# UCLA American Indian Culture and Research Journal

## Title

As Long as Grass Grows: The Indigenous Fight for Environmental Justice, from Colonization to Standing Rock. By Dina Gilio-Whitaker.

Permalink https://escholarship.org/uc/item/1wg5k6h9

#### Journal

American Indian Culture and Research Journal, 43(3)

#### ISSN

0161-6463

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Publication Date

2019-06-01

### DOI

10.17953/aicrj.43.3.reviews

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Powered by the <u>California Digital Library</u> University of California Young University from 1960 to 1983. Warren Metcalf notes that in the termination era, the university's assimilationist Indian program was the largest in the country and perhaps the most successful. Nonetheless, Indian students at Brigham Young still found themselves with a foot in two worlds. With the advent of Red Power came reassertion of sovereignty programs focused on Indian studies, rather than Indian students, which became more attractive to Native people.

One would expect to encounter a good deal of redundancy in a collection of this sort; nonetheless, the volume breaks new ground. As Brendan Rensink concludes, the "essays open as many doors and pose as many unanswered questions as they do resolve existing ones" (247). There is much to recommend here. One wonders how the experiences with Mormons of those chronicled here would compare to those of other specific tribes. The interactions between Mormons and non-US Indigenous peoples deserve additional research. American Indian studies scholars, as well as students of the history of the American West, will find this volume to be thought-provoking.

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As Long as Grass Grows: The Indigenous Fight for Environmental Justice, from Colonization to Standing Rock. By Dina Gilio-Whitaker. Boston: Beacon Press, 2019. 212 pages. \$25.95 cloth; \$16.00 paper; \$34.99 audio.

Much is said about Indians and the environment in general, and the work on environmental justice is vast, but surprisingly, few studies have focused on the perspectives and politics of Indigenous peoples regarding environmental justice frameworks. In *As Long as Grass Grows: The Indigenous Fight for Environmental Justice, from Colonization to Standing Rock,* author Dina Gilio-Whitaker asks why Indigenous notions of sovereignty are difficult to fit within conventional definitions of environmental justice. The events at Standing Rock, Gilio-Whitaker finds, demonstrate that often, environmental justice frameworks overlook Indigenous peoples' long relationships with place and land, and at times recycle myths of pristine wilderness and notions of white supremacy that disempower, displace, and exclude Indigenous peoples.

Gilio-Whitaker's analysis of the history of American environmentalism and the roles of Indigenous peoples within it unpack these myths. The first chapter's comparison of the claims of environmentalism with Indigenous political struggles for territorial rights and sovereignty demonstrates that environmentalists often undermine these struggles. Gilio-Whitaker's take is distinct from previous scholarship that had effectively reduced Indigenous political claims to cultural difference: she instead insists that we must take Indigenous sovereignty seriously. When we do, we not only expose the legal-political limitations of environmental justice law, but we also identify real political disparities between tribes and states that are rooted in colonial difference and that are not simply reducible to racism and classist negligence of rural peoples. Gilio-Whitaker's next chapter grounds US colonial history in slavery, land dispossession, and genocide. This violence informs her understanding of "environmental injustice" (36). She locates Indigenous displacements such as the Trail of Tears as the origin of environmental injustice against Indigenous peoples (46). The chapter challenges conventional narratives in US environmental history characterizing the continent as having existed in a pristine state absent Indigenous peoples. Importantly, Gilio-Whitaker analyzes how the impact of slavery and forced removal have produced the environmental outcomes Indigenous peoples experience today. Ultimately, the author asks us to understand environmental injustice through the lens of attempted genocide (50).

Gilio-Whitaker then considers the legacies of westward expansion and industrialization in destroying Indigenous peoples and their environments, notably railways in the second half of the nineteenth century and hydroelectric damming, energy, and extraction in the twentieth. Building rail across the Great Plains and Southwest confined tribes onto reservations and exacerbated murder of the buffalo. Reservations and ecocide undermined the socioeconomic and cultural foundation of tribes, ultimately altering how tribes could relate to place and the land. After applying a paradigm of environmental justice and injustice that newly exposes these underappreciated environmental burdens of colonialism, Gilio-Whitaker then considers the challenges and moral choices extractive industries generate *within* tribal communities. Although choices often become a "double-bind" or "Faustian bargain," she finds hope in "original instructions" and traditional laws that focus on restoring relationship with animals and the earth (69–71).

