Making Relatives as Pedagogy: Unsettling Universities Towards Human Maturation

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Abstract: The active, living presence of Land is regularly left out of most designs of teaching and learning. This article asks us to unsettle the assumptions and normative logics of so-called "higher" education and to breathe dissonance and radical relationship with Land into our disciplines. Radical relationalities bring us closer to individual and collective well-being. We demonstrate shared pedagogical design principles across two sub-disciplines of education and course content areas and highlight tensions and future possibilities. Cultivating a relational, Land-based pedagogy is possible in every discipline and can propel us and our students toward human maturation and meaningful coexistence.

Keywords: Land-based pedagogy, human maturation, relational, environmental humanities, education

Introduction

Land (intentionally capitalized here as actor and teacher) has become increasingly central to conversations on Indigenous presence and sovereignty across Turtle Island. Similarly, Land is crucial to global discussions of climate change, biodiversity, human health and food systems. And yet, the active, living presences of Land is regularly left out of most designs of teaching and learning. This explicit erasure of the livingness of place in our curricular structures, in our courses, in our meetings and programmatic orientations are ongoing ways that settler colonialism continues to perpetuate Indigenous erasure and structure problematic nature-culture divides (Bang et al.; Simpson; Deloria Jr. and Wildcat). In this article, we ask how might we renew our relationships with the peoples and places where we live and learn? In the age of land acknowledgements, how might we more deeply unsettle land-grab institutions from within?

Our offerings intentionally focus on the imaginative, re-membering, and future dreaming practices that support the enactment of distinct worlds in two university courses. We align here with the special issue's call for "unsettling" as verb that calls for "disquiet and dissonance" while also inviting other "modes of learning, and ways of being in the world" (Running Grass; Tomashow, this issue). In considering "unsettling" as practice, we start from relationality as the first ontological grounds of our courses and then layer on practices of settler colonial refusal. We intentionally weave cycles of creation and critique; beginning with re-membering stories always embedded in the landscape, returning to ourselves, and cultivating shared commitments to "inter-being and interconnectedness" (Dillard). We then use these relational ethics as a lens to examine and dismantle ongoing structures and experiences of settler colonialism, such as the ontological violences that children, young people, Black, Indigenous and other People of Color experience every day. We wanted to design courses that bring us closer to individual and collective well-being through radical relationalities as "criticality alone" does not "raise thriving children" (Bang), and we add, nor communities.

Both of us, Meixi and Katie, have histories working with young people in land-based learning and teaching. We also teach and research from within a university. Even though universities are less regulated by curriculum standards and testing regimes in K-12 education systems, universities continue to be notorious for systematically erasing the primacy of Land and place in teaching and learning. We have tried in our courses here to directly challenge these settled assumptions, the normative logics that continue to structure hierarchies of knowledge (whose knowledge counts and the bounds of legitimate sense-making), the primacy of learning indoors (vs outdoors), reading as only referring to the written text (vs reading lands and waters), and chronological time structures that are timetable based (vs based on seasons or the sun).

These are settled expectations, steeped in whiteness and assumptions that dominant society "have come to expect and rely on' across the many contexts of daily life (Harris, p. 277 as cited in Bang et al).

A Few Key Terms

By ***Land***, we mean the histories and geologic configurations - the physical geographic entities that make it up (e.g. rivers, rocks, plants, humans, city lots), as well as the space - the underlying ethics, principles, priorities, philosophies and embodied and spiritual ways of being (Styres 49). In this way, Land includes various timescales and histories of a place that explicitly attends to Indigenous presence and relationality. We use Land to include the ongoing mutual constitution of nature-culture relations. We too are Land; our flesh is an extension of the earth (Watts). From Indigenous perspectives, all life emerges from Land. Land is interlocutor, theorist, strategist, and co-designer of the interconnectedness of life. Land/water/skies hold memories of multigenerational life, of Indigenous narratives, and sociopolitical accounts of place, and the dynamic intellectual systems that emerge from life on Land (Meixi and Elliott).

