

Transposing nomenclatures—performing treaty relationship

Bibi (Silvina) Calderaro

Urban Education Doctoral Program

The Graduate Center, CUNY

Professor Celina Su

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“Non-Native historians are only beginning to recognize the value of indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing to their research. [...] Analyzing the historicity of *kaswentha* raises our awareness of an Iroquois understanding of cross-cultural relationships that works towards unity—not uniformity—by demonstrating how differences between individuals, communities, and nations have to be acknowledged and integrated, rather than annihilated or absorbed.”

Parmenter, 2013:99

“...history of science should mean the history of what is known as well as of the knowledge itself.”

Latour, 2007:27

INTRODUCTION

In this paper I explore environmental histories of the Hudson River estuary and valley. I am engaged with this bioregion as I currently live in the settler-occupied territories where the megacity of New York sits by the mouth of the estuary where it joins the salt waters of the Atlantic Ocean; also because I am organizing a decolonial pedagogical experiment in its waters launching this summer 2021. These engagements stem from my research interests in climate action and environmental justice endeavors from the standpoint of education understood in broad strokes as transformational opportunities to overcome Western dualisms such as culture-nature, the environment versus the economy, etc. In this paper I apply decolonial frames to explore the paths by which this bioregion’s environmental histories are entangled with colonial contexts, and how these have been inscribed in different historical ‘readings.’ I also aim to identify some conflicts in the capacity of the decolonial to become fully embodied experiential practices with material weight. Ultimately this performative take of the decolonial is

implicated with onto-epistemological risk-taking (Latulippe, 2015). With this type of risk-taking I refer not just to events or moments of protest to instantiate change but to a possible adoption of counter-strategies where systemic ways of existence based on reciprocal relationalities, different from dominant ones and with the capacity to endure, may become regenerative lifestyles, what decolonial anthropologist Dana E. Powell calls alternative ‘technologies of existence’ (Powell, 2006). These apply to research as well since its instrumentality and operability are always already tied to settler-colonial apparatuses of measurement and control. At the counter-strategic end of risk-taking sit indigenous people, for whom environmental struggles¹ began at the time of contact with European settlers.

In this paper I aim to draft a navigable course for the project above-mentioned where decoloniality is one constellation that guides across the turbulent waters of settler-colonial empire. The other constellation follows the words of Canadian decolonial geographer Nicole Latulippe when she asserts, “In my mixed methodology, the treaty relationship emerged as a powerful orienting device. For all treaty people, the nation-to-nation relationship offers an invitation to engage knowledge systems in a spirit of respect and reciprocity” (Latulippe, 2015). I focus then on the parallel historicities of environmental struggles in this bioregion as seen from a liberal and white perspective and an anti-racist, decolonial one. Both of these frames co-inhabit physically in material manifestations but primarily as onto-epistemologies that unfold throughout time in their own capacities to enact worlds. Of particular interest to me following the treaty

¹ These are encompassed in what in Western paradigm is understood as separate—the environmental as distinct from the social—yet reflect the overall dispossession of indigenous peoples from their culture as they were uprooted from land, which is intricately woven into their identity (Powell, 2006).

relationship is the performative instantiation of relationality that it activates.

ONE

In the complex landscape of environmental issues that is the current state of affairs in this bioregion there seem to be two currents that in a sense come to illuminate the two main pillars that sustain modernity—one is the modern itself (controlling, factoring, measuring, rationalizing, exceptionalizing/minimizing, subjectivizing/objectivizing, constituting the liberal subject, moved by profitmaking as sole drive); the other is what modernity attempts to oppose in order to shut down (all that exceeds these controlling/measuring endeavors, thus categorized as ‘other:’ racialized minorities, ‘primitive’ onto-epistemologies, Nature, ‘wilderness,’ poetic endeavors that are not sustained by profit-making logics, etc.). Within the above modern processes and their unfolding in the current geopolitical formation of the liberal nation-state, one key issue has been economics and its development as discipline as it is tied with a capitalist ideology that seems to run not just as dominant strategy but as monologic single alternative since 1989. On the other hand there are deeper, onto-epistemological issues of economic performativity as economics is necessarily entangled with relationalities with land, water and air. These elements (referred to as ‘resources’ in dominant anthropocentric parlance) necessarily reflect how the relationships put forth via capitalist ideologies reciprocally manifest through these elements in their current critical states.

