism in ecological economics—Knowledge, understanding and improvisation*, all pages;

Santone, *Ecological Economics Education*; all pages.

⁴ Santone, *Ecological Economics Education*; pp. 155, 157, her italics.

⁵ Santone, *Ecological Economics Education*; all pages.

⁶ Ingebrigtsen & Jakobsen, *Utopias and realism in ecological economics—Knowledge, understanding and improvisation*, all pages.

well as by states and the federal government. The conflicting policies of tribal government acknowledgement, federal government blood quantum criteria, and a myriad of self-identifications contribute to this paradox of cultural identity.”⁷ Yet on closer look and despite differences, most indigenous cultures assert that their identities and cultures have been historically imbricated with and still retain a deep relationship with their ways of being with land.⁸ This characteristic can be found in what is currently understood as Traditional Ecological Knowledges (TEK) espoused by indigenous land-management practices and concepts such as ‘kincentricity.’ In the words of Indigenous scholar Enrique Salmón, “To indigenous people, humans are at an equal standing with the rest of the natural world; they are kindred relations. In addition, indigenous people believe that the complex interactions that result from this relationship enhance and preserve the ecosystem. It is understood that human practices such as burning and pruning promote new growth of shrubs, trees, and grasses. This attracts animals such as birds to sprouting trees and shrubs, and mammals such as deer and elk to grasslands. This concept of kincentricity with the natural world is what is being referred to as “kincentric ecology.””⁹

These concepts and relationships have taken me to explore the Western understanding of the environment and its entanglement with the dominant economy. With regards to its approach within education, it has drawn me to investigate how the field of EE developed from the 1970’s alongside environmental movements that concerned

⁷ Pewewardy, *To be or Not to Be Indigenous: Identity, Race and Representation in Education*, pg. 73

⁸ Pewewardy, *To be or Not to Be Indigenous: Identity, Race and Representation in Education*, all pages; Fleming, *Nanaboozhoo and the Wiindigo: An Ojibwe History from Colonization to the Present*, all pages

⁹ Salmón, *Kincentric Ecology: Indigenous Perceptions of the Human–Nature Relationship*, pg. 1331

themselves with these issues. Subsequent nuanced versions of this field as they understand the high-stakes situation we are faced with today reflect different approaches to environmental-economic relationships. These versions' names indicate somewhat their different orientations within the field—Education for Sustainability (EfS), Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), and the more recent and radical Land Education (LE), with a basis on Indigenous onto-epistemologies. The latter concerns with "...the necessity of centering historical and current contexts of colonization in education on and in relation to land."¹⁰ It particularly takes into account the embeddedness of colonial practices of land and peoples within environmental education and research globally. Tuck, McKenzie and McCoy, 2014 editors to *Environmental Education Research Journal*'s special issue on Land Education add, "The special issue also arises as a conversation in relation to the building momentum of place-based education, including how it has been mobilized within the field of environmental education. In part inspired by a recognition that the specifics of geography and community matter for how (environmental) education can and should be engaged, place-based forms of education are steadily evolving with increasing curricular uptake and empirical research. Many authors in the current collection, however, draw attention to concerns with place-based and other forms of environmental education that position themselves as culturally or politically neutral while perpetuating forms of European universalism (Mignolo 2003) and settler colonialism, including understandings of Indigenous peoples as repositories of static forms of cultural knowledge (Friedel 2011)." The authors quote Bang et al. in asserting a crucial difference in these fields' basic paradigms, "...we might imagine that

¹⁰ Tuck, McKenzie, McCoy, Land education: Indigenous, post-colonial, and decolonizing perspectives on place and environmental education research, Pg. 1

ontology of place-based paradigms is something like ‘I am, therefore place is,’ in contrast, the ontology of land-based pedagogies might be summarized as ‘Land is, therefore we are.’”¹¹

