

INDIGENOUS INSIGHTS INTO HUMAN NEEDS



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Introduction

The human needs of indigenous peoples in settler states are not being met. In New Zealand and across the world, they are overrepresented in the negative statistics (Kukutai 2010; UN, 2014). Much work is being done to try to meet these needs both by indigenous communities and the states themselves. Despite years of effort, many issues across health, justice, education, and employment have not improved greatly and some are getting worse. One of the reasons for this, we contend, is due to the different worldviews of indigenous peoples and the settler states they live in. To explore this, first we chronicle the development of the western human needs model, showing how this was actually adapted from a First Nation tribe's cultural knowledge, we then explain contemporary human needs theory, after which we examine the state of indigenous peoples' pre-contact human needs, with particular reference to Māori, arguing that in general most indigenous peoples' needs were better met before colonization because their cultural 'operating principles' had been 'contextually calibrated' because of their animistic worldview to ensure this outcome. Then we outline the physical and psychological consequences of colonization, explaining how it resulted in not just the loss of resources but also in a severe disruption of the very cultural identity and worldview that helped them meet their needs. Finally, we argue that the human need of 'identity' can act as a shortcut for meeting indigenous needs as indigenous identity has both the operating principles and the drive to contextually calibrate these to suit current conditions.

Maslow and the 'discovery' of human needs

While others had begun examining human needs in a piecemeal manner in the decades before (Dover 2010), it was Abraham Maslow's 1943 paper 'A Theory of Human Motivation' and his following work that presented them in a comprehensive fashion, making them one of the most "cognitively contagious ideas in the behavioral sciences" (Kenrick et al. 2010, 292). Maslow introduced what he called a 'hierarchy of human needs', arguing that not only are there a universal set of needs all individuals have but they can be ranked, with a path that leads from the fundamental physiological needs, through to safety, then belonging and love, followed by esteem, then self-actualization, and, finally, self-transcendence (Maslow 1943).

After a chaotic and violent childhood, Maslow was driven by the desire to discover why some people were good human beings so he could help others reach this benchmark (Valiunas, 2011). This was his life's work and his mechanism for achieving this goal was science, in which he had a "boundless confidence" (Valiunas, 2011). It was in pursuit of his goal that he went to study the Blackfoot First Nation in 1938 (Valiunas, 2011). Before this, Maslow had been a cultural relativist

but during his time with the Blackfoot he became a universalist, writing that “my Indians were first human beings and *secondly* Blackfoot Indians” (quoted in Cullen 2010, 185). He was amazed by the remarkably high level of emotional security across the Blackfoot people and he believed that the reason for this was that “their culture did not erode their fundamental humanity”, which led him to conclude that “Cultural relativism had to go. What all people shared in the best of their nature overrode even the differences between races, classes, or civilizations” (Valiunas 2011).

In sum, when faced with a non-western culture that showed greater emotional security, Maslow assumed that it must be because their culture did not erode the universal good innate within humanity to the same degree rather than the more obvious assumption: that their culture was better at encouraging and developing emotional security. What makes this even more incredible is that while he was studying the Blackfoot, Maslow came to realize that “many of the ideas believed to be universal in psychology... were irrelevant at best in the Blackfoot traditional cosmos” (Rouse 2014, 150). In other words, his change to a universalist view occurred when he discovered that many of the universal beliefs of psychology were in fact wrong.

Cullen (2010, 185) writes that it was this change from relativist to universalist that “led him to the concept of a ‘fundamental’ or ‘natural’ personality structure, in other words, the universal theory of human motivation found in the needs hierarchy”. However, the lineage of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs does not just trace back to this epiphany but rather to the Blackfoot’s own culture. As Blackstock (2008, 7) writes, “Maslow took many of his ideas for the [hierarchy of human needs] model from the Blackfoot First Nation in Alberta but failed to recognize this in his publication and promotion of the model”. This bears repeating: *Maslow did not develop his model of human needs, but rather appropriated it from the Blackfoot*. The most prominent human needs model in the modern world is actually derived from an indigenous culture. That Maslow’s needs model was so widely accepted by psychologists despite any empirical evidence to support it (Wahba and Bridwell, 1976) suggests that there was something inherently resonant about Maslow’s model that overrode the need for empirical proof, something we will return to later.

Blackstock’s (2008, 7) criticisms go deeper than lack of credit – Maslow, she contends, “also missed a number of essential teachings around the hierarchy and thus it is not as rich or robust as it could have been had Maslow taken the time to respectfully learn from the Blackfoot and ensure that his understanding of the model was consistent with their teachings”. Where the Blackfoot’s conception was of balanced, interdependent needs, in Maslow’s model the needs were ranked,

which in turn separates them, with the individual moving up each step in the hierarchy (Cross in Blackstock 2008). Certainly, “Maslow emphasized the interconnection of needs, [but] he also believed that some human needs were more foundational than others and that both the identified needs and hierarchal importance of those needs were valid across cultures” (Blackstock 2011). Another key difference is that the Blackfoots emphasized multi-generational community actualization over individual actualization and transcendence, while Maslow’s model ignored the wider context of community, focusing on the individual (Blackstock, 2011).

