

## FINAL REPORT

### ***UNSETTLING COLLABORATIVE CONSERVATION THROUGH A DECOLONIZING LENS: ENGAGEMENT AND COLLABORATION WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND COMMUNITIES***

***Organized by the Center for Collaborative Conservation (CCC), Colorado State University (CSU)***

**September 10-12, 2019, Fort Collins, CO**



Written by María Fernández-Giménez, Roe Bubar, Caridad Souza



### ***Summary of Key Learnings and Recommendations***

**Purpose and Goal:** This 2.5 day workshop brought together Indigenous scholars, community members and leaders, and collaborative conservation researchers and practitioners, to share experiences and lessons learned about research partnerships that simultaneously address critical conservation and community needs. The overarching goal was to develop a network and platform to create an integrated research, education and practice program, building on CSU's existing programs, including programs at the Center for Collaborative Conservation.

**Process:** Workshop goals and design were guided by a seven-person organizing team and two facilitators, encompassing diverse experiences and perspectives. Team members recommended focusing the workshop towards young Indigenous scholars, students and community members, and inviting as keynotes both Indigenous scholars and tribal leaders. To develop a common vocabulary and conceptual grounding for discussions, all participants were asked to read several articles in advance of the workshop. Twenty-six people participated in the workshop, including two facilitators. Sixty-five percent of participants identified as Indigenous, and 23% from settler/colonist backgrounds.

**Major Themes:** *Relationality* emerged as a major theme that ran throughout the workshop, expressed as rupture and restoration of Indigenous relationships to the land, relationships within Indigenous Nations and communities, and relationships between Indigenous people/communities and other governments, academic institutions and allies. Resource extraction, resulting pollution/degradation, and climate change arose as **key environmental/conservation challenges** facing Indigenous communities. **Colonial education systems** that devalue traditional knowledge and perpetuate false histories and Indigenous erasure continue to harm Indigenous students. **Colonial and authoritarian governments** challenge Indigenous land, food, health and stewardship sovereignty. Participants shared **solutions** grounded in healing within Indigenous communities, restoring relationships to land, and developing equitable collaborative partnerships with external allies, governments and research institutions. Supporting Indigenous women and two-spirit/non-binary people within Indigenous and mainstream communities as they (re)claim their roles, empowers future change-agents and counteracts the patriarchal legacy of Christianity. Commitment to self-reflection and continual learning enables individuals of settler/colonist heritage to become more effective allies in decolonizing conservation, education, and research.

**Key Outcomes and Learnings:** Both Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants found the workshop powerful and unlike any other they had attended. Participants credited the composition of the group, the use of Indigenous facilitators and protocols, the thought-provoking keynote speakers, and an atmosphere of trust, care and shared learning. Participants valued listening to each others' stories, networking, and the feeling of being seen, heard and supported as their authentic selves. The experience of being seen, heard and accepted resonated deeply for some participants who identify as non-binary/trans or of mixed ethnic heritage (e.g. Chicana).

**Implications:** The workshop outcomes point to the need for more such gatherings to support Indigenous students, researchers and community members, and build equitable and authentic relationships with allies in the University. More profoundly, the workshop discussions point to the need for a transformative paradigm shift within academic institutions like CSU that touches all aspects of the Land Grant mission. The university must recognize its continuing role in perpetuating harm through its academic, research and outreach/engagement activities. Further, it must commit to repair the damage

and re-imagine education, research and outreach that meaningfully and equitably include Indigenous students, staff and faculty; that foster equitable relationships with Indigenous people, communities and Nations; and that invest in long-term, reciprocal relationships that build community and support researchers and Indigenous communities in finding solutions together.

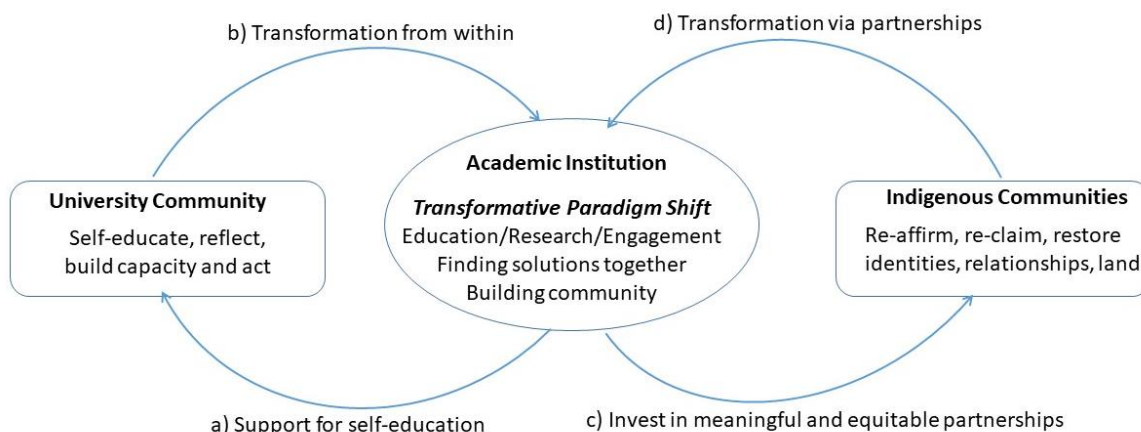


Figure 1. Relationships and practices among the University Community and Indigenous Communities that foster a transformative paradigm shift within Academic institutions.

This discussion suggests that the University can play a key role (Figure 1, above) in fostering this paradigm shift. The University can support its settler/colonist faculty and staff in their necessary processes of self-education, reflection and action (a), which, in turn, contribute to transformation within the university (b). At the same time, the University can support its Indigenous students, faculty, staff and community partners, in their work of healing, re-affirming, reclaiming and restoring relationships within their communities and with the land. When meaningful, trustful, reciprocal, and equitable relationships are established between Indigenous communities and the University (c), opportunities for collective solution-finding open, and Indigenous people and communities can participate in accelerating the transformation to a re-imagined University (d).

## ***Full Report***

### **Background and Purpose of the Workshop**

This workshop brought together indigenous scholars, community members and leaders, and collaborative conservation researchers and practitioners, to share experiences and lessons learned about research partnerships that simultaneously address critical conservation and community needs. Our overarching goal was to develop a network and platform to create an integrated research, education and practice program, building on CSU's existing programs. Focusing on urgent global sustainability concerns of climate change and biocultural diversity conservation that disproportionately affect Indigenous communities' livelihoods, cultures and environments, the workshop aimed to:

1. Convene indigenous scholars and community leaders from North America, Africa, Asia and Oceania to reflect on challenges and successes in community-research partnerships for conservation and climate change;
2. Document and explore case studies of this work and its future directions;
3. Empower young indigenous scholars and leaders by connecting them with senior scholars, leaders and mentors;
4. Build capacity of researchers/educators from dominant cultural groups/identities to a) develop more effective and equitable research relationships with indigenous communities and b) decolonize conservation curricula and pedagogy;
5. Communicate key learnings to a wider audience via novel transdisciplinary multi-media outputs such as video story-telling and collaborative artwork.
6. Catalyze formation of a researcher-practitioner network of indigenous and non-indigenous scholars and community members to develop research/action proposals for future work and develop a major program in this subject area.