Native Peoples’ plight to land

To further investigate these questions I take Native Americans’ historic and current tight identities with land as pivotal elements of this discussion. Through historical sources and a critical overview of key moments in this timeline, this paper explores Native Peoples’ plight to return to their homeland. This journey began as soon as contact with European settlers rendered treaties, policies and practices of assimilation and physical and cultural genocide that severed their cultural identities’ and their physical embeddedness’ tight relationship with land. My non-exhaustive readings and analysis intend to shed light into the difficult period of relocation | assimilation since the early 1800’s till now in what is today US national territory. My carrying question is that of the relationship with land, both from an indigenous perspective in terms of its loss and recurring requests to reinstate their rights to it, and the many instruments that settler colonialists devise(d) in order to subsume | subjugate this plight. Through this itinerary I also investigate US formal education’s relationships with and to land. The latter have manifested in diverse ways, both extractive (land taken from Native Americans) and additive (lands given towards formalizing settler’s educational goals). An example of the latter is the Morrill Land-Grant Act of 1862, one instance of how the federal government’s (settler) entitlement to land was put to use towards the creation of State

¹¹ Tuck, McKenzie, McCoy, Land education: Indigenous, post-colonial, and decolonizing perspectives on place and environmental education research, Pg. 10

Universities.¹² State Universities in turn benefited from Land Grants as they would sell these lands to gather resources to continue with their specific educational mission as structured in the Grant agreement. This encompassed the overall purposes of opening up higher education to lower classes, in particular by imparting agricultural and mechanical training, doing research, and bringing liberal arts courses to the working classes. This endeavor of producing agricultural knowledge was based on and stemmed from solely extrapolated Eurocentric practices and understandings of land-use (subsistence farming and larger agricultural endeavors based on the privatization of land vs. communal tending of the land). Throughout the timeline since contact, education has been used as token for negotiations in most of these instruments—it was a key factor in all treaties, agreements and contracts between settlers and Native Peoples. According to educator Stan Juneau from the Blackfoot Tribe, “Federal Indian education policy began during President Washington’s time in 1792 with the Seneca Nation, as part of the government’s historical policy of trying to “civilize” the American Indian. The United States included education provisions in most treaties they negotiated with Indian tribes.”¹³

Questions to History

One direct and exhaustive relationship that was made clearly evident in these past months of research is that of the entangled developments of the US public education system and its dominant economic system—how ‘one best system’¹⁴ monopolized both economics in the form of capitalism and education as an embedded subsystem for

¹² Fabricant & Brier, *Austerity Blues: Fighting for the Soul of Public Higher Education*, pg. 13, 41-42, 50.

¹³ Juneau, *Indian Education for All. A History and Foundation of American Indian Education Policy*, pg. 9

¹⁴ Tyack, *The one best system: A history of American urban education*, all pages

providing a tiered labor force *for* this economic system. The battles over which curriculum was best suited for this endeavor—whether to ameliorate the enormous gaps left by the accelerated pace of industrial revolution, to be ever more efficient in preparing children for their adult lives in the economy, or to be children-centered and bring their highest potential during those years yet not break with the structure per se—seems to have left a hybrid landscape in the neoliberal camp of the 21st century.¹⁵ Fluidity—reforms that flow one after the other in attempts to shift proportions but never change the entire architecture—might be better at describing a neoliberal operation that, not surprisingly, is well suited for leaving intact ever-increasing problems of inequality.¹⁶ While the public education system seems to be rigged from the start with the paradoxical goals of both exacerbating these problems and trying to solve them, this characteristic mirrors the ambiguities of a schizoid/perverse design (depending on whether they are deemed reactive/enactive or deliberate). On the one hand it responded to a dominant settler, Anglo Saxon mindset (how to bring literacy to a ‘freed’ black population, ‘Americanize’ immigrants, level all children with a certain standard of civic, English, math and science literacy, and discipline the masses to become the next work force for a ‘growing’ capitalist economy) with its one goal of amassing the most profit in the shortest of time. On the other hand it attempted to ameliorate the effects of such philosophy of life, while never really intending to overcome it, given the West’s fixation with ‘naturalized’ dualities and opposites on which to leverage movement and growth.¹⁷