Settler colonialism is a social structure that has always revolved around Land (Alfred; Simpson; Goeman). This form of colonization erases already established and functioning relationships, governmental structures, knowledge systems and ethical laws to inscribe settler homeland on Indigenous territory. Through ongoing acts of physical and conceptual domination, settler colonialism disrupts healthy and mutually regenerative Land relations to instead engrave their own social, political, and cultural paradigms onto the soils, waters, and skies of Indigenous territories (Whyte et al.). These colonial logics of domination and entitlement justify human

ownership of Land and bodies towards maintaining racialized or caste-based superiority and capital accumulation (Wilkerson).

We use ***relationalities*** similarly to not only consider nature-culture divides but the everyday ontological and epistemological transformations that uphold Indigenous law, presence, and sovereignty (Borrows; Todd; Goeman). Indigenous scholars have long highlighted the centrality of in-relation methodologies (Tachine and Nicolazzo) and relational ethics of consent, responsibility, and respect among humans and the natural world required for mutual thriving on earth as Indigenous legal theory (Whyte; Simpson). Learning to be in-relation requires the "ability to reflect on the ordinary things of life and discover their real meaning and the proper way to understand them when they appear in our lives" what (Deloria) names as human maturation (p. 13, cited in Bang, Learning). Human maturation then is related to how we begin to understand the relation of ordinary things to ourselves - how we learn our everyday roles, responsibilities, and complicities within larger structures of power, violence, erasure, domination, and white supremacy. In an interpretation of Deloria, Richardson writes that this "process of maturation in the relational as most meaningful—the joining of ontology (the always already being in relations) with the epistemic (knowledge and meaning making as already relational)" (Richardson, 227 as cited in Bang, Learning). It is through and within these relationalities that we might make and re-make relatives and enact more sustainable and just worlds.

Finally, we intentionally use ***universities and colleges*** throughout this paper rather than "higher education". In the same movement to unsettle the environmental humanities, we unsettle the use of the term "higher education." "Higher education" as a term for us flirts with settler

complicity and white supremacy that perpetuate explicit and implicit hierarchies of knowledge and impose singular pathways to knowing. Higher education than what? Or higher than whom? At the same time, we recognize that "higher education" is an established field in itself and that accredited degrees come with deep privilege and power. As authors with PhDs, we benefit from this privilege. Yet given the rich knowledges of Land itself, and the non-degree knowledges that have and always continue to exist in place and community, we see this reframe as an important shift in our sensibilities around whose and what knowledges count and are valid for the fields of education, environmental studies and humanities, along with many others.

Towards Human Maturation in Two University Courses

This paper brings together the experiences of two university classrooms with a core focus of understanding: What making-relative practices supported human maturation across an undergraduate and graduate land-based course? In what ways did these practices create, critique, and unsettle individual and collective relationships with peoples and the places where we live and learn? By *practices* we mean class routines, course activities and assignments. Specifically, we offer three shared key *pedagogical design principles* that guided our courses' practices and facilitated students' relational meaning-making of Land and life. These include (1) Histories In-Relation, (2) Phenology In-Relation, and (3) Time In-Relation. Given the rapid shifts in the globe at this time in human history, we need to consider how local knowledges can reveal themselves through place-based pedagogies like walking and storying in community, and how these shape our active engagements with place - wherever we live and learn.

In the following sections we name the ways two seemingly distinct sub-disciplines of education (an undergraduate course in Youth Studies and a graduate course on land and water-based

pedagogies) utilize the environment and 'place' to disrupt this divide in their classrooms. First, we briefly describe our two courses, their commitments and related assignments that we engaged in. Then we do a deeper dive into the principles and practices of Making Relatives as Pedagogy. In this section, we describe course practices and the related principles behind their design. Finally, we reflect on some felt tensions that we had to balance when enacting these in-relation pedagogies towards human maturation. These include holding the personal, the public, and collective, the poetic and the political, and finally practices of place-keeping and place-making as we journeyed together in the hard work of relative-making with our students in these courses (See Table 1 for Making Relatives as Pedagogy Framework).