Since Maslow, a ‘basic needs’ approach became prominent in international development and development economics from the late 1970s, shaping the work of major international and multilateral institutions (Streeten 1981). Then, building on development theory and insights from multiple iterations of participatory human development workshops, economist and philosopher Manfred Max-Neef and colleagues (1989) proposed a set of nine fundamental human needs: subsistence, protection, affection, understanding, leisure, creation, identity, and freedom. His fundamental human needs approach explicitly recognizes needs as simultaneously physical and psychological, as well as pertaining to individuals and collectives. Needs are also seen as interrelated and interactive, and non-hierarchical.

The interrelated and interactive nature of human needs has been reinforced through scientific discovery across a broad array of disciplines. The evidence is now insurmountable, these needs all influence each other, a poverty in one will have cascading impacts on the others. For example, esteem is negatively impacted (here delimited to depression) by a poverty of every other need:

- Subsistence (Galler et al., 2010; Murphy and Athanasou, 199; Walker et al., 2006);
- Safety (Bifulco et al., 2002; Frías et al., 2014; Liem and Boudewyn, 1999; Spertus et al., 2003; Waldinger et al., 2006; Whisman, 2006);
- Love (Fasman and DiMascio, 1975; Hagerty and Williams, 1999; Jorm et al., 2003; Khaleque and Rohner, 2002; McLewin and Muller, 2006; Rohner and Khaleque, 2002; Spertus et al., 2003);
- Belonging (Phinney and Chavira, 1992; Phinney et al., 1997; Umaña-Taylor, 2002)
- Self-actualization (Ellerman & Reed, 2001; Garcia-Romeu, 2010; Hull, 1990; Klaas, 1998; Reed, 1986, 1989, 1991; Young & Reed, 1995).

Likewise, it is not just a poverty of subsistence that negatively impacts the physical development of the brain (Morgan and Winick, 1985; Scrimshaw, 1998; Winick and Rosso, 1969), numerous

studies (Akers et al., 2008; Bruer, 1999; DeBellis et al., 1999; DeBellis, 2005; Eluvathingal et al., 2006; Perry, 2000; Shonkoff, 2009; Teicher, 2000; Teicher et al., 2004) have shown that a poverty of love and safety results in adverse brain development, leading to “altered emotional, behavioral, cognitive, social and physical functioning” (Teicher et al., 2004). Neglect and violence in childhood causes physical damage to the brain with cascading negative effects on virtually every aspect of that individual’s life, drastically impeding their ability to meet any of their human needs.

This research emphasizes how important it is to ensure that all human needs are being met as they are all interrelated, a poverty in one can have impacts in all others. Human needs do not exist in a hierarchy, they cannot be divided into neat hermetic categories that can be met separately in an upward march, rather human needs all have an influence on each other and their ambit appears far more interconnected than originally conceptualized by Maslow. In other words, unsurprisingly, growing western insight is steering these needs back towards the more interdependent Blackfoot model, which begs the question, what can be learnt by going back and examining how indigenous human needs were satisfied?

Pre-contact indigenous human needs

There has been much debate about the quality of life of indigenous peoples before contact. During the ‘Age of Discovery’ there were diverse views ranging from Hobbes’ pessimistic ‘nasty, brutish, and short’ prognostication to Rousseau’s romanticized ‘state of nature’ idyll. To the contemporary observer, these extremist positions reduce complex realities into a simplistic binary. While this is a vast and difficult area, one aspect is believed incontrovertible: in general, the human needs of indigenous peoples were better met before contact than they have been since (Downey, 2011; Jacobs, 1971; Salzman and Halloran, 2004; Tafoya and Del Vecchio, 2005; Webb, 1995). This in itself may be a contentious statement but there are a number of pieces of evidence that back this up, that range from the anecdotal to the empirical to the ontological.

Using an indigenous society’s own historical record to ascertain how well they met their human needs is fraught with difficulty due to the paucity of information, particularly when working within the western academic paradigm, which is why the most plentiful accepted means of verification comes from the first wave of explorers who ‘discovered’ these indigenous societies. These explorers generally found the indigenous people to be physically healthy and psychologically well-balanced (Zinn, 1980; Duffy and Duffy, 1993; Lange, 1999; Stannard, 2006). With regard to physical health, in 1770 Captain Cook (1729, 1779) said of the Māori: “they are stout, well-limbed,

and fleshy... they are also exceedingly vigorous and active. Their teeth are extremely regular and as white as ivory... they seem to enjoy high health and we saw many who appeared to be of a great age”. Similarly, in 1527 Cabeza de Vaca (quoted in Varnum, 2014, 78) described the Americans as “wonderfully well built, spare, very strong, and very swift”. These views on physical health, particularly with regard to the hunter-gatherer life, have been largely corroborated by modern paleopathology (Cohen and Armelagos, 2013; Pool, 2012; Steckel and Rose, 2002)

In reference to their disposition, Las Casas (quoted in Zinn, 1980, 6) wrote of the Americans that “Endless testimonies... prove the mild and pacific temperament of the natives” and said they were “innocently simple... behave themselves very patiently... [and] live without the least thirst after revenge” (Las Casas, 1552, 6). Likewise, Camões, depicting one of the first recorded meetings between Europeans and Southern Africans, wrote they “were so gentle and well disposed” (quoted in Meihuizen, 2002, p. 29). Cook (1842, 187) said Māori “dispositions... [were] mild and gentle” and that the Aboriginals “may appear to some to be the most wretched upon the earth; but in reality they are far happier than ... we Europeans”. Of particular interest, Banks (quoted in Beaglehole, 1962, 130) said the Aboriginals were “happy people, content with little nay almost nothing... From them appear how small are the real wants of human nature, which we Europeans have increased to an excess which would appear incredible to these people could they be told it”.

