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OPEN RIVERS :
RETHINKING WATER, PLACE & COMMUNITY

RELATIONALITY

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An interdisciplinary online journal rethinking the Mississippi
from multiple perspectives within and beyond the academy.

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FEATURE

INDIGENIZING ENVIRONMENTAL THINKING

By Waziyatawin, Roxanne Biidabinokwe Gould, Clement Loo, Samantha Majhor, Sara Černe, Bonnie Etherington, Andrew M. Freiman, Agléška Cohen-Rencountre, Adam W. Coon, Sarah Peele, Wendy F. Smythe, Christine Taitano DeLisle, and Becca Gercken

A key component of the work of the Humanities-led Environmental Stewardship, Place, and Community Initiative is an emphasis on considering how higher education might be

changed by centering ways of knowing that have often been dismissed or diminished by traditional Western academic systems. Vital to this work is recognizing academia's participation in and



Lake Itasca. Image courtesy of Sara Černe.

perpetuation of settler colonial logics and the ways these limit understandings of place, other-than-human relatives, environmental challenges and their possible solutions. Participants in the Initiative, as well as many people beyond it, are focusing on ways to Indigenize and decolonize environmental thinking, education, and relations with the world and each other.

We asked scholars and thinkers from within and beyond the academy to share a short response about what this work might look like. Specifically, we asked people to respond to the following prompt: As we face environmental challenges, such as climate change, extraction economies, (over)development, loss of habitats and ecosystems, pollution, and other harms,

what might Indigenous ways of knowing offer to address these global concerns? How might Indigenizing and/or decolonizing our methodologies transform higher education teaching and research?

The responses here offer insights, experiences, reading suggestions, and provocations. We at Open Rivers still have a lot to learn about this work; we suspect we are not alone. As one respondent reminds us, even the questions we pose here demonstrate settler logics. Still, we hope you'll engage with these responses and learn with us.

– Laurie Moberg, Managing Editor

Waziyatawin

In our age of catastrophic climate chaos, Indigenous wisdom may be the only wisdom of value. Indigenous cultures throughout the world have a demonstrated capacity to live on the same land base over millennia without destroying it. Rooted in understandings of the interconnectedness and spiritual essence of all beings, pre-colonial Indigenous ways of being strove to be in good relationship with all of creation.

Western civilization, on the other hand, has never demonstrated a capacity for sustainability. On the contrary, from an environmental sensibility, Western civilization destroys every landscape it touches. Industrialization has only intensified and exacerbated the destructive impulse of Western society, which is rooted in the myth of human supremacy. Thus, in a few short centuries, Americans have all but destroyed our wetlands, our prairies, and our forests while poisoning our

air, water, and soil. The toxification and hyper-exploitation of the very ecosystems essential to our survival are the predictable outcomes of treating other life forms as inferior and expendable.

In spite of this utter failing to protect what is vital to our future survival, academic culture has often marginalized and denigrated Indigenous ways of knowing and being, relegating them to the realm of quaint or colorful supplements to the nucleus of Western knowledge. In this context, decolonizing Western education at its most fundamental requires shattering the social evolutionary worldview that places Western education at the pinnacle of knowledge with Indigenous knowledge far below it. If scholars want to contribute to saving the planet, that paradigm must be reversed. On issues of long-term sustainability, Indigenous knowledge, time-tested over thousands of years, must be given the primacy it deserves.

Roxanne Biidabinokwe Gould, Being a Good Relative in Someone Else's Homeland

Indigenous peoples are not the overseers or stewards of the places in which we live. We are part of the ecosystem, the very entrails, insides, and soul of that place. Our creation begins in our homeland where we have lived for millennia worked to be in right relationship with all the beings of that place (Cajete 1999).

Indigenous peoples believe there is a direct link between the well-being of Indigenous peoples and the well-being of the planet, but the reality is we are often the miners' canaries made to test the waters to see how much destruction the planet can endure before there is no return (Gould and Day 2017).

In academia there are many theoretical models that can provide guidance on how to understand our planet's decline. Ecosocialism places capitalism at the heart of the problem. Ecofeminism (Shiva and Mies 2014) interrogates toxic patriarchy as the reason for the abuse of women and Mother Earth. Both offer important contributions to the discussion, but Critical Indigenous Pedagogy of Place locates Indigenous epistemology at the forefront, while promoting

a community-based process that sheds light on locally grounded sustainable solutions aimed at reinhabiting and decolonizing Indigenous homelands (Gould 2018).