### **Workshop Organization, Participation and Process**

The former CCC Director, Robin Reid, and Associate Director for Research, María Fernández-Giménez, convened a 7-person organizing team from diverse backgrounds with research and collaborative conservation experience. In addition to Reid and Fernández-Giménez organizing team members included Karim-Aly Kassam (Cornell University), Kelly Hopping (Boise State University), Octavius Jones (Victoria University, New Zealand), Dominique David-Chavez (Colorado State University), and Shannon Archibeque-Engle (Colorado State University). The organizing team refined the goals of the workshop, nominated potential participants and keynote speakers, and worked together with the facilitators to develop the workshop agenda and select pre-workshop readings. Organizing team members made several key suggestions that influenced the workshop composition and process. First, they suggested that the majority of participants identify as Indigenous and that we especially prioritize young Indigenous students, scholars and community members. Second, they suggested that keynote presenters/participants include not only Indigenous academics/researchers but also senior Tribal and Indigenous community leaders.

Twenty-six people participated the full 2-day workshop, including the two facilitators. Seventeen participants identified as Indigenous (65%), two as Chicana, one as African-American, and six (23%) from white settler/colonist backgrounds. Four of the Indigenous participants were international (19%). Several participants also identified as gender non-binary, queer, trans, and/or two-spirit.

The workshop facilitators integrated Indigenous knowledges and methodology that helped set the tone for a decolonial approach to conservation work that was supported and reinforced by the workshop keynotes. The workshop agenda is provided in Appendix 1.

### **Summary of Workshop Discussion**

The following summary draws directly from the facilitators' notes taken during the workshop. The facilitators (Roe Bubar and Caridad Souza) and one of the workshop organizers (María Fernández-Giménez) collectively coded all of the notes and wrote the following summaries based on our collective coding and iterative process.

#### ***Opening Keynote and Circle and Successful Strategies***

Relationality was an overarching theme discussed in our opening circle and which continued to come up in multidimensional ways from participants throughout the workshop. Indigenous knowledge is of central importance in working in Indigenous communities. The Two Row Wampum, an Akwesasne Prayer of Thanksgiving, introduced by James Ransom was used as a metaphor to discuss relationships with non-Indigenous people. James Ransom, a former tribal leader of the St. Regis Mohawk, delivered this important keynote on the Two Row Wampum Teachings on the first day of the workshop. His message was clear that collaboration and relationships occur in a good way when each community is not conquered or overpowered by the other. Relationships symbolized by the ship (settlers) and the canoe (Mohawks) move forward and in tandem with one another . . . wherein one never eclipses nor attempts to assimilate the other. Strong tribal relationships of membership, clans, community and culture were understood to be steeped in Indigenous ways of knowing and thus able to resist in particular ways, making tribes and Indigenous peoples resilient to withstand historical atrocities and the contamination of their communities. Tribal and Indigenous specific approaches are being adapted or reclaimed in a modern context, as they were acknowledged as effective practices and embraced by a number of participants as a way to move forward. Two examples included reclaiming two-spirit gender roles/identities and communal living situations/group ownership of property, shared food sources and responsibilities to one another in an urban context for young trans Indigenous folks.

Specific tenets or aspects of relationality were discussed in terms of Indigenous understandings of lifeways and their multidimensional relationships to the animate and inanimate natural world. The role of Indigenous peoples and pastoralists specifically as stewards of their homeland areas is pressing given the current impacts from climate change and declining access to grazing areas. Place-based relationships that Indigenous peoples depend on are critical for life. The importance of these relationships was highlighted by participants in discussions of the need to have access to clean water, to grow traditional foods, and to find grazing for pastoralists in drought conditions. Place-based relationships were discussed in the context of the role of Indigenous women in agriculture, healing from violence, health implications for environmental contamination, displacement of Indigenous queer/trans youth, and

Indigenous people whose efforts towards self-determination have been thwarted by authoritarian regimes.

Relationships with allies were and are supported by Indigenous peoples and work best when non-Indigenous people and scholars are aligned and working towards common interests (canoe and ship). Participants discussed that they can walk most successfully together and collaboratively in this work when we acknowledge and discuss the impact of colonialization and specific nation state histories. Genuine collaboration can only occur through the establishment of relationships based on such knowledge, which allows for necessary healing. When common interests are not specifically pursued and colonial history is not acknowledged and discussed, the authenticity of these academic relationships is questioned. Romanticizing Indigenous knowledge and spiritual belief systems as a form of honoring Indigenous people simply does not include or confront ongoing land and resource dispossession, health and environmental impacts, nor does it address settler privilege and on-going impacts of colonialism.

Several presenters discussed Potawatomi environmental activist Kyle Powys Whyte's critique of how mainstream conservation movements damage Native communities. The narrative that accompanies these framings from conservation, specifically in the naming of national parks, conservancy efforts, wilderness, ecological restoration projects, public lands and the public domain is political and obscures settler-colonial dispossession of Indigenous land. It also erases the histories of the First Nations that had legal title to the land. Participants discussed how land dispossession is important, needs to be discussed, and should be understood and deconstructed by conservationists as well.

Another theme that emerged was the importance of learning about how nation states colonized Indigenous nations in different areas of the world. This took the form of forcing Indigenous peoples—via instituting policies, replacing religious practices and withholding funding for quid pro quo changes in Indigenous governance—to reflect settler and colonial notions of private property ownership, monogamy, and heteropatriarchal and accepted colonial gendered practices. Understanding colonialism requires knowing how such practices became embedded and naturalized within Indigenous communities. These changes in social relationships and gender practices are often not addressed in decolonization efforts yet have impacted the health, healing, ecology and vibrancy of Indigenous communities in a variety of ways. Participants discussed how colonization impacted young queer, trans, LGBT, and Indigenous women, particularly as it relates to violence and their accepted historical roles in communities as agriculturalists, or as valued community members. Participants discussed the introduction of Christian religious values through forced boarding school policies, and of Communist ideologies in Central Asia and Mongolia, both of which displaced Indigenous ways of being and knowing. This remains an on-going challenge today and must be set within a dialogue and an understanding of forced colonialization.

The relationship of Indigenous people with history becomes an important aspect of any relationship with them. For example, in the U.S. context, and in former British Settler States (Canada, New Zealand, Australia), the Logic of Superiority, which is characteristic of many imperialist regimes, is embedded in international legal doctrines and in U.S. Supreme Court cases and Federal Indian policy, as a rationale used to colonize or gain access to Indigenous land and resources. Within the Academy, Indigenous relationships with scholars are often fraught with fundamental epistemological and cosmological differences. A typical epistemological stance of western scholars is the embrace of Cartesian dualism

(the mind as separate and thus independent from the body) in assumptions about value-neutral and objective science and research. When this intellectual stance becomes the natural or preferred position about research and scholarship within universities, it privileges western approaches to knowledge production that make academia more difficult to embrace, excludes Indigenous knowledges and methodological approaches, and presents challenges for Indigenous students, faculty and Indigenous community collaborators.

Understanding and acknowledging a relational epistemological stance exposes how neoliberal and extractive practices (e.g. fossil fuel and mineral extraction) position profits and capitalism over people and the planet. Even when Tribes and Indigenous people participate in these efforts they often do so in the context of leases owned by non-Natives on their lands and the role of the U.S. in engineering these efforts or economic realities of survival. Indigenous participants and speakers discussed how their access to land and homeland areas is decreasing through relocation to urban areas, forced removal, environmental challenges, erasure of indigeneity, and climate change. Other factors include authoritarian regimes' restrictions on Indigenous practices. Participants discussed the importance of efforts and initiatives to heal for moving ahead and reclaiming Indigenous knowledges in an effort to follow a decolonizing discourse or agenda.

### ***Challenges***

Various themes emerged from participant notes regarding the challenges faced by Indigenous communities and their allies. Historical challenges based on imperialism and colonial legacies that echoed into the present were at the forefront of the challenges articulated by participants. These challenges also harkened towards our honoring of what happens now and what the future holds. The challenge of how to move ahead towards healing was another important theme emerging from our work together.