Two salient concerns stem from this ‘default’ design as it has evolved during two hundred years of relentless ‘progress:’

¹⁵ Kliebard, *The struggle for the American curriculum, 1893-1958*, all pages

¹⁶ Fabricant & Brier, *Austerity Blues: Fighting for the Soul of Public Higher Education*, pgs. 16-20;
Lipman, *Neoliberal Urbanism and Educational Policy*, all pages;
Barnett, *The Coming of the Ecological Learner*, all pages.

¹⁷ Tyack, *The one best system: A history of American urban education*, all pages;
Kliebard, *The struggle for the American curriculum, 1893-1958*, all pages.

- an all-encompassing, unsustainable economic system that already is unable to accommodate most people of working ages despite their level of education,¹⁸
- an overarching climate change environment with increasing myriad challenges and uncertainties¹⁹ that have become the ‘norm’ in defining the ‘glocal’ too while exacerbating its inequalities.²⁰

The fact that the many environmental issues confronting us today have the most impacts on the least resourceful of populations around the globe (both human urban and rural *and* non-human) is well documented.²¹ Educator Carol Lee makes this explicit when she quotes M. B. Spencer asserting that “to be human is to be at risk,” and goes on to add that “...at the same time the nature of the vulnerabilities that human individuals and human communities face are clearly differentiated by an array of societal positionings, particularly with regard to race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, and constructions of ability.”²² This is partly why I believe social justice issues cannot be dealt with in isolation, as disproportionate disparities in the allocation of resources are already impacted by climate change in its many manifestations and complex causal-effectual processes. These issues need to be addressed along pressing environmental justice ones that are complexly entangled with them and that stem from the same Western philosophical paradigm. The other motive is a shared belief in a different way of life altogether, one that can be more equitable with life as an expanded, interconnected

¹⁸ Fabricant & Brier, *Austerity Blues: Fighting for the Soul of Public Higher Education*, pgs.35-38.

¹⁹ IPCC

²⁰ Lipman, *Neoliberal Urbanism and Educational Policy*, all pages

²¹ Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*, all pages.

²² Lee, *An Ecological Framework for Enacting Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies*, pg. 262

ecology, more ethical in terms of humans' exchanges with other humans and with other life forms, and presumably where hope and joy are constitutive elements.²³

Western Lineage: From implications *for* the land to implications *to* the land²⁴

Treatises and negotiations with Native Americans were carried out since 1775 through three different departments of the Continental Congress for Indian Affairs.²⁵ Yet since the early 1800's, through the creation of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA, 1824-present), a succession of Federal and State treaties, acts and bills carried out mainly by BIA, have implemented an oscillating set of policies towards Native Americans. This set of policies stumbles between dispossessing tribes of their commonly held land, their uses and habits in and with it, while dismantling tribal government and community life. The oscillatory pattern manifests in the 'attempts' to counter the impacts of the above by restoring what was taken by past policies of relocation, allotment, assimilation, 'education,' and other incoherent practices, through what was thought to be 'ameliorative,' (more relocation, education, education, relocation). Specific key moments in this timeline, with some approximate start and end dates are: European Intrusion (1492-1787), Federalism and Indian Treaty Period (1787-1871), Boarding School Period (1617-present, with peak moments during the late 1800's when implemented by the Federal government), Allotment Period (1887-1934), Tribal Reorganization Period (1934-1953), Termination of Indian Tribes Period (1953-1975) and Indian Self-Determination Period (1975-present).²⁶ Each of these periods pivot around displacement

²³ Williams, Regenerative Hope: Pedagogy of Action and Agency in the Learning Gardens, all pages.