Like many Indigenous people today, I do not live in the homeland of my ancestors. Because of marriage and work, I now reside in the homeland of the Dakota of Mni Sota Makoce. I have a responsibility of reciprocity as a guest in the Dakota homeland to the original inhabitants and their traditional Indigenous knowledge. I also have the responsibility to work with them to dismantle those destructive systems that continue to harm Dakota homelands, Dakota people, and the planet.

Contemplating this future requires expansive thinking on the part of us all. For non-Dakota people, it asks that you challenge, re-examine, and reject the racist and colonialist programming to which you have grown accustomed. It also asks that you rethink the values of domination, consumption and exploitation that have become a part of American society. (Waziyatawin 2008, 14)

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Clement Loo, Decolonizing and Indigenizing Higher-Education

Every definition of “sustainability” that I can think of includes some mention of the mutual flourishing (or some synonym thereof) of all people (as well as non-people) living on the planet.

The difficult question is: what counts as flourishing? Even if one only focuses on humans, there are numerous understandings about how a human might flourish. These different understandings are influenced and modified by values, history, minoritization, marginalization, and a host of other economic, political, social, and cultural factors.

The context dependency and complexity of flourishing is one of the many reasons why those of us whose efforts are aimed at pursuing sustainability must be better at integrating Indigenous knowledges and perspectives into our work and our institutions. To promote the flourishing of

all, one must understand what flourishing means across a wide range of cultures. Given such a need for understanding the many ways that flourishing might be defined across cultures, we must include a broad range of voices and perspectives in our conversations about and decision-making processes relevant to sustainability.

To have effective and inclusive discourse, we must be intentional about the format of our conversations. We must, informed by partners representing marginalized communities, be careful to consider how we engage in discourse. Higher education must take steps to ensure that our practices appropriately recognize and respond to different cultural assumptions about the proper and good ways that individuals and communities should relate to one another. This, I contend, is at the heart of decolonization and Indigenization.

Contributions from the “Indigenous Art and Activism in Changing Climates” Project

The Mississippi River has always facilitated currents of trade, activism, art, and research as a site of constant cultural, environmental, and political exchange. As a collective of graduate students and junior faculty, and as members of the Mellon Foundation Humanities Without Walls (HWW) project, “Indigenous Art and Activism in Changing Climates: The Mississippi Valley, Colonialism, and Climate Change,” we bring together responses to the *Open Rivers* prompt that foreground collaborative and interdisciplinary approaches and highlight multidimensional understandings of *Indigenous* relationally with the river and its tributaries. Project participants came from six different institutions and we met as a group at sites from the headwaters of the Mississippi to the Gulf, reading scholarly

and creative texts about these places while prioritizing embodied, experiential research methods—from canoeing, to visiting Indigenous earthworks, and hearing from and working with Indigenous artists and community members. Over two years of gathering along the river and researching, we have generated individual and collective questions about the Mississippi that connect Indigenous engagements with the river to thinking through decolonizing methodologies and global environmental challenges: What confluences have emerged between Indigenous research, art, and activism in the context of the river? What does “humanities without walls” mean in the context of Indigenous Studies? How are particular Indigenous river histories made visible by collaborative practices and pedagogies

of art and activism? As part of our emphasis on team-based research, our responses to these questions regarding environmental stewardship, place, and community are developed in

conversation with each other and, much like a river's tributaries, take shared waters in different directions.

Samantha Majhor, “Indigenous Art and Activism in Changing Climates” Project

River networks sprawl and span across our homelands, sustaining life and carrying it to connect through other water systems across the globe. This is part of the understanding that reverberates from the D/Lakhóta phrase “mní wichóni”—water is life. Native American and Indigenous Studies (NAIS) is like the river in this way, in its methods and in the way NAIS scholars focus on relations and relationality. I often

think that NAIS methodologies work as a bridge between the silos of knowledge that academia tends to produce: arts and sciences, trade and design, business and agriculture. Indigenous knowledges and methodologies point us toward the networking, the relationships, and the maintenance of relationships between humans and other-than-humans, and NAIS methodologies ask us to focus on these relationships by attending



HWW Group with Jim Rock at Indian Mounds Regional Park, Minnesota. Image courtesy of Sara Černe.