The relationship with the ‘environmental’ even as it is understood to lie outside of the human domain has never been simple nor unidirectional, but rather always political. This political space is as well inscribed within the liberal ethos where the natural environment is taken as a realm in need of control so that its scarce resources can be

maximally extracted for human benefit and profit. Yet in the not-so-distant 19th century within Western science, some of these relationships were seen as distant (in space and/or time), silent or invisible yet nonetheless having (non)intended or unaccounted for negative effects and consequences. Even those relationalities that assume a unidirectional input-output, linear dynamic² are necessarily entangled with the agencies of what lies beyond the human domain (here referred to as the more-than-human (MTH)). This is the case when in 1896 Swedish chemist Svante Arrhenius quantified the increase in greenhouse gases from coal-burning industries and correlated it with the increase in atmospheric temperature, indexing what is now understood as ‘greenhouse effect’ or ‘global warming.’ More recently these connections were made visible through the more publicized studies on the effects of DDT and other pesticides on humans by American biologist Rachel Carson’s book *The Silent Spring* (Hulme, 2008; Von Storch & Stehr, 2006). More recently a relational turn in social sciences and humanities posits relationalities as co-constitutive of the human with the MTH. Bruno Latour’s synthetic thinking in “A Textbook Case Revisited[...],” calls for a de-epistemologizing of knowledge and an ontologization of it instead. In what he calls a second empiricism, the artificial gap between subject and object created by first empiricists from Lock through James (exclusive) dissolves by shifting the accent so that the factors are understood to be in co-constitutive relations (Latour, 2007). This turn has further made explicit the ethico-political components of these relationalities from the vantage point of the human as it engages any relationship, which according to the principle of reciprocity necessarily

² encompassed in neoclassical economics in the formulations, which not surprisingly profess to maximize profits and attain absolute control of all factors involved, and which manifest in extractivist accounts of agriculture, mining and urbanization.

yields vitalizing or decaying relationalities. The latter are indexed in the current chains of crises as compounded in social and environmental justice struggles around the globe.

Within the human side of these relationalities, there are also well-crafted biopolitical strategies that for centuries have revolved around underprivileging categories that produce racialized minorities. Regardless of which historicities inform what account of the past, these ‘minorities’ have struggled and still relentlessly endure to succeed at liberating themselves from these categories, organizations and oppressive relationships. For example the black liberation movements gathered even more strength during the uprisings of 2020 through Black Lives Matter although these movements are a force that in itself has been at work since the days of slavery, through the civil rights movement and beyond till today. Another such endeavor is environmental justice (EJ) struggles by all ‘minorities’ (Latinex, Black and Indigenous) as they engage the entangled characteristics of structural and systemic underprivileging strategies—those that sustain oppressive hierarchical categories, dispossess peoples from their means of sustenance (psychic/socio-cultural, economic and political systems but also and primarily dispossess them from their land-based existences), and sustain the myth of (some) humans’ exceptionality, rationality and autonomy. In short, the compounded characteristics of modernity as it unfolded through the machinery of colonialism and capitalism to result in a ‘history of development as a biopolitical operation’ (Powell, 2006). Thus EJ struggles are indices of relationalities within the human socio-political domain whereby the hierarchical, oppressive and exploitative characteristics of a capitalist ideology spill over to ‘the other’—Nature, racialized minorities, the global South, etc. There should be no surprises here—any element in an ecology performs in ways that reflect the relationships

within which it exists. This reciprocity is perhaps the great ‘discovery’ of ‘systems thinking’ within Western thought (first in the natural sciences and then adopted by some social sciences). But this ‘wholistic’ thinking has always been the key understanding of indigenous cosmologies around the world and one that has been communicated by them to European travelers since the days of contact with the latter.

The case of North America as it became the scenario of colonial strategies from the Dutch, French and British empires is one such case where erasures, silencing, displacements and other dispossessions were and are the maneuvers of empire and its unfolding capitalist machine. Thus, Native American peoples are the oldest endurers in the continent of what in Western epistemology is understood as environmental struggles. As Marxist sociologist Brett Clark asserts, “Increasingly, environmental justice movements, insofar as they are directed primarily against environmental racism, are associated with communities of color. The Latino/Latina, African American, and Native American populations have been at the forefront of this movement, expanding the concerns, interests, and definitions of environmentalism,” adding that “The IEM [Indigenous Environmental Movement] is not a struggle within society; it is a struggle of societies” (2002:410-411). Here lies the central issue of ‘environmental’ histories—their struggles seem to be irreconcilable since they stem from altogether different onto-epistemologies.

