Re-indigenizing the commons

Re-indigenizing the commons

John Milton drew the "line in the sand" in his epic poem <u>Paradise Lost</u> . Writing in the same time as John Locke he narrated the struggle between Good and Evil. Good was the hierarchy of mysticism and wealth. Evil was the state of nature, rebellious and unchained by the rule of eternal Law.

Thomas Hobbs extols the "state of nature" as "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short "

Re-indigenizing the commons

Locke dismissed indigenous life as inferior. He saw that indigenous people were vulnerable to the power manifested in technology, militarism, slavery and capitalism. He accounted for this in their unwillingness to treat the earth and its resources as commodities. Locke dismissed the possibility that indigenous people might "own" property because they had not risen to a level of civilization where they could understand the true nature of wealth and ownership.

The utopian vision was that the most powerful would work together in a kind of contractual diplomacy so that all men who were willing to labour, lead moral lives and submit to the rule of law would prosper. Locke became the principle colonial theorist emulated by great thinkers like Emanuel Kant who once wrote:

"It is...never made clear how the biologically inferior endowments of non- whites could be consistent with this destiny."

Locke's fallacies –

John Locke failed to realize that the "State of Nature" has powerful limitations on deviant economic theories.

He failed to realize that the domestication of human labour would lead to unsustainable exponential increases in human populations.

He also failed to realize the consequences of pollution, environmental degradation and climate change which would be brought about through the commoditisation of the commons".
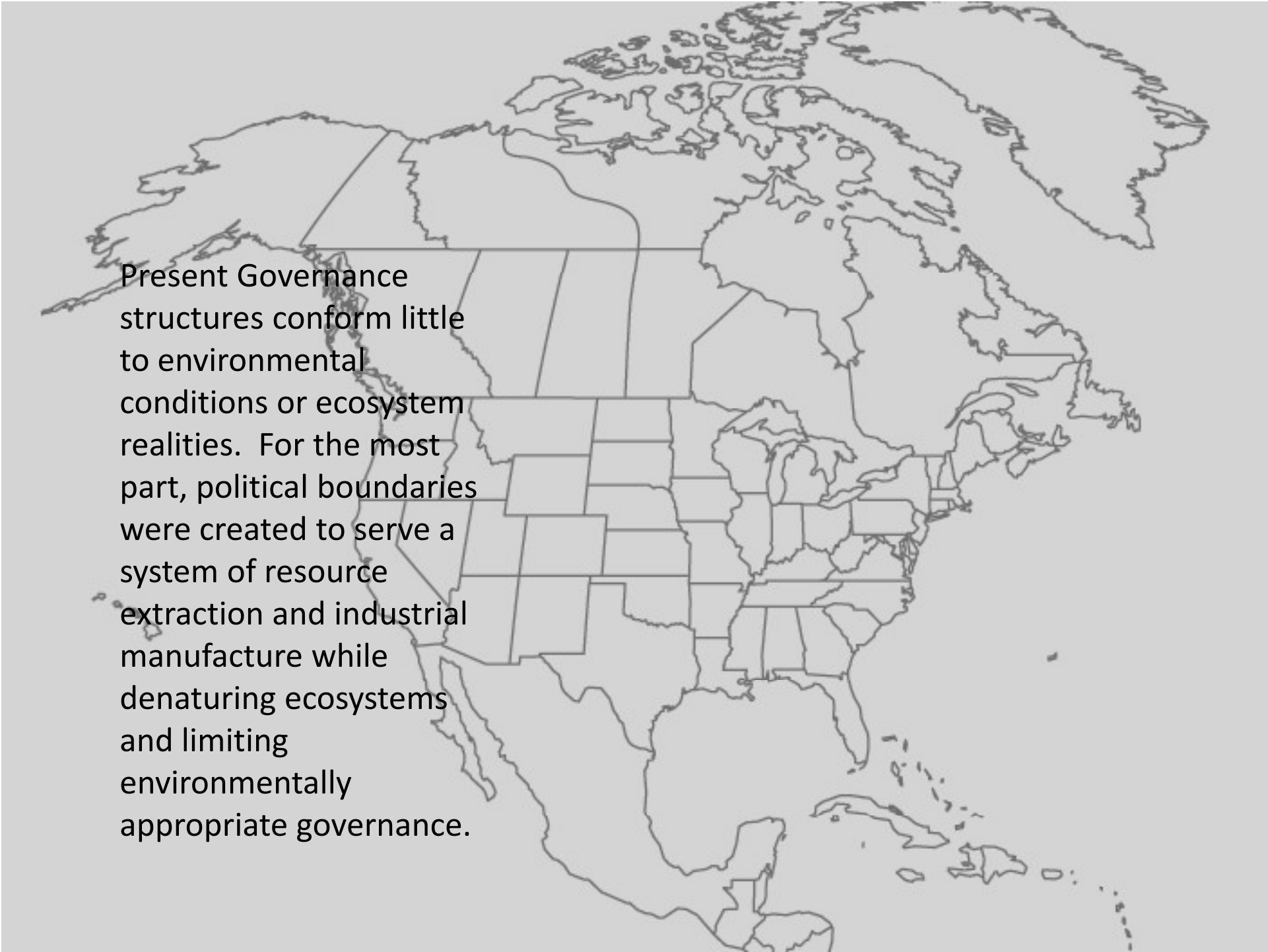
And he failed to understand how externalizing the costs of production on indigenous societies, labour and the environment would lead to a global denunciation of his utopian ideals.