Many would contend that these reports were tainted by the ‘myth of the noble savage’ (Jacobs; 1971; Mann, 2005), however, while some may have been overemphasized, we contend the ‘myth’ is often used to preemptively denigrate positive descriptions of indigenous people. As Ellingson (2001, 297) writes, “the myth operates by oblique and obfuscatory symbolic manipulations to attain its intended purpose, the creation of a self-authenticating, and self-perpetuating rhetorical program for the promotion of racial superiority and dominance”. Certainly it must be examined critically, but to discount it outright is as intellectually dishonest as accepting it unquestioningly. Las Casas is often referred to as being of the ‘noble savage’ school of thought (Mann, 2005; Vickery, 2006), yet his descriptions matched those of Columbus, who referred to the Arawaks as “gentle and shy” (quoted in Koning, 1992, 36) and said of Americans in general, “So loving, so tractable, so peaceable, are these people” (quoted in Irving, 1831, 663). Critically then, Columbus and Las Casas did not fundamentally disagree on the qualities of the indigenous peoples they encountered but rather on the value they placed on these qualities – while Columbus saw an instrumental value in their gentleness, making them easy to dominate, Las Casas appreciated them for their intrinsic worth (Koning, 1992; Zinn, 1980). As many (Césaire 2000; Monteiro-Ferreira 2014) have argued,

one of the major enablers of European domination was the belief that the indigenous peoples they encountered were inferior or even sub-human. This is apparent in Darwin (quoted in Hale, 2014, 28), who wrote that “the difference between savage and civilized man... is greater than between wild and domesticated animal”. What is incredible, then, is that some of the explorers of these New Worlds remarked positively on the physiques, personalities, and lifestyles of the indigenous peoples they encountered in comparison to themselves despite their culture’s deeply held conviction of its own superiority (Shohat and Stam, 1994).

Despite the accusations of romanticizing the ‘noble savage’, the early explorers’ accounts are seen as more accurate by many scholars. With respect to New Zealand, Ballara (1998, 55) explains that the “18th century explorers arrived in New Zealand ignorant of Māori other than from the glimpses recorded by Abel Tasman...the explorers were relatively open-minded compared to some later observers. As a result their recorded observations are comparatively valuable to scholars”. Likewise, King (2003, 108) reinforces the position that Cook accounts have a high degree of integrity, that Cook had an understanding of Māori as equally human, of understanding that “on each side there was ‘savagery and kindness, generosity and greed, intelligent curiosity and stupidity’” and “the honest and humane way that Cook had, on the whole, dealt with indigenous peoples, and of his essential humanity”. Even more importantly, as King (2003, 109) explains, the “greatest compliment his biographer John Beaglehole could pay him was that Cook ‘saw and [by his own lights] reported truly’” in what King refers to as “an understatement that would have been characteristic and worthy of the man himself”. Cook was not some ideologue who romanticized indigenous peoples but a pragmatic yet principled man who sought to provide an honest portrayal. By the 19th Century, when the clashes between settlers and indigenous peoples peaked, that the mixture of imperialist capitalist drive and Enlightenment discourses of progress and civilization saw western views of indigenous peoples harden into self-serving stereotypes (Evans 2001).

By the mid-20th Century there was a groundswell of anthropological studies published that changed the way the west saw indigenous peoples: that rather than being “on-the-verge-of-starvation savages” who were ‘saved’ by colonization (Bichierri 1992, 36), they could be considered the ‘original affluent societies’ where “all the people’s wants are easily satisfied” through desiring little and meeting those desires with what is readily available (Sahlins 1968, 85). Though still a contentious proposal, Bird-David (1992, 27) believes that “Sahlins’s [original affluent society] argument, duly updated and reconceptualized, does indeed hold”. Likewise, Barnard and Woodburn (1988, 11) state that although it has some issues the “crux of the theory has, we believe,

stood up well to twenty years of additional research.” Despite criticism (see Ingold, 2000; Kaplan, 2000), it is felt that the thesis provides an important core insight: indigenous peoples are able to meet their needs through a form of ‘contextual calibration’. That is, what we might call their culture’s ‘operating principles’ are tailored to meet their collective needs in a way that is balanced by the capacity of the wider environment to sustain these needs in perpetuity. But what is the source of these principles?