In what follows I focus on indigenous environmental struggles with and in this land, the Hudson River valley, through the enactment of a 17th century treaty that signals the depth of the above assertion. I take this event as a high platform from which to think the conditions of possibility of decoloniality as process. In particular because to think in

decolonial terms about this bioregion is not easy; for one, I belong to a series of genealogies that bring me closer to settler colonial practices than to indigenous ecological traditions or indigenous approaches to environmental justice. But most importantly because the sovereignty that is central to the struggles of indigenous peoples revolves around a diametrically opposed stance toward life in general and relationality (and territoriality) in particular that seems difficult to reconcile with the high-stakes global capitalism entrenched in the web of life since the colonial epoch. The former relies on obligations with land that extend to both physical and spiritual realms whereas the latter underscores an anthropocentric view of land as resource for extraction (Bayet, 1994; Hallenbeck, 2015; King, 2007; Powell, 2006; Ransom & Ettenger, 2001). In the words of Mohawk activist Joyce Tekahnawiiaks King referring to one element among many but one which interests me particularly with respect to my project, “From the perspective of the traditional Haudenosaunee, we speak in terms of *responsibilities* with respect to water, not in terms of water *rights*” (King, 2007).

Thus, considering the decolonial as what I am oriented to and aligned with, I explore the tensions inherent in this endeavor as I benefit from being part of a privileged citizenry in a ‘privileged’ nation-state. While I identify as Latinx, I am perceived as white; while I was born in the US, I am both an immigrant from South America and a citizen; while I am an urban dweller and land owner (therefore epitomizing a settler performativity as well as consuming what is brought mainly from a rural domain and also creating a kind of waste that necessarily exceeds the capacity of the urban to uptake), I remain committed to practices of care with land and for land (inclusive of humans and the MRH). In short, belonging and non-belonging have always been moving marks in my

life where porous boundaries, hybridity, poetics and queerness are my adopted onto-epistemological groundings. From here I attempt to understand and undertake the many ways in which ‘environmental’ conflict was historically anticipated and dealt with but perhaps most importantly how it can be dealt with in the future.

Two

The indigenous populations who have been dispossessed through the centuries after initial trade and somewhat of a convivial situation in the first decades of contact with Europeans have not disappeared nor been idle. Instead, struggles and resistance movements against the settler colonial regime are documented and enacted in scholarly and activist ways. Despite these struggles and disregarding them blatantly to the point of erasure is a historicity that distinguishes two key moments in what is understood as the US environmental movement. The first was driven by conservationists reacting to the effects of the industrial revolution and the devastations it occasioned during the 19th century, bringing about the implementation of the National and State Park Services to preserve ‘wild, pristine and untouched’ spaces from further ruination. A second modern wave is identified as reacting to new changes in the economy within the context of the Cold War and its military-industrial (nuclear) complex. The latter wave responded first to aesthetic mandates inherited from the first wave (nature as majestic, wilderness as untouched nature and agent of the sublime, etc.) to then turn to ecological parameters with which to evaluate the relationship with environment (Lifset, 2014; Von Storch & Stehr, 2006). Yet both waves are markedly modernist and anthropocentric in scope.

One of modern US environmental movement’s origin points is located in 1962 at the onset of struggles against the utility company Consolidated Edison (ConEd) as it

announced plans to implement a pumped-storage hydroelectric power plant by the Hudson River's West shore near Storm King Mountain, NY. The struggle began with concerns about the eyesore this intrusion would create in the 'pristine' landscape of the Hudson River and evolved to address concerns with water and air pollution. In a distinct reading of environmental struggles, and along other environmental struggles by myriad groups in the region caught in liberal political games of the moment, folk singer Pete Seeger became one hero to the movement as he built a replica of a colonial sloop and launched it to raise awareness of the river's pollution at the moment. The sloop *Clearwater* thus began its long career as education center in the river, not without typical non-for-profit political and financial struggles to remain afloat and with distinct controversial moments stemming from the Hudson River valley's conservative flanks (Lifset, 2014; Schuyler, 2018). Although Seeger distanced from the mission of the sloop later in life, his intent of raising awareness through a kind of popular instilling of love for the river still resonates today in this quote in Lifset's account of the moment, "We just want people to learn to love their river again." (Lifset, 2014:138). Despite these intentions, in hindsight these words resonate more with a white savior complex than with a leftist account of popular activism.