Colonial States
at the end
of time

The architecture of a decolonized society – re-indigenizing the self, community and environment

Present Governance structures conform little to environmental conditions or ecosystem realities. For the most part, political boundaries were created to serve a system of resource extraction and industrial manufacture while denaturing ecosystems and limiting environmentally appropriate governance.

Indigenous Development

Indigenous cultures emerge as human knowledge systems based on relational experience with distinct ecosystems.

Indigenous cultures are epistemologically driven – that is they are determined and reinforced by knowledge acquired through an interaction with complex energetic environments.

Indigenous knowledge systems are complex reflections of empirical local experience, rational discovery, symbolic imagery and social reinforcement.
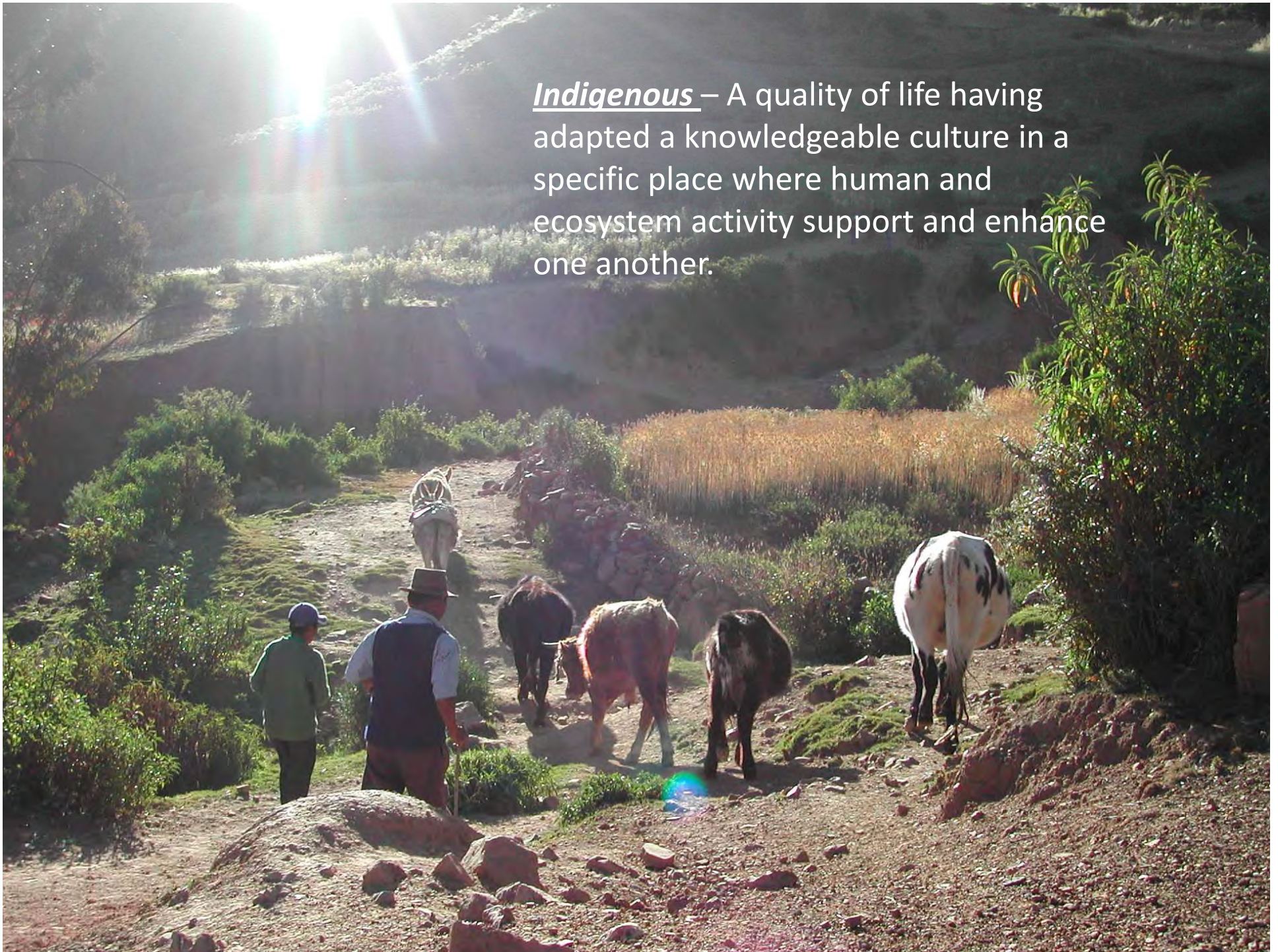
Indigenous Development

Environment determines culture

- Use of energy
- food security
- population levels
- diplomacy and trade
- defensive boundaries
- customary law
- balance with the replenishment cycles

Indigenous – A quality of life having adapted a knowledgeable culture in a specific place where human and ecosystem activity support and enhance one another.

<u>a simple formula</u>

Never consume more matter than can be restored through Replenishment Cycles in a particular ecosystem   C<M(rc)

Never expend more energy than what can be replaced by what you consume C<E(e)

<u>C<M(rc) + C<E(e)</u>

K

Both of these conditions are mitigated by cultural knowledge

Conflict between Colonial and Indigenous Cultures

Language

Technology

Human organization

Militarism

Economics

Law

These six themes illustrate fundamental conflicts between Indigenous peoples and Colonial/Capitalist Nation States

Present social, economic and environmental analysis projects that the synthesized cultures created by colonialism/capitalism are reaching a tipping point where they can no longer maintain balance.

Future scenarios project:

Fortress Capitalism

Bending the Curve and pacifying human populations

Societal breakdown (what the bomb couldn't do we will do to ourselves)

Conflict between Colonial and Indigenous Cultures

These six themes illustrate fundamental conflicts between Indigenous peoples and Colonial/Capitalist Nation States

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A Structural analysis of the difference between indigenous cultural traits and those of modern Nation States suggests that there are alternatives to the principle scenarios suggested in the Bruntland report and those suggested by Kyoto, Rio and Johannesburg.

The solutions lie within the social/cultural realm as apposed to the political or technological

Conflict between Colonial and Indigenous Cultures

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Indigenous peoples account for most of the world's **cultural diversity**. Their distinct ways of life vary considerably from one location to another. Of the estimated 6,000 cultures in the world, between 4,000 and 5,000 are indigenous. Approximately three-quarters of the world's 6,000 languages are spoken by indigenous peoples.

