

Native American and Indigenous Philosophy



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Agnes B. Curry

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APA STUDIES ON

Native American and Indigenous Philosophy

AGNES CURRY, MANAGING EDITOR

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FROM THE MANAGING EDITOR

Agnes B. Curry
UNIVERSITY OF SAINT JOSEPH

Along with the article, "Performing Education through the Embodied Dancing Knower: Epistemic Features of Hula," by Celia T. Bardwell-Jones (University of Hawai'i at Hilo), Kumu Kekaikalani Naone (Hawai'i Community College), and Kumu Krisha Zane (Unukupukupu), this issue includes two items from Andrea Sullivan Clarke (University of Windsor), the outgoing chair of the APA Committee on Native American and Indigenous Philosophers. The first is her final communication as chair, summing up the previous year's committee activities. The second is an article, "Discovering Reality and a First Nations/American Indian Standpoint Theory," built from a symposium address to the Canadian Society for Women in Philosophy that starts to outline her take on a First Nations/American Indian Standpoint theory as distinguished from an Indigenous standpoint. The final item is a collaborative article by Ryan Molloy, an undergraduate student and his environmental ethics instructor, Áila O'Loughlin, both of the University of Minnesota. The article both argues for and demonstrates the pedagogical significance of a more accurate understanding of the history of academic inquiries in environmental ethics.

We take this opportunity to express our heartfelt thanks to Dr. Sullivan-Clarke for her leadership through these last three years. In a time of unprecedented challenges in which the impossible was routinely asked of everyone in academia, she not only preserved the committee but further strengthened it, adding to its membership, opportunities for communication, and scope of activities. We also welcome the incoming chair, Joey Miller (West Chester University), who will build on these accomplishments.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES AND INFORMATION

We invite you to submit your work for consideration for publication in *APA Studies on Native American and Indigenous Philosophy*. Work submitted goes through anonymous peer review. Our project in this journal is to engage in scholarly and pedagogical conversations that further develop this field in its integrity. We accept work that foregrounds these philosophical perspectives. We also accept work that addresses the professional and community

concerns regarding Native American and indigenous philosophies and philosophers of all global indigenous nations. This is an inherently decolonial project. **We do not accept work that engages merely in comparative exercises or uses Native American and Indigenous philosophy merely to solve the philosophical or practical problems generated by Western thinking.**

We welcome comments and responses to work published in this or past issues. We also welcome work that speaks to philosophical, professional and community concerns regarding Native American and indigenous philosophies and philosophers of all global indigenous nations. Editors do not limit the format of what can be submitted; we accept a range of submission formats including but not limited to papers, opinion editorials, transcribed dialogue interviews, book reviews, poetry, links to oral and video resources, cartoons, artwork, satire, parody, and other diverse formats. In all cases, however, references should follow the *Chicago Manual of Style* and include endnotes rather than in-text citations. For further information, please see the Guidelines for Authors available on the [APA website](#). Please submit material electronically to Joseph Miller (JMiller4@wcupa.edu). For consideration for the spring 2024 issue, please submit your work by January 15, 2024.

FROM THE CHAIR

Report from the Native American and Indigenous Philosophers Committee

Andrea Sullivan-Clarke
UNIVERSITY OF WINDSOR

Hensci! (Greetings in Muskogee!)

This is my final report as chairperson. I stepped into the role as chairperson in the midst of the global pandemic. What a chaotic time that was! Since then, our committee has seen many changes. From the development of the official land acknowledgement statement for the APA to the participation in the divisional conferences, our members have been quite active.

This year, we acquired an [APA Connect member community](#) for our general membership (thank you, Mike Morris!), and it has paid off in terms of new faces and Indigenous representation. Our membership extends beyond the borders of Turtle Island (North America) and includes

members of global indigenous groups! We cordially invite members of the APA who are Indigenous and/or conduct Indigenous research to join our group.

The membership was quite busy this year. Our committee was present at all three divisional conferences. At the Eastern Division meeting, Andrew Smith (Drexel University) and I participated in the committee's first Teaching Hub session. (See the [spring 2023 issue](#) for information on our presentations.)

Notably, Shelbi Nahwilet Meissner (Georgetown University) presented her paper, "An Indigenous Ethic of Incommensurability," in an invited symposium titled Indigenous Philosophy in North America.

Our session at the Central Division meeting—Relations, Land, and Knowledge—included papers from Joel Alvarez (University of South Florida), "Spinozism and Native American Pantheism," Áila KK O'Loughlin (University of Minnesota), "Relationality in Indigenous Kinship Ethics: A Shared Central Value in Localized Ethical Systems," and Andrea Sullivan-Clarke (University of Windsor), "Strategic Ignorance and Two Objections Involving Indigenous Epistemology."

The Pacific Division session—Topics in Native American and Indigenous Philosophy—included papers from Áila O'Loughlin (University of Minnesota), "A Metaphysics of Morals from Relationality," Wayne Wapeemukwa (The Pennsylvania State University), "Cultivating Whiteness: Indigenous Dispossession and the Social Construction of Race in the Plains, 1870–1920," and Kelly Tannenbaum (University of Colorado Denver), "Metaphysical Importance of Indigenous Culturally Modified Trees."

In addition to participating in the divisional conferences, members Shelbi Nahwilet Meissner (Georgetown University) and Joseph Len Miller (West Chester University) received an APA Diversity and Inclusiveness Grant for their project, "Savage Education: Epistemic Injustices of Native American Boarding Schools." The workshop took place in July 2023 at West Chester University.

The committee is continuing to raise funds for the creation of an Indigenous writing prize. To that end, I would like to thank Andrew Smith (Drexel University) for his work on the drafting of grant applications. I would also like to thank the managing editor of our publication, Agnes Curry (University of Saint Joseph), for her tireless efforts in producing a quality publication, and the co-editors/reviewers who put in the time to provide helpful comments and recommendations. They are the heart of our committee, and I am lucky to work with them all.