The Western modernist trope of separating nature from culture to instantiate the double bind of humanity through the promises and perils of progress is ever so presently inscribed in this history of the Hudson River valley. Here, the region was and is understood to be a sublime landscape and one that helped shape a national identity through the arts. It is also a commercial and industrial hub that 'pollutes' the sublimity of nature; a 'natural' perfection which 'human' hubris comes to disturb. It is always already

encapsulated in an antagonistic and reductive onto-epistemology where the relationship human-environment is corrupted from the start. Placing this framework against a decolonial reading of the estuary's troubled environmental histories that highlights indigenous views and relationships with land renders a different story altogether. In this move I am not attempting to lessen the importance of organizations like *Clearwater Sloop* or *Riverkeeper* in their successes at raising awareness of the state of the Hudson River's pollution and implementing policies for their redress, nor any of the other organizations and movements that succeeded in overthrowing ConEd's environmental threat to the region, nor the sloop's great importance as an environmental educational template for other similar programs. My point rather is one of decolonizing the many instances in which struggles for the environment are made the entitlement of settlers and their universalizing ways. In short, the many instances in which the settler colonial logic reproduces and naturalizes itself—re-inscribing patriarchal and white-supremacist patterns through history-writing, making one person in a struggle the hero of a movement instead of understanding the collective nature of any struggle; erasing the long histories of indigenous struggles against dispossessions of many kinds since contact; utilizing a language that reflects settler colonial lenses and privileges; erasing once again other struggles that may be aligned in mission and even strategy but that are obscured due to the self-reflexivity of liberal premises; reinstating anthropocentric paradigms that reify key ethical problems. All these manifested in the Hudson River valley of the 60s environmental movement in ways that reflected their own interests and limitations. For example, *Clearwater* and *Riverkeeper*, two of the many organizations that emerged from the struggle with ConEd, were originally mainly preoccupied with 'landscape' as visual

experience and with the heritage from the fathers of the nation through the Hudson River School of painting and literature movements that reinforced the river's sublime experience as pivotal in the creation of a national sentiment (Lifset, 2014; Schuyler, 2018). Thus, these struggles emerged as concerns with ConEd's siting of the power plant that would have become an eyesore in the landscape; where garbage and pollution were degrading of a landscape otherwise perceived as pristine and beautiful; where the political played off as struggles between democrats and republicans as they bounced from state to federal political spaces and back while ingrained in white collar strategies—fundraising, lobbying, policy prescriptions, etc. (Schuyler, 2018). The liberal ethos that runs through these practices of 'protesting' conflictive situations is confined to reformist tactics within the domain of capitalism—the nation-state and its extractive economy remains untouched. In other words, the residents of the Hudson River valley as it experienced huge changes due to industrialization, de-industrialization post WWII, and gentrification, responded to economic needs and strategies that were not too radically opposing of capitalist development. A newly installed railroad infrastructure responded to the urge of the real estate industry to sell and develop land for residential as well as commercial and industrial purposes whereas the economic and energy needs of growing urban and rural populations still had to be satisfied. In short, the strategies of this environmental movement are more closely aligned with a NIMBY³ stance⁴ than with a real desire to eradicate the oppressive and extractive technopolitical practices that sustain capitalism. In this sense it is interesting to think of Pete Seeger as one central figure of

³ NIMBY is short for 'not in my backyard'

⁴ itself derived from colonial mechanisms of land use and dispossession, especially as seen through the lens of the myriad relocations enforced onto indigenous nations to seemingly 'valueless' reservations and other forms of racial environmental injustices.

the movement as he himself was aligned with the Communist party since the 50s, which complicated his engagement with environmental activism. In the eyes of liberal democrats he was a risk-taker; and in the eyes of conservatives he was a ‘hippie’ and ‘leftie.’

The post WWII economic situation bleeding into the environment in the Northeast USA must be understood within complexities that exceed this paper. Yet one key factor that needs to be underscored is that there is no economic growth without the input of energy, the development of certain infrastructures to satisfy those needs, and the harnessing of certain elements to keep these going—coal, oil, water; wind and solar. The other element that needs highlighting is the geographical tensions that exist between the rural and the urban in particular in this bioregion, by which what is understood as ‘upstate’ is thought as ‘resource’ to satisfy the needs of the ‘downstate’ location of New York City and its urban population. Without justifying ConEd’s siting of Storm King mountain for its next storage plant without regard for people or environment, it is possible that caught between the fire of energy satisfaction for the city and the ruination of the environment by an electric plant (with its unavoidable waste-products such as heat, oil spills, air pollution, etc.) might be a growing tension and conflict between the rural ‘beauty’ and its working-class population and the urban bourgeois classes and their insatiable consumerism.

