

Fourth World Nations' Collision with Capitalism in the United States

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Abstract

In broad strokes this study traces the history of capitalism's merge with Fourth World nations in the United States as a tool of settler colonialism and as a "case study" for capitalism's infiltration of all Fourth World peoples. As a subordinate process to colonialism, capitalism was deployed in service to settler colonialism's imperative to eliminate Fourth World peoples. At the same time, paradoxically, Fourth World nations in the United States have endured, and can be seen to be in a process of ongoing political development. Four examples of changing modes of political economy are considered as a demonstration of agency and Fourth World peoples' ability to adapt to changing political and economic circumstances, while disrupting narratives of native savagery and romanticized depictions of Fourth World peoples as always "pure," "authentic," and unchanging. The essay then examines the history of federal Indian policy from the Progressive Era forward, identifying the economic imperatives at the root of each twentieth century policy. While many complex processes are involved, including ideological commitments to Social Darwinism and progressive reformers' commitments to improve indigenous lives by bestowing upon them civilization, these processes can be seen to be mediated by imposed economic conformity to the capitalist state, even in the current moment of self-determination. Fourth World nations' decolonization projects, however, reveal certain tensions between the concept of settler colonialism and Fourth World political development.

Keywords: Fourth World nations, American Indians, political economy, settler colonialism, capitalism, decolonization

Settler colonialism proposes that colonialism is more than just a historic event, but is a social structure that continually reproduces itself in order to accomplish the elimination of the "Native" (Wolfe, 2006). Its goal is always access to indigenous territories. Built into state governing structures, technologies—aimed at eradicating indigenous populations by absorption into the body politic of the state—become culturally normalized and so common they are hardly questioned. Acculturation through state education systems, socially encouraged miscegenation, resource extraction, multiculturalism, citizenship, and the breakup of indigenous lands into alienable land titles are some of the more common elements of settler colonial practices. They are deployed in dozens of states where

Fourth World nations still maintain separate identities and claims to land within state borders. Perhaps the most insidious form of all colonial systems is capitalist economics. No nation is immune to its assimilative force and all nations must adapt while they simultaneously struggle to maintain their own traditional cultures and economies. This case study examines how capitalism seeped into Fourth World nations' realities in the United States and what some of its effects have been.

Applying the lens of political economy to today's indigenous social and governing institutions allows us to understand how capitalism was deployed in service to settler colonial processes. Within the larger context of thousands of Fourth World nations and peoples globally and their collisions with capitalism, studying

Fourth World nations in the United States collectively as an example of how capitalism infiltrated the Fourth World admittedly risks an oversimplified, universalizing narrative that can only pay passing glances to the nuances inherent in historic and nations' specificity. It also risks a lack of attention on how other processes worked to discipline Fourth World nations into their incorporation into the state, and ways they resisted. Risky though it may be, I attempt a "heavy lifting" approach to understanding the infiltration of capitalism and its use as a tool of settler colonialism. My hope is that it can be productive in helping to construct a counter-narrative that de-naturalizes capitalism in Fourth World political economies and opens space to think beyond a sense of the hegemonic inevitability of global capitalism.

To the degree that Fourth World political economies in the United States were co-opted by capitalism in service to the settler state, John H. Moore contends that the conflict between indigenous peoples and European invaders was not a "a *cultural* conflict...but an *economic* conflict between precapitalist or communal modes of production and capitalist modes."¹ This point is debatable since all political and economic systems are based on the dominant philosophical frameworks of a culture, and as has been amply demonstrated by indigenous studies scholars (Cordova, 2007; Cajete, 1994 & 2000; Smith, 1999; Meyer, 2008;), the epistemologies and foundational philosophies of indigenous cultures are profoundly different—at times even diametrically opposed to—those of settler colonialism's dominant culture(s). If economy is a function of culture then economic conflict must have at its roots a conflict of culture. Either way, the conflict is still very much alive among Fourth

World peoples in the United States today. Whether or not we agree that the conflict between indigenous peoples and European systems is better qualified as economic than cultural, they are clearly connected. The principles of capitalism have become normalized in Fourth World governance, often compromising traditional indigenous values, with devastating effects to communities.