Living within a neoliberal world where resources become increasingly scarce, the two big issues that came to the forefront were the legacies of extraction and climate issues. Regarding extraction, most participants felt that the erasure of the harm done to Indigenous people needs to be articulated and corrected. Collaboration can only occur when settlers acknowledge the legacy of state-sanctioned policies and violence and the harm it caused. Harm includes the historical trauma indigenous people live with, along with the way they have been thwarted in terms of entrepreneurship, economics, and technology. Here the roles of the Academy and the researcher are paramount and must be rethought so that erasure and the western value of separating the intellect from the rest of human life is understood and addressed. Young Indigenous people in the Academy have a two-fold burden: 1) they are present in the Academy as a way to advance the interests and perspectives of their communities; and 2) young people are crushed in academic contexts where including Traditional Knowledge is discouraged in favor of doing "real" science. This kills the spirit, creativity, and produces a specific kind of trauma that needs healing. Reinvigorating Indigenous youth, including queer/two spirit people and their perspectives, means listening to and honoring their voices. We must recognize that both reclamation and healing work are difficult challenges ahead of us.

Climate changes emerged as a central concern for Indigenous people around the world. Whether pastoralists dispossessed of land or the challenges faced by First Nation/Global South Indigenous people in authoritarian regimes where they teeter between life and death, climate is a critical issue. There is a

clear sense about lack of access to natural environments, food and water, the rapid shifts in and impact of climate in the Arctic, and the way food insecurity works its way into neoliberal ways of living.

### ***Decolonial Moves***

We acknowledged how Tuck and Yang, 2012 articulate that decolonization is not a metaphor for other things and that decolonization means the repatriation of Indigenous land and life ways. We discussed a few small steps or decolonial moves that help in the work ahead of us. The process of decolonization requires attention and intention and taking small steps to begin that process towards each other. It begins with our self-reflection and self-reflexivity, an awareness about our own implication in the colonial and decolonial processes. Local contexts are implicated in national and international work. We must move towards ways of seeing that are multifaceted—seeing the whole picture and not just its fragments—instead of the disconnected way that academia encourages separations and categorizations. Part of this means we need to examine how Christianity changed Indigenous ways of seeing and concepts like gender. If we ask others to see us in our totality, in our humanity, in our beauty, then we must also see them in their totality, humanity, and beauty.

### ***Goals Moving Forward***

Towards the end of the workshop, each participant shared their personal goals for applying what they learned to their work/life moving forward. The goals of many Indigenous participants focused on re-affirming and reclaiming Indigenous lifeways, knowledge, and identities, including intersectional identities as Native two-spirit/queer and Native women. Participants spoke about healing self and community, restoring community relationships with the land, and continuing to participate in and foster conversations within Indigenous communities and with non-Native researchers, students and practitioners. The need to continue to protect and advocate for the land and Indigenous rights, and the interrelatedness of Indigenous land rights and cultural continuity/revitalization emerged as strong themes. Indigenous participants generally prioritized working in their own communities, while also seeking solutions together with academic researchers/teachers.

Non-Indigenous participants committed to continuing the process of self-education and reflection about their own identities and roles, and decolonization, and to developing their capacities to be effective allies and research partners with Indigenous people and communities. Participants from settler/colonist backgrounds shared how the workshop raised their awareness of the harm perpetuated by academic institutions and several committed to working immediately within their institution to counteract erasure and revise curricula to be more accurate and inclusive of Indigenous histories and ways of knowing. Building capacity for more equitable and informed research and action partnerships with Indigenous communities also arose as a priority.



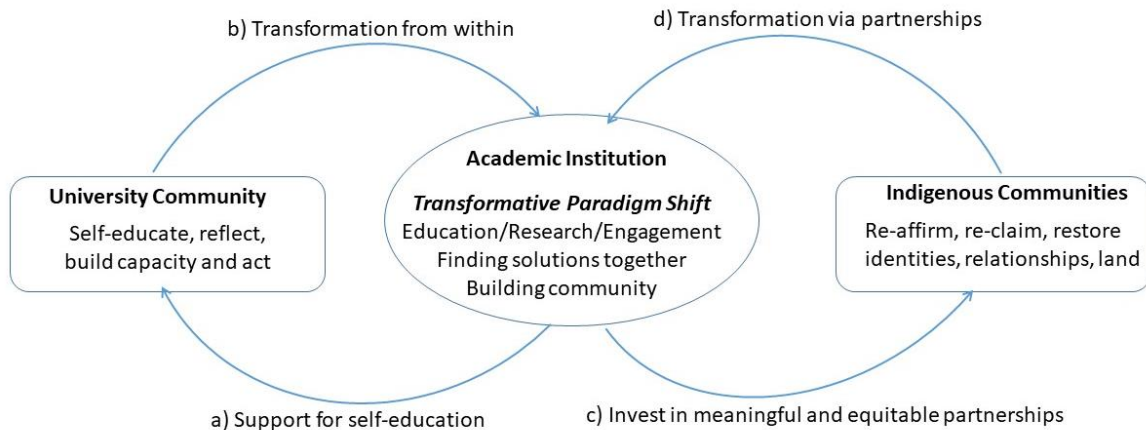


Figure 1. Relationships and practices among the University Community and Indigenous Communities that foster a transformative paradigm shift within Academic institutions.

An overarching theme that emerged from the discussion is the need for a transformative paradigm shift within academic institutions like Colorado State University that touches all aspects of the Land Grant mission (Figure 1). The university must recognize its continuing role in perpetuating harm through its academic, research and outreach/engagement activities. Further, it must commit to repair the damage and re-imagine education, research and outreach that meaningfully and equitably include Indigenous students, staff and faculty; that foster equitable relationships with Indigenous people, communities and Nations; and that invest in long-term, reciprocal relationships that build community and support researchers and Indigenous communities in finding solutions together.

This discussion suggests that the University can play a key role (Figure 1, above) in fostering this paradigm shift. The University can support its settler/colonist faculty and staff in their necessary processes of self-education, reflection and action (a), which, in turn, contribute to transformation within the university (b). At the same time, the university can support its Indigenous students, faculty, staff and community partners, in their work of healing, re-affirming, reclaiming and restoring relationships within their communities and with the land. When meaningful, trustful, reciprocal, and equitable relationships are established between Indigenous communities and the university (c), opportunities for collective solution-finding open, and Indigenous people and communities can participate in accelerating the transformation to a re-imagined university (d).

### Other Key Learnings

These learnings are based on follow-up discussions with a number of workshop participants as well as an anonymous on-line workshop evaluation completed by 12 of the participants. Many participants commented that they had never participated in a gathering like this in an academic setting, with a majority of Indigenous participants concerned with environmental conservation, and with an atmosphere of safety, generosity and openness. One student participant wrote the following comment that exemplifies this experience:

*"I would just like to say this was the best, most powerful, most moving gathering/workshop I have ever been a part of in my life. I felt seen, I felt heard, I felt valued and I felt that for everyone else who was there too. It was powerful to have a space where we could all openly*

*and genuinely share our experiences and thoughts related to something that touches/beats down on us in every way, shape and form in not only this field of conservation but in our own lives outside of work and then to be able to learn from each other about ways to overcome and resist/fight against this kind of thing with valuable hard work and tangible examples is truly inspiring and hopeful.”*