to relational networks situated in place. No one person, people, city, state, or nation can put humans on the track to reaffirming our responsibilities to the river; its expanse reaches beyond these other bodies. Here, in Mnisóta Makóče, we tend to call the river ᠬᠠᠬᠢ Wąkpá in the Dakhóta language—river of the falls. This is not what all Dakhóta people call this river all the time, but where I am now, just north of Minneapolis/St. Paul, this is the name that gets used most often

because this is where one will find waterfalls along the Mississippi. The name attends to the river's particular features in this spot. The river has many other names, names dictated by other relationships with and observations of the river, depending on one's place along the river and its tributaries. NAIS methodology suggests that one get to know the river in a multivalent way and embark on a reciprocal relationship that lives in place but, inevitably, ripples downstream.

Sara Černe, “Indigenous Art and Activism in Changing Climates” Project

The collaborative nature of the project and the Indigenous artists and activists we met during our site visits to the Upper and the Lower

Mississippi made evident the importance of the local in addressing global environmental concerns. The experience underscored the necessity



HWW members Jacki Rand and Agléška Cohen-Rencountre at the Mississippi Headwaters, Lake Itasca, Minnesota. Image courtesy of Sara Černe.

of considering longer historical perspectives within particular spaces—of going deep while remaining rooted in place—all to better understand broad issues that transcend and connect specific local geographies. For me, embodied engagement with places and histories along the river made concrete the abstract notions of dispossession and extraction, processes that take place across the river valley as well as nationally and globally. Conversations with Jim Rock, Director of Indigenous Programming at the Alworth Planetarium at the University of Minnesota Duluth, for instance, highlighted the longevity and relational geography of Native mounds in the Mississippi's watershed. Disregarding Dakota traditions developed in relation to this space, the

relatively recent settler activity of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries destroyed many sacred sites in the greater Minneapolis area such as Wakan Tipi and Spirit Island. This was done in the name of Western progress and (over)development, a mentality that disrupts local ecologies and causes a chain of devastating consequences. While it is common for younger students to engage in place-based learning, higher education seems to devalue the method. If we wish to collectively unlearn some of the practices and mindsets that led to the age of Great Acceleration, we could do worse than to make relationality, accountability, and sustainability crucial to humanistic education, anchoring and modeling these values in local environments.



Lake Itasca. Image courtesy of Sara Černe.

Bonnie Etherington, “Indigenous Art and Activism in Changing Climates” Project

In Minneapolis in 2018 our Humanities Without Walls group had the privilege of hearing from Nibi (water) walker Sharon Day (Anishinaabe) who described how she along with other Nibi walkers journeyed from the headwaters of the Mississippi River to the Gulf, carrying the clean water with them to “remind the water” in the Gulf what it once was. This action compelled thinking about what the river carries and is shaped by as it travels toward the ocean, what the waters leave behind, and what they accumulate in their passage. Shipping traffic carries oil and other goods upriver. Corn, beans, wheat, and more flow out, and the waters bear with them currents

of silt, nitrates, and other forms of pollution. At the same time that the accumulation of sediment is critical for resisting land loss in the Louisiana Delta and sustaining complex river-ocean ecosystems, nitrates trigger growing dead zones in the ocean and rising seas inundate entire communities near the river mouth. Actions such as Day’s Nibi walks indicate that conversations about Indigenous sovereignty and water rights up and down the river and its tributaries do not exist in isolation from each other. We can only address issues down river (such as land loss) and their impacts on multi-being populations when also considering issues upriver (such as



The HaHá Wakpá at Hidden Falls Regional Park, Minnesota. Image courtesy of Sara Černe.

levee or pipeline building), and vice versa. This kind of thinking (or walking) with the river also suggests that lasting and equitable solutions to the environmental issues faced by Indigenous

peoples with relationships to the Mississippi must contend with histories of settler colonialism and extractive capitalism at local, national, and global scales.

Andrew M. Freiman, “Indigenous Art and Activism in Changing Climates” Project

In 2019 we met in Oxford, Mississippi with filmmaker Monique Verdin (Houma) and visual artist Sarah Sense (Chitimacha) to discuss Indigenous art, activism, and the loss of Indigenous land in the Louisiana Delta. Levee systems and sea walls along the Lower Mississippi have reduced sedimentation, while

canals built by the petroleum industry have killed wetlands through saltwater intrusion. For Indigenous communities, losing land means losing life itself. Our conversations made it clear that the practices of settler colonialism are still in operation. Indigenous land is being overtaken by the petrochemical industry that sees the land



Itasca rocks. Image courtesy of Aglėška Cohen-Rencountre.