This study interrogates colonialism's collusion with capitalism in the context of Fourth World nations in the United States. It explores distant and recent histories of indigenous sociopolitical and economic processes and sees them in terms of processes of political development within a globalized world and in which they are (however imperfectly) still evolving. As part of larger, more complex global processes we can observe ways they were hijacked by federal Indian policy and remolded under the trust doctrine. Capitalism's collision with Fourth World nations profoundly altered their governing systems and has ongoing ramifications, just as capitalism's neoliberal agenda has brought the world to a critical tipping point environmentally, socially, politically, and economically. The study of reservation economies as discreet economies (separate from larger economic processes) is embryonic but clearly inextricable from the trust relationship. Tracing even a rough historical trajectory of the economies of certain Fourth World nations in the United States reveals the complex ways they have been politically evolving since well before European contact; in this context colonization was not simply a force of destruction, but presented new circumstances to which they have been forced to adapt even as the world around them was changing and evolving.

Changes in Indigenous Political Economy over Time

Settler colonialism's logic of the elimina-

¹ John H. Moore, "Political Economy in Anthropology," in *The Political Economy of North American Indians* (Oklahoma University Press, 1993): pp. 3-19. 15.

tion of Fourth World nations birthed a myriad of technologies (Wolfe, 2006) designed to subsume indigenous peoples within the multicultural state (Champagne, 2005), as part of the state's homogenizing project. Joanne Barker (2011) observed that [Fourth World] "tribes" were reconstituted through the processes of federal Indian law, which automatically assumes the inauthenticity of the individual Indian, as well as the "tribe." Demanding that they meet the state's (always restrictive) definitions for Indian identity and thus the entitlements afforded them to their own lands, resources and other "special benefits," Fourth World identity is always in service to the state. The implication is that Fourth World peoples are non-existent until and unless they can prove otherwise (based on the state's criteria). The foundational legal concepts which construct the now non-existent authentic "Indian" are grounded in the ever-familiar narratives of the savagery and inferiority of Indians (Berkhofer, Jr., 1978 and Williams, 2005) who "lacked the essential qualities—such as belief in a Christian God or a capitalist free-market economy—that would prove they possessed a status equal to that of the 'civilized world.'"² Contributing to the savagery narrative is the "description of the character of tribes and the authority of the United States over them...by their *usufruct* relationship to the lands on which they 'roamed over' to satisfy their immediate needs" which circumscribes the notion of aboriginal title based on the right to occupy and use lands, as opposed to preeminent title or ownership of the lands by the United States.³ Barker further notes that the perpetually-lacking Indian has been shown to be "a complete fabrication or 'simulation'...of dominant ideologies of race that rationalize the still-colonial and imperial

relations between the United States and Native peoples."⁴

A survey of particular pre-and post-European contact Fourth World economies reveals a far more complex and nuanced picture of indigenous commerce, trade, use of the land, and how all those elements interacted with each other and other peoples throughout time to form sophisticated (and not necessarily always wise) use of those lands and resources in some ways eerily reflective of today's globalized mega-economies into which they have been swept. It simultaneously disrupts the savagery narrative, challenges notions of authenticity demanded by the state (i.e. the concept of a pure, original, and unchanging culture), and sees Fourth World peoples as active agents in historical processes rather than perpetually disempowered victims.

Although indigenous peoples generally evolved epistemologies that reflected their relationships with the world based on respect and reciprocity (Cajete, 1994 and 2000), at times they produced hierarchical, inequalitarian social systems. In a post-European contact world, however, when they evolved stratified systems it was largely in response to their contact with the Western world. The study of Fourth World political economies is at present under-theorized and emergent (and whose scope is ultimately far beyond one essay). But by looking at the historical record—both in the distant and recent past—we can come to certain assumptions that contradict the master narrative of Fourth World nations' static and unsophisticated economic practices and how they inform an analysis of Fourth World political development today. Four examples of pre-and post-contact indigenous economies are explored through processes of historical evolution and their contemporary effects: the

2 Joanne Barker, *Native Acts: Law, Recognition and Cultural Authenticity* (Duke University Press, 2011): 84.

3 Ibid., 32.

4 Ibid., 12.

Mississippian Mound Builders, slavery in the southeast, Plains horse cultures, and disenrollments in today's indigenous gaming era.