We argue that they emerge from the worldview of the indigenous peoples of America, Asia, Australasia, and Africa, who, for the large part were, and in some cases remain, animist (Degler, 1991; Harvey, 2005). Animism is not, as has been framed by anthropologists, a primitive belief that both human and nonhuman entities possess a soul (Tylor, 1871; Bird-David, 1999), but rather is an inherently relational cognitive orientation that views the world as one of reciprocal and contextual interactions within an ecosystem of human and nonhuman subjects (Ingold, 2006). Animists believe that the nonhuman entities (from moose to mountain, rat to river) that they interact with are “active subjects in their world rather than passive objects and, as a consequence, they see humans as a part of reality, not apart from it, embedded in a network of ever-changing relationships with these other nonhuman entities” (Reid and Rout, 2017, 429). The fundamental importance of these reciprocal subjective relationships, and the interconnectedness that they generate, is what makes the animist worldview one that is imminently suited to ensuring human needs are met. There are two components to this belief. Firstly, the understanding that everything one interacts with is an active subject requires these subjects to be related to in a respectful manner; the cognizance of human and nonhuman agency demands “careful and constructive engagement” as they are “necessarily connected to others and are expected to enact those connections responsibly and respectfully” (Harvey 2014, 208-209). Secondly, animists view their place in reality as one of mutual interdependence with everyone else they relate with; put simply, they realize that how they interact with the wider ecosystem affects them and this serves “to limit short-term self-interest and promote long-term group interest” (Sullivan, 2013, 54). The point is not that all animists exist in some form of unified utopia, as Charlton (2007, 728), a neuroscientist, writes, animists “are not necessarily happy, of course – but they have a relationship with the world: they are not alienated”. Rather, it is that, as Howell (2014, 106) explains, “Animic cosmology brings the animated beings into reciprocal moral relationships that are ‘life-giving’”. Animism, we believe, is not an atavistic anomaly or useful fiction but an accurate cognitive orientation that is hardwired into the human conscious (Charlton, 2007; Latour, 1993; Bird-David, 1999; Hornborg, 2006;

Willerslev, 2007; Bai, 2009). This fundamentality of the animist worldview is possibly why Maslow's needs were accepted in the west despite a lack of empirical evidence.

Animist operating principles – the fundamental expressions of the animist worldview as a guide to existence – show how this relational cognitive orientation helps ensure needs are met (Goldberg, 2009; Ingold, 2000). Despite geographical and temporal separation, indigenous peoples across America, Asia, Australasia and Africa developed a number of similar principles. This 'convergent evolution', we argue, is largely due to their shared animist worldview. A brief, admittedly generalized, summary of some of the more pertinent operating principles will show how the animist worldview shaped the development of principles that are beneficial to human needs:

- Consensus decision-making: inclusive and deliberative governance, with leadership often contingent on delivering consensus (Edwards & Edwards, 1995; Friesen, 2015; Fryer-Smith, 2008; Graeber, 2004; Mayor, 2012; Reid, Barr, and Lambert, 2013; Shostak, 1996; Trosper, 2009; Wiredu, 1995; Woodburn, 1998; van Cott, 2007).
- Reciprocity in exchange: most transactions are based on the expectation of equivalent return, generally with an emphasis on the importance of giving over receiving. (Boyer et al., 2015; Harvey, 2014; Mayor, 2012; Mead, 2003; Myers, 1979; Ranzijn et al., 2009; Reynolds, 2006; Trosper, 2009).
- Collective ownership: resources and possessions are usually shared, where separate rights exist sharing in times of need is expected (Mead, 2003; Simons et al., 2011; Solway and Lee, 2010; Vaver, 2006).
- Emphasis on emotional thinking and phenomenological experience: focus on 'emotional intelligence' and embodied sense experience of 'Being in place' (Struthers and PedemcAlpine 2005).
- Balance in lifestyle: leisure, creation, and spirituality are integral components of daily life, often integrated into the process of subsistence and with each other (Tafoy and Del Vecchio, 2005; Ranzijn et al., 2009; Satzewich and Wotherspoon, 1993; Shostak, 1996; Veal et al., 2013).
- Communal parenting: children raised by extended family and tribal groups (Jenkins and Mountain Harte, 2011; Ranzijn et al., 2009).
- Multigenerational integration: extended family groups, with emphasis on elder respect (Boyer et al., 2015; Durie, 1999; Medicine, 2001; Ranzijn et al., 2009).

- Gender equality: balanced, if often distinct, gender roles with limited gender hierarchy (Ackerman, 2003; Bonvillian, 1989; Boyer et al., 2015; Jenkins and Mountain Harte, 2011; Klein and Ackerman, 1995; Leacock, 1983; Tonkinson, 2000)
- Synchronized with nature: actively interacted with environment, had mechanisms in place to ensure long-term sustainability, often involving a sense of a shared bond and resultant guardianship (De Freitas and Perry, 2012; Ingold, 2000; Gammage, 2011; Trosper, 2009).
- Overarching focus on harmony: a foundational principle that prioritizes an equilibrium of being (Boyer et al., 2015; Hodge et al., 2009; Mead, 2003; Porter, 2007; Rice 2005).

These operational principles, from which a range of culturally-specific values are derived, are all seen as ensuring human needs are well met as they serve to regulate outcomes by limiting power, encouraging participation, maintaining an equilibrium through a unified outlook, providing an expanded provision of love and security, reducing hierarchies, and ensuring resources are equally shared and are not overly depleted.