²⁴ I am utilizing here a lens related by Professor Dr. Brier and set forth by historian Dr. Gutman in regards to how the question of the institution of slavery evolved historically.

²⁵ Henson, From War to Self-Determination: a History of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, all pages.

²⁶ Juneau, Indian Education for All. A History and Foundation of American Indian Education Policy, all pages.

of tribes from their lands and have institutionalized educational parameters operative within them. Some examples are the Treaty of Fort Meigs (1817) by which the University of Michigan first acquired land to evolve into what it is today; the Indian Removal Act of 1829 by which Native Americans were relocated to lands West of the Mississippi River in order to give European settlers lands within existing state borders; the Morrill Land-Grant Act (1862) by which the federal government further dispossesses indigenous peoples of their historic use of land, then granted ownership of these lands to states in order to develop State universities; the General Allotment Act of 1887 (otherwise known as Dawes Act), by which the Federal government divides and distributes tribally held land into lots given in trust to tribal individuals, and sells ‘surplus’ lands (typically the best land for agricultural purposes) to settlers and industry development (several sources claim this Act is directly responsible for the loss of 90 million acres of tribal lands to settlers). Fast forward to the twentieth century, the Indian Relocation Act of 1956 encourages indigenous individuals to move to urban areas, away from tribal life on reservations.²⁷

Federal Boarding Schools--What was done *for* Indians

Historically within the US, education has been both a tool for ‘Americanization’ as well as an instrument in the numerous negotiations with tribes and the ‘cession’ of their lands. Boarding schools’ lineage comes from the UK medieval times when boys were sent to monasteries for their education. Many Commonwealth colonies have inherited the boarding school system, nowadays secular. Boarding schools for Native

²⁷ Indian Land Tenure Foundation

Americans in the US were implemented by missionaries since European intrusion²⁸ and had a peak period when the Federal government attempted to assimilate indigenous peoples during the late 1800's. This institution's goal was to impart a general and specific American education since early in indigenous people's lives, through immersion and forced changes in their habits and culture. Colonel R. H. Pratt, administrator of the quintessential Carlisle Indian Industrial School in PA, refers to the historic era of the boarding school as "...a far sadder day is it for them when they fall under the baneful influences of a treaty agreement with the United States whereby they are to receive large annuities, and to be protected on reservations, and held apart from all association with the best of our civilization. The destruction is not so speedy, but it is far more general. We shall have to go elsewhere, and seek for other means besides land in severalty to release these people from their tribal relations and to bring them individually into the capacity and freedom of citizens."²⁹ The infamous quote "Kill the Indian, and save the man" from his same speech in 1892 at the peak of boarding school 'fever' is relevant in this regard, as the forceful attempts to 'Americanize' while leaving the Native Americans' assimilated bodies 'intact' has proven to have rippling effects to date in different forms of alienation, when not in the sheer decreasing numbers of their bodies remaining alive.³⁰ Both tactics—assimilation and long-term genocide—relied on the Indians' displacement from their land. This latter operation was as much a tactic of domination as an outright economic move towards ownership of lands for settlement and development of numerous capitalist industries (forestry, mining, agriculture, transportation). In Pratt's words, illustrative of formal education's goals of the same period,

²⁸ Bill, *From Boarding Schools to Self-Determination*, pg. 1

²⁹ Pratt, *Official Report of the Nineteenth Annual Conference of Charities and Correction*.

³⁰ Fleming, *Nanaboozhoo and the Wiindigo: An Ojibwe History from Colonization to the Present*, all pages.