The Mississippian Mound Builders

Between A.D. 900 and 1400 the ancestors of Cherokee and Choctaw people evolved a thriving civilization in the southeast region that spanned today's Florida, northward to the Ohio River Valley, and as far West as the Great Plains.⁵ Three major centers revolved around Cahokia in today's southern Illinois, Moundville in Alabama, and Etowah in Georgia—with Cahokia exhibiting the highest population density. The archaeological record renders enough information to theorize a highly developed society reminiscent of the Meso and South American civilizations of the Aztec and Inca. The Mississippian culture is probably most comparable to the Toltec capital in Mexico.⁶ Cahokia is thought to have encompassed approximately 3 square miles and supported a population density of between 20,000 and 50,000 people at its height in around 1250 to 1300 A.D.⁷

A plethora of scholarship contends that the Mississippian civilization formed a highly complex social structure based on the production of surplus food, extensive trade networks, and technology. Quoting Boserup, Barrington argues that the production of surplus food and manufactured goods signals development "inasmuch as it requires technical and social change" compared to "primitive" societies who produce only for their own consumption.⁸ Based on Boserup's framework, urban

populations require food production to happen outside the city centers and can indicate the importation and exportation of food for local and distant consumers.⁹ Specialized food production in Mississippian culture exists alongside evidence of specialization of labor production and trade; this presumes people employed in full time craft-making occupations, absent the need to hunt for themselves.¹⁰ At the site known as Mill Creek in southern Illinois, for instance, there is evidence that suggests an annual surplus production of over 392,000 kilograms of bison meat which could easily have been transported to Cahokia where there seems to have been a short supply of protein in proportion to the population.¹¹

High population densities, food surplus, and specialized production create the conditions for a highly stratified social order characterized by a small elite class. According to Barrington, "the record clearly identifies the existence of such an elite Mississippian class, who extracted tribute in both goods and coerced labor in order to support themselves and direct the construction of large public structures. And at mound centers, luxury goods were imported and consumed by the few."¹² Barrington wonders that given the degree of stratification in Mississippian civilization, to what extent did early indigenous institutions

those who practiced hunting and gathering as their main modes of economy versus those more oriented toward agriculture and technology development. These are of course loaded terms for American Indian peoples who are still entrenched in the colonial language of domination. The continued use of such troubling terms only reinforces the tropes of superiority and inferiority.

9 Ibid., 88.

10 Ibid., 93.

11 Ibid., 94.

12 Ibid., 90. Eyewitness accounts from 16th century Spaniards who encountered the Mississippian culture in its waning days attest to the hierarchical system maintained by regional paramount chiefs and lesser, subjugated tributary chiefs in which tribute was requested (96-7).

5 Linda Barrington, "The Mississippians and Economic Development before European Colonization," in *The Other Side of the Frontier: Economic Explorations into Native American History* (Westview press, 1999): pp. 86-102.

6 Ibid., 98.

7 Ibid., 92.

8 Economists and historians tend to use the problematic terms "primitive" and "developed" to distinguish between

of southeastern North America influence that regions' later development of slavery?¹³ She also concludes that:

*the hierarchy of Mississippian society may not have been as multitiered as that of the Incan, Aztec, or Mesoamerican civilizations, but neither was it as egalitarian as either the Canadian fur-trading tribes or the tribes of the eastern seaboard, woodlands, and plains that survived into the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. While the degree to which the Mississippian civilization influenced colonial institutions requires further analysis, we can conclude that, like the encomenderos of Latin America, the plantation owners of southern colonial America were not the first in the region to benefit from exploitative institutions restricting equal access to economic resources.*¹⁴

Slavery in the Five Civilized Tribes

As one of the foremost scholars on Cherokee history, Theda Perdue has written (1979), "the institution of slavery fostered the growth of modern capitalism in the Western world."¹⁵ She traces the first accounts of slavery in the Cherokee Nation to 1540 when the Spanish explorer Hernando DeSoto encountered them (citing the same accounts as Barrington, although Barrington refers to the indigenous population more generally as Mississippian civilizations or cultures, rather than specifically Cherokee). During this time period Fourth World nations in the Southeast were not only

practicing slavery but were also subject to capture by invading Europeans in the earliest incarnation of the transatlantic slave trade in North America. DeSoto, for instance, wrote of his capture of a slaveholding woman with great power and wealth, the Lady of Cofitachequi,¹⁶ demonstrating the Southeast nations' complicated relationship with slavery. Perdue attributes Cherokee slavery to colonization; she invokes Albert Memmi's *The Colonizer and the Colonized*¹⁷ which explains that the colonized man reproduces oppression in his attempt to divorce himself of his own culture. But given the evidence of pre-contact forced labor in Mississippian society(s) it seems premature to attribute Cherokee (and other Southeast nations') slavery practices entirely to colonial domination. Although it is clear that Fourth World peoples were for centuries victimized at the hands of European slave raiders, it appears to be entirely possible if not likely that the descendants of Mississippian cultures practiced their own forms of slavery uninterrupted from pre-contact times, even after the collapse of that civilization from its apparent peak over two centuries years before.