It may appear that the above is arguing for a romanticized Rousseauian view of indigenous peoples and it is important not to allow this to happen. Clearly, there is a difference between having principles and putting them into practice and it is certain that different indigenous societies varied in their implementation of these principles, that there was also variance across time within each culture, and that while many cultural values are based on these principles, cultures are idiosyncratic and chaotic rather than pure expressions of these operating principles. It is also certain that in these indigenous societies there was selfishness, greed, jealousy, anger; it is known they had organized and random violence, slavery, cannibalism, human sacrifice, and that they suffered from famines and epidemics, that they caused extinctions and environmental collapses. They were communities of humans with all the flaws and faults that this implies, though it seems safe to say from this vantage point in history that none of their flaws and faults compare in magnitude to those that enabled Europeans to kill, enslave, and dispossess indigenous peoples during what some consider the “intrinsically genocidal” process of settler colonization (Moses, 2005, 27). While it has been argued (Diamond, 1997) that this difference was merely one of chance and capacity – of guns, germs, and steel – we believe it more fundamental than that, we believe it was one of worldview. Furthermore, we argue that the same qualities that enabled modern civilization to conquer are those that make the comprehensive provision of human needs difficult.

The common principles outlined above came about because of the calibrating capacity that the animist worldview enables; we believe that animist societies will generally develop principles that ensure that they operate in equilibrium with each other and the wider environment (Ingold, 2000; Sullivan, 2013). There has been great contention about whether animists were ‘ecological noble savages’ (see Hames 2007 for coverage of this debate), it is important to stress that we are not arguing that they have always been perfect custodians of the environment, as the record of extinctions they caused contravenes this – though they have been accused of more than they have likely perpetrated (Westaway et al. 2017) – but that their worldview enables, even forces, them to develop a set of operating principles which takes their relationships with each other and the wider world into account in a manner that the modernist worldview cannot and does not. Furthermore, these extinctions are often used to disingenuously discredit indigenous peoples. As Belich (1996) explains, while Maori were responsible for the extinction of a number of species as well as a large amount of deforestation, this should not be used to completely denigrate their environmentalist credentials as compared to the small Pacific Islands from which they came New Zealand would have appeared as infinite and once the impact of their actions became apparent they made concerted conservation efforts – in other words, they need to calibrate to their new context. While there is an element of ‘sacred ecology’ to this argument (Hornborg, 2008), it is more fundamental and pragmatic than this: the animist worldview facilitates an understanding of reality that encourages mutual sustainability because animists see their own wellbeing as intrinsically connected to the wellbeing of the wider world. In game theory parlance, animists see the nexus of relationships between themselves, other human persons, and nonhuman persons as being non zero-sum, which contrasts with the western worldview, where interactions are inherently zero-sum. It is to this worldview that we turn next.

Modernism

From the Ancient Greeks to the Enlightenment philosophers, the modernist worldview has a long history, progressing from nascent viewpoint to dominant worldview. Though many claim we live in a ‘postmodern’ age, it is more accurate to say we are in a period of transition as the key operating principles of the modernist worldview still dominate in most areas (Best & Kellner, 1997). These principles, mostly from what Beck et al. (2003) would call ‘first modernity’, are:

- Hierarchical decision-making: while regimes may be democratic or dictatorial, governance is top-down (Taylor 1991).

- Market exchange: transactions premised on maximizing individual outcomes (Best & Kellner, 1997).
- Individual ownership: resources and possessions owned on an individual basis and are often hoarded in times of scarcity.
- Emphasis on rational thinking and abstracted experience: rationality is prioritized and there is a focus on general rules and universalized concepts (Best & Kellner, 1997; Taylor 1991).
- Segregation of life: subsistence (work) generally separate from all other aspects of life and viewed as most important (Beck et al. 2003).
- Individualized parenting: children are raised by their parents and often have little to do with their extended family.
- Nuclear family: family group consists of parents and their children (Beck et al. 2003).
- Gender inequality: clearly defined and unequal gender roles (Beck et al. 2003).
- Premised on dominating nature: the non-human world is understood as an object to be utilized for human benefit (Bai 2009; Beck et al. 2003).
- Overarching focus on progress: emphasis on increasing in objectively in scope or scale and subjectively in quality or morality (Best & Kellner 1997) .

Admittedly these principles have been simplified and exaggerated to contrast with animism and as with animist societies there is a much scope for variation across cultures. Also, it needs to be made clear that the modern worldview has been hugely beneficial in many ways. Modernism has succeed as a worldview largely because it has enabled incredible advances in a number of areas. It has propelled philosophic inquiry and scientific discovery, it has brought about equitable political systems and technological marvels (Ford, 2011). However, at the same time it has enabled enormous environmental destruction and human suffering (Sullivan, 2010). Modernism is erratic at best and these inconsistencies are generated by the core paradox at the heart of the modernist worldview As Berman (1982, 13, 15) writes:

“To be modern is to live a life of paradox and contradiction... To be modern is to find ourselves in an environment that promises us adventure, power, joy, growth, transformation of ourselves and the world – and, at the same time, that threatens to destroy everything we have, everything we know, everything we are. Modern environments and experiences cut across all boundaries of geography and ethnicity, of class and nationality, of religion and ideology: in this sense, modernity can be said to unite all mankind. But it is a paradoxical unity, a unity of disunity: it pours us all into a maelstrom of perpetual disintegration and renewal, of struggle and contradiction, of ambiguity and anguish”.