	Design Principle 1: *(Hi)stories In-Relation*	**Design Principle 2:** *Phenology In-Relation*	**Design Principle 3:** *Time In-Relation*
Youth Studies Practices	Dis-orienting the university	Land and Self reflections	Ancestor projects
Comparative Education Practices	Cartographies of resurgence	Introductions in-place	Akinoomaage Socioecological timescales
Emergent Creative Tensions in Making Relatives 1. Poetic, Painful, and the Political 2. Personal and the Public/Collective 3. Placekeeping and Placemaking			

Table 1. Making Relatives as Pedagogy Framework

We recognize that every student has a unique experience in the class. As such, we do not examine the student responses and experiences of the course, that is another paper. Our focus here is our own sense-making of our course design, how we reflected on our courses, being self-aware and self-critical of our own course practices, our assignments and activities, and remembering the ethical and political dimensions of why we introduced ideas and what we

sought to dream and enact into existence. Additionally, we reflected on what was common and different among our two courses and our own learnings within them. We now turn to these.

Course 1 - Youth Studies: History and Philosophy of Youth (Undergraduate)

This in-person undergraduate course is offered in the Youth Studies program in the College of Education and Human Development. It is a foundational course required of students who are majoring in Youth Studies (an interdisciplinary program with intellectual roots in informal education) to learn about the history and ideas of youth/youthhood as well as the professional practices of youth work that have emerged in response. Through the use of environment/place in a Youth Studies course, the course introduces the history and philosophy of youth as a category of chronological importance (*or not*). This course utilizes place in literal and metaphoric ways, pushing students to uncover norms, values and assumptions of age and development as they are aligned with traditions of settler colonialism (i.e. the domination and "development" of land and Indigenous peoples that is commonly represented as progress).

This class presents the nature-culture divide as a metaphor for development that has subsequently resulted in a divide between adults and youth. We begin with an exploration of "development" unpacking its association with moral positions and terms such as primitive, race, progress and civilization, while analyzing the ways in which our places (i.e. university, state, nation) participated in this development. Development here is synonymous with civilization; Western European powers sought to develop both people and Land, turning them into something recognizable and reflective of themselves and their belief systems.

We then introduce the ways that the fields of child and youth development grafted these ideas onto our modern understanding of young people producing the idea of the child as not-yet–civilized or what Lesko refers to as the *child-as-primitive*. The "modern child" presents with biopsychosocial stages of development that correspond to evolutionary epochs of racial development: pre-human, tribal, medieval, civilized. For example, scholars believed "the modern individual begins his career at precisely the same point which each cave-man started" (Wells 371), the child has "inherited certain tendencies from his ancestry" (Guise) and the child's play "resembles the pursuits of primitive man" (Patrick 472).

Armed with this historic knowledge we explore competing perspectives and cultural philosophies of youth and analyze the dominance of W.E.I.R.D. –Western, educated, industrialized, rich and democratic (Heinrich et al.) psychological perspectives and the adult-designed programming and science that results from them (Johnston-Goodstar). Through a series of classroom activities and assignments, we use place/Land and the development of place/Land and Indigenous peoples as a way to unsettle "development" in our ideas about and work with young people. We ask, how has development harmed? Whose versions of "good" and desirable child, family and community are valued? How are those ideas represented in our professional practices with youth? Who gets to decide who is developed, and into what?

Finally, we reclaim place/Land as a mode of professional practice that separates itself from development and reconnects with self-determined being and mutuality. Place/Land-based youth work has long been part of professional practices such as: adventure playgrounds, outdoor education, youth climate activism and food sovereignty, conservation corps and land-based

trauma healing practices (in contrast to the more problematic practice of Land as punishment or disciplinarian as found in boot camps for juvenile "delinquents" or outdoor education for behavior modification). Place-based practices reconnect youth with place/Land, walking alongside them to build skills and capacities, to heal, grow and change and to learn and engage with self-determined interests (careers, hobbies etc.).

Course 2 - Land and Water-based Pedagogies (Graduate Seminar)

This online graduate seminar is offered in the Comparative and International Development Education program in the Organization, Leadership, and Policy Development department, also in the College of Education and Human Development. Briefly, the seminar was broadly interested in the centrality of lands, waters, skies, and place as core determinants of physical, intellectual, ecological and mental health, and how to design for more just and flourishing worlds. A key question in this class is: How might we design and study pedagogies that attune to dynamic nature-culture relationships that are constitutive of place? How can ideas of relative-ness in teaching and learning help disrupt human supremacy as the settled infrastructures and normative societal frames of teaching and learning?