It is with great pleasure that I close with a welcome to our incoming chairperson, Joseph Len Miller (West Chester University). As a fellow Muscogee, I wish him *Likepvs Vlakeckat hēres ce* (welcome) to the role as chairperson. I am very excited for what the future holds for our group. *Mvto* (thank you)!

ARTICLES

Performing Education through the Embodied Dancing Knower: Epistemic Features of Hula

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Kumu Kekaikalani Naone
HAWAII COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Kumu Krisha Zane
UNUKUPUKUPU

One of the most remarkable instances of racism against Polynesian people by a Western philosopher is infamously made by Immanuel Kant in which he claims that "South Sea Islanders" were examples of a people that were prone to idleness and unable to cultivate (moral, rational) talents. This colonial assessment of Polynesian people became a pervasive assumption throughout Western Anglo culture, which normalized and justified the settler colonial illegal occupation of Hawai'i. ku'ualooha ho'omanawanui citing Noenoe Silva's work notes that the political economy of Hawai'i amplified by a Christian/Puritan work ethic falsely interpreted Native Hawaiians' "love for hula"¹ as a sign of laziness rather than acts of resistance against settler colonialism or more importantly as an epistemic practice that cultivates morally valuable and rational talents. The idleness mistakenly associated with hula led to its ban in Hawai'i in 1830 until King Kalākaua officially declared hula to be legally performed in a public setting in 1874.

In this essay, we examine the epistemic features of hula that challenge the settler colonial assumption that Native Hawaiians' "love of hula" perpetuates moral and rational idleness. This racist assumption reduces hula's epistemic features within a logic of scarcity informed by capitalist projects that views nature and people outside of a framework of abundance, thereby interpreting cultural practice as well as landscapes and seascapes as useless or as wastelands. This assumption has justified bans such as hula in the service of building environmentally degrading infrastructures, i.e., plantation-style agriculture. According to Candace Fujikane, an epistemic feature utilized by Kānaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian people) emerges within *mo'olelo*, stories, that have been transmitted throughout the generations. As Fujikane notes, *mo'olelo* reveals "the art of kilo, keen intergenerational observation and forecasting key to recording changes on the earth in story and song, and such changes were met with renewed efforts to conserve, protect and enhance abundance."² An Indigenous methodology of abundance undermines capitalist projects and makes space for Indigenous lifepaths that view elemental forms in nature as familial, which elicits the appropriate care to those relationships that ought to be nourished. Within a Western Anglo framework, the practice of hula became disassociated from its Indigenous meaning, which obscured hula's epistemic potential as encouraging epistemic laziness. However, hula's epistemic tradition is

richly choreographed within the ancestral lineages of the Kānaka Maoli performed through the embodiment of the dancing knower.

DANCING WITH/AS NATURE: EPISTEMOLOGY AS PERFORMANCE

Pualani Kanaka'ole Kanahele, an eminent and revered kumu hula master, situates hula within the movements of nature: "Hula begins with the movement of the sun, the wind, the sounds, the growth on land and the ocean."³ Moreover, Kanahele explains: "Like nature hula is rhythmic, inclusive, transformative, physical, spiritual, healing, and above all, it is Hawaiian."⁴ It would be impossible to understand hula outside a Kānaka Maoli metaphysics grounded within an embodied attunement to nature. Much like other Kānaka Maoli practices, such as *he'e nalu*, or surfing, hula develops a *kilo*, a form of knowledge production that keenly observes nature's movements. Part of hula's *kilo* necessitates an understanding of the movements of nature through a distinctly poetic mind culturally cultivated and transmitted throughout the generations. For example, Kanahele writes: "The foot movements of *kāhōlo*, *wāwae kā*, *kāhele*, *kalākaua*, *'uehe*, and *'ō* present some imagery of the *kai* (ocean) movement."⁵ The poetic motions performed through the body mirror the movements of nature generating a specific form of knowledge.

One particular hula, *Ke Ha'a Lā Puna*,⁶ demonstrates how through hula the dancer becomes the vehicle to translate the animacy of the environment by becoming the embodiment of nature itself. The dance embodies Hi'iaka's friendship with Hōpoe⁷ and throughout the hula, elemental nature also participates and dances alongside the hula dancer. The place, Ha'ena (located in the district of Puna on Hawai'i Island), becomes transformed to *ke kahua*, the stage, where the hala groves melodically sway with choreographed precision close to the ocean shores. The sea in the hula chant passionately responds to the swaying hala leaves capturing an elemental harmony that exceeds human perception. Joy is the mood, tone, creative expression; joy poetically arranges the embodied performance of both human and elemental nature. Unlike other modes of human activity that assume a boundary between the human and natural world, hula's logic/epistemology embraces the humanistic spirit in nature and the elemental call embedded within the human soul. Every being is dancing.

THE NARRATIVE FUNCTION OF HULA

In this sense hula's distinct *kilo* poetically choreographs nature's movements through storytelling, *mo'olelo*. For example, the story of Hi'iaka and Pele (sister deities who traveled and found a home in Hawai'i) charts the journey of Hi'iaka at the behest of her older sister Pele to retrieve her lover Lohiau from Kaua'i as Hi'iaka overcomes many challenges along the way. This *mo'olelo* has been told through performances in hula. According to ho'omanawanui, "The intertwining of oral and written traditions is expected in *mo'olelo* such as Pele and Hi'iaka, because of the performance aspect associated with it—not just through storytelling, but through story performance (hula) . . . the practice of hula is both a practice of memory and the

embodiment of tradition."⁸ Emalani Case similarly reflects on the intertwining of the oral and performance traditions through her embodied engagement with hula. She writes, "When I was old enough to begin my formal training, I was introduced not only to the basics of hula—or to basic foot and hand motions and the principles of discipline and how to hold your body—but also to the stories that my motions would tell."⁹ What Case and ho'omanawanui point to is that the embodied transmission of the stories is made possible through literacies of the dance. For many Kia'i (protectors/activists) of Mauna Kea, the tallest mountain in the archipelago of Hawai'i and considered to be a sacred place (*wahi pana*), the proposed building of a thirty-meter telescope is interpreted to be an act of desecration. Hula as ritually performed by the Kia'i three times daily during the time in which the access road to the mountain was blocked by thousands of activists served as an ethical and political embodied enactment of resistance drawing upon the *mo'olelo* of the land, the sea, and the mountain to nourish and restore the elemental relationships of the Kānaka Maoli to their ancestors.