The literature on the connection between pre- and post- contact slavery in the Southeast is scant. However, Christine Snyder, in the book *Slavery in Indian Country: The Changing Face of Captivity in Early America* (2011) sees post-contact Indian slavery as an adaptation of the long standing practice of captive-taking which was a "normal accompaniment to warfare" (4) and more a tactic for gaining political power, vengeance, or to replace lost family members than as a tool of economy. However, in the first chapter dedicated to the Mississippians, Snyder (like Barrington) notes that luxury items drove the economy with captives likely being the most valuable of all "goods" (38).

13 Ibid., 98.

14 Ibid., 99.

15 Theda Perdue, *Slavery and the Evolution of Cherokee Society, 1540-1866* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1979): pg. xii. Doran (1978) however, places the first mention of slavery among Indians in the later part of the eighteenth century.

16 Ibid., 3.

17 Ibid., xiii.

Allan Galloway's book *The Indian Slave Trade: The Rise of the English Empire in the American South, 1670-1717* contends that Indians who were slave traders (versus simply slave owners) were the first Indians to be introduced to the international market economy.

According to Perdue, Cherokee slaveholders acquired slaves almost entirely through warfare rather than direct purchase;¹⁸ Doran (1978) wrote that by and large slaveholding among the Five Civilized Tribes (Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, and Seminole) was practiced primarily by mixed-bloods mainly for the purpose of helping with farm labor, as opposed to the production of agricultural surplus for sale,¹⁹ i.e. for the market economy. Much of the rest of the literature on slavery in the Five Civilized Tribes produced since the 1970s has focused on the differences in slavery as practiced by them and white southern plantation owners, and between each other. Fourth World peoples, for instance, are said to have been less brutal as slave owners compared to their white counterparts (Doran, 1978; Miles, 2005). Arguably, the larger differences between indigenous and white slavers might be attributed to whites being more driven by the economic imperative of transatlantic markets. In the book *Ties that Bind: the Story of an Afro-Cherokee Family in Slavery and Freedom* (2005) Tiya Miles emphasizes the sometimes-blurry lines between servitude and kinship. Yet, like Perdue and indeed much of the scholarship on slavery in Southeast nations, she attributes Cherokee slavery to the pressure of the American government's civilizing mission,²⁰ outside

the context of the historical practice of captivity and forced labor in Mississippian cultures.

Slavery and captivity was not a phenomenon unique to the Southeast in pre- and post-contact Fourth World nations. Less generally known is the history of slavery and its role in the economies in the coastal Salish nations of the Pacific Northwest (Donald, 1997; Ruyle, 1973; Chun, 1980; Mitchell 1985). There is also a dearth in the literature on bondage in the American southwest; James Brooks, however, intervened with his award-winning book *Captives & Cousins: Slavery, Kinship, and Community in the Southwest Borderlands* (2002). There he gives an exhaustive account of the "slave system" (31) that developed as a result of the colonial encounter between Fourth World nations, Spanish and Mexicans, but reminds us that "Indigenous peoples like Apaches, Comanches, Utes, Navajos, Pawnees, and Pueblos (to name but a few) had practiced the capture, adoption, intermarriage, and occasional sacrifice of outsiders since well before European entry into the region" (33). The articulations of slavery in indigenous communities at times reflected different values and objectives compared to European chattel slavery as it was more bound up with and complicated by kinship practices; but overall, slavery in those communities was as much a function of local economies as the transatlantic slave trade was a function of an emerging international economy.

Although arguments can be made that slavery as practiced by the Five Civilized Tribes was blunted by indigenous proclivities toward making relations, their histories of slave-owning have nonetheless produced contemporary repercussions. Even the extensive intermarriage of slaves into the nations would not prevent the systematic exclusion or marginalization of Black Indians in their societies. This is most obvious in today's Seminole

¹⁸ Ibid., 4.

¹⁹ Michael Doran, "Negro Slaves of the Five Civilized Tribes," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 68, No. 3 (Sep., 1978): pg. 338.

²⁰ Miles recounts the Treaty of Holston signed in 1791 at the end of the Revolutionary war as a turning point at which the Cherokee submitted to pressure to adopt slavery as necessary to a sedentary life and thus the civilizing project of the United States (pg. 35-36).