Modernism's outcomes are so contradictory that it often compromises the very positive developments that it engenders, developing and destroying with equal ferocity (Anderson, 1984). Modernism, as Lash & Friedman (1992, 1) state, is a "matter of movement, of flux, of change, of unpredictability". Berman's (1982) understanding of this paradox is that modernism has a developmental dialectic where the transformative shifts at the macro-scale – as caused by changes wrought by the political and economic systems and the technological imperative – create, co-mingle, clash, and cascade with the micro-scale – those personal changes of understanding, experience and perception that shape and are shaped by the macro-scale transformations. Or as Beck (quoted in Lash and Friedman 1992, 8) views the paradox: modernization is "a learning process; hence it should be increasingly possible to achieve meaningful change. The paradox, however, lies in that modernization is also a process of individualization. Hence we are unable to organize collectively to bring about this social change". We would argue that the progressivist, rationalist, and individualist nature of modernism creates this chaotic paradoxical dynamism of creation and destruction. Critically, the emphasis on progress, rationality, and the individual means modernism creates an intrinsically zero-sum situation, encouraging outcomes where one's gain is another's loss, yet they also promise beneficial outcomes for all – this is the heart of the paradox (Gelfand and Christakopoulou, 1999). Modernism has both lifted humanity up and crushed it simultaneously, betraying "its own human promise" (Berman 1992, 33). It is this betrayal that Taylor (1991) references when he refers to the 'Malaise of Modernity'. "Dissatisfaction with modernity is", as Fleming (1988, 4) notes, "one of the hallmarks of modernism".

To be clear, our argument is that modernism is largely unsuited to meeting human needs because of its paradoxical nature. Human needs are interconnected and not just at an individual level but communally; yet modernism is unequal and unstable, meaning that often satisfying one need compromises the others, and creates situations where individuals compete rather than collaborate, such that satisfying one's needs often creates a poverty of needs for other people. In this there is an obvious critique of capitalism – itself a core manifestation of the modernist worldview – and particularly the unregulated neoliberal form that dominates the contemporary era. In fact, much of the paradoxical nature of the modernist worldview is due to capitalism, as the individual political and social freedoms modernism has helped create are often quashed by the individual economic freedom also inherent in modernism – negative economic freedom impinges on positive political and social freedoms (Gough 1994; Max-Neef 1989). As Sen (2009 – emphasis in original) writes "the huge limitations of relying entirely on the market economy and the profit motive were... clear

enough even to Adam Smith... The most immediate failure of the market mechanism lies in the things that the market leaves *undone*". Unregulated, the market tends towards such inequalities of capital that this has an impact on other forms of freedom. And capitalism, as driven by its own internal modernist logic, will always drive towards deregulation. This is what Block and Somers (2014), borrowing from Soros, refer to as 'the power of market fundamentalism'.

Furthermore, the capitalist market is often portrayed as the satisfier of needs, that the mechanics of supply and demand are in themselves the ideal means of meeting human needs, but in fact it often violates the satisfaction of needs, over-satisfies one need while inhibiting others, and creates pseudo-satisfiers that do not satisfy any need, because its core purpose is not satisfying all human needs in a synergistic manner but rather is geared towards the competitive accumulation of capital (Max-Neef et al. 1992). As Max-Neef et al. (1992, 202 – emphasis in original) explain:

“While a satisfier is in an *ultimate sense* the way in which a need is expressed, goods are in a *strict sense* the means by which individuals will empower the satisfiers to meet their needs. When, however, the form of production and consumption of goods makes goods an end in themselves, then the alleged satisfaction of a need impairs its capacity to create potential. This creates the conditions for entrenching an alienated society engaged in a productivity race lacking any sense at all. Life, then, is placed at the service of artifacts, rather than artifacts at the service of life. The question of the quality of life is overshadowed by our obsession to increase productivity”.

This is not to deny that the market is unable to meet some needs, but rather that by framing exchange as a zero-sum competition this satisfying-capacity becomes incidental rather than intentional and furthermore this framing means that many false needs are manufactured as a means of accumulating more capital.

Critically, what amplifies this issue is that modernism does not have the same capacity to contextually calibrate as animism. Animism emerges from relationships and is, consequently, emotional and phenomenological; this is what empowers the contextual calibration, context is core to animism. Modernism is built on the Cartesian dualist mind and matter dichotomy, which casts matter as inert and interchangeable – universalized and, thus, essentially contextless (Bai 2009). In turn, the human mind is seen as the seat of rationality, but reason has a “fatal flaw... [.] that it depended on domination, on subjecting the external world to the processes of abstract thought”

(Walton 2017). As Lash & Friedman (1992, 5) write, modernism “gives extraordinary privilege... to judgement and especially cognition. It correspondingly devalues the faculty of perception, so that vision is so to speak colonized by cognition”. By favoring rationality over all other forms of thinking, modernism detaches cognition from context precisely because it abstracts cognition to such a degree that it taints perception. You only have to look at how natural resources have long been assumed to be infinite by economists, or how international development program spent decades failing to successfully apply the western model to non-western states, to see how context is ignored by the modern worldview.