Participants who completed the workshop evaluation (n=12, 46% of participants) reported that the most valuable aspects of the workshop included the opportunity to meet with other Indigenous scholars and community members, both youth and elders, and to learn from Indigenous people from around the world about their common challenges and diverse strategies for addressing them. One participant commented, *“I am grateful for bringing community of scholars from different regions to reflect on successes as well as challenges. I was happy to meet and know the senior scholars in addition what we have discussed and learned.”* Several others echoed the value of hearing diverse voices and experiences, such as this participant, *“Having such a diversity of participants, and yet it felt very much like an Indigenous space (thanks to the facilitation and having a majority of Indigenous participants).”* Another wrote, *“Bringing many people from various places to converse and learn about some unlearning we should be doing.”*

In terms of key learnings and take-aways, participants valued hearing the stories of other participants, making connections with others working on the same issues around the country and the world, and learning about effective or needed approaches to decolonization. For example, one participant wrote, *“That it is really important that Indigenous peoples and communities are supported in leading and designing these initiatives. That we should continue to learn from each other across our communities how to strategize and what resources are available to us.”* Participants who identified as being from settler/colonial backgrounds shared their powerful learning about the continuing harms caused by colonization in conservation and in the Academy. One such participant wrote, *“(As a colonizer) understanding problematic dimensions of concepts that I have long viewed as core to my perspectives on protecting nature, e.g., “wilderness”.* Another participant encapsulated their learning as follows, *“My most important learnings were of learning about all the various ways people/we are all still affected by the harmful continuing threads of colonialism and how it is so interwoven and embedded in all structures of society and perpetuated in research/science that is extractive, and how each of us are working to decolonize our mind, body and spirit in the work we do.”*

Participants who responded to the evaluation suggested improvements for future workshops such as allowing more time (4-5 days), having the workshop at the end of the week (Th-F), holding the workshop in a location where more time could be spent out of doors, holding the workshop internationally, and continuing to include diverse voices from around the world. Evaluation respondents identified a number of topics they would like to learn more about, including the following: successful strategies for decolonization; academic marginalization and how to overcome it; how colonizers and Indigenous communities can work together; success stories of indigenous-led projects; blending art and science; grant writing; methods and approaches for supporting Indigenous scholarship; how to apply international agreements like UNDRIP in our work; how to address conservation and decolonization under different political systems; recent research in Indigenous and Traditional Knowledge. All of the respondents said they would definitely (10) or maybe (2) be interested in attending a follow-up workshop. Fewer (6 yes, 4 maybe) were interested in a virtual network, list-serve, etc.

Below we share some of the ways in which the meeting organization and facilitation likely contributed to creating a safe and welcoming space for interaction and learning across diverse cultures, identities and experiences. We also acknowledge that not all the organizers and participants felt completely included throughout the process and that viewpoints differed over the pre-workshop readings in particular. The approaches and practices below are ones that others may want to consider if they seek to organize similar gatherings in the future.

- A diverse organizing team established a culture of open discussion of difficult issues early in the workshop organizing process.
- Based on an early discussion by the team, organizers prioritized inviting young Indigenous scholars and practitioners, more senior/experienced Indigenous scholars, activists, allies and tribal leaders. We deliberately ensured that a significant majority of participants identified as Indigenous or as belonging to other marginalized groups and identified with Indigenous ancestry.
- Organizing team members and facilitators encouraged inviting strategic (i.e. influential decision-maker) settler participants who were interested and willing to participate for the entire workshop.
- Workshop participants committed to participating for the entire 2 days, in order to allow time for trust- and relationship-building.
- A significant fraction of participants identified as gender fluid or LGBTQ, creating an atmosphere of acceptance and support.
- We selected facilitators with Indigenous expertise or knowledge and/or extensive experience and understanding of decolonization theory and practice.
- We followed Indigenous protocols throughout the meeting, beginning with a community meal; honoring of elders, leaders and invited guests; using Indigenous methods like a talking circle and embodied facilitation practices
- We read the CSU indigenous land acknowledgement statement twice during the workshop, at our public seminar and at the opening of the smaller group workshop.
- We invited excellent keynote speakers, who set the tone (Jim Ransom), reinforced the readings and theory (Dina Gilio-Whitaker), and told powerful stories (Shannon Archibeque-Engle).

## **List of Appendices**

**Appendix 1 Workshop Agenda**

**Appendix 2 List of Participants**

**Appendix 3 List of pre-workshop readings**

**Appendix 4 Powerpoint of Opening Keynote, Building Cooperative Relationships, James Ransom**

**Appendix 5 Powerpoint, Unsettling the Readings, Roe Bubar and Caridad Souza**

# **“Unsettling Conservation through A Decolonizing Lens: Engagement and Collaboration with Indigenous Peoples and Communities”**

*Establishing a Path for Decolonization Facilitated by  
Caridad Souza, PhD., and Roe Bubar, J.D.*

Sponsored by the Center for Collaborative Conservation (CCC)  
Colorado State University

**September 10th-12th, 2019**

**Tamasag Conference Center ~Bellvue, Colorado**

**Colorado State University~Fort Collins, Colorado**

## **AGENDA**

### **Tuesday September 10<sup>th</sup> Day One**

5:00 pm      **Opening Keynote and Community Dinner Event**– Horsetooth Rock Conference Room,  
room 345, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, Smith Natural Resource Building, CSU Campus

**Invocation**

**Land Acknowledgement:** María Fernández-Giménez

**Keynote**– James Ransom, Director of the Department of Tehotijennawakon (They Work Together) for the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne and former Chief of the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe

7:00 pm      **Optional Evening Walk** organized to walk around Old Town Fort Collins.

**Wednesday September 11<sup>th</sup> Day Two**

8:00-8:30      **Continental Breakfast** at Tamasag

8:30-9:00      **OPENING: Welcome Statements and Land Acknowledgement**

María Fernández-Giménez, PhD., Colorado State University

Robin Reid, PhD., Colorado State University

9:00-9:15      **Overview of the Decolonization Training – Establishing a Common Language for our Work Together:** Caridad Souza, PhD., and Roe Bubar, J.D.

9:15-9:45      **Opening Circle:** Self Location and sharing about challenges and effective practices in working together on conservation and decolonizing efforts in the field and in our communities

9:45-10:00      **Leading the Way~** Performative Exercise

10:00-10:15      **Break**

10:15-11:45      **Moving from World View to World Sense:** Reflective Writing and Process Centering Decolonial Epistemologies

11:45-12:00      **A Performative Exercise:** Group Process

12:00-1:30      **Lunch at Tamasag**

**Keynote Speakers:** Dr. Karim-Aly Kassam, International Professor of Environmental and Indigenous Studies and Associate Professor, Department of Natural Resources and the American Indian and Indigenous Studies Program, Cornell University.

Dr. Shannon Archibeque-Engle, Assistant Vice President for Strategic Initiatives and Assessment in the Vice President for Diversity office.