In summary, hula's epistemology is situated within nature and develops a *kilo* or method of observing nature through poetically choreographed performance of the *mo'olelo*, the ancestral stories, of the elemental deities. Ethical and political observations anchored within nature are also hermeneutically woven within the performance.

PERFORMING PEDAGOGIES THROUGH HULA

All of the co-authors of this article met through our participation with Unukupukupu, a *hālau*, or school, organized through Hawai'i Community College under the direction of Dr. Taupōuri Tangarō, Professor of Hawaiian Studies at Hawaii Community College and UH Hilo. Kekaiokalani Naone and Krisha Zane were rigorously trained as kumu hula under Dr. Taupōuri Tangarō. Celia Bardwell-Jones participates in a faculty development program at UH Hilo, known as Uluākea,¹⁰ whose main purpose is to indigenize higher education through a pedagogy informed by Hawaiian practices, such as chanting and hula. Celia also participates in the Kūkū'ena¹¹ (older sister of Pele and presides over the ceremonial *awa* drinking) cohort, of which she is still a member. Through this opportunity of study, we reflected on how learning hula, as dancers and knowers, as students and teachers intertwines and weaves our professional and spiritual life. What this experience has taught us was to adopt an alternative model of being an educator. We learned a different Indigenous framework for seeing education, a decolonial *kilo*, that places Hawaiian concepts and cosmologies at the center of inquiry. Throughout our learning of hula under the direction of Dr. Taupōuri Tangarō, we paired our dance with reflections on how to become better human beings in our professional lives. How does hula, the *mele*, represent deeper meanings for us as educators or professionals as we engage a variety of different student learning capabilities from diverse lineages in Hawai'i? Being a student in this cohort decentered any "expertise" we may have held in the classroom and positioned us to rethink how education can be indigenized through the framework of hula.

Moving away from an attitude of hula that was stigmatized in the nineteenth century, currently at UH Hilo and Hawai'i Community College, hula is revered and integrated in educational practices and perpetuates a radical future making that manifests resilience and resurgence of the animate spirit in education. Two examples from our learning in hula that showcase this pedagogical method include the *mele komo* (welcoming chant) and the *ho'ike* (demonstration of knowledge through performance). In the *mele komo*, students chant to ask permission to enter the *hālau*. At this point, all preconceptions and assumptions are left at the door. The student enters with an open mind, a humble spirit, making it possible to activate the creative potentialities of the soul. Teachers are committed and willing to teach the student and the relationship of learning is made through this performance of trust and reciprocity. In the *ho'ike*, students demonstrate their skills and mastery of knowledge, *'ike*, and are showcased as a collective body or on an individual basis to an audience. Mastery of a skill can vary from dancer to dancer and so as a collective body, hula's framework rejects the model of an individual knower grasping the truth with certainty, a knowledge grounded in solitude. *Ho'ike's* epistemic feature is grounded within a community of dancing knowers profoundly interdependent, accountable for others' bodily movements, spirits and learning. Unlike forms of Western education that hold accountable individual students, dancing knowers are held accountable to a community of hula dancers as one's progress and mastery of hula can only occur through them. One guideline for hula dancers is that once you are ready to perform, you offer your assistance to others to ensure all the community of hula dancers are ready together in spirit and capability.

These examples gesture towards a model of Indigenizing and decolonizing education. Decolonizing education involves generating paradigms that resist settler colonial epistemologies that operate on a logic of scarcity. It also involves a willingness to step forward and hula, to dance with others, to be held accountable with others, which requires education to be framed through values of abundance, thereby making Indigenous futures possible. Settler-colonial frameworks that rendered hula as idleness lacking any epistemic credibility fail to understand the resistant power and the creative and innovative scope of hula in contributing to the rich hermenutical resources of the community.

NOTES

1. ku'ualoha ho'omanawanui, *Voices of Fire: Reweaving the Literary Lei of Pele and Hi'iaka* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 15.
2. Candace Fujikane, *Mapping Abundance for a Planetary Future: Kanaka Maoli and Critica Settler Cartographies in Hawai'i* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2021), 3.
3. Pualani Kanaka'ole Kanahale, *Ka Honua Ola: Eli'eli Kau Mai/The Living Earth* (Kamehameha Publishing, 2011), 109.
4. Kanahale, *Ka Honua Ola*, 109.
5. Kanahale, *Ka Honua Ola*, 116.
6. See the chant and brief description: https://www.huapala.org/Chants/Ke_Haa_La_Puna.html.

The hula was also performed during the 2021 Merrie Monarch by Hālau Ka Wēikiu: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mUZ4iDYQA9s>.

7. A version of the story of Hōpoe and Hi'iaka can be found here: <https://www.sacred-texts.com/pac/hlov/hlov17.htm>.
8. ho'omanawanui, *Voices of Fire*, 57.
9. Emalani Case, *Everything Ancient Was Once New: Indigenous Persistence from Hawai'i to Kahiki* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2021), 5.
10. <https://kipuka.uhh.hawaii.edu/wipce2014/docs/Uluakea%20Presentation.pdf>.
11. <http://kipuka.uhh.hawaii.edu/wipce2014/docs/Kukuena%20Presentation.pdf>.

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Discovering Reality and a First Nations/ American Indian Standpoint Theory

Andrea Sullivan-Clarke

UNIVERSITY OF WINDSOR

There are a few moments in the trajectory of one's career when you have the feeling that you have come into your own. One such moment occurred this year when I was invited to take part in a symposium hosted by the Canadian Society for Women in Philosophy (CSWIP) at the Canadian Philosophical Association meeting in May 2023. The symposium was titled *Discovering Reality Forty Years Later*, and the organizer (Rebecca Ring, York University) encouraged the participants to engage with the influential legacy of the 1983 anthology edited by Sandra Harding and Merrill Hintikka, *Discovering Reality: Feminist Perspectives on Epistemology, Metaphysics, Methodology, and Philosophy of Science*.