Colonization, when modernism met animism

Colonization, like capitalism, can be seen as a manifestation of modernism, for the colonization of much of the world was due in no small part to Europe’s cognitive orientation. It silenced nature, devalued other cultures, drove expansion, and facilitated domination. Wolfe (2006, 394) stresses the “modernity of colonialism” while Havemann (2005, 57) states “Colonisation is a key feature of modernity”. Colonization is not just physical process, however, but a psychological one as well; it not only involves the loss of land and independence but also results in the ‘colonization of the mind’ by an invasive set of memes that are commonly referred to as the colonial narrative (Bhabha 1983; Fanon 1967; Said 1979). Much has been written of this narrative, but its most important trait with regard to this article is its modernist foundation. The colonial narrative that came with Europeans to the New Worlds was inherently modernist, it used scientific rationality to frame Europeans as more advanced than all other peoples and cultures, it placed the individual above the collective, it severed humans from nature and made land into property, it promoted its version of reality as the sole authoritative account, and justified the alienation of indigenous lands as progress. As Franke (2012) writes, modernism is the “mechanism that has served to legitimize colonial subjugation”; the narrative was the vehicle.

Empowered by the sheer brute force of physical colonization and the state-driven assimilation programs, the colonial narrative was internalized by many indigenous peoples, inscribing the modernist worldview over their animist orientation and seeking to replace their cultural identity with a pseudo-settler one. This is not a uniform process (Reid and Rout 2017). However, for many indigenous peoples – especially those who live in settler societies where they are outnumbered by the colonizer and must, to varying degrees, interact with the modern world – the animist way of understanding reality has been largely, but rarely completely, subsumed by the modernist worldview. This means that not only have indigenous peoples had their land and resources taken

from them, but have also lost the cognitive orientation and the operating principles that ensured they lived in a manner calibrated to their context. Both their physical and psychological capacity to meet their needs has been compromised, they have become “conscripts of western civilization” (Asad quoted in Garuba, 2013, 44) . It is no surprise, then, that indigenous needs are not being met in settler states; as Alfred (2009, 42) laments “[we live in] entrenched dependencies, in physical, psychological and financial terms, on the very people and institutions that have caused the near erasure of our existence and who have come to dominate us”.

How indigenous peoples can meet their human needs in a modern world

Because of the interrelated nature of human needs, it is believed that in general the best way to meet them is holistically rather than, reductively, one by one. However, for indigenous peoples there is a possible ‘shortcut’ available. Their cultural identity (itself a human need), the repository that informs their sense of ‘being’ and ways of ‘acting’, already contains the worldview and operating principles within it required to help them meet their needs more effectively. This means that one of the best ways for indigenous people to meet their needs is to reconnect with their cultural identity. This will only work if they also have some degree of political and economic autonomy (also itself a human need), but nevertheless it offers a clearer path towards improving their needs than that currently on offer. Walker (2004, 389-390) has argued that Māori to must retain their culture and need to “exorcise the Pākehā ghost of assimilation, and its weaker sibling integration” and while he understands that Maori are now “irrevocably integrated into the political economy” his belief was that Maori must not only be able to operate with both cultures but must be willing to adapt – contextually calibrate – Maori tikanga so it is relevant in the contemporary world.

Suggesting that reconnecting with indigenous identity can help overcome the trauma of colonization has become an increasingly common recommendation (Dockery, 2010; Lawson-Te Aho and Liu, 2010; Salzman and Halloran, 2004; Taonui, 2010; Wexler, 2009). However, what we are arguing for is an expansion from treating trauma to meeting the broad spectrum of human needs through an emphasis on the underlying animist worldview of indigenous identity. That is not to say that the worldview is not apparent in previous work; for example, Lawson-Te Aho and Liu (2010, 126) explain that a “person is not treated as an individual in Maori culture, but as part of a web of social relationships involving a mutuality of responsibilities to the collective and connections to one another that transcend time and space.” Nor is it that identity does not have an inherent connection with worldview. The issue is that animism is never explicitly stated,

meaning that it can never be fully utilized. Nor has it, to our knowledge, been applied to human needs, aside from by Cross.

The risk of not specifically emphasizing animism itself is not just theoretical either. Many individuals who reconnect with their indigenous identity do so in a way that is rigid and backward-looking, focusing on an inflexible, frequently ersatz, 'traditional' version of identity that has often been influenced by the colonial narrative (Hogan, 2000; Reid and Rout 2017). Thus, they will insist that the values of their culture are enforced in rigid and inflexible manner as they want to ensure that they are as close to the pre-contact ideal as possible. In so doing, the fundamental function of contextual calibration is lost. It no longer serves as a means of mediating needs based on circumstance but rather locks values that may no longer be relevant into place, for the reality is that the current circumstances of most indigenous peoples are vastly different from those under which the principles were developed. Only by embracing the underlying animist worldview can the full utility of contextual calibration be unlocked and utilized.