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simply as a “sacrifice zone” where money can be made quickly, disregarding its historical, social, or religious meaning. Worse still, climate change, the rearguard of American colonialism, is wiping land off the map for good. In 2011, thirty-five place names had to be retired from local maps—they no longer exist. Multiple Indigenous communities are trying to relocate to higher ground, a difficult process further hindered by ignorant and racist federal expectations and recalcitrant local officials. Government-sponsored relocation isn’t

a success story, only part of a series of short-term solutions. The Biloxi-Chitimacha-Choctaw of Isle De Jean Charles recently left the relocation program because it left out historical members of the tribe. In order to combat the destructive habits of petroleum extraction, universities could work to divest from fossil fuels and diversify their energy systems, while also working to invest in/support Indigenous artists, thinkers, and elders who are the lifeblood of their cultures’ futures.



Portage. Image courtesy of Agléška Cohen-Rencountre.

Agléška Cohen-Rencountre, “Indigenous Art and Activism in Changing Climates” Project

My initial thoughts about the prompt focus on settler colonial logics that are made more evident

through our collective HWW inquiries that center Indigenous place and ways of knowing.



Wading. Image courtesy of Agléška Cohen-Rencountre.



Canoe detail. Image courtesy of Agléška Cohen-Rencountre.

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As an Očéti Šakówiŋ dual citizen, I struggle with the question of what Native people contribute to global issues regarding the environmental abuses for profit. The question, which speaks to what Native and Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies offer to a global healing from these politically driven environmental abuses, prioritizes *settler acquisition* of Native and Indigenous knowledge as the epicenter of that healing. In our current climate, there will continue to be growing interest in Native and Indigenous ecological stewardship and thus Native and Indigenous

science. I believe our work as HWW scholars helps to expose settler colonial logics at the roots and lessen the burden placed on Native and Indigenous peoples to compartmentalize trauma. “What might Indigenous ways of knowing offer in order to address these global concerns?” In short, there is no singular Indigenous way of knowing, and therefore the framing of this question itself is derived from a colonial perspective that is embedded within ongoing Native and Indigenous dispossession. So what more can Natives offer when we already give everything?



HWW group in canoes at Skokie Lagoons, Illinois. Image courtesy of Agléška Cohen-Rencountre.

Adam W. Coon, Centering Native Methodologies

As part of the Mellon Environmental Stewardship, Place, and Community Initiative cohort at the University of Minnesota Morris, we have discussed the need to center Native methodologies—not just talk about them as a topic, but instead as a lens through which to interpret situations, analyze texts, and develop solutions to contemporary issues and problems.

In thinking about Nahuas in Mexico, they offer methodological perspectives that are especially useful today. One that comes to mind is *ixtla-matlistli*, which literally means “knowledge with the face”; this perspective values personal experiences and needing to be personally involved in an issue to come up with effective solutions. This demonstrates a different idea of an intellectual;



Group at Itasca. Image courtesy of Aglėška Cohen-Rencountre.

a lot of times when people hear “intellectual” they think of someone locked in a room with an objective view, but *ixtlamatlistli* emphasizes this conception of needing to be in the thick of things to know how to offer the best solutions.

Further, this aligns with the idea of seeing elders as key knowledge producers. Elders have so many years of experience that they are able to draw on to offer effective solutions. In today’s society, there is often a perception that elders are on their way out, and we isolate them in retirement homes. In Nahuatl, there isn’t even a word for that because the concept of isolating elders is so foreign and wrong. I mention this because it ties into a view as seeing the past as in front of us rather than behind. In English and Spanish, the word “past” itself conveys the idea of being behind us, but in Nahuatl, and many other Native nations, the past is perceived as in front of you. If something is unknown, it is the future, and it is behind you where it cannot be seen. The knowledge from the past, however, will help guide you in encountering the unpredictable, dynamic present and future.