The symposium opened with a welcome from Sandra Harding, who addressed the environment that motivated the creation of the anthology, and its surprising influence as well as the later critique of its ideas. The contributors to the anthology staked out new territory in philosophy and forged new paths of research for future generations of feminist philosophers. In addition to the welcome from Harding, a research group headed by Alison Wylie (University of British Columbia) presented a project currently under development that included a podcast in which Sandra Harding discussed the impact of the anthology and promised future podcasts with other contributors. This project contains the history

of this area of feminist philosophy and will be especially useful for future generations.

Motivated by the work of Naomi Scheman (Professor Emeritus, University of Minnesota), Lauren Edwards (York University) presented “Pernicious Love Myths,” an engaging example of the way in which the anthology is motivating research today. In the presentation, Edwards challenges scientific constructions of love as a relation that is gendered, narrowly understood as romantic, and marginalizes the experiences of non-cisgendered individuals.

As an Indigenous philosopher who conducts research in social epistemology, I opted to consider the reliance on an Indigenous standpoint in science involving First Nation/American Indian populations. I suggest that a First Nations/American Indian standpoint would be more appropriate in certain instances than one that relies on a broader (read global) Indigenous standpoint. My presentation provides only a general sketch in support of such a theory. It primarily identifies some of the questions and issues that would involve the use of a First Nations/American Indian standpoint.

The final presentation of the symposium was provided by Naomi Scheman, who spoke on being included in the anthology, and the environment in which the development of a decidedly feminist epistemology arose. She addressed the topics of the papers presented by myself and Edwards, and noted the directions for future research. As she discussed her account of individualism in political theory and social science methodology, I could not help but think that an Indigenous worldview, one that is more communal and not as individual, would complement her critique of Western science.

What follows is my contribution to the symposium. I wrote it with the intention of addressing the impact of *Discovering Reality*, as well as considering the implications for the future. There were no Indigenous contributors to the anthology, and given how the experiences of Indigenous (and colonized) people are often conflated, I suggest that some research questions may require a more fine-grained theory of Indigenous standpoint. If the challenges to patriarchal science were posited in order to secure a better understanding of human nature, then the knowledge needed to achieve understanding must include First Nation/American Indian lived experiences.

Hensci, Estonko! (Greetings in the language of the Muscogee Nation of Oklahoma.) It is an honor to take part in this symposium and to be associated with such distinguished scholars, especially since their work has made a profound impact on my own. As I consider the changes in our discipline since the publication of *Discovering Reality* and turn my thoughts to the future, I envision a theory of First Nations/American Indian standpoint. In this talk, I provide a general sketch of the theory while also calling attention to some interesting questions, and concerns for future research.

Research in various areas, such as health disparities and the politics of education curriculum, point to a First Nations/American Indian standpoint theory, noting its use in knowledge production.¹ Absent of any formal account of a First Nations/American Indian standpoint, researchers in one case tailor a global Indigenous standpoint theory, such as that provided by Aileen Moreton-Robinson² or Martin Nakata,³ to suit their needs. In the other case, the author works from the feminist critiques of philosophers in developing nations, like Jitendra Mohanty, Uma Narayan, and Chela Sandoval, to craft a standpoint associated with colonialism. These cases prompt the question of whether an Indigenous standpoint theory—one that may be global but still engages with historical and contemporary colonialism—is adequate, or even morally acceptable, as a resource for research concerning First Nation/American Indian issues. If we consider First Nations/American Indian philosophical thought and the nations’ unique engagement with colonialism, I am not convinced that we should just “make do.” Thus, I propose the need for a more formal account.

A general sketch of a First Nations/American Indian standpoint theory must address the use of “Indigenous” as a way of denoting First Nations, American Indians, Métis, Inuit, and Alaskan Natives of North America. The use of the term “Indigenous” is broader; it denotes other individuals and communities across the globe. Using “Indigenous” may gloss over some critical differences between groups of people, even if they all have experienced colonialism. Colonialism is complex and it is not dead—it is contemporary. Even if Indigenous communities over the globe experienced the same historical treatment, it does not necessarily mean they have similar experiences now.

With differences in philosophical thought and worldview, it makes sense to distinguish between Indigenous and First Nations/American Indian standpoint theories. (I am not saying we can’t use Indigenous standpoint theory when formulating a theory for First Nations/American Indians or that the authors in the above articles are wrong for tailoring Indigenous conceptions to fit their needs. Rather, we should attend to the critical differences of all Indigenous nations/communities if we are seeking a more complete understanding of humanity, and I suggest formal theorizing to do that.)

This prompts an additional question: If key differences are a distinguishing feature, then shouldn’t there be a standpoint for each community/nation? I feel the significance of this observation. In fact, the issue mirrors the conversations in the discipline as to whether it is better to use the term “Indigenous philosophy” or “Indigenous philosophies”—or better yet, refer to the specific community or nation, as in “Muscogee philosophy.” The language of the colonizer has as its goal the erasure of First Nations/American Indians; it is easier to lump groups together (with the added comfort of no need to pronounce specific names). It also reduces the issues with those nations/communities to a single problem. I am reminded of Duncan Campbell Scott’s goal of getting rid of the “Indian Problem”—as described, it permitted the eradication of First Nations people through assimilation or extermination.

Yet, there are times when grouping by similarities affords the opportunity to speak more generally. For example, many communities maintain that they stand in relation to all things, which is useful for thinking about an Indigenous approach to environmental issues for example, or when trying to understand an Indigenous conception of “sacred.” The research on health disparities benefits from a more general usage of Indigenous (referring to the Indigenous of North America) because it provides an adequate sample size (so long as there are relevant similarities among nations). Similar to the treatment of race as a socially constructed category, researchers might use “Indigenous,” not because it is a natural kind, but because it does work.