Chapter 4 demonstrates the continued importance of food sovereignty and water security for surviving Indigenous nations. Gilio-Whitaker argues that negative health disparities are the consequence of settler-colonialism's project of elimination (75). Pointing out that the reservation system forcefully changed the diets of Indigenous peoples, who had relied on native plants and animals for thousands of years, she links health outcomes more directly with the environment. The sudden and violent destruction of traditional food sources plays a part in the high incidence of diabetes in many Indigenous communities today. She considers the importance of plant medicine, water rights, and the broader Indigenous food sovereignty movement.

Returning to questions raised in the beginning of the book, chapters 5 and 6 remind readers of the "preservationist" origins of the modern environmental movement that, at times, echo notions of western expansion, white supremacy, and myths of the "pristine continent" and the "vanishing Native." Gilio-Whitaker contends that a few decades of progressive environmental laws are not powerful enough to overturn centuries of racism (99). Following the political and cultural revolutions of the 1960s, along with the rise of Native self-determination came the beginning of the second-wave environmental movement, eventually diverging over questions of sovereignty. Gilio-Whitaker concludes with an important insight: if settler-colonialism is a structure that disrupts Indigenous peoples' relationship with the land, and self-determination seeks to reverse this process, then at times, challenges to Indigenous sovereignty by environmental groups can perpetuate environmental injustice (108). Chapter 6 offers an important account of the role of women in Indigenous rights and environmental

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struggles. Its challenges to legacies of patriarchy in contemporary Indigenous cultures and politics help us rethink the Faustian bargain and the nature of tribal economic development across Indian country.

Also key is chapter 7, which brings us into the messiness of coalition building between the Indigenous environmental movement and non-Indigenous conservation organizations. Highlighting successful coalition building that negotiated competing world views concerning the environment to stop a highway project, Gilio-Whitaker analyzes the political dynamics involved in the efforts of the Acjachemen people in 2006 to stop the construction of a toll road near the Southern California coast that threatened the San Mateo Creek watershed, which not only is a sacred site for the people, but also produces one of the most important surfs on the west coast (132). The multidimensional framing of the groups, in combination, persuaded lawmakers to deny the road's permit (137). Although it worked, it was rife with contradictions. Gilio-Whitaker calls for more critique of the colonial foundations of American environmentalism.

Chapter 8 examines other examples of coalition building and the lingering challenges tribes face within the environmental justice framework, especially in the legal-political understanding of it found within federal and state laws and policies. Because environmental laws are made consistent with colonial laws, environmental laws in the United States perpetuate legal forms of settler colonialism. In the end, Whitaker argues that dismantling institutions of white supremacy, returning rights and lands to tribes, and moving toward environmental justice for tribes is justice for everyone and the planet (162).

Ultimately, the book is powerful contribution to literatures on Indigenous environments with particular attention to history of environmental justice. Gilio-Whitaker offers textbook summaries of key issues. Recent books such as Estes's *Our History Is the Future*, Beth Rose Middleton Manning's *Upstream*, Powell's *Landscapes of Power*, and Grossman's *Unlikely Alliances*, also consider similar tensions between Indigenous peoples and environmentalists. Gilio-Whitaker masterfully contextualizes these struggles and adds important critiques of colonialism while demonstrating ways forward in coalition building. It is a necessary contribution.

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Fighting Invisible Enemies: Health and Medical Transitions among Southern California Indians. By Clifford E. Trafzer. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2019. 392 pages. \$34.95 cloth.

During the final decades of the nineteenth century, American Indians in Southern California endured genocide, dispossession of lands and resources, and depopulation from diseases introduced by settler colonists. Adeptly integrating years of archival and ethnographic research, Robert Trafzer portrays in *Fighting Invisible Enemies* the