Nation and Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma with the expulsions of Freedman descendents in 2000 and 2007, respectively. The banishment of the Freedmen in both cases was mired in the way racism informs the justification of the withholding of material benefits to which they would otherwise be entitled as nation citizens. Ultimately, it was the racialization of Freedmen based on their blackness that led to their expulsion (Sturm, 2002; Robertson, 2006; Miles, 2005). In other words, it appears that the denial of wealth-sharing is a weapon deployed by the Cherokees and Seminoles through racialized exclusion developed over centuries of human exploitation based only minimally on the need to adapt to change, but more perhaps on greed itself.

Plains Horse Cultures

Few images in popular culture have represented Fourth World nations in the United States more ubiquitously than the horse-mounted "Indian." In reality the horse was a newcomer to Plains cultures, having proliferated in its northward trajectory from Mexico from around 1600 to 1740²¹, owing to their importation by the Spanish. For thousands of years Plains peoples maintained their lives without the utility provided by the horse; the horse thus introduced a level of change unparalleled up until that point, ranging from change in diets to changes in social structures. Analyzing it from an economic perspective, Anderson and Lacombe contend that it "produced a variety of institutional arrangements as varied as any found in human history."²²

Prior to the horse's arrival Plains peoples were more sedentary and agricultural, cultivating corn, beans, and squash part of the year

and following the vast herds of buffalo in the summer and fall months. With the horse came greater mobility and the ability to hunt more easily; diets previously more balanced between vegetables and meat became dominated by protein provided by buffalo.²³ Permanent earthen lodge homes were traded for teepees (covered by buffalo hides now more readily available), portable on larger travois outfitted for horses compared to the previously smaller ones reserved for dogs. Buffalo hunting became more efficient and less wasteful than pedestrian hunting in which entire herds could be run off a cliff, resulting in killing far more buffalo than could ever be used.²⁴

Nations became more dispersed because of the enhanced ability to harvest game, but also because of the need for adequate water and pasturage for the horses. Increased mobility also increased intertribal conflict and warfare, owing to territorial infringements and with this more centralized political structures.²⁵ Prior to the horse intertribal warfare was uncommon. Quoting Steward, Anderson and Lacombe surmise that "the horse and the accompanying warfare transformed the organization of Plains Indian tribes into political bonds that 'interlocked in all directions... Previously indepen-

23 Ibid., 115.

24 Even mounted bison hunting, however, could be wasteful, according to Andrew Isenberg. He argues that the trope of the "aboriginal ecologist" whose use of land has been upheld as the model of sustainability has sometimes advanced "without regard to historical accuracy... Insofar as the nomads of the Western Plains are concerned, the notion of aboriginal environmentalism holds that the Indians hunted bison only when necessary and wasted no parts of their kills. Mounted bison hunting was not a time-honored practice, however, but rather an 18th-century improvisation that the Western Plains Indians continued to revise during the 19th century. Moreover, like other Native American groups that relied on the hunting of large mammals – whales, seals, and caribou, for instance – the nomadic bison hunters sometimes wasted large amounts of their kills." *The Destruction of the Bison* (Cambridge University Press, 2000): pp.10.

25 Ibid., 117.

21 Terry L. Anderson and Stephen Lacombe, "Institutional Change in the Indian Horse Culture," in *The Other Side of the Frontier*, pp. 103 – 123:115.

22 Ibid., 103.

dent villages, now traveling with horses, united into military bands under high commands.”²⁶

Horses thus became a symbol of wealth (and power) in Plains cultures and with that wealth came uneven distribution and greater social stratification. Nugent (1993), for example, writes that the introduction of the horse to Blackfeet culture in 1730 resulted in increased economic inequality as well as the rise of greater power differentials between men and women. Prior to horses, Blackfeet society was more egalitarian where property ownership was based on reciprocal social relations. Property ownership was vested in the individual. Once horses were introduced this tradition continued, but horses being the property of men (for hunting) meant that more horses produced more buffalo meat. The wealthiest families could own several hundred horses, “middle class” families had between 5 and 40 horses, while the “poor” were those families who owned less than 5 horses and accounted for 25 percent of the population.²⁷ What guarded against starvation of the poor was the high value placed on generosity and sharing as the wealthy were seen to be responsible for the poor; they were obliged to loan horses for hunting and moving camp, to provide food when necessary, and for gift-giving. Increased horse wealth for the men, additionally, perpetuated and intensified the practice of polygyny (enabling a wealthy and thus powerful chief to have multiple wives) which produced a social class of subsidiary wives who were referred to as “slave” wives. Nugent argues that “reciprocal obligations concerning the social use of property defined the uses to which horses could be put and thus the social significance of

wealth in horses,”²⁸ helping to create a new political economic structure in Blackfeet society.²⁹