Having addressed some initial worries, I turn to a general sketch of a First Nations/American Indian standpoint as a way of theorizing knowledge from a position that distinguishes itself from the settler-colonial view. Canada, Mexico, and the United States are settler-colonial states that conducted “profound epistemic, ontological, [and] cosmological violence” against First Nations/American Indians to secure land as “[a] home and [a] source of capital.”⁴ As such, First Nations/American Indian standpoint is incommensurable with other feminist standpoint theories, even those incorporating intersectional analyses. This results from key differences in ways of knowing. For First Nations/American Indian communities/nations, the exchange of knowledge assumes many forms and is shared amongst relations, human and nonhuman. Stories are not myths and dreams and/or visions are sources of knowledge. The knowledge is not propositional, but it is discursive, resulting from walking in two worlds; it takes place in a space that exists between First Nations/American Indian and Western knowledges.

A First Nations/American Indian standpoint theory not only situates First Nation/American Indian epistemology, but it also centers sovereignty in a current colonial context.⁵ Given that it is “informed by politics, history, knowledges, family (relations), and collective consciousness” there is an awareness that First Nation/American Indian “epistemologies have been omitted from the creation and implementation of knowledge” regarding them.⁶ It seeks to restore balance and harmony to interactions with non-Indigenous researchers/scientists by advocating for the nation/community. As such, research should be undertaken by the communities or with sovereign oversight. Research must also be conducted for the benefit of First Nations/American Indians as well as be consistent with their interests.

A First Nations/American Indian standpoint theory is unsettling.⁷ That is to say that it is decolonial and the goal is to repatriate/rematriate the land and ways of living.⁸ Given its goal, how decolonization is defined or understood is critical. Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang note that although some ways of conceiving of decolonization may be consistent with social justice projects, they have the worrisome trait of relying on a metaphorical sense of decolonization.⁹ What makes this troubling is that a metaphorical sense of decolonization makes available strategies that “actually further settler colonialism.”¹⁰ It allows for an unearned alliance through the language of putative solidarity—such as “decolonizing our schools”

or using “decolonizing methods.”¹¹ Such language avoids the real task of decolonization and instead “recenters whiteness, it resettles theory, it extends innocence to the settler, [and] it entertains a settler future.”¹²

The project of reconciliation is also impacted by the sense of decolonization underwriting a First Nations/American Indian standpoint. Reconciliation can only arise in a context of respectful relations. As Tuck and Yang remind us, “decolonization is not a swappable term for other things we want to do to improve our societies and schools.”¹³ Solidarity is not sufficient for decolonization, as it “neither reconciles present grievances nor forecloses future conflict.”¹⁴ It enables its settler participants to avoid the hard work of repatriating/rematriating First Nations/American Indian land and life.¹⁵ Reconciliation will only come if decolonization is attained, so what sense of decolonization grounds a First Nations/American Indian standpoint matters.

Given that decolonization plays such a foundational role in the First Nations/American Indian standpoint theory, the priority of social efforts to Indigenize institutions lessens. Indigenization is a project of social justice, but not of decolonization. Increasing the number of First Nations/American Indian researchers, developing curriculums, and centering research are socially just, but not decolonial. Another side of the same coin reveals that the First Nation/American Indian projects of resurgence, resistance, and resilience, however, increase in importance because they emphasize particular, precontact/pre-removal/pre-assimilative/precolonial methods and content of knowledge production.

Attendant to the epistemology is a system of values as well as a communal identity that cannot be extracted. Like a braid of sweetgrass, the areas comprising the content of our discipline—the metaphysics, the epistemology, and values—are tightly interwoven. The repatriation/rematriation of First Nation/American Indian life takes place within these contexts. Resurgence includes a reclamation of languages and cultural practices/protocols. It also assumes a form of resistance to present-day colonialism in the adoption and continuance of doing, as Leanne Betasamosake Simpson states, *As We Have Always Done*.

To this end, Simpson asks a simple question, the answer of which indicates the framework for the resistance: “Do my Ancestors recognize me as their own?”¹⁶ The type of resistance endorsed by Simpson entails the reclamation, and continuance, of the cultural practices and traditions that gave rise to the resilience of the people in the face of historical colonial policies. As Simpson explains,

when my indigeneity grows, I am more connected. I fall more in love with my homeland, my family, my culture, and my language and more in line with the thousands of stories that demonstrate how to live a meaningful life, and I have more emotional capital to fight and protect what is meaningful to me. I am a bigger threat to the Canadian state and its plans to build pipelines across my body, clear-cut my forests, contaminate [sic] my lakes with

toxic cottages and chemicals, and make my body a site of continual sexualized violence.¹⁷

Simpson's call to resist by doing as we have always done cannot be adequately addressed by the concept of intersectionality. The specificity of context supports the need for a more formal account of a First Nation/American Indian standpoint—and may even provide resources for determining the scaling of the standpoint up to denote "Indigenous" groups—bounded by Turtle Island or a more global conception—to scaling down when relevant distinctions and context demand specificity at the level of nation, or perhaps clan. It might be the case that language families (given that language is the seat of knowledge) be a way to assess the "boundaries" of a standpoint.

The formulation of a First Nation/American Indian standpoint theory will not only contribute to more meaningful research regarding those nations/communities, but it also has the resources to contribute to the discussions of settler ignorance and the epistemologies of ignorance. Similar to the Indigenous critique levied by Aileen Moreton-Robinson (that Western theories of standpoint and intersectionality fail to adequately address colonialism), the Western frameworks of epistemologies of ignorance and their solutions rely on a less sophisticated focus: that of race or of colonialism (but where all colonized people are the same). A more formal conception of First Nation/American Indian standpoint may serve as a guide for locating key features to distinguish cases of ignorance from one another, such as white ignorance from settler ignorance. Charles Mills notes that white ignorance is not exclusive to white people, but its focus is racial.¹⁸

What exactly are the differences between a First Nations/American Indian standpoint theory and one that is Indigenous? I suggest that it can be found in the unique relations with the land and the efforts to maintain them in the face of colonialism. Some communities have unique relations with the beings of their traditional land—the Makah and the whales, the Ojibwe and wild rice (minoomin), and the Muscogee Nation and turtles. Through colonial policies of removal, some nations have relations that must be re-established. Some must work against the building of dams that prevent salmon from swimming upriver to spawn and others must work against mining, fracking, and threats from the transport of dangerous materials. I suggest that it is these differences in the maintenance of relations that indicate when to scale up or down the theory.