The course itself had theoretical, enacted, and design components. Theoretical components included core course readings and reflections on land-based and Indigenous approaches to strengthening Indigenous families, communities, and nations. Our discussion of land and waters also included a critical focus on the impacts of settler colonialism, land dispossession, economic displacement, and resource extraction, and also how Land is tied to Indigenous sovereignty, human maturation, socioecological justice, and Black joy and liberation. Enacted components

included living and practicing land-based design methodologies and pedagogies of mobility and how to study them through attention to land and water-based phenomena, and pedagogies such as Indigenous making, reading, walking and storying lands (Marin and Bang). Design components culminated in the form of culminating educational design projects (see https://tinyurl.com/landeducationumn). Overall, this course takes up Land and place-based education as a critical way to enact, study, and design for more ethical, just, and climate resilient futures.

Together we explored walking as pedagogy in an online format, and the ways that walking provided relational and intellectual openings to engage in as a class. Of special interest to my (Meixi's) most recent class, the acts of walking and learning became in service of the design of the land-based curriculum that focused on revitalizing Indigenous languages, specifically Ojibwemowin. Course activities such as reading, walking and storying lands directly supported their educational designs and the intersection of lands and languages and the ways in which language furthered our understandings of land.

The synchronous virtual seminar format allowed students who were working and teaching in distinct land-based contexts across the state the opportunity to stay within their own communities while taking classes at the university. At the same time, herein lay the challenge and opportunity to imagine a land-based course that was almost 100% virtual. Thus, central to the course was to engage in a land ethnography, what we termed Akinoomaage journal entries. The name Akinoomage journal is based on Basil Johnston's use of the Akinomaage to mean learning by observation. "He says the word is formed from two roots: *aki:noomaage.* In his description, *aki*

means “earth” and *noommage* means “to point towards and take direction from". While there are differences in interpretation and etymology, both concepts convey the idea that teaching and learning occurs through observing the earth and those around us.” (Borrows 150).

A core component of the class was thus Akinoomaage - to learn and receive direction from the earth. The assignment was described in this way:

> Every week you will spend at least 30 minutes noticing a particular place that is significant (to you, to your community, to the ways that life is lived where you make home). Four times over the course of the semester there will be a new prompt and dimension of how/who/what to notice, or how to read this place as it changes over weekly times, seasonal times, sociohistorical times. Each **akinoomaage** journal entry (x4) will consist of what you learn and come to notice in place as a way to build your own relationships with a land and notice the ways that land and our natural world relatives are teaching us. This practice is best focused on a very local, dynamic context as a kind of reflective practice so that we might attend to how we are actually learning from land, how language develops and is sustained in relation to lands, how trauma and healing might emerge within and from lands, how stories might emerge and be created all the time with lands, and how we witness consent, reciprocity, and relationalities in emotive and embodied ways as part of our theorizing. A key goal of this practice is to strengthen our relationships to a particular place, to co-construct knowledge and theories with lands and support our methodological practices of observing, listening, and storying in embodied ways.

For our seminar, these journal entries formed the foundation for much of our dialogue for emplacing our readings and our relationships within the class.

Making Relatives/Relationality as Pedagogy

1. *(Hi)stories In-Relation: Critical storying/mapping*

Across both of our courses, we engaged with practices of critical pedagogies of place (Gruenewald) and critical storymapping in ways that open up multiple ways of knowing and sense-making with the world or what (Warren et al.) call onto-epistemic heterogeneity. Critical story/mapping underscores the urgency of exposing the ways "settler colonial society is built on the violent erasures of alternative modes of mapping and geographic understandings" (Goeman). Instead, "remapping creates a situation where settler colonialism is no longer relevant, nor determinative of Indigenous futurities" (Recollet 94).

In the Youth Studies course, we use an activity we colloquially refer to as "dis-orienting the university". Jumping off of the undergraduate tradition of "orienting" students with campus tours and inspired by Dakota historians sacred sites tours on campus (St. Clair), we work to dis-orient students. We map the collective history of our place/Land by starting our course with a tour of campus. We identify buildings and narratives across our place. We ask questions like: What was this person's role in the university and in settler colonial society and what ideas did they leave behind? What was here before and what additional ideas can we uncover? How do these pieces form a larger narrative? We collectively uncover patterns of land theft, disingenuous business practices and policy advocacy that systematically disenfranchised and dispossessed our states indigenous populations (LandGrabU). We locate violations of human subjects protections and the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (TRUTH). We find an active Eugenics Department and administrators that promoted racial segregation and political

surveillance of students and faculty. In uncovering layers of original (hi)story and institutional complicity, we also begin weaving new stories.