### **Short Walk around Tamasag: A Pedagogy of the Land**

- 1:30-3:30      **Shifting Paradigms: Conceptual Applications of Our Lived Stories to Our Practice, Research and Communities: An Applied Decolonization Process**
- 3:30-3:45      **Break**
- 3:45- 4:00      **Readings Continued . . . Word Cloud Reflection and One Word Image Circle**
- 4:00-5:30      **Optional Walk before Dinner:** Watson Lake State Wildlife Area and Fish Hatchery  
Meet by the front door for this 15-minute walk to Watson Lake then a 45-minute hike around the lake. There will also be a driving option for those who want to drive to the Lake.
- 6:00-7:30      **Invited Guests Dinner** – Dinner at María Fernández-Giménez home, 113 N. Sherwood St., Fort Collins, CO  
**Poetry Reading, Autumn Bernhardt**

### **Thursday September 12<sup>th</sup> Day Three**

- 8:00-8:45 am      **Continental Breakfast at Horsetooth Rock Conference Room, #345, Michael Smith Natural Resources Building, CSU campus**
- 8:45 – 10:00      **Circle Work: Humanizing Stories from the Field of Conservation and Stories of Inspiration**
- 10:00-10:15      **Break**
- 10:15-11:30      **4 Group Rotations: Community work, Teaching/Research, Engagement/Collaboration and Transformation**  
  
**Ending Exercise**

- 11:30 -1:00     **Lunch in the Horsetooth Rock Conference room**
- Keynote:** Dina Gilio-Whitaker (Colville Confederated Tribes), Policy Director and Senior Research Associate at the Center for World Indigenous Studies (As Long as the Grass Grows: The Indigenous Fight for Environmental Justice from Colonization to Standing Rock).
- 1:00-2:00       **Identifying Future Steps and Community Needs:**  
                    Defining and shifting our practices.
- 2:00-3:00       **Thinking through Collaboration: Closing Circle**
- 6:00-9:00       **Farewell Celebration for Robin Reid: Director of the CCC**  
                    Sylvan Dale Ranch, dinner and campfire provided



## Appendix 2

### List of Participants

<u>Name</u>	<u>Email address</u>
Shannon Archibeque-Engle	<a href="mailto:Shannon.Archibeque-Engle@ColoState.EDU">Shannon.Archibeque-Engle@ColoState.EDU</a>
Autumn Bernhardt	<a href="mailto:Autumn.Bernhardt@colostate.edu">Autumn.Bernhardt@colostate.edu</a>
Roe Buber	<a href="mailto:4bubar@gmail.com">4bubar@gmail.com</a>
Phillip Chavez	<a href="mailto:pmchavez@mail.colostate.edu">pmchavez@mail.colostate.edu</a>
Dominique David-Chavez	<a href="mailto:d.mari.david@gmail.com">d.mari.david@gmail.com</a>
Cheyenne DeChristopher	<a href="mailto:chevedechris@gmail.com">chevedechris@gmail.com</a>
Maria Fernandez-Gimenez	<a href="mailto:Maria.Fernandez-Gimenez@ColoState.EDU">Maria.Fernandez-Gimenez@ColoState.EDU</a>
Jamie Folsom	<a href="mailto:Jamie.Folsom@colostate.edu">Jamie.Folsom@colostate.edu</a>
Abraham Francis	<a href="mailto:atf32@cornell.edu">atf32@cornell.edu</a>
Kathy Galvin	<a href="mailto:Kathleen.Galvin@colostate.edu">Kathleen.Galvin@colostate.edu</a>
Dina Gilio-Whitaker	<a href="mailto:dgilio-whita@csusm.edu">dgilio-whita@csusm.edu</a>
Marie Gladue	<a href="mailto:mariegladue@yahoo.com">mariegladue@yahoo.com</a>
Ariana Gloria	<a href="mailto:ariana.gloria01@gmail.com">ariana.gloria01@gmail.com</a>
Krista Heeringa	<a href="mailto:kmheeringa@alaska.edu">kmheeringa@alaska.edu</a>
Kelly Hopping	<a href="mailto:kellyhopping@boisestate.edu">kellyhopping@boisestate.edu</a>
Chantsa Jamsranjav	<a href="mailto:ichantsaa@yahoo.com">ichantsaa@yahoo.com</a>
Octavius Jones	<a href="mailto:jones.octavius@gmail.com">jones.octavius@gmail.com</a>
Daler Kaziev	<a href="mailto:dsk267@cornell.edu">dsk267@cornell.edu</a>
Yonten Nyima	<a href="mailto:yundannima.yundannima@colorado.edu">yundannima.yundannima@colorado.edu</a>
Norma Ortiz	<a href="mailto:normaor450@hotmail.com">normaor450@hotmail.com</a>
Nickson Parmisa	<a href="mailto:nikparmisa@yahoo.com">nikparmisa@yahoo.com</a>
Arielle Quintana	<a href="mailto:ariequintana1@gmail.com">ariequintana1@gmail.com</a>
James Ransom	<a href="mailto:jameswransom@outlook.com">jameswransom@outlook.com</a>
Robin Reid	<a href="mailto:robin.reid@colostate.edu">robin.reid@colostate.edu</a>
John Sanderson	<a href="mailto:John.Sanderson@colostate.edu">John.Sanderson@colostate.edu</a>
Lindsey Schneider	<a href="mailto:Lindsey.Schneider@colostate.edu">Lindsey.Schneider@colostate.edu</a>
Marley Smith	<a href="mailto:marleyyps@rams.colostate.edu">marleyyps@rams.colostate.edu</a>
Caridad Souza	<a href="mailto:Caridad.Souza@colostate.edu">Caridad.Souza@colostate.edu</a>

## **Appendix 4**

### **Pre-workshop Readings**

Gilio-Whitaker, D. 2018. Not so strange bedfellows. P. 91-110 in *As Long as Grass Grows: The Indigenous Fight for Environmental Justice from Colonization to Standing Rock*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Kimmerer, R. W. 2013. Maple nation: A citizenship guide. Pp. 165-174 in *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants*. Minneapolis, MN: Milkweed Editions.

Kimmerer, R. W. 2013. Epiphany in the Beans. Pp. 122-127 in *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants*. Minneapolis, MN: Milkweed Editions.

Latulipe, N. 2015. Situating the work. *AlterNative* 11(2): 118-131.

Rasmussen, D. and T. Akulukjuk. 2009 "My father was told to talk to the environment before anything else." *Arctic Environmental Education in the Language of the Land*. Pp. 285-298 in M. McKenzie, P. Hart, H. Bai and B. Jickling (eds) *Fields of Green: Restoring Culture, Environment and Education*. Creskill, NJ: Hampton Press.

Tuck, E. and K. Wayne Yang. 2012. Decolonization is not a metaphor. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education and Society* 1(1): 1-40.

# **Building Cooperative Relationships: An Indigenous Perspective**

*James W. Ransom*

*September 10, 2019*



# Ohen:ton Karihwaterhkwen





# LIVING THE SPIRIT OF THE THANKSGIVING ADDRESS

- Akwesasne Freedom School – Building curriculum around it.
- Creating a Culturally Based Environmental Assessment Process.
- Educating others by presenting our worldview- Book: Words That Come Before All Else and using it in educational settings.
- Changing people's lives, including mine.



# Demographics

- Land base: Approximately 28,000 acres.
- Population base: 15,000 – 18,000 living at Akwesasne.
- Three Mohawk Governments: Two elected and recognized by the respective U.S. and Canadian governments, one Traditional government quasi-recognized by external governments.



# SPIRITUALITY IS THE HEART OF RELATIONSHIPS

Life is about relationships

- Family Relationships
- Work Relationships
- Relationships with the Natural World.
- Relationships with the Sky World.

Success in life is tied to the quality of our relationships, of how much spirit we put into them.