As I look to the next twenty years, I wish to point out that a First Nations/American Indian standpoint, one that distinguishes itself from a global Indigenous one, is not solely to right the historical wrongs of knowledge production in a colonial context (past tense). Rather, it is a way of bringing First Nations/American Indians to the research in a respectful way—read moral way. There is a normative sense associated with living in the world. According to Viola Cordova (Jicarilla Apache), "the universe is a good thing—the goodness is inherent in the fact that the moving, living universe operates on the principles of balance and harmony."¹⁹ Given that what humans do contributes to the creation of the world, individuals are

obligated to act in those ways that "maintain balance" and harmony.²⁰ If "I am responsible for adding to the world a new thing," then it must be consistent with the values of the Indigenous communities that affirm this unique way of being in the world.²¹ The discovering of reality is a normative practice. What knowledge we introduce into the world determines whether the balance is upset, restored, or maintained. A standpoint that endorses nation sovereignty will address historical errors, but it will also enable new productions to be accomplished in the right way, in a way that our ancestors would recognize.

NOTES

1. See Genevieve R. Cox et al., "Indigenous Standpoint Theory as a Theoretical Framework for Decolonizing Social Science Health Research with American Indian Communities," 460–68, and Leilani Sabzalian, "Curricular Standpoints and Native Feminist Theories: Why Native Feminist Theories Should Matter to Curriculum Studies," 359–82.
2. See Aileen Moreton-Robinson, "Towards an Australian Indigenous Women's Standpoint Theory: A Methodological Tool"; and *The White Possessive: Property, Power, and Indigenous Sovereignty* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015).
3. See Martin Nakata, *Disciplining the Savages: Savaging the Discipline*, especially Chapter 11.
4. Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, "Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, 5.
5. Cox et al., "Indigenous Standpoint Theory," 462; and Moreton-Robinson, "Towards an Australian Indigenous Women's Standpoint Theory."
6. Cox et al., "Indigenous Standpoint Theory," 462.
7. Cox et al., "Indigenous Standpoint Theory," 461.
8. Tuck and Yang, "Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor," 1.
9. Tuck and Yang, "Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor," 1.
10. Tuck and Yang, "Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor," 1.
11. Tuck and Yang, "Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor," 1.
12. Tuck and Yang, "Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor," 3.
13. Tuck and Yang, "Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor," 3.
14. Tuck and Yang, "Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor," 3.
15. Tuck and Yang, "Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor," 1.
16. Leanne B. Simpson, *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom through Radical Resistance*, 179.
17. Simpson, *As We Have Always Done*, 182–83.
18. See Charles W. Mills, "White Ignorance."
19. Viola Cordova, "Ethics: From an Artist's Point of View," 254.
20. Cordova, "Ethics: From an Artist's Point of View," 254.
21. Cordova, "Ethics: From an Artist's Point of View," 254.

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Rethinking a 1970s Timeline for a History of Environmental Ethics

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Ryan Mulloy: Opening the Environmental Ethics syllabus for the first time, I looked through the course readings, and was surprised to see articles by multiple Indigenous philosophers. Growing up as an Indigenous (Ojibwe) student in public education, Indigenous knowledge and Western knowledge were always taught separately. Indigenous knowledge was learned primarily through stories, traditions, and the land. The public schools in Minneapolis allowed for "Indian education," but the way it worked in practice was that once every two weeks, community elders would come to school, remove the few Indigenous students from class, and educate us in the traditional way. The two methods, of Western and Indigenous education, never mixed. A wave of anticipation rushed through me as I looked forward to the first day of class in which we would be discussing Indigenous ethics at a public university.

In the first course reading by the philosopher Kyle Whyte (Citizen Potawatomi), Whyte discusses concepts such as kinship and reciprocity in the context of the environment and environmental justice. It was Áila's intention for this piece by Whyte to ground the course, but after seeing how some of the students struggled with these concepts, I was skeptical that it would work. It was not that the concepts were too difficult for the students; rather, it seemed they were too strange. One student expressed to me their particular difficulty imagining how one could have genuine, reciprocal relationships with non-human animals.

However, as the weeks went by and we progressed further into the material, reading works by non-Indigenous philosophers, the other students continued to carry those Indigenous concepts. While discussing works of environmental virtue ethics, or deontology, the Indigenous ethics remained in discourse. Now after having finished the course, I can no longer conceive of a conversation on environmental ethics without including Indigenous ethics.

After this course the disparate dichotomy between Western and Indigenous education that I previously felt has come closer to being reconciled.

Áila O'Loughlin: While preparing material to teach the spring section of Environmental Ethics (EE), I could not find a single overview history of EE that included the formative contributions to the discipline of Indigenous people, history, thought, or philosophers. As an American child of an Irish father and Sámi/Finnish mother, I knew the influence of my own Sámi relatives on environmental philosophers and activists like Arne Naess and Greta Thunberg. As a scholar of kinship ethics, I view work from philosophers Kyle Whyte and Brian Burkhart as the forefront of practical ethics as it pertains to the environment. And as a global citizen, I know that since Indigenous peoples protect 80 percent of the planet's biodiversity, which is increasingly threatened by climate crisis,¹ Indigenous rights are environmental rights. Yet, where was this Indigenous history past, present, and future in the philosophical accounts on the history of environmental ethics? So I did what all other philosophers before me have done when the canon excludes voices integral to the subject: I supplemented. And lectured. And attempted to offer an alternative history of environmental philosophy that doesn't hold on to Indigenous erasure. The purpose of this paper, written by both student and instructor, is to challenge that Indigenous erasure in historical accounts of environmental ethics.