Almost in synchronicity with these struggles which themselves resonate with the wave of civil rights movements and their offshoots across the country, and a bit further North, the Mohawk Nation was fighting their own battle with industrial infrastructures. Their movement’s point of origin though cannot be located so squarely in the Cold War

years but more intently in the years after contact with European travelers, explorers and traders turned to an influx of settler colonists who came to stay. This more distant history I will recount in the next session, but here I want to juxtapose a somewhat synchronic sequence of events to illustrate how what is called the ‘modern environmental movement,’ remains enchained in the ‘modern’ in ways that are, at this point, unnecessarily embarrassing due to its colonist limitations. In Brett Clark’s succinct words, “The Mohawk struggle to prevent and end the ecological degradation of the water and land has been a long road. Early conflicts over the destruction of fishing grounds date back to 1834, but it was in the 1950s, when the St. Lawrence Seaway opened up, providing access to cheap power for manufacturing plants, that these struggles intensified. Industrial development along the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence River set the stage for the constant degradation of the land and water. [...] Factories were even built adjacent to the reservations, intruding on fishing grounds.” (Clark, 2002:423). Unfortunately these are not loose events in the midst of the humanism and progress of Western institutions and infrastructure.

THREE

In 1613 a treatise was signed between the Dutch and the Haudenosaunee Confederacy by which it was agreed that the two would lead lives in pacific co-existence and respect each other’s sovereignty. The treatise is represented by what is known as the Two Row Wampum (TRW) or *Kaswentha*, a scroll-like belt made of shell beads of two colors—three white stripes representing peace, friendship and respect while navigating the river of life, and two purple stripes that run horizontally parallel to each other represent the two nations that would never touch each other’s sovereignty and decision-

making processes. (Hallenbeck, 2015; King, 2007; Parmenter, 2013). The *Kaswentha* is unfortunately not the only treaty between settler colonists and indigenous nations that has been broken. In particular this has been the case with matters having to do with land tenure and use, where regimes of law just do not match. On the one hand Native Americans do not have a system by which they ‘own’ land in the same terms as Westerners do; they believe land is lent, cared for at least for seven generations, and passed on in better shape than found (Anderson, 2005; King, 2007). On the other hand, settlers were astute dealers in matters of land ownership through colonial tactics of dispossession. These presentational and representational issues are important as they weave yet another dimension where onto-epistemologies differ—open and closed nomenclatures. The sealing of a diplomatic agreement through wampum—an open nomenclature (Otto, 2013) necessarily clashed with the controlling technologies of European settlers, whose exact writing was made to account for all possible imaginable instances of defrauding as asymmetrical political agency in favor of colonists. These all amount to the jurisdictional infrastructure brought by the settlers in order to effect their settlers’ goals. In today’s terminology, this is land-grabbing 101 with all its strategic thinking and tactical moves—a technopolitics of erasure, dispossession and genocide (Clark, 2002; Hallenbeck, 2015). Also of note is the idea of promise, where the indigenous thinking about future accountability is represented in the TRW as a keeping of sovereign matters ‘forever’ parallel, un-touching, separate, yet where peace, friendship and respect could be acted upon via trade, oratory and diplomacy (Hallenbeck, 2015). Instead, the settlers’ futurity is represented (in hindsight) as the broken promises brought

about by infrastructures that were never designed to be reciprocal—they only match profit-making desires that respond to capitalist minds and colonial strategies.

Thus the artifact called the Two Row Wampum tells the story of the peacemaking agreement known as *Kaswentha*. This artifact represents the way of life of the Haudenosaunee people as they navigate the river in their bark canoes, and the way of life of European settlers as they navigate the river of life in their ships. The former stripe representing the bark canoes can be thought of today as representing appropriate technologies, whereas the latter stripe of the Europeans' ships may be seen to represent the extractive infrastructures of today. The fact that these lines do not touch symbolizes a mode of co-existence that respects differences and each other's sovereignty while navigating the same river. This 'together but separate' mode of peacemaking was represented in an open nomenclature, one that actually flows as a process so that its intelligibility is not fixed in time but situated in the actualities of those who honor it through present enactment. The TRW points in the direction of a more malleable and mutating form of nomenclature, one in which the oral traditions of indigenous peoples supersede the Western prioritization of writing that responds to fixing/controlling needs. The TRW as representational technology is ambiguous and open—its symbolism relies on performativity and oral traditions to keep it alive. As the meaning of literacy has been narrowed down to indicate reading and writing abilities only, other literacies supported and enhanced by oral traditions are deprioritized. One such literacy is indigenous diplomacy as enacted by oratory. This literacy also aligns with a performative domain whereby present enactment is a leading force substantiated by pasts that need resurfacing and reinscription. Perhaps reinscription is all that is left to do with documents and other