Under our principles we have established the public school system, where people of all races may become unified in every way, and loyal to the government; but we do not gather the people of one nation into schools by themselves, and the people of another nation into schools by themselves, but we invite the youth of all peoples into all schools. We shall not succeed in Americanizing the Indian unless we take him in in exactly the same way. I do not care if abundant schools on the plan of Carlisle are established. If the principle we have always had at Carlisle—of sending them out into families and into the public schools—were left out, the result would be the same, even though such schools were established, as Carlisle is, in the centre of an intelligent and industrious population, and though such schools were, as Carlisle always has been, filled with students from many tribes. Purely Indian schools say to the Indians: “You are Indians, and must remain Indians. You are not of the nation, and cannot become of the nation. We do not want you to become of the nation.” We make our greatest mistake in feeding our civilization to the Indians instead of feeding the Indians to our civilization.

Overall Pratt’s tone, as surely the overall intention of public education can be said to be, is ‘humanitarian’ in the sense that he is truly under the impression that his operation as ‘savior’ of indigenous bodies through assimilation must be the fundamentally ‘correct’ method to follow. Through education, he attempts to bring to Indians the same opportunities white men have offered to immigrants and blacks, except that when analyzing the extent of these ‘opportunities,’ they are based on a concept of civilization that is unilateral and Eurocentric. His own words extend a kind of naïve invitation to partake in the activities of Western civilization without the least regard for difference, criticality or insight into the process of domination. Is his a kind of blindness, ingenuity, frivolity typical of the historical figure he has come to embody? Is it a combination of all of the above? Was his appointment into this role a strategic one within the federal (and historic) attempt to not ‘deal’ with the ‘Indian issue’ frontally, yet crucially disempower the Indian? I dwell in Pratt’s historical speech as one example of the dominant perspective in this process of assimilation through the inconspicuous coupling of education with land grabbing. In this regard, it is difficult for me to keep

‘intact’ from ‘presentism’ a historical perspective, for in questioning the process by which assimilation methods were (are) implemented, measuring or analyzing the concept of the boarding school even within historical context, is constantly having to recur unquestioningly to the central colonial issue of domination and oppression through the coupling of education (in the most formal and institutional sense) with land occupation.³¹

Reorganization Period -- 1930's

A more recent historical moment illustrates well the movement of the pendulum in the opposite direction—the reversal operation by which the Federal government ‘reflects’ on the “Indian issue.” The Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, also known as the Wheeler-Howard Act (WHA), along with the Johnson O’Malley Act of the same year (JOA) were part of Roosevelt’s New Deal and thus called the “Indian New Deal.” Through the work of BIA’s Commissioner John Collier, a social reformer sociologist and indigenous advocate, these Acts attempted to transfer Federal responsibility towards Native Peoples on reservations to implement self-determination. Its main highlights are the willingness to not only restore but ‘protect’ tribal life, self-government and self-determination *on* the reservations, while abandoning “...the attempt to “Americanize” the Indian...”³² This plan also rested on a new organization with respect to land ownership whereby the old system of allotments was terminated, while establishing a fund for “...scholarship loans to enable gifted Indians to receive advanced education.” An important element of this act is that it was not forced upon any of the federally inscribed tribes, but could be adopted by them on the basis of self-determination. Out of the 266

³¹ Tuck, McKenzie, McCoy, Land education: Indigenous, post-colonial, and decolonizing perspectives on place and environmental education research, all pages.

³² Juneau, Indian Education for All. A History and Foundation of American Indian Education, all pages.

eligible bands and tribes of that period, 189 accepted the act. The JOA was specifically designed towards the inclusion of Native Americans in the public education system, yet it did not account for the cultural needs of these students in order to help them succeed in the system. The overall impact of the latter act, implemented between 1934 and 1973, was seen as a failure by its presupposed beneficiaries in that the financial resources that were originally redirected from the Federal government to the states to further fund their newly extended invitation to Native American children in joining public schools was instead utilized for the betterment of already privileged populations.