Tied into this is the idea of having a reciprocal relationship with the past. For example, even though the Day of the Dead in Mexico is

sometimes exoticized, it is all about reciprocity with one’s past and one’s relatives. Even though these relatives have died, people still have a special relationship with the knowledges that they’ve given, and they are remembered and recognized for that. The dead have given their knowledges and the living give back by acknowledging them with pictures on an altar in honor.

Perspectives like this are especially useful for today and valuable for tackling contemporary problems like some of the current environmental challenges. The emphasis on reciprocity, for example, is absolutely key: what you take, you give back. For example, in Nahuatl, people have a reciprocal relationship with the land because it is a relative, the Earth Mother. It is a relationship, not something you can barter or trade. In Western perspectives there is a strong tendency to compartmentalize, but in Nahuatl, people and place are interconnected dynamically and this helps to provide a wider picture, a panorama. Drawing on these interconnections offers different strategies for confronting contemporary environmental challenges.

Sarah Peele and Wendy F. Smythe, Decolonizing Science to Save Mother Earth

Indigenous ways of knowing, as taught through Traditional Knowledge systems, draws upon thousands of years of quantitative and qualitative understanding and has supported Indigenous people in harmony with nature since time immemorial. Traditional ways of knowing are grounded in the belief that we are caretakers of Mother Earth, recognizing the connectedness of all things such that the impacts we extend upon the environment—water, air, land, and all living things—returns to us. This is reflected in the destructive practices imparted upon the environment through the extraction of oil, gas, minerals,

and timber, all of which have had a profound negative impact on fragile ecosystems around the globe. This is exhibited through the extinction of hundreds of species of plants and animals, contamination of food and water resources, and the increase in global temperatures which causes rapid ecological shifts, such as thawing in the arctic and the subsequent release of methane deposits further exacerbating global warming and collapse of ecosystems.

If we take a step back and critically examine these practices it is evident that there is an urgent need



Coastal waters in the traditional territory of the Haida people of Hydaburg, Alaska. Image courtesy of the Hydaburg Geoscience Program.



Hydaburg sunset. Image courtesy of Sarah Peele.

to interact with our environment in a different way. At this critical juncture in history, we would benefit from decolonizing methodologies and Western knowledge in favor of utilizing traditional ways of knowing as knowledge and

practices that sustained sophisticated Indigenous communities who have existed living in balance with nature for tens of thousands of years as current practices have pushed us to the edge of extinction in only a few hundred years.

Christine Taitano DeLisle

From our creation stories and oral traditions, and as reflected in our sustainable farming and fishing practices, Indigenous peoples have always known and *felt* that we are extensions of the land (and waters and skies), and that with that knowledge comes the reciprocal heavy lifting that we must do to care for the gift of land and relations. Even centuries-old Indigenous childbirth knowledge and the practice that dictates the proper burial of a child's companion, the placenta, in the land, as a protective measure of keeping a newborn safe and keeping that child (into adulthood) tied (and responsible) to land, reminds us of these embodied connections. In Guåhan in the Marianas (in the Oceanic region of Micronesia) where I was born and raised, these land-body relationalities, which require tremendous *guinaiya* (love),

metgot (strength), and *afuetsao* (obligation), are aptly captured in the Indigenous CHamoru vernacular: *taotao tâno'* (people of the land). In the age of climate change and global pandemic, the need to heed Indigenous ways of knowing and to center Indigenous embodied practices around the land becomes all the more urgent. As teachers, historians, scholars, writers, poets, and activists, we must be mindful of whose lands we are on and center when possible place-based Indigenous ways of knowing not as mere *quaint* acts of cultural expression, but as Indigenous political acts of reclaiming, nation-building, mitigating, and prioritizing community wellbeing amid ecological breakdown and environmental destruction (and desecration) and against ongoing forms of settler colonialism.

Becca Gercken

As a way to engage these questions, I'd like to suggest some readings and authors:

Truth & Bright Water by Thomas King

In this novel, environmental degradation may not be central, but it shows how the deterioration of the land is tied to spiritual health and mental health issues in the community. As an example, one of the characters, Monroe Swimmer—"Famous Indian Artist"—does "restorations" by painting Indians into famous artworks. He "restores" Indigenous communities by making churches and residential schools disappear from their landscapes by painting the buildings so that

they blend in with the land itself. His restorations often have an environmental component: he paints a wooden platform green and leaves it on the prairie "Teaching the Grass About Green" (43) and uses a kite with "wings, painted bright blue," (44) when he is "Teaching the Sky About Blue" (49).