artifacts the readings of which have usually been limited to dominant historicities that make of modern progress a broom to erase smaller yet more successful instances of conviviality⁵. Yet re-inscription is also the way to understand the 400th anniversary Renewal Campaign of the Two Row Wampum in 2013. In this multi-day symbolic ‘enactment’ the Haudenosaunee Confederation organized, among other events, a culminating paddling 14 day trip on the Mahicantuck River from Albany to New York City, where parallel rows of Haudenosaunee people and allies paddled next to each other. The event consisted of upward of 500 people registered to paddle along the Haudenosaunee for the whole stretch or partial legs of the trip. In the words of Canadian feminist decolonial geographer and participant ally paddler Jessica Hallenbeck, “I read the Two Row Wampum enactment as an empirical site of conversation and as a practice of decolonial relations.” She adds that “...the enactment (re)inscribed the treaty relationship into the waters of the Mahicantuck/Hudson, the surrounding landscape, and the paddlers. The Two Row Wampum renewal campaign is an example of how water undermines and transforms colonial understandings of territory, law, and entitlement” (Hallenbeck, 2015). The enactment was not just a lively multitudinal performance nor an environmental protest, although according to Hallenbeck the latter lens threatened “to subsume Indigenous Sovereignty within a liberal framework of social justice and environmental protection” (2015). The centrality of the enactment revolved around the embodiment of the diplomatic and its witnessing, by which one sovereign nation engages another sovereign nation and reinscribes a treatise long breached by one (powerful)

⁵ Via the inclusion of native peoples’ use of the ethos involved in the convivial, anthropologists Overing and Passes contend that “These features would include peacefulness, high morale and high affectivity, a metaphysics of human and non-human interconnectedness, a stress on kinship, good gifting-sharing, work relations and dialogue, a propensity for the informal and performative as against the formal and institutional, and an intense ethical and aesthetic valuing of sociable sociality.” (2000:xiii-xiv).

element in the two-factor relationship. The symbolic thus transformed into material realization where water, sovereignty and law were reconnected via paddlers (Hallenbeck, 2015).

CONCLUSION

Utopias are the progressive citizens' secular heavens—they seem to recede in space and time as one attempts to approach them; never able to materialize as they have been conceived from the start to remain virtual. This relationship with a temporal dimension that remains in the virtual as the carrot stick to promote movement into a future believed to have the capacity to be better in its liberatory potential reinforces a divorce from current material responsible actions that focus on the regenerative capacities of process and performativity. Western paradigm and its utopic yielding to futurity cannot ever fully grasp the presentness and fragility of the web of life and humanity's humble place in it.

What I argue in this paper is not new, but newness, innovation and originality are also modernist tropes that highlight endeavors as individuals' succeeding end points. My main argument then can be said to reinforce a decolonial stance whereby I reinscribe certain knowledges and practices that resist dominant monoculture by emphasizing responsible, caring and collective processes. I remain troubled by the claim that the modern environmental movement stands on the shoulders of Pete Seeger's *Clearwater Sloop* or any of the Hudson River valley organizations that in the 60s and 70s fought to clean the river. Not only does this erase the environmental struggles of indigenous peoples before the historic date of 1969 when the sloop launched from Lower Manhattan into the Hudson River's waters to fight ConEd's plan to build a power plant along the

shores near Beacon. Unless clearly stated and checked, the sloop also re-enacts the line in the TRW that represents the settler's ship. Despite its current potential reading as being fueled fully by aeolic renewable energy, the sloop has deep ties with colonial times and infrastructures. As such, conducting educational programs from its deck does not dismantle the master's tools (Lorde, 2018). These remain anchored to ways of transmitting knowledge that are sustained by the Western modernist tropes better understood under the generalizing term of Cartesian duality. Instead, enacting a treaty relationship as foregrounding practice to a decolonial pedagogical experiment perhaps puts the latter in a space of humbleness and respect toward both water and reciprocal relationalities that blesses the project from the start.

poetic epilogue

territories of contestation—on how to handle conflict :

deliberations
protests
confrontations

territories of encounter—on the organization of regenerative processes :

commoning
staying with the trouble
repairing the good enough
reconciling and enacting treaties
remaining unreconciled
revisiting humbleness and vulnerability

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