Indigenous languages tend to be verb based.

Non-indigenous languages are technical, lineal and object based.

**Conflict between Colonial
and Indigenous Cultures**

Language

Indigenous technology is communal, locally
applicable and reflective of environmental
realities.

Technology

Knowledge holders are respected as customary
custodians of knowledge.

Human organization

Militarism

Western technology is private property,
universally applied and controlled by statute.

Economics

Knowledge is bought and sold.

Law

Conflict between Colonial and Indigenous Cultures

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Law

Indigenous communities are small in population with lower birthrates. There are no superfluous members

Indigenous Social Class systems while present tend to be horizontal, represented by Clan systems.

Non-indigenous societies experience over-population. Large groups of landless unemployed are maintained in order to respond to variable production needs.

Non-indigenous societies are organized as vertical Class systems in which elite families dominate a nuclear family managerial class which organize and order a wage labour class of disintegrating families. A superfluous underclass is maintained.

What is "a legitimate State"?

"…. has the authority to regulate social relations, extract resources and take actions in the public's name."

Counter Insurgency Manual

U.S. Army & Marine Corps.

Petraeus, Amos, Nagle

Conflict between Colonial and Indigenous Cultures

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Indigenous communities engage in periodic defensive combat to maintain territorial integrity

Indigenous Societies practice exonomy to secure compatible relations and establish defensive allies. . A minimum of community resources are expended on defense.

Indigenous people wage insurgency warfare against colonial enterprises.

Non-indigenous Nation States maintain large regular armies to enforce colonial claims to land and resources and for protection against competing States. A large portion of National resources are expended on maintaining armed forces.

Non-indigenous Nation States occupy Indigenous territory and promote settlement of outsiders.

Non-indigenous Nation States classify insurgents as terrorists.

Conflict between Colonial and Indigenous Cultures

Language

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Indigenous communities engage in lateral trade. Trade values are determined by free exchange.

Within and between Indigenous Societies, trade relations are a means of securing social equity, diplomacy, spirituality and personal gratification.

Indigenous people are limited to choosing to either trade or consume local products. They rely on the replenishment cycle for production.

Non-indigenous Nation States promote a paradigm of private wealth, capital investment and the exploitation of labour and natural resources as the foundation for inverse pyramidal (ever expanding markets) trade growth.

Non-indigenous Nation States permit corporations to manufacture consumer needs and desires as a means of expanding markets.

Non-indigenous Nation States and Multi-national Corporations rely on non-renewable resources to supply industrial growth and expansion.

Conflict between Colonial and Indigenous Cultures

Language

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Law

Indigenous people codify laws through ritual and ceremony.

Indigenous laws correlate with natural laws and natural consequences. While community well being is paramount individual expression and freedom are highly valued.

Indigenous governance is dependent on consensus and leadership is characteristic of strength, generosity and tolerance.

Non-indigenous Nation States codify laws through constitutions and statutes.

Non-indigenous laws pertain to property, citizenship rights and social behaviour. Laws protect the functioning of commercial interests above the environment, and individual and collective rights.

Non-indigenous laws restrict or negate customary laws.

Conflict between Colonial and Indigenous Cultures

Language

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Law

The Meaning of Reconciliation

- Nation States recognize Indigenous groups in a limited fashion and include them as legitimate expressions of culture in a Multi-cultural constellation.

- State authorized "First Nations" are permitted to negotiate limited benefits and Aboriginal rights which are recognized in Statute law in exchange for termination of Indigenous custom, governance and territorial claims within their homelands.

- First Nations partner with corporations in efforts to relieve poverty and obtain protection.

Remedies for Eco-Human Failure

Concepts:

Indigenous cultures are attainable through learning and practice.

While resisting colonial development avoid becoming only cultures of resistance.

Institute and practice customary laws at the local ecosystem level and meaningful negotiations within macro systems.

Institute and evolve customary laws within existing constitutional and statute law.