In the Land and Water pedagogies course, students engaged in two (re)mapping activities, one of their home and neighborhood community and another of sacred places connected by water. Our final Akinoomaage journal entry engaged with (Fujikane)'s idea of "cartographies of resurgence" where we were mapping interconnectedness and storying sacred land and waterscapes. In preparation to engage more in water pedagogies, this journal entry focused on what flows beneath and above layers of land, substrates of soil, and water memory and chosen pathways. For this journal entry, students created an art-map representation and wrote a short paragraph of your water noticing considering the following three prompts.

1. Where and how are the waterways flowing? What flows beneath?
2. How are these waterways connected to other kinds, e.g. plants, skies, rocks, draining systems, etc.?
3. What stories might you know and or imagine along these waterways?

Particularly within discourses of climate anxiety and eco-grief, stories and narrative to the multiplicities of place help attend not only to critical construals of harm, erasure, and domination but also to the cultivation of hope, joy, and healing at individual and collective scales. The mapping of waterways prompted the reflection on the multiple layers of the earth and water, that they hold multiple stories that we know and carry from past and future ancestors. In this way, the joining of being (onto) and knowing (epistemic) is embedded within the act of journaling and connecting currents and flows of water to the ways we are connected ourselves. Critical story/mapping was an opening for heterogeneity and the knowing of multiple layers of stories in

a dis-orientation on campus (*The Danger of a Single Story*). (His)stories in-relation as a kind of making relatives pedagogy unsettles the singular zero-point narratives of place, of erasure, of what's right and wrong, that so often foreclose futures and the living possibilities of being in relation. Instead, critical story/mapping emplaces us in these histories as part of maturation where learning how to be better humans leaves us open to the endless possibilities of being in relation and letting ourselves be transformed by them.

2. Phenology In-Relation: People in Places

The second design principle we noticed was attending to the phenology of place. By phenology, we mean to interrelate, study, and observe the relationships, timing, cyclical patterns of events in the natural world in which we humans are a part. Here we take a distinct departure from settled notions of phenology in the Euro-scientific worlds where humans are separate from natural world phenology. Across our course designs, we ask students to learn to see, feel, listen, smell, speak, sense the livingness of the places where they are journaling and the livingness of ourselves - our own lives and daily transformations as "humans being" (in contrast to the object *human beings*, for additional conversation, see Krawek) in the world who participate every day in the places where we learn and travel. This requires an attention to the embodied-ness of learning with our whole bodies in place.

In the Land and Water Pedagogies seminar, every week we had a student lead the class with a Storywalk introductions-in-place. This included a 5–10-minute walk around a site of your choice, a place of importance, a place of belonging and "home" as a way of becoming to know each other - *in-place*. Each walk illuminated that person as a composite of the natural world relations they belonged to. Students were also provided Learning in Places Neighborhood Walk

activity frameworks to consider the matrix of species and behaviors, relationships, and lands and waters and map them onto particular observations (what do you see, notice, hear in place), connections (who else might need these flowers, how is this river changing), and purpose (why is it important to learn, what is this flower's role here) (Learning in Places) https://learninginplaces.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/1.A-Sharing-Places-Neighborhood-Walk-2.pdf). Importantly as part of the Storywalk Introductions-in-place, we asked collectively how am I, how are *we* learning and receiving direction from the phenology of this place? How are we changed and continue to co-create and change through it?

Similarly in the Youth Studies course, we use phenology to reflect on relationship and transformation. We ask students to select a place/Land and to sit in that place four times over the course of the semester. Students are asked to document their observations: What do they see, smell, feel and hear around them? Each return they are prompted by: What remains? What has changed? Finally, students are asked to reflect on change as development: How are change and development related? What are the differences between non-interference, presence with and facilitated development in this context? How do you apply the lessons of the course and this assignment to your work with young people?

Making relatives as pedagogy here was supported by a series of reciprocal embodied emplacements in the landscape. On one hand, students are encouraged to observe the beings of a place and their cycles, while also thinking about their own relationships and cycles and how place *makes* us all. Phenology requires mutuality and non-linear thinking, and it makes space for the recognition that the Land has sovereignty all its own. Phenology in-relation discussions often then extended to include discussions of power, belonging and orientations towards the future.