Gaming Nations and the Problem of Disenrollment

The passage of the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (IGRA) in 1988 paved a powerful new path to economic development for Fourth World nations in the United States. Today, 224 nations have casinos³⁰ representing slightly less than half of all federally recognized nations. Contrary to popular myths that perpetuate a “rich Indian” stereotype (Corntassel and Witmer, 2008) most casinos are only marginally financially successful with the vast majority of them providing little more than jobs in terms of substantial wealth. Still, according to Cornell and Kalt (2010) Fourth World nations in the United States overall are experiencing a trend of economic growth and a closing of the income gap per capita between indigenous peoples and the U.S. on the whole. They report that while income on reservations remains less than half of the U.S. average, since the 1990s it has been growing approximately three times as fast as the national average. While non-gaming nations experienced a 30 percent growth, gaming nations fared only a little better with a 36 percent growth rate (9). What Cornell and Kalt’s report doesn’t reflect is the dramatic explosion of nation disenrollments that roughly

²⁸ Ibid., 347.

²⁹ The changes brought to Plains cultures by the horse stand in contrast to the changes experienced by Plateau peoples. On the Plateau horses were likewise associated with new wealth but rather than causing revolutionary changes in lifestyle as it did for Plains peoples, horses simply reinforced already existing patterns of subsistence and gender relations. Because Plateau peoples did not replace their subsistence diets based on roots and other plant gathering (traditionally women’s work) women on the Plateau maintained their high status compared to Plains women whose status deteriorated with the acquisition of horses and increased reliance on buffalo (Cebula, 2003: 19).

³⁰ *Native Gaming Resources*, Tribal Clearing House, <http://www.tribal-institute.org/lists/gaming.htm>.

²⁶ Ibid., 117-8.

²⁷ David Nugent, “Property Relations, Production Relations, and Inequality: Anthropology, Political Economy, and the Blackfeet,” *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (May 1993): pp. 336-362

parallels the growth in gaming.

The disenrollments were at first most visible in California where much of the gaming wealth is concentrated.³¹ Interrogating the role of national narrations of cultural authenticity on disenrollment, Joanne Barker (2011) provides an extensive account of how the disenrollments have played out in California. The Pechanga Band of Luiseño Indians has been one of the most high profile, having disenrolled 223 individuals, or 16 percent of the population (147), beginning seven years after the establishment of its gaming facility in Riverside County. She writes:

it appears that of the 108 federally recognized tribes in the state, between fifteen and twenty have disenrolled four thousand to five thousand members. This is fairly significant in a state where the overwhelming majority of tribes have fewer than two thousand members each. Since 1988, about 10 percent of the membership of California tribes have been disenrolled. But, for each of the fifteen to twenty tribes who have disenrolled, it has meant a loss of anywhere between 10 and 50 percent of their total membership (163).

David Wilkins notes that disenrollments have expanded throughout Fourth World nations in the United States, comparing it to a virus that has spread to at least seventeen different states.³² He writes that:

31 The Native American Indian Gaming Commission compiles reports of revenue generation based on seven regions. The California region (which includes Nevada gaming tribes) in 2012 reported the highest revenues at \$7 billion, followed by the Washington D.C. region at \$6.7 billion.

32 "Two Possible Paths Forward for Native Disenrollees and Federal Government?" Indian Country Today Media Network, <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2013/06/04/two-possible-paths-forward-native-disenrollees-and-federal-government>.

*Tribal governments justify disenrollments on several grounds: fraud, documentary errors, insufficient blood quantum, and criminal activity are frequently cited reasons. Disenrollees, on the other hand, often assert that their tribes' official rationales are mere pretenses that conceal the real motivation for disenrollment—the casting out of members who challenge tribal political figures who appear intent on expanding their own economic and political empires.*³³

Tellingly, Barker's research revealed that when per capita distribution of gaming revenues at Pechanga began in 2003 payments were around \$10,000 to \$12,000. When the disenrollments were completed in 2006 the checks had skyrocketed to approximately \$40,000 (179).