Termination of Indian Tribes Period of 1950's --What was done to the Indian

Next in what I deem important highlights that illustrate educational and land-use stakes is the House Concurrent Resolution 108, otherwise known as the Termination Bills of the post World War II era. Its goal was to end a long period of Federal responsibilities towards Native peoples. This time it was shaped as a termination of federal aid to reservations—services and programs—as a means to have indigenous populations relocate to cities and thus assimilate as regular American citizens. The language in the bill speaks of a “final solution” that despite a certain distance with recently lived circumstances in Europe during the war, it speaks of a disregard for human rights and processes that is chilling. Transfer of responsibilities from the Federal government to the tribes was, this time around, taken to be the ‘right’ answer for years of displacement, assiduous disrespect and discrimination and overall inhuman methods of ‘civilizing the Indian.’ Indigenous resistance to this bill was offered on the grounds that it would once again run against tribal self-determination and would derive in a new wave of loss of

lands. The Termination Bills came to an end during Lyndon Johnson's presidency. Overall relocation is seen as another failed operation on both accounts.³³ Again following the oscillatory pattern since intrusion, Johnson's message to Congress in 1968 was to reinstate Federal support towards Native tribes, asserting a philosophy of self-help managed through Federal partnerships.³⁴

The 1970's and beyond

The era of civil rights movements and self-determination of underprivileged groups of the 1960's and 1970's at a planetary scale had its impact in indigenous peoples as well. In 1968 Native Americans belonging to different tribes who had relocated to Minneapolis during the Termination Bill era founded the American Indian Movement. Its goal was partly to exert pressure on the government for more self-determination and sovereignty, and to protect urban Native Americans from police brutality. Since its inception, a pan-Indian process was adopted due to the mix of tribal identities found in urban areas post-relocation.³⁵ In 1970 during Nixon's presidency Congress responded by passing statutes that somewhat reflect these requests. Of these, the Indian Self-determination and Education act of 1975 (PL 93 638) and the Tribally Controlled Community College Act of 1978 during Carter's presidency are the most important. The effects that these had in different tribes is crucial as the possibilities and resources for development of their own schools, their own curricula, and their own teachers in both tribal schools and community colleges materialized, succeeding in a process towards self-

³³ Juneau, Indian Education for All. A History and Foundation of American Indian Education pg. 48; Nixon, Special Message on Indian Affairs, all pages.

³⁴ Juneau, Indian Education for All. A History and Foundation of American Indian Education, pg. 38.

³⁵ Miner, The American Indian Movement, all pages.

determination and sovereignty. Some direct effects of these are increase in enrollment and retention, and the creation in 1973 of the American Indian Higher Education Consortium. In the words of Muckleshoot Tribe educator Dr. Willard E. Bill,³⁶

Education innovations which had their impetus in the 1960s found their fruition in the 1970s. Indian communities and Alaskan villages began to develop their own educational programs open to enrollment by Native American youth...

American Indian and Alaskan Native leaders perceived that schools controlled by their community would have a built-in cultural relevance which would strengthen the self-concept of students. After years of struggling to inform elected officials and educators of the unique status of the American Indians, they realized that an Indian-controlled school was necessary to provide validity to native culture. The Indian-controlled school, by its very nature of organization, is held accountable to the local Indian leadership.

The teachers and administrators understand their role in enhancing the culture, self-concept, and confidence of Indian youths entrusted to their teaching. With the tribal council or village council in control there is an incentive for the teacher to promote cultural relevance.

...The fact that these Indian-controlled schools increased enrollment ... was evidence that tribal schools were meeting an important need of which Indian tribes had been deprived for the prior one hundred years.

These can be said to reflect a similar spirit as some of the needs and requests of underprivileged public schools in New York City of the same period and an early implementation of Culturally Relevant Pedagogies (CRPs) and Culturally Sustainable Pedagogies (CSPs).³⁷

In 1994 thirty-one Tribal Colleges on reservations were granted Land Grant status. The situation was celebrated as a triumph of sovereignty. After centuries of

³⁶ Bill, *From Boarding Schools to Self-Determination*, pg. 34-36.