Storywalking and being in lands reflected back to us our practices as educators and youth workers, teaching us about ourselves, our specialized roles in these Lands, and who and how we should become as humans.

3. Time In-Relation: Epochs, Seasons & Timescales

Time is another dimension that is unsettled in order to support individual and collective sense-making with lands, waters, and skies. A theme across the two courses was to reframe notions and layers of time as dictated by the clock. We had to intentionally name the ways settler conditioning through chronological time and neoliberal agendas is pervasive in our everyday lives (Springgay and Truman). Unsettling time can play a "central role in how we think about endurance, rhythm, movement, relationality, collectivity, disruption, and futurity" in ways that are not only sequential and progressive (Springgay and Truman). Through both playing with the pluralities of time, we also engaged in emplacing ourselves within multiple flows of time, respecting the different timescales present within a place, and reflecting and refracting ourselves within these interconnected flows.

Expanding notions of time in our classes involved re-thinking epochs of childhood, facilitated thinking across layers of time and timescales, and gentle speculative practices about the future. For example, in the Youth Studies course, students produce Ancestor projects. Each student selects an ancestor of their choice; they study that ancestor's experience of childhood/youthhood in particular era, place/Land and culture. They begin by presenting what a "typical childhood" looked like for their ancestor: With whom did they "do life"? What were their daily patterns? What conditions surrounded them? Grounded in an intimate biography of each ancestor, we compare and contrast across era, place and culture asking: What social eras,

policies, technologies impacted your ancestors' childhood? What did this look like in other areas around the world at that time? What were their physical surroundings i.e. what did their childhood look, smell, feel like? How did they interact with their place/Land? What norms and expectations of class, gender and culture were enacted?

While the learning present across student and semester are too numerous to detail, the projects take us on a journey across time and space where "12 year old" can be working as a gentleman's servant to escape a famine, honing your skills on a machete to steward the forest with your uncles, serving as a child soldier, moving into a dorm to pursue a sporting dream or attending an after-school session of the Campfire Girls. Our excavation across time begs us the question, what is a "normal" childhood anyway? What do we mean when we say, "let them be kids"? And of course, if child/youthhood isn't a monolithic, chronological reality, what does this require of our youth work?

The Land and Water Pedagogies Course drew from another helpful tool from the Learning in Places collaborative, their Socioecological Histories of Place framework (See below, Learning in Places Collaborative). This framework illustrates layers of time at the scales of a) hydrogeologic time (land formations and histories of oceans), b) plant, animal, and soil time, c) Indigenous people's time that recognizes Indigenous sovereignty and places, d) nation-state time that includes human movements across continents, political, and economic structures, and "powered shifts in technology", e) global time (how local places are impacted by global phenomena), f) celestial time which includes the attention to the sun, moon, planets, and other astronomical phenomena, and finally g) living ethical responsibilities and possibilities to engage in possible stories and enactments of the future. While all these timescales are deeply co-constituted and co-present in any place, the visibility of these layers support students' deeper

understandings of self-in-place and the multiple scales of time in which life on land is connected to others.

Fig. 1 Socio-Ecological Histories of Places diagram, Learning in Places Collaborative 2023

Through thinking across scales of time, the course scaffolded students' attention to epochs and timescales by drawing out time as a dimension to consider their own lifecycles as related to other socioecological timeframes. Similar to phenology in-relation, time in-relation is not a "homogeneous measure of universal movement along a singular axis, we can think of it as plural, less as a temporality than temporalities. From this perspective, there is no singular unfolding of

time, but, instead, varied temporal formations that have their own rhythms—patterns of consistency and transformation that emerge immanently out of the multifaceted and shifting sets of relationships that constitute those formations and out of the interactions among those formations" (Rifkin).

When considering relationalities based on ongoing consensual relations with all people - human and more-than-human, we considered what gentle futures might look like (Meixi). This involves the ways in which we engage in projecting and speculating ourselves into the future, always being in conversation, always in humility, and always trying to move with others in consensual and shifting ways. The Akinoomaage journaling in the Land and Water pedagogies class supported individual and collective practices of learning to listen to the invites and the 'no's of Land and each other. It required us to respect the multiple rhythms in place. These were important to help check our practices of futurity, that we resist replicating settler logics of futurities by inserting or pushing ourselves into futures that we are not invited to be a part of. It is learning this humility, these ways to shift with another's time that we believe can support the practice of human maturation through these making-relatives pedagogies.