# CHARACTERISTICS OF RELATIONSHIPS

## Colonizing Relationship

Focus is on Differences – Poor  
Communication- No Empowerment =  
Low Trust

## Cooperative Relationship

Focus is on Common Interests + Good  
Communication + Empowerment =  
High Trust

# CAPTURING THE SPIRIT OF RELATIONSHIPS

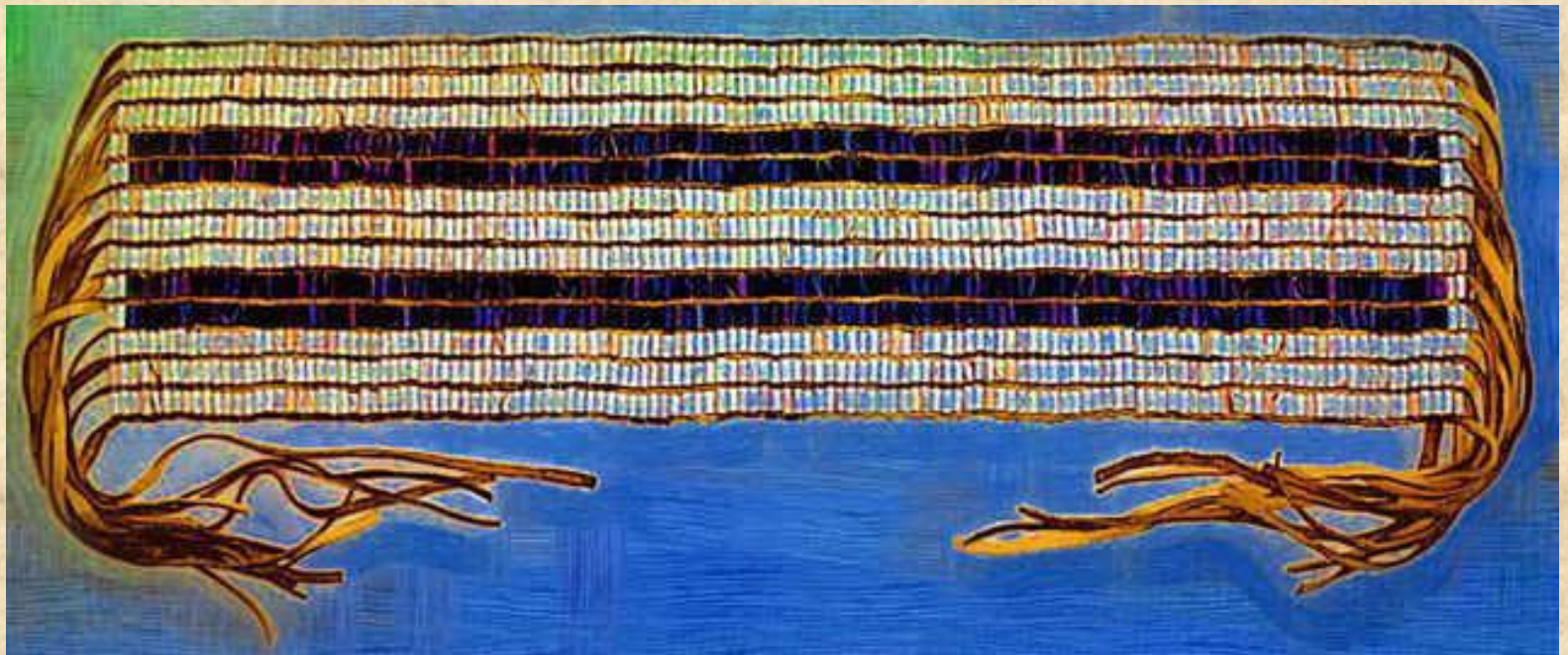
Our Ancestors knew the importance of relationships and how to build a cooperative one. The Silver Covenant Chain captured the spirit of the relationship they envisioned with others.

“You say that you are our father and I am your son...

...We will not be like Father and Son, but like Brothers.”



# SYMBOLIZING THE SPIRIT OF THE RELATIONSHIP - TWO ROW WAMPUM TREATY BELT



# Building Relationships Around Principles

## Binding the Vessels Together

- Skennen or Peace
- Kanikonriio or a good mind
- Kasestensera or strength



# Skennen

- Peace doesn't just happen, it takes action. You have to work to keep the peace.
- Effective communication is essential to keeping the peace. Listen first, then talk.
- Invest in the relationship. Get to know the interests of the other party.

# Kanikonriio

- Build the relationship around common interests or common ground.
- However, in every relationship there are disagreements.
- Using a good mind means we acknowledge the disagreement.
- More importantly, we agree to work together to find a mutually beneficial solution.

# Kasestensera

- A key part of what kind of relationship we will have is whether we will live up to our words.
- Strength arises when our words and actions match.
- It is what integrity is about.



# The Cooperative Relationship

- Keep the Peace
- Find common ground and mutually beneficial solutions to problems.
- Our words and actions match
- They show we are trustworthy. It is what builds trust in the relationship.



# APPLYING THE TWO ROW WAMPUM TODAY

- Building better relationships.
- Finding common ground.
- Educating to dispel misconceptions.
- What worked 400 years ago works today.

# EXAMPLE

- Changing the relationship with the Salmon River School District - Background
- State Education Policy – Assimilate Indians (1846-1975).
- Contract with neighboring school districts
- No voice in education of our children.
- No role models in the classroom.

# APPLYING THE TWO ROW

- Implementing a 200% Education Philosophy
- Majority Native American Student Population.
- 40 Mohawk Professionals.
- Cultural Content in the Curriculum
- Graduation Attire.
- Graduation Rate – 81%.





# EXAMPLE

- Building Relationships with external government staff.
- Educating those we work with.
- Who we are, what our history is, sharing our knowledge.
- You never know when paths will cross again.



# APPLYING THE TWO ROW

- Educating EPA Site Manager.
- Raising her awareness of who we are, what we bring to the relationship.
- Finding common ground to work together.
- Meeting the EPA Administrator.

# EXAMPLE

- Concern about extending the St. Lawrence Seaway shipping season.
- Congressional representatives couldn't get them to respond.
- Being proactive to get their attention – we sued them.

# APPLYING THE TWO ROW

- Building a relationship with St. Lawrence Seaway Administration
- Being proactive, not being a victim.
- Finding common ground.
- Finding mutually beneficial solutions.



# EXAMPLE

- Presenting at Public Meetings.
- Do you present from the Ship's perspective?
- Do you present from the Canoe's perspective?