Remedies for Eco-Human Failure

Human activity that alters the land to accommodate social, cultural, spiritual and economic interests is known as development. All communities engage in some form or level of development in order to secure advantages that sustain and enrich the community and its individuals. Altering the land requires conscious and moral decisions that recognise in practice responsibility for the spirit of the land and the future generations who will also be dependent on it.

Walking lightly on the land

A human can not really possess the land, for when his time passes the land remains. Algonquin people must respect that the life of the land is independent of human existence and that creation has its own purpose beyond sustaining human life. Algonquin people should regard the land as a living creature and should interfere as little as possible with its expressions.

Remedies for Eco-Human Failure

Taking only what is needed

A human can only take so much until he is full; taking more will ensure that his children starve. When using the land and its resources Algonquins need to be aware of the purpose of their use and consider how their use will affect the wider environment. Extravagant exploitation that is driven by self interest or to increase one's reputation should be avoided. An Algonquin community should measure the consequences of development with its long term dependency on the land. When the land is disturbed for development a plan of remediation and protection of natural processes needs to be developed and implemented as a condition of the completion of the project.

Listening to the Elders

It is easy to listen to an Elder when he or she tells you what you want to hear, but much harder when they tell you what you need to know. Elders are the keepers of our knowledge and have a more complete understanding of the world than others who are younger. Elders who have worked on the land and depended upon it for their life and livelihoods have developed a deep appreciation and respect for the living world. The creator has given Elders the capacity for wisdom. These men and women are the most experienced scientists, counsellors, and warriors. The community should listen carefully and actively to the Elders in regard to the development of land.

Remedies for Eco-Human Failure

Knowing the land

One can assume anything in idle talk, but a warrior and provider must have knowledge and they must seek an understanding of what they do not know. A warrior and provider must often respond to the unknown so learning is the key to overcoming ignorance. It is essential to success to understand in both fact and concept how the world works. Before affecting change in the land for development, the land and its many relationships and processes should be understood and known. As well, the affects of any phase of development should be evaluated and understood.

Honouring the relationship between the land and the people

The people are of the earth in form and the most dependent of all creatures; our spirits are connected in a great journey. Each creature within creation has a purpose. When we develop the land it is imperative that each person have a role and take responsibility for the consequences of our actions. Every member of the community should be included in the benefits that come from development through participation in the processes of evaluation, creativity, preparation, construction, leadership and decision making. Through the process of development the community as a whole should be developed for the better.

Remedies for Eco-Human Failure

Protecting the people and the sacred relationship to the land

The role of the warrior is to keep the peace and protect the people. As long as there are peoples who would subvert the sacred relationship between the land and the Algonquin people there will be warriors. Algonquin warriors must act with respect for peaceful accommodation while ensuring the rights and wellbeing of the Algonquin people are not diminished or violated. A warrior understands the consequences of violent action and seeks non-violent means of achieving success. Expressions of control, racism or paternalism will be regarded as violence against the Algonquin people and will not be left unanswered.

Making relations

The beauty of this world is expressed in its many colours and forms and in the complexity of its meanings and spirits. There are many human beings beyond the Algonquin community who share recognition of the abiding responsibility we have to our homeland and the greater world. We need to respect these people as brothers and sisters and work with them in mutually supportive ways. We need to listen to good advice when it is given in a respectful way as though it is given by a brother or sister.

Remedies for Eco-Human Failure

Concepts:

work with the local environment to create indigenous culture.

Create narratives, songs and stories that celebrate and reinforce justice, responsibility and health.

Socialize your children to be healthy, intelligent and respectful of Elders. Teach them that learning is a life long vocation and a gift from the creator. Teach your children to take care of themselves and the land.

Remedies for Eco-Human Failure

Concepts:

change yourself

No matter how old you are, open your mind to the possibilities of renewal.

Be willing to fight and sacrifice everything you presently have to attain a better future.

Recognize that the only fundamental right for each person born on this planet is the right to live in harmony with the earth. That this right is also the fundamental human responsibility.