Creative Tensions & Reflections

Across the three principles of (hi)stories in-relation, phenology in-relation, and time in-relation, we find that holding creative tensions was foundational to navigating the practices and possibilities of human maturation. We name three tensions here: (a) the poetic and the political, (b) the personal and the public/collective, and (c) placekeeping and placemaking.

Poetic, Painful, and the Political

First teaching with lands required us both as instructors and for those in our classes to hold the painful, poetic and political. This refers to the duality of finding the interweaves and points of tension between deep grief, loss at the destruction of our planet, anger at the pervasive injustice in schools and youth systems and in Indigenous erasure, *and also* the groundswells of hope and healing, to enact everyday worlds that are more reflective of the kinds of beauty, intention, and relationality that we desire now and into the future. It is this poetic attention to detail and the courage to imagine futures, collective balance, consensual relationships that is a part that holds space for collective freedom dreaming and Black and Indigenous radical imaginations "in spite of being occupied" (Simpson 153).

In both courses, we also had to be conscious of the ways that these activities might open up historically charged, complex, painful pasts and complicit futures for students. We are attempting to make relatives in worlds (and lives) that at times, offer painful, personal experience. Depending on the moment and the student, our content and activities can be challenging, triggering, soothing and/or healing. For example, we recall a case of Ava, a student in another land-based course who engaged in similar land-based activities to process her brother's death in an avalanche (See Elliott et al, in press for a detailed example). Through reflective exercises and foregrounding nature-culture relations, Ava renewed her understandings of personal and familial relationships with snow and sense-making of processes of life and death. Other students have grappled with histories of forced relocation, grieved land dispossession or remembered ancestral traumas and likewise, found healing or new perspectives.

While some of us have training in trauma-informed pedagogies and practices, these are not necessarily a common skillset of every faculty member or teacher, We do not believe however that the possibility of pain should dissuade us from engaging Land-based pedagogies

any more than it should dissuade us from engaging critical pedagogies. First, painful moments occur in many classrooms. Second, the attuned observation and heightened senses that prepare us to engage with Land and more-than-human relatives, also prepare us to poetically engage with students. Finally, we recognize and underscore the power of relation; the act of making relatives does not solely occur with walking and reflecting on places but also *with one another.* We explicitly design for, state, and enact relational qualities in our classes which mirror the politics and ethics in our land-based activities and assignments. For example, creating shared norms about trust, dialogic listening, sharing our own vulnerabilities as instructors provide a foundation by which we support students' individual sense-making, and collective conversations on shared desired futures. While each instructor must assess and be transparent about their own limits as they center relative-making as pedagogy (i.e. teaching is not clinical therapeutic intervention), we believe the benefits are innumerable.

Direct embodied experiences expand possibilities of resurgence and renewal based in ancestral connections and future-building. Leanna Betasamosake Simpson writes, "Answers to how to rebuild and how to resurge are therefore derived from a web of consensual relationships that is infused with movement (kinetic) through lived experience and embodiment. Intellectual knowledge is not enough on its own. Neither is spiritual knowledge or emotional knowledge. All kinds of knowledge are important and necessary in a communal and emergent balance" (162). We find that it is within this emergent balance, this dance across the poetic and the political that we continue to generate new systems of intelligences (in the plural) that guide the ways we act and move in the places where we live. Importantly we must be versed first in the poetics of emplacement, within their dynamic web of relations of creation before critique. Starting from the seeds of renewal and regeneration does not require colonization in order to decolonize; we have

already always been self-determining and free. Poetics offers those reaches for beauty and elegance; those ethics lead the way through the political.