# APPLYING THE TWO ROW

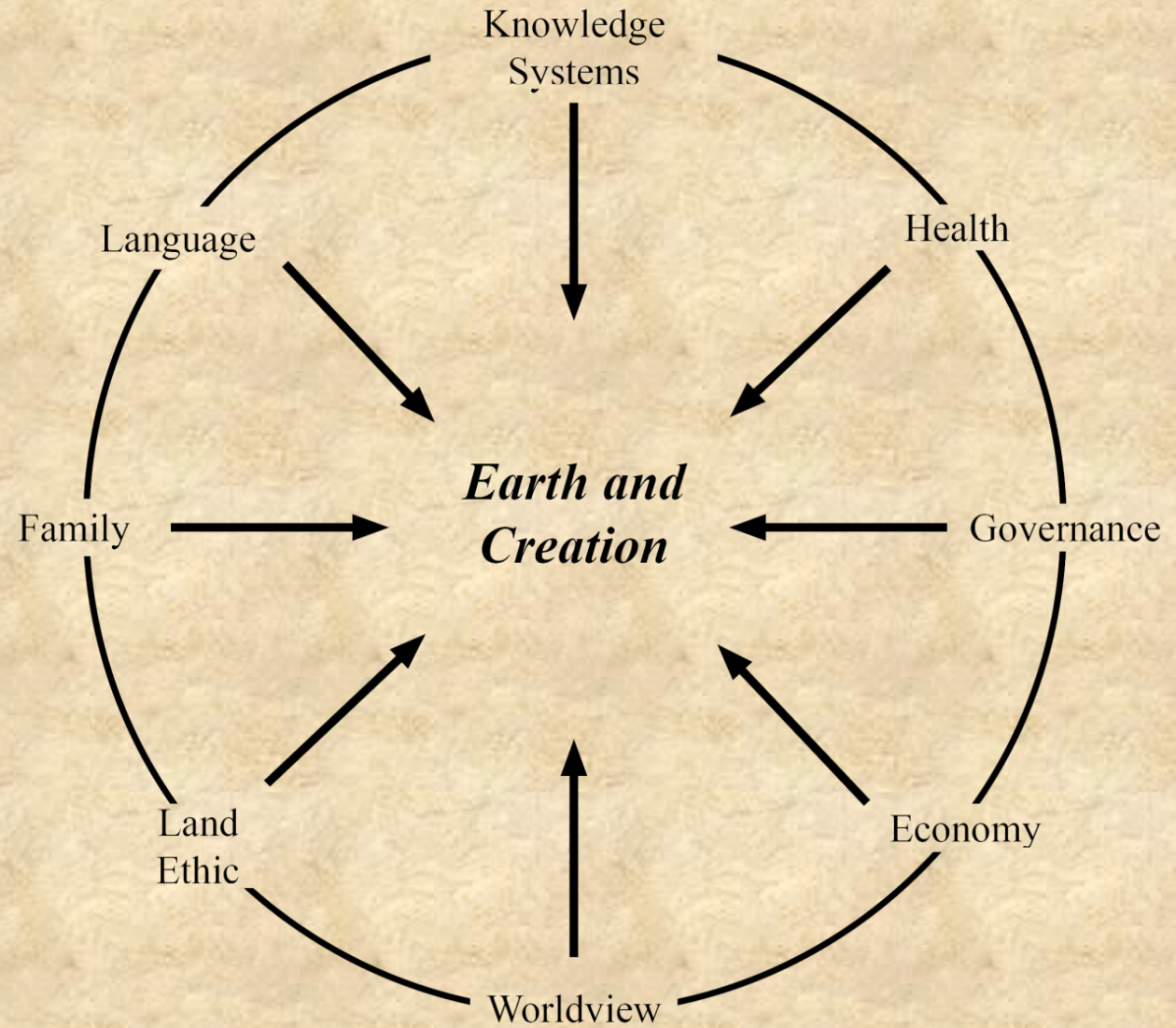
- EPA Public Hearing on addressing a hazardous waste dump.
- Audience is mostly community members.
- Using Traditional Teaching to guide the presentation.

# Understanding the Role of Culture

- What is culture?
- Important to building relationship.
- Everyone has their own opinion.
- There is no right or wrong answer to it.
- It all depends on the purpose of the relationship.
- There are common traits that can serve as a guide.

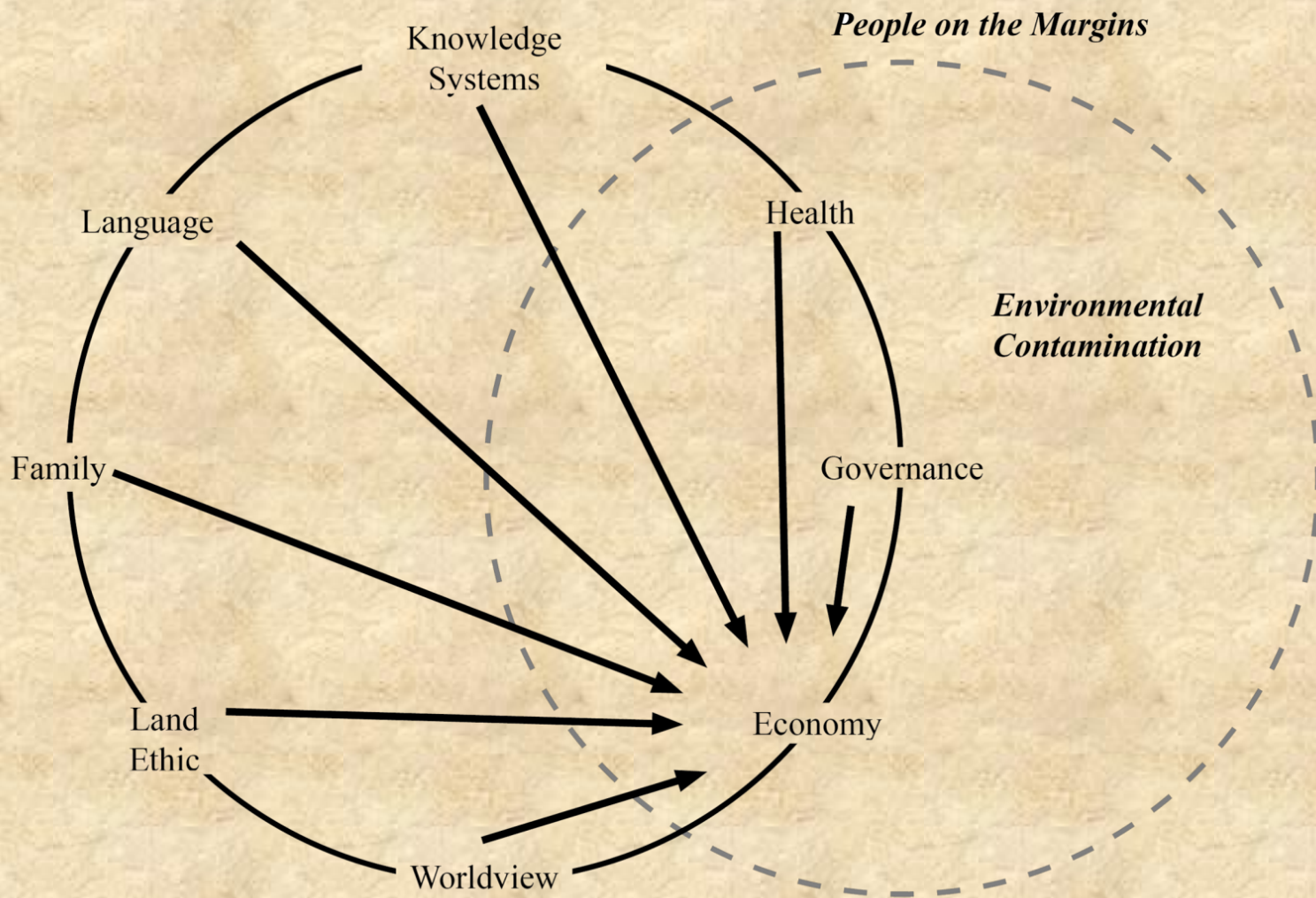


# Culture



# Paradigm Shift

- Larger Society (Ship) is out of balance with the Natural World.
- It puts smaller more earth-based societies “on the margin”.
- Smaller societies bear the brunt of environmental impacts.
- Climate change impacts are the result of the imbalance.