This paper is about the history of environmental ethics. Specifically, we argue that any account of the history of environmental ethics that does not include the foundational role of Indigenous thought is inaccurate. Environmental ethics' (EE) emergence as a distinct field of philosophical study began in the 1970s, according to prominent accounts.² However, in this paper, we challenge the 1970s genesis timeline for the history of EE by highlighting the foundational role of Indigenous peoples and thought in the formation of the field. We aim to show Indigenous peoples have been *doing* EE before its 1970s emergence as an academic discipline, and are constitutive to the philosophical subdiscipline of environmental ethics since the 1970s.

Environmental ethics is a growing sub-discipline of philosophy germane to pressing contemporary issues such as the climate crisis. When we use the term "environmental ethics" in this paper, we mean any philosophical study of moral value as it pertains to the environment, as well as the relations between subjects that constitute that environment. Literature in the field commonly cites the 1970s as the "beginning" of environmental ethics,³ with references to the 1949 work of Aldo Leopold's *A Sand County Almanac*, Lynn White's 1967 *The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis*, and Rachel Carson's 1962 *Silent Spring* as formative for the field. Alternatively, philosophers have also credited seventeenth- to nineteenth-century social contract theory and philosophy of science as proto-EE that laid groundwork for the academic discipline.⁴

Along with the work from zoologist Rachel Carson, historian Lynn White, and agricultural economist Aldo Leopold, Indigenous practices and thought are foundational to the philosophical subdiscipline of EE; however, the role of Indigenous thought is often absent from canonical historical accounts. By showcasing examples of the bedrock role of Indigenous thought to the academic discipline of EE, we hope to motivate a correction to that absence in future historical accounts.

The first EE movement we highlight in this paper to showcase the essential role of Indigenous thought in environmental ethics is deep ecology. Coined by the Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess, deep ecology takes a holistic approach to EE, and places moral significance on whole ecosystems. Deep ecology stands in contrast with shallow ecology; shallow ecology is Naess's term for environmental movements he deems superficial, or short sighted. Naess views these shallow movements as merely concerned with fighting pollution and supporting the well-being of people in developed nations. Conversely, deep ecology positions itself as a long-range movement focused on decentralization, and symbiosis of all living things across the planet. The first tenant of deep ecology claims, "The deep ecology movement rejects the human-in-environment image in favor of the relational, totalfield image: organisms as knots in the biospherical net or field of intrinsic relations."⁵ This relational-based understanding of the human and non-human world underpins all of Naess's ethics. An example of practical Indigenous environmental ethics as influential to Naess's framework can be found in his travels to Nepal:

During a climbing expedition in Nepal, Naess discovered with surprise that the Sherpa people would not venture on to certain mountains they considered holy or sacred. Naess and two of his Norwegian friends took inspiration from this reverence for mountains to formulate a new philosophy that would extend the same moral regard to all of nature.⁶

Through learning about Indigenous Sherpas' practices, Naess found inspiration for his ecosophy.

Further, Arne Naess cites the Indigenous Sámi worldview as influential to his writings on deep ecology. Both in the film *The Call of the Mountain* (1997), which details Naess's life and work, as well as an interview with Naess made for the film's release,⁷ Naess repeatedly cites the Sámi response to the Alta Dam construction in Norway as inspiration for his life and writing. In the interview, Naess recalls:

Yeah, the Sámi people, they astonished me; one young man there, a Sámi man, who was caught by the police, standing where they should make a road. It was a part of direct action in favor of the river that should not be used for hydro-electric dams. And the police: "Why do you stay here?" "Well, this here, is part of myself." . . . that he could say "it is part of myself." And that is typical of deep ecology movement.⁸

To be clear, in Naess's own work, Naess cites Indigenous practices and worldview, from both his travels to Nepal as well as his home country in Norway, as fundamental to the formation of deep ecology. Deep ecology is considered a cornerstone movement in the history of EE, yet the role of Indigenous knowledge and practice is absent from prominent historical accounts.

In addition to deep ecology, environmental philosopher Baird Callicott's work, much of which interprets and builds from Aldo Leopold's *A Sand County Almanac*, directly cites Indigenous practices of EE. In Leopold's *Part II: Chihuahua and Sonora* from *A Sand County Almanac*, Leopold references traditional ecological knowledge from the multiple Indigenous tribal nations of North America as emblematic of the ethical claims he was advancing in his text that whole ecosystems have moral value. In Callicott's 1994 *Earth's Insights: A Multicultural Survey of Ecological Ethics*, Callicott compares environmental ethical frameworks from around the world, including what Callicott refers to as "Indigenous African Environmental Ethics" and "American Indian Environmental Ethics."⁹ The work of both Callicott and Leopold's *Land Ethics* as those land ethics engage with Indigenous environmental ethics is the subject of several contemporary peer-reviewed articles in EE.¹⁰

So far in this text, we aim to have shown the ways that pre-1970s Indigenous environmental ethics has been fundamental to early work in academic philosophy on moral value and the environment. Prominent literature on the history of EE places the origins of EE in the 1970s; nonetheless, people have been practicing and studying EE since well before then. And in fact, early environmental philosophers such as Arne Naess, Aldo Leopold, and Baird Callicott directly reference the pre-1970s environmental ethics of Indigenous peoples. Therefore, just as Rachel Carson or Lynn White are included in the history of environmental ethics due to the influence of their work on environmental philosophers of the 1970s and 1980s, so too ought we accurately reference the bedrock influence of Indigenous practical environmental ethics on the academic discipline of EE.