Personal and Public

The second tension we name here is the personal and the public and collective. The three practices mentioned above point to the important interplay between the deeply personal manner of relationality within the larger flows and movements of the collective. Deloria writes that the "universe is personal and therefore, must be approached in a personal manner" (Deloria Jr. and Wildcat 23). Our courses engaged with each student finding their own place in the universe, their unique roles and responsibilities to place, and the places they carried within them while also considering their roles in larger historical processes, intergenerational thriving and trauma, complicity in structures of colonialism, and collective movement that have always been ongoing. We had to work on fluidly, gently, and courageously "jumping scales" beginning with a "single person and their body" (Harjo 45), then to the "collective level where knowledge production, power, and geographies are staged". Moving seamlessly across scales of time also asks us to take "ontological risks" where "no one knows how to do that in advance of coming together in composition" (Haraway). It required courage and quiet confrontations; and the simultaneous de-centering and re-centering of the personal within the collective as new units of analysis within notions of well-being and thriving. The multiplicity and simultaneity of scales was critical to building relational futures in everyday ways.

It is important to note that while an emphasis on walking can be complicit in ableism, we tried hard to resist normative, exclusionary frames of Land-based pedagogy, walking and mobility. Together we engage in in-place reflections and mobilities from the lens of the growing

and vibrant work of critical disability and queer ecologies and examined our own unique practices of walking for expansive notions of mobility. Ways of walking, seeing and hearing are deeply personal, based on the current state of our bodies - if we are tired, hurt, whole, joyous, anxious, excited. Students in our classes who were seeing or hearing-impaired have been critical co-collaborators in class. Each way of walking (wayfinding, skipping, dragging, limping, paddling, balancing, and so many more!), speaking, seeing, feeling, and hearing (colors, winds, words) is additive to the ways that we collectively understand Lands and our bodies as extensions of a dynamic landscape.

Importantly critical disability scholars highlight the ways that movement, mobilities, and walking in all its forms are akin to what Eli Clare calls "brilliant imperfection… that resists the pressures of *normal* and *abnormal*. It defies the easy splitting of *natural* from *unnatural*. It has emerged from collective understandings and stubborn survivals. It is expressed in different ways by different communities, Sebastian taught it to me as an uppity, determined pride" (p. xvii). Instead, disabled ecologies help us reconsider "relationships of injury and resistance across humans and nature, that injury to the environment is inseparable from injury to human beings" (Taylor). Critical disability and ecology scholarship expanded notions of walking, mobilities, and nature-culture relations.

Placekeeping and Placemaking

The third tension involves placemaking and placekeeping. Placemaking can be a process of leveraging everyday knowledge, creativity, and tools to make meaning of place based on hope and resilience (Smith et al.). While placemaking has been a term used in the worlds of critical geographies (e.g. McKittrick) it can also be insidious code work for gentrification, displacement,

and erasure (Bedoya). While we are always making and re-making place, we also are placekeepers (Loewenstein). Placekeeping recognizes that "in some cases the places don't need to be made, they just need to be recognized and cared for" (Lowenstein 111) - and returned. We extend placekeeping to not just healing ecological landscapes but also healing histories through #LandBack through the restoring of Lands to their original guardians and Indigenous peoples. Critical storymappng opened both the possibilities of placekeeping and placemaking - to unearth untold stories, to map ourselves and our histories in place, to desire to ontologically shift from maker of place, builder of Land to becoming relative to becoming Land's friend, confidant, and keeper (*3000-Year-Old Solutions to Modern Problems*). And as we make and re-make relatives in place both the keeping and the making of pasts, presents, and futures, we might experience the sense of joy and belonging in serving a role to a continuum of something much greater than ourselves.

Future Imaginations

We are dreaming of a time when the land might give thanks for the people.

- Robin Kimmerer (263)

Teaching with Lands is a practice that is cultivated. We are all capable of this. We hope this piece inspires you to also build relational worlds among Lands, to connect place to your disciplinary content and to connect to one another in class. At these times in human history where there is widespread grief of lands changed, climate extremes, and debilitating anxiety about the future, we hope these practices and pedagogies support your own educational journey wherever you are.

Given the rapid shifts in the globe at this time in human history, we need to consider how local knowledges, and age-old stories can reveal themselves through place-based pedagogies like walking and storying in community, and how these shape our active engagements with place - wherever we live and learn. We offer ways that such practices can help us attune to the distinct and layered dimensions of the natural world - human and more-than-human for deeper understandings of well-being and our roles and responsibilities as humans in supporting this flourishing. We hope that one day we as humans will find and remember our ecological niche, our collective and deeply personal contributions to the earth, and that one day, just maybe, the rest of creation might give thanks for us.

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