King, Thomas. 1999. *Truth & Bright Water*. Toronto: HarperFlamingo Canada.

Tracks by Louise Erdrich

This novel, which takes place from 1912-1924, tells the story of what is happening to an Anishinaabe community as their land is being broken up by the Dawes Act. The story focuses on

how the community responds to this change, and the underlying tension of the push for Western development and a Western notion of resources is central to the book. Other books in this series touch on this topic, but *Tracks* has the greatest emphasis on topics related to environmental change.

Erdrich, Louise. 1988. *Tracks*. New York: Henry Holt & Co.

***Ceremony* by Leslie Marmon Silko**

Set in the immediate aftermath of World War II, the novel demonstrates how the health and well-being of a community is tied to the land it is on. It explores the tensions between how white people are using the land and understanding resources and how the Laguna Pueblo people are using the land and understanding resources. There is commentary on schooling, scientific knowledge, and Indian knowledges as well. The book is controversial because Silko wrote about ceremonial things that are not to be shared with outsiders, and her decision to do so upset many in her community. When I've asked elders if it's okay to teach this book given its controversial content, I've been told that it's okay because the ceremonies are stronger than any book.

Silko, Leslie Marmon. 1977. *Ceremony*. New York: The Viking Press.

***The Marrow Thieves* by Cherie Dimaline**

A novel of speculative fiction, *The Marrow Thieves* is set in the not-too-distant future, when climate change has wreaked so much havoc on human's health that white people have lost the ability to dream, which is making them very sick. Native people, who are still able to dream, become the target of a government campaign to

extract their bone marrow and give it to white people so they can dream. The book includes commentary on climate change, clean water, residential schools, and the struggle to survive. Dimaline, Cherie. 2017. *The Marrow Thieves*. Toronto: Cormorant Books Inc.

Joy Harjo

Harjo's poems frequently offer commentary about Indians' changing relationships with the natural world in the face of colonization and assimilation. Harjo has served as poet laureate since 2019 and is the first Native American poet to hold the position.

***National Monuments* by Heid Erdrich**

This collection of poetry is about how white science is comfortable using brown bodies as spectacle, treating these bodies differently than white remains. There are poems about grave markers, anthropologists' representations of brown people, and archaeologists' treatment of brown remains. The book offers commentary on federal Indian policies such as NAGPRA and ARPA, drawing attention to the fact that these regulations meant to protect are doing a marginal job because they rely on Western epistemologies for evaluation.

Erdrich, Heid. 2008. *National Monuments*. East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press.

Craig Santos Perez

Perez, a Chamoru poet, has work that explicitly focuses on environmental issues and offers engagement on environmental change from a Pacific Islander perspective.

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About the Authors

Waziyatawin is a Dakota writer, teacher, and justice advocate from the Pezihutazizi Otunwe (Yellow Medicine Village) in southwestern Minnesota. She earned her Ph.D. in American History from Cornell University and has held tenured positions at Arizona State University and the University of Victoria where she also served as the Indigenous Peoples Research Chair in the Indigenous Governance Program. Currently, Waziyatawin is executive director of the Dakota nonprofit Makoce Ikikcupi, a reparative justice project supporting Dakota reclamation of homeland. She is the author or co/editor of seven volumes, including *What Does Justice Look Like? The Struggle for Liberation in Dakota Homeland* (Living Justice Press, 2008) and, most recently, *Pezihutazizi Oyate Kin: The People of Yellow Medicine* (Living Justice Press, 2019).

Dr. Roxanne Biidabinokwe Gould (Grand Traverse Band Odawa/ Ojibwe) currently serves as associate professor of Indigenous education in the College of Education at the UMN-Duluth. Roxanne's research and work is global with a focus on Indigenous peoples, education, land justice, critical pedagogy of place, ecofeminism, traditional ecological knowledge and environmental sustainability. Her research includes Indigenous sacred site restoration, Indigenous food sovereignty, examination of Bolivia's agreement with Mother Earth and Living Well model, and Indigenous women's water teachings, traditions, and the work they do to protect it.