³⁷ Charles Isaacs, *Inside Ocean Hill-Brownsville: A Teacher's Education*; Podair, *The Strike That Changed New York: Blacks, Whites and the Ocean Hill-Brownsville Crisis*; Taylor, *Knocking on Our Own Door: Milton A. Galamison and the Struggle to Integrate the New York City Schools*; Paris & Alim, *Culturally sustaining pedagogies: Teaching and learning for justice in a changing world*, all pages.

indirect and direct policies of subjugation and assimilation, Indigenous peoples' resilience and resistance had finally landed what seemed like sovereign terms of passing on their knowledge.³⁸ Yet this did not put them in a similar situation as those State Universities under Land Grant status from 1862. Instead of land, the tribal colleges got an endowment from which to draw interests annually. To date, the latter amounts to a little over \$30,000 per institution per year, administered by the 1862 institutions.³⁹ In a sense the 1994 Land Grant Status to Tribal Colleges could be said to be a full 360° return to land—teaching to tend for and grow food from the land, producing knowledge based on land—except on Western parameters (private ownership of land and highly administered terms, in short, a heavily managed sovereignty).⁴⁰ It is worthy of note that whereas the Morrill Land Grant Act of 1862 gave states 30,000 acres of federally owned land each to be sold by the University at a profit that would be its 'seed' money, not coincidentally that was the same year that President Lincoln passed the Homestead Act of 1862, where 160 acres of land were given to settlers willing to farm in the Western territories of the nation. That year clearly indicates a solidification of US policy towards particular and definite land uses—the settling of both European descendants and their knowledge into 'new,' 'uncharted' territory. Except, as ethnobotanist M. Kat Anderson has strongly articulated, this was not the case. Anderson's research, in particular in California, has proven that what was experienced as 'wilderness' by settlers, had instead been tended for by the indigenous peoples who inhabit(ed) that territory for millennia prior to intrusion.

³⁸ Pewewardy, *To Be or Not to Be Indigenous: Identity, Race and Representation in Education*, all pages; Juneau, *Indian Education for All. A History and Foundation of American Indian Education*, all pages.

³⁹ Phillips, *A Tribal College Land Grant Perspective: Changing the Conversation*, all pages.

⁴⁰ *Pathkeepers for Indigenous Knowledge, Education Sovereignty: Restoring Self-Determination in Native American Education*, all pages.

This tending of land was a set of land uses and management techniques that was (and seems to still be) invisible to the settler.⁴¹

Conclusion

In reflecting on the paradoxical condition presented by a will to self-determination and a (potential/partial) surrendering to assimilation (out of sheer necessity?), Stan Juneau's words in the earlier part of this relentless new century illustrate well the conflict of interests embodied in his people,

In the old treaty-signing days, many Indians came to feel this superior knowledge gave the white man his right to do what he did. Bows and arrows were useless against guns. Ponies could not outrun trains. Iron kettles were superior to earthen pots and hides. So education provisions were written into the treaties, and from tribe to tribe people began to slowly change their ways to conform to the white man's way of doing things. The expectation that one day the fuzzy picture would clear and the Indian would stand as equal to the white man grew over the generations. Today, when we are asked what our problems are, we continue to reflect this ancient belief. "Give us more education," we cry, "and we can become self-sufficient."⁴²

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, the US public education system from pre-K to 12th grade holds a steady 1% of Native American children in its classrooms. This is a demographic count that reflects ethnic composition from 2003 to a projection in 2025. Data derived from the 2012 census tells us that "New York City has the largest number of American Indians and Alaska Natives of any location within the United States, with a population of 111,749 Native Americans out of

⁴¹ Anderson, *Tending the Wild*, all pages.