Today, the growing sub-discipline of EE still includes the cornerstone movements of Naess's deep ecology as well as Leopold's, and then Callicott's, land ethic. Since the 1970s, academic environmental philosophy has galvanized additional movements in EE such as environmental pragmatism, ecofeminism, and Indigenous kinship ethics (IKE). The prominent literature on the history of EE does not mention Indigenous kinship ethics as a major movement in the field despite philosophers working on IKE contributing greatly to environmental philosophy. Kinship is a large topic, but we follow Kyle Whyte's (2020) description here:

For Potawatomi, Quechua, and Sámi peoples, gtegegan, papa arariwa, and siida are kinship relationships that serve as ethical systems that motivate humans to be responsible for protecting the environment. That is, they are relationships with qualities of reciprocity. Dialogue across Indigenous peoples on reciprocity is a global conversation that we have with each other.¹¹

Here, Whyte provides a working definition of kinship as a criterion for ethical action, as well as details the role that kinship plays in a practice and study of ethical behavior when it comes to the environment.

In Indigenous communities, ethical thinking starts in childhood through storytelling and community mentorship, both of which provide a behavioral and moral framework of how to interact and form kinship bonds with the world. One of the ways these kinship bonds are strengthened is through acts of reciprocal gift giving. For instance, in Ojibwe culture it is common to leave a gift of tobacco at the base of a tree from which medicine is gathered. The tree's gift of medicine is reciprocated by the human, through the gift of tobacco. These acts of reciprocal gift giving demonstrate the interdependence of life, which is fundamental to kinship ethics.

Indigenous philosophers such as V. F. Cordova, Vine Deloria Jr., Kyle Whyte, and Brian Burkhart have all published prolific academic work on kinship as it pertains to the environment. This work often cites traditional Indigenous practices that have been central to Indigenous environmental study and stewardship long before the 1970s. By highlighting the contributions of Indigenous kinship ethics in EE today, we hope to draw a throughline to the fundamental role of Indigenous thought in the development of EE, both in genesis as well as contemporary scholarship. Indigenous thought has always inextricably studied, and continues to study, moral value as it pertains to the environment. Indigenous thought continues, as well, to contribute greatly to the academic field of EE. Therefore, any historical work on EE would be inaccurate without an inclusion of Indigenous peoples and Indigenous kinship practices. The influence of Indigenous thought on deep ecology and land ethic challenges the 1970s genesis timeline; the rich history of Indigenous kinship ethics demonstrates that Indigenous thought was not only integral to the formation of the academic field of EE in its inception, but continues to offer vital developments today.

The 1970s genesis timeline is one story about the history of environmental ethics. We propose an alternative story. This alternative story could go something like this: Since time immemorial, Indigenous peoples have practiced a study of moral value as it pertains to the environment and all its constituents. For example, the Haudenosaunee democracy formalized the Seventh Generation Principle, which measures right action according to how it impacts generations (of human and other-than-humans) in the future.¹² This kind of practical Indigenous environmental ethics largely influenced the formation of the subdiscipline of EE in philosophy, which emerged in the 1970s, as credited by major early EE philosophers such as Aldo Leopold and Arne Naess. In addition, the publication of environmental theory in other fields greatly influenced the formation of EE as a subdiscipline in philosophy, such as zoologist Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* or historian Lynn White's *The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis*. Today, environmental ethics is a broad philosophical subdiscipline that studies moral value as it pertains to the environment through canonical movements (such as deep ecology, environmental pragmatism, ecofeminism, or Indigenous

kinship ethics) as well as topics and puzzles (such as geoengineering, animal rights, or collective responsibility).

This alternative story more accurately reflects the beginning of the study of moral value as it pertains to the environment, as well as how the academic discipline of philosophy has developed considerations on the environment over the past fifty years. In total, this paper aims to highlight the Indigenous influence on the EE movements of deep ecology and land ethic, as well as detail Indigenous kinship ethics as a major contemporary movement in EE that is often left out from prominent literature on the history of environmental ethics. Ultimately, we challenge the 1970s genesis timeline that remains a prevalent narrative by showing that Indigenous people have been doing EE before its 1970s emergence as an academic discipline, as well as continue to contribute crucially to that academic discipline since the '70s. Due to this historical influence and contemporary contribution, we contend that any history of environmental ethics that does not include Indigenous peoples and thought is inaccurate. Finally, last spring, as both student and instructor, we each prepared for an upcoming environmental ethics course carrying the weight of known Indigenous erasure into the classroom. Together, we look forward to the next era of a history of philosophy where it is no longer possible to conceive of a conversation on environmental ethics without including Indigenous ethics.

NOTES

1. "Frontline and Forest Communities are Forest Defenders," *Rainforest Action Network*, n.d. <https://www.ran.org/issue/frontline-and-indigenous-communities-forest-defenders/>.
2. Jason Kawall, "A History of Environmental Ethics"; Andrew Brennan and Norva Y. S. Lo, "Environmental Ethics"; Marjan Laal, "A Brief History of Enviroethics and Its Challenges."
3. Kawall, "A History of Environmental Ethics"; Brennan and Lo, "Environmental Ethics"; Laal, "A Brief History of Enviroethics."
4. Roderick Frazier, *The Rights of Nature: A History of Environmental Ethics*.
5. Arne Naess, "The Shallow and the Deep, Long-Range Ecology Movement. A summary*," 95.
6. Chris Abakare, "A Critique of Deep Ecology," 99.
7. Boeckel, Jan van, *Interview with Norwegian Ecco-philosopher Arne Naess*.
8. Boeckel, 14. Also available at as a pdf at http://www.naturearteducation.org/Interview_Arne_Naess_1995.pdf, 13.
9. Baird Callicott, *Earth's Insights: A Multicultural Survey of Ecological Ethics from the Mediterranean Basin to the Australian Outback*, 156–84.
10. Lee Hester, Dennis McPherson, and Annie Booth, "Indigenous Worlds and Callicott's Land Ethic," 273–90; Kyle Whyte, "How Similar Are Indigenous North American and Leopoldian Environmental Ethics?"
11. Kyle Whyte, "Indigenous Environmental Justice: Anti-Colonial Action through Kinship," 277.
12. This principle is referenced in philosopher William MacAskill's *What We Owe the Future* (2022).

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