Ultimately there may be no way to prove that gaming nations are systematically disenrolling members to increase the wealth and political power of those that remain. Even if it could be proven, while it may be a gross violation of the rights of the disenrolled, to argue for legal intervention by the federal government presents a whole host of other problems related to Fourth World nations' self-determination. That the disenrollments are correlated to the rise of gaming wealth seems obvious, and it also seems obvious that there needs to be some kind of mechanism that can either prevent or remedy this kind of apparent corruption. Any potential solutions, however, must take into account the complex histories that occurred at the intersections of sometimes multiple colonizations.

The preceding examples of Fourth World nations' political economies is not intended to paint a complete picture of the variations

33 Ibid.

of political economies that evolved over time, but to illustrate specific ways nations adapted to the changes they encountered. Between the eighteenth and twentieth centuries vast changes occurred all over Fourth World lands that reflected the grinding onslaught of the American capitalist machine; the transition from subsistence to agrarian economies; the allotment and privatization of lands; resource extraction-based economies, cultural tourism, renewable energy, and other innovative economic development endeavors. Many of those changes were thrust on nations, while others were adopted as strategies for economic and political survival, and can even be seen as decolonizing projects. There is a certain inherent paradox of today's indigenous economic development that suggests the complexities of capitalism's influence and the interrelationship between hegemonic power and subaltern agency.

Nor is it my intent to moralize about the ways indigenous nations perpetuate social inequality either in the past or present. I wish to emphasize that these examples are not indicative of an overall larger pattern of inequality among Fourth World Nations. It is rather to: 1) illustrate how some nations have independently evolved ways of adapting to changing circumstances throughout their various historical continuums, pre and post-colonization; and 2) to disrupt romanticized notions of indigenous peoples as always equitable and non-hierarchical, always environmentally sensible, always pure and unspoiled. Like all peoples throughout history, for survival's sake, they adopted new elements into their cultures while they also maintained old traditions in ways that have had lasting repercussions.

Addressing the temporal dimensions of Fourth World nations' adaptation to change challenges conquest narratives that cast them as people without agency in historical process-

es thrust upon them. At the same time, however, there are moments of profound dispossession of both culture and land. They stand out in specific eras where indigenous power and agency are at low points, creating vacuums that federal policies and legislation would fill, which along with a complex array of social, cultural, religious, and legal ideologies fuels a system of Fourth World dispossession, mediated by economic mechanisms. Thus historical processes crystallize into structures built into the settler state and become normalized in the cultural imaginary of its citizens.

Capitalism and Federal Indian Policy

It's clear from the historical record that Fourth World nations in the United States evolved complex economies with and without outside influences. In the case of the Mississippian Mound Builders, although they were a pre-capitalist civilization, their economy displayed some of the common core elements of what we today think of as a capitalist economy, including an exploitative work force, specialized labor, surplus production, the production of luxury goods, and a system of taxation in the form of tribute-paying. Even with the collapse of the culture, remnants of that society seem to have survived into post-contact Southeastern cultures, most notably in a system of forced labor. In general, however, in post-contact Fourth World nations subsistence economies were the norm (leading to the European discursive of "Indian" primitiveness and savagery). Comparing historical and contemporary Fourth World economies, Champagne (1992) wrote that traditionally their societies did not have a value system rooted in capitalist accumulation. While some cultures like Pacific Northwest Salish peoples did value wealth accumulation within the potlatch economy, it was in the service of the prestige associated with generosity through the redistribution of

that wealth to the community, or what he calls “cultural capitalism” (200). This dynamic, he argues, contributed to nations like the Tlingits’ relative ease of entry into the labor market, based on their independence within a subsistence economy. He also notes the entrepreneurial spirit of the Cherokee, Choctaw, Chickasaw, and Creeks whose dependence on slavery created an Indian planter class; while the Indian planter class only amounted to 4 or 5 percent of the families in their nations, they nonetheless were influential in their communities for the rest of the century (199). In general, however, Champagne laments the inherent lack of acquisitive values and market participation as at least partially responsible for the state of persistent poverty of contemporary Fourth World peoples.

It wasn’t for lack of trying on the part of the federal government to systematically instill those values in Fourth World individuals and governments. In broad strokes I want to argue here that once nations came under the domination of the United States, the project to civilize them was a mechanism guided by the state’s capitalist economic agenda, bolstered by ideological frameworks rooted in Social Darwinism. Particularly in the Progressive era, the prime directive of federal Indian policy was to promote indigenous participation in the free market economy upon which the United States’ political philosophy was based. Eventually even the concept of self-governance became wedded to economic independence. It was mediated by the trust doctrine which was bound up with narratives of wardship from which Fourth World nations needed to be liberated, to be achieved through the individual values of productive citizenship. Even when self-determination resurrected the concept of self-governance after termination, it came to be defined in decidedly economic terms.