⁴² Juneau, *Indian Education for All. A History and Foundation of American Indian Education Policy*, pg. 14.

the total population of 8,175,133 New Yorkers.”⁴³ According to the DOE, the New York City public school system, the largest in the country, has a total of 1,135,334 students, out of which 26% are classified as Black and 40% as Hispanic (a category that is only linguistic in that it denotes a certain familiarity with the Spanish language or an ancestry to what is now Central and South America as land colonized by Spain and Portugal, yet it is not a racial category). Despite this confusion of categorizing methods—where ethnicity and race are intermingled except for what is understood as being White/Caucasian⁴⁴—the DOE’s website lacks ‘Native American’ as a category altogether.⁴⁵ Yet another source states that in the years 2012-2013, K-12 in New York City’s public schools held 0.7% of Native American children in its classrooms, out of a total 1,075,681 students.⁴⁶ This amounts to a meager 7,529 children whose cultural roots are embedded in one or more tribes of the 573 American Indian and Alaska Natives tribes recognized today by the US government.⁴⁷

Continuing to revitalize the heritage of these children would prove to be a great way to implement CSPs in the direction of transitioning to an ecological economics that shares values with indigenous ethics towards life and land. In this historical moment of great ecological disarray and socio-economic injustices, it is important that settler onto-epistemological stances realize the non-universality of their beliefs and practices, and open up to ways of being and doing that have proven more beneficial to both humans and non-humans alike. In the words of Anderson, “Most important, these studies open up opportunities for rekindling indigenous land relationships by applying the scientific

⁴³ From NY Statewide Language RBE-RN at NYU, pg.12

⁴⁴ where skin tonalities of Black to all shades of Brown are widely accepted but where those from pale White to intense Pink are not.

⁴⁵ <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/about-us/reports/doe-data-at-a-glance> (accessed 01-21-19)

⁴⁶ <https://www.slideshare.net/LuisTaverasMBAMS/new-york-city-public-schools-demographics> (accessed 01-21-19).

⁴⁷ Indian Affairs, pg. 1

knowledge of native peoples.” She follows by asserting that “The art and science of the new field of ecological restoration, therefore, will necessarily integrate traditional indigenous ecological knowledge into its philosophies, methods, and practicums.”⁴⁸

Following sociologist John Phillips in his appeal to shift leadership in land grant institutions and have Tribal Colleges become role models to other universities,⁴⁹ I looked into one 1994 institution to capture their current ethos—Saginaw Chippewa Tribal Community College (SCTC) in Michigan. In their webpage, SCTC’s historical mission is partly stated as to “...enable Native Americans to achieve a significant position in the world’s emerging economy...while promoting values, history, traditions, and wisdom of the Anishinaabe.”⁵⁰⁻⁵¹ One surely hopes their millenary wisdom refers this ‘emerging economy’ to an economy that is closer to Traditional Ecological Knowledges and to Ecological Economic Thought than it is to a dominant idea of the economy. Most importantly, that a collaborative effort fosters the opportunity to put this wisdom to practice. Implementing Traditional Ecological Knowledges and Land Education insights can show all of us (rural *and* urban learners of all ages, races, abilities, ancestries and genders) a way out of the conundrum of anthropogenic climate change. One invokes Indigenous peoples will not hold resentment for years of unethical misconduct and concede to share their millenary wisdoms and knowledges with the ‘white man.’

⁴⁸ Anderson, *Tending the Wild*, pg.337

⁴⁹ Phillips, A Tribal College Land Grant Perspective: Changing the Conversation, all pages.

⁵⁰ <http://www.sagchip.edu/aboutus/history.htm>; accessed 1-22-19

⁵¹ Anderson, *Tending the Wild*, all pages.

In educators Dr. Xenia King and Manley Begay Jr.’s words, “The [Western Apache] notion behind the concept of wisdom is that an ongoing contemplation of the symbolic dimensions of the physical environment leads to the development of three essential mental sets. The three sets comprise smoothness of mind, resilience of mind, and steadiness of mind.” King & Begay Jr., *Promoting Strategic Thinking in American Indian Leaders*, pg. 57.

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