Clement Loo is an assistant professor of Environmental Studies and the Student Success Coordinator for Equity, Diversity, and Intercultural Programs at the University of Minnesota Morris. He also serves on the Advisory Council and the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee of the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) and is a fellow of the Institute on the Environment's Educator program. His research and teaching focuses on food justice and equitable/inclusive stakeholder consultation as a tool to improve the robustness of scholarship and practice within higher education. In his free time, Clement rides his scooter or uses fishing as an excuse to explore the shores of the many streams and lakes in Minnesota.

Samantha Majhor is an assistant professor of Native American Literature in the English department at Marquette University. Her current project explores the portrayal of natural and cultural materials, like beaded dresses, books, cars, and rivers in Native American literature in order to elucidate long-held indigenous philosophies about human and nonhuman relationality and materiality.

Sara Černe is a visiting assistant professor of English at Northwestern University and a former Franke Fellow at Northwestern's Alice Kaplan Institute for the Humanities. Her first book manuscript centers on race and the environment in twentieth- and twenty-first-century literature along the Mississippi River. Sara grew up in Ljubljana, Slovenia, and has lived in the Midwest for the past six years.

Bonnie Etherington is a Mellon Sawyer Environmental Futures Postdoctoral Associate at the University of Colorado Boulder. She earned her Ph.D. in English from Northwestern University, where she was also a Presidential Fellow. She is at work on a book manuscript entitled *One Salt Water: Writing the Pacific Ocean in Contemporary Indigenous Protest Literatures*, and her first novel, *The Earth Cries Out* (Vintage NZ, 2017), was shortlisted for the William Saroyan International Prize for Writing and long-listed for the New Zealand Book Awards. Bonnie was born in Aotearoa New Zealand and raised in West Papua.

Andrew M. Freiman is a Ph.D. student at the University of Mississippi where he studies representations of the environment and labor in American petro-fictions. He received his M.F.A. in poetry in 2015 and has pieces published in Bayou Magazine, Atticus Review, and Dreginald. He was born in Memphis, Tennessee and raised in Austin, Texas.

Agléška' Rebecca Cohen-Rencountre (enrolled Lower Brule Sioux Tribe) Oglala, Sicangu, Mdewakanton is a Ph.D. candidate in American Studies at the University of Minnesota Twin Cities campus. The university is situated in traditional and modern-day Dakota homelands. Agléška is a Winkte parent, scholar-activist whose dissertation research is based in Rapid City, South Dakota, an urban Indigenous space of where they were born and raised.

Adam W. Coon is assistant professor at the University of Minnesota Morris. He specializes in contemporary Nahua cultural production, contemporary Indigenous literatures, and language revitalization. He analyzes how Nahua authors of the last three decades complement one another in displacing the Mexican nationalist narrative that positions them as "not present in the present" and reduces their ethical perspectives to exotic folklore.

Sarah Peele is a Haida, Tlingit, and Caucasian woman from Hydaburg, Alaska. She is a Haa Yoo X'atángi Deiyí: Our Language Pathway scholar double majoring in Xaad kíl (Haida language) and biology at University of Alaska Southeast. She plans on following a career path that will incorporate her passion for her heritage language, traditional values, and science.

Wendy F. Smythe, Ph.D. is an assistant professor at the University of Minnesota Duluth; she holds a joint appointment between the Departments of American Indian Studies and Earth & Environmental Sciences. She was named the 2019 Professional of the Year by the American Indian Science and Engineering Society for her interdisciplinary research in geoscience, Native Education, and policy. In 2020 Dr. Smythe was elected to the AISES Board of Directors.

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Christine Taitano DeLisle is associate professor of American Indian Studies, University of Minnesota-Twin Cities where she teaches courses on Indigenous resurgence, Indigenous women's history, and public history. DeLisle is CHamoru born and raised in Guåhan (Guam) and her research interests span Indigenous oceans, lands, and waters across Oceania and Turtle Island. She is a member of the Guam-based CHamoru women's advocacy organization, I Hagan Famalåo'an Guåhan, and is currently involved in revitalization projects between Dakota peoples and Native Pacific Islanders of Mni Sota Makoce.

Becca Gercken is an associate professor in English and a founding faculty member of the Native American and Indigenous Studies major. With co-lead Kevin Whalen, Gercken has led the summer "field school" course on Indigenous Education, in which students study contextual literature and archival materials and use that knowledge to craft an understanding of the Morris campus' boarding school history. Gercken received the Horace T. Morse Award for Outstanding Contributions to Undergraduate Education in 2017.