We believe that an overt awareness of animism is critical in ensuring that the full benefit is derived because the worldview delivers the essential understanding that existence is a non-zero sum game, that relationships should be based on respect, and that contextual calibration is vital. In short, while reconnecting with cultural identity can help overcome the trauma of colonization, re-embedding, or reinforcing, the animist cognitive orientation can actually make indigenous peoples see reality in a fundamentally more useful manner that can help them meet their needs. To see the world as one occupied by subjects whose actions influence and shape you and, in turn, who are influenced and shaped by your actions is an empowering understanding of reality, one that has enabled numerous animist cultures to ensure that the full spectrum of human needs are met. As Alfred (2009, 45) has argued, no modernist-led initiative will work, the only way to help indigenous people is through "reorienting people's mindsets". In her book on decolonizing indigenous child welfare, Libesman (2014, 431) recommends for "rights as generative of, or at least supportive of, reciprocal relationships rather than rights as standards which in a static way need to be met".

While some may be skeptical of whether the animist worldview can be restored (see Garuba 2013 for discussion), as stated previously, many believe that humans are innate animists, that it is a fundamentally accurate cognitive orientation. Thus, we would argue that not only is it possible to revive the animist worldview in indigenous peoples but not even as difficult as may be perceived for, as Latour (1993) argued, the modern self is essentially a fictitious, if pernicious, overlay.

Certainly, it will not be the same in practice as it was before because it is an orientation of context and the context has changed, any 'neo-animists' will live in a truly postmodern world. Furthermore, we believe that the key to removing or reducing the modern overlay lies in praxis. Animism is, first and foremost, a practice-based cognitive orientation though even this makes it sound too abstracted. Animism comes from doing and being, from involvement and interaction, it arises in "particular contexts of activities and experiences" (Willerslev, 2007, 9). This, of course, dovetails with the very idea of reconnecting with their indigenous identity as this is a group identity and, as such, any genuine reconnection means connecting with other members of the group in, to repurpose Ingold (2000, 42), "an active, practical and perceptual engagement".

Furthermore, this 'group' could, in this hyperconnected age, be expanded to include all indigenous peoples who share this worldview, this would be a powerful aspect of the neo-animism. As Cobb (2014, 588) said, the "assertion of a global indigenous identity stands among the most potentially transformative aspects... [as it connects] the past experiences, present concerns, and future aspirations" of all indigenous peoples. Likewise, Clifford (2013, 15-16) has spoken of "a new public persona and globalizing voice... a *présence indigène*" that he labels "*Indigénitude*", defining it as "a vision of liberation" and explaining that it has "a shared symbolic repertoire ('the sacred', 'Mother Earth', 'shamanism', 'sovereignty', the wisdom of 'elders', stewardship of 'the land')". In his discussion on the development of a 'global indigenous identity', Niezen (2012, 128) also fixes onto worldview, explaining that one of the key drivers of this identity was the discovery of indigenous peoples' "unifying global experience". He goes on to explain that the "emergence of an indigenous worldview thus involves self-defining actors in processes or 'projects' of collective self-definition mediated by culturally defining public outreach and collaborative activism". Bird-David (2017) does warn against forgetting scale when discussing animism, as it emerged in small related groups. However, while there is certainly some truth to this global identity would not replace but supplement.

The point of this globalized indigenous identity would be to provide an contextualized and enhanced animist worldview built using the many different strands from around the world. Not in a monolithic way, but rather collaborative, more an ever-growing tool box than a single tool. We must heed Alfred and Corntassel's (2005) warning of imposed labels serving as a continuing means of colonial domination, this must be indigenously-owned. Niezen (2012, 119), who sees the development of an indigenous *we*, explains that the "global form of... spirituality" that is animism is a "concept [that] can be used not merely as a reference point for understanding some of the

distinct human rights protections of indigenous peoples, but beyond this, as a starting point for considering a number of qualities and consequences of the human rights movement as a whole". In another work, Niezen (2005) discusses the role of the internet in helping usher in the globalized indigenous identity, and also somewhat paradoxically strengthening localized identity at the same time, and it is this remarkable modernist tool with animist implications that we see as being fundamental to this project. This is something that Latour (1991) hinted at as well, the internet as uber quasi-object. As Sahlins (2000, 57-58) notes, this is not a new practice, "Another set of cultural forms has developed since the fifteenth century: hybrid forms, some of them space-defying or using the latest technology in creative projects of indigenising modernity". While there can be no argument that thus far the flow has been unequal in modernism's favor, it has not been one way and as the many crises of modernity grow, maybe this flow will switch. For, finally, this is not just a solution for indigenous peoples. As what we believe to be *the* fundamental cognitive orientation, animism offers the same benefits to all humanity. Certainly westerners need to go back many more years to find the operating principles in their own cultural identity, but this is no real limit as we are all 'hardwired' to see reality relationally and, of course, the operating principles are already well known. In a world of rampant economic inequality and colossal environmental destruction, contextual calibration is crucial.

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