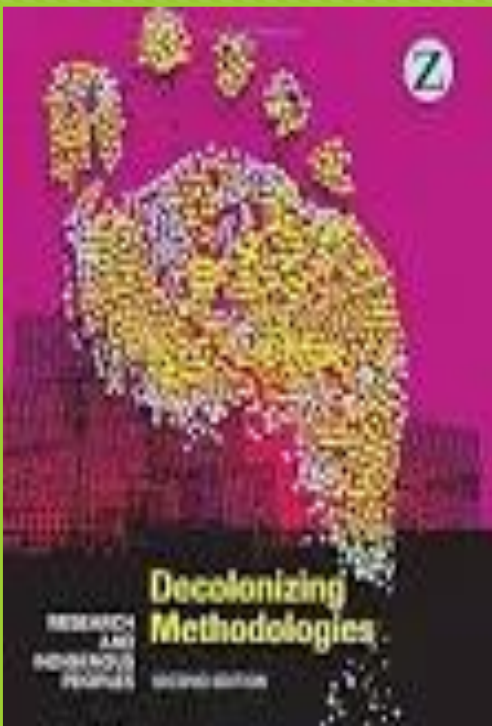


# The Future

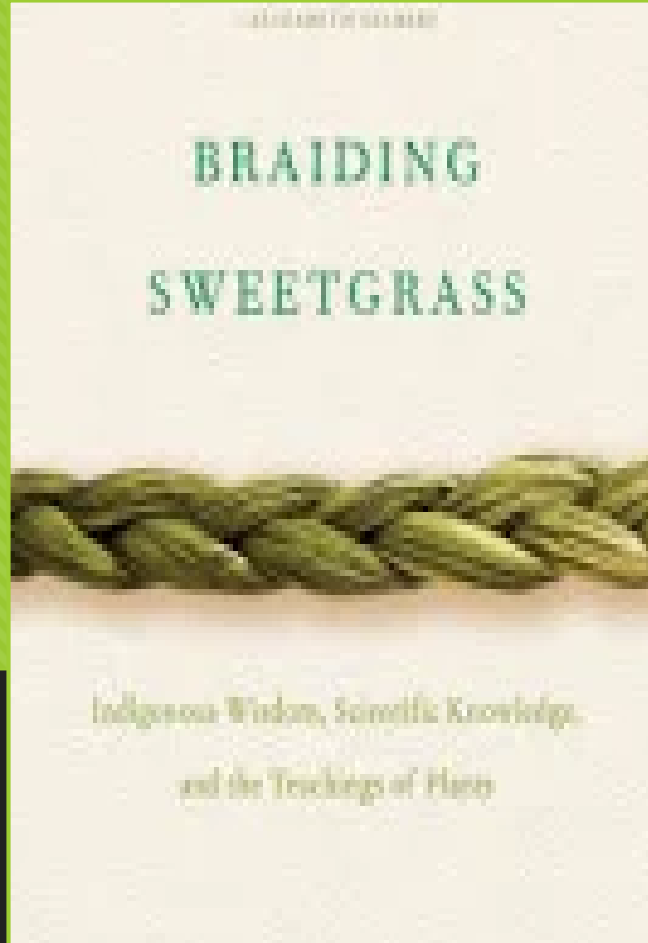
- There has to be a paradigm shift back to a more balanced relationship with the Natural World.
- Prophecies talk about the world changing and give us the chance to keep it from happening.
- If we don't change, the natural world will change without us.

NIAWEN – THANK YOU!





# Unsettling the Readings



*Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*  
Vol. 1, No. 1, 2012, pp. 1-40

## Decolonization is not a metaphor

**Eve Tuck**

*State University of New York at New Paltz*

**K. Wayne Yang**

*University of California, San Diego*

Abstract



# Tuck and Yang, 2012

- Decolonization is not a metaphor it means repatriation of Indigenous land and life
- Decolonization as a metaphor taps into pre-existing tropes that attempt to reconcile settler guilt & complicity & rescue settler futurity
- Settler scholars swap out prior civil and human rights-based terms seemingly to signal both an awareness of the significance of Indigenous and decolonization theorizations of schooling and educational research and to include Indigenous peoples on a list of considerations

# Settler Privilege Critique

- Kyle Powys Whyte, Potawatomi Environmental Activist

- Having settler privilege means that some combination of one's economic security, U.S. citizenship, sense of relationship to the land, mental and physical health, cultural integrity, family values, career aspirations, and spiritual lives are not possible—literally!—without the territorial dispossession of Indigenous peoples.



# Same Boat Approach misses the Boat

— Kyle Powys Whyte, Potawatomi Environmental Activist

- The conservation movement has been as damaging to Indigenous peoples as extractive industries. National parks, ecological restoration projects, conservation zones, and even the uses of certain terms—especially “wilderness”—are associated with forced displacement of entire communities, erasure of Indigenous histories in education and public memory, economic marginalization, and violations of cultural and political rights.



# Repeating Harms of the Past

— Kyle Powys Whyte, Potawatomi Environmental Activist

- Though certain sectors of conservation have improved greatly, newer movements, such as the international UN-REDD+ Programme, still repeat harms of the past. Almost every environmental achievement in the U.S.—such as the Clean Air or Clean Water acts—has required Indigenous peoples to work hard to reform these laws to gain fair access to the protections.

# Ecological footprint of Colonialism as Seismic

-Kyle Powys Whyte, Potawatomi Environmental Activist

- The ongoing U.S. colonial legacy includes forcing Indigenous peoples into grid-like reservations that empower corporations and private individuals to degrade our territories; fostering patriarchy and conditions for sexual violence in Indigenous communities; brainwashing Indigenous children through boarding schools; and brainwashing everyone else through erasing Indigenous histories and experiences across U.S. culture, education, and memory.

# Colonial Fantasy and Desires

-Kyle Powys Whyte, Potawatomi Environmental Activist

- I do not see much differentiating those who fight to protect the colonial fantasy of wilderness from those who claim the Dakota Access pipeline does not cross Indigenous lands. Indigenous environmental movements work to reject the ancestral dystopias and colonial fantasies of the present. This is why so many of our environmental movements are about stopping sexual and state violence against Indigenous people, reclaiming ethical self-determination across diverse urban and rural ecosystems, empowering gender justice and gender fluidity, transforming lawmaking to be consensual, healing intergenerational traumas, and calling out all practices that erase Indigenous histories, cultures, and experiences.

# 5 Moves to Innocence

-Tuck & Yang, 2012

- Settler Nativism
- Fantasizing Adoption
- Colonial Equivocation
- Conscientization
- At Risk-ing / Asterisk-ing Indigenous Peoples



# Question for Group Discussion

- How then can settler allies move beyond being sympathetic beneficiaries of colonialism? What approach is legitimately decolonizing?

# Decolonizing Methodologies

-Linda Tuhiwai Smith, 2012

- Research is one of the ways in which the underlying code of imperialism and colonialism is both regulated and realized.
- It is regulated through the formal rules of individual scholarly disciplines and scientific paradigms, and the institutions that support them.
- It is realized in the myriad of representations and ideological constructions of the Other in scholarly and “popular” works, and in the principles, which help to select and recontextualize those constructions in such things as the media, official histories and school curricula.

# Indigenous Activists ask in a Variety of Ways:

-Linda Tuhiwai Smith, 2012

- Whose research is it?
- Who owns it?
- Whose interests does it serve?
- Who will benefit from it?
- Who has designed its questions and framed its scope?
- Who will carry it out?
- Who will write it up?
- How will the results be disseminated?

# Western Disciplines as Imperialistic

-Linda Tuhiwai Smith, 2012

- Western disciplines are as much implicated in each other as they are in imperialism. Some, such as anthropology, made the study of us into “their” science, others were employed in the practices of imperialism in less direct but far more devastating ways. My own background in education, and in my field there is a very rich history of research which attempts to legitimate views about indigenous peoples which have been antagonistic and dehumanizing.



# It's Survival

-Linda Tuhiwai Smith, 2012

- It may be those qualities that make me skeptical or cautious about the mystical, misty-eyed discourse that is sometimes employed by indigenous people to describe our relationships with the land the universe. I believe that our survival as peoples has come from our knowledge of our contexts, our environment, not from some active beneficence of our Earth Mother. We had to know to survive.

# Privilege within the World of Indigenous Peoples

-Linda Tuhiwai Smith, 2012

- Despite the very powerful issues which locate many First World indigenous peoples in Third World social conditions we still, comparatively speaking, occupy a place of privilege within the world of indigenous peoples.

# This is Methodology Folks

-Linda Tuhiwai Smith, 2012

- Indigenous methodologies tend to approach cultural protocols, values and behaviours as an integral part of methodology. They are factors to be built into research explicitly, to be thought about reflexivity, to be declared openly as part of the research design, to be discussed as part of the final results of a study and to be disseminated back to the people in culturally appropriate ways in a language that can be understood.