The government of the United States, as

Eric Cheyfitz (2011) reminds us, was formed on the premise of the protection of the propertied (landowning) class.³⁴ Property invariably means the commodification of land for the benefit of exploitation by the individual (whether in the form of a person or corporation), or in Marx’s terms, commodity fetishism. In this sense government is simultaneously the arbiter and protector of material accumulation in a capitalist state. Cheyfitz characterizes this as the “naturalization of class”, which he argues, “is the severance of economic conditions from the consideration of political justice” (294). Said another way, governance in a class-based system is only good to the extent that it upholds the class-based structure of society. It is juxtaposed, as Cheyfitz points out, to indigenous relationships with land and nature which are rooted in kinship networks. He writes that:

From an Indigenous perspective, we can understand commodity fetishism as the displacement of kinship relations by object relations, particularly in the severance of kinship ties between consumer and producer, the latter being assimilated into the object consumed. Commodity fetishism, the heart of capitalism, is cannibalism. What, then, is the West’s historic imputation of cannibalism to the Indigenous (archetypal rationalization for the category ‘savage’) but a projection of its own exploitative socioeconomic relations? (pg. 303).

34 Cheyfitz makes his argument based on James Madison’s Federalist Paper 10 which of all the Federalist Papers became the most foundational to the Constitution. While it recognizes and decries the limits to capitalism’s imagination Madison nonetheless presupposes the inevitability of unequal property distribution. “What Is a Just Society? Native American Philosophies and the Limits of Capitalism’s Imagination: A Brief Manifesto”, *South Atlantic Quarterly*, Spring 2011.

This displacement of kinship relations through the cannibalism of commodity fetishism constitutes the paradigm shift that became the objective the U.S. sought to impose in its relations with Fourth World nations, as the balance of power shifted in its favor. Indigenous peoples were to be remade in the white man's image, with his devotion to the commodification of life as his defining social ideology. It was cast as "self sufficiency" and coded in the language of civilization. It can be traced back as far as the earliest Europeans who were confounded by the predominantly communal values they observed in Fourth World cultures—the "barbarity" that needed civilizing—and became woven into the very fabric of federal Indian law and policy that came to determine Fourth World peoples' lives. By 1887, with the passage of the General Allotment Act (aka the Dawes Act), the imposed paradigm shift was perfected with its goals to assimilate indigenous peoples through the allotment of lands. It would be guaranteed through the granting of citizenship and a system of education that would cement the new (capitalist) ideals in the hearts and minds of new generations of Fourth World peoples.

About Henry Dawes and the indigenous reformers who sponsored the General Allotment Act, Deloria and Lytle (1984) wrote, "private property, they believed, had mystical magical qualities about it that led people directly to a 'civilized' state" (9).³⁵ They appear to be referring to a clause in the 1928 Meriam Report which rebuked the idea that individual property ownership would civilize Fourth World peoples; it speculated that "...the government assumed that some magic in individual ownership of property would in itself prove an educational civilizing factor..."³⁶ The clause

may have been an oblique reference to the "invisible hand of the market" theory espoused by the eighteenth century writings of the father of modern economics, Adam Smith. Reminiscent of the failed twentieth century concept of trickle-down economics (or Reaganomics), the theory is a metaphor for the idea that the maximized self-interest of individuals in a free market economy can benefit all of society, as the market (substitute individual property ownership for market) has almost magical self-regulating qualities. The nineteenth century industrial-era indigenous reformers were deeply committed to the principles of free market economics. In Tom Holm's in-depth account of the Progressive Era's Indian policy (2005), the key to assimilation was the idea of competition (p.14); "Through the Indian schools, allotment in severalty, and the abandonment of tribal cultures, American Indians would be on a level playing field with whites," he wrote. That playing field was clearly economic. He goes on to say that:

'Reformer' was something of a misnomer for these activists. They believed in economic orthodoxy, limited government in the Jeffersonian mold, and laissez-faire capitalism. They were individualistic to the core, leaned toward the evangelical side of Protestant ideology, and held an all-consuming optimism concerning the future of mankind... Their attitudes toward competition and individualism were confirmed in the classical economics of Smith, Malthus, Ricardo, and Say in the most advanced scientific thought of the day (p.15).³⁷

Reyhner and Eder (2004) show how Fourth

35 Vine Deloria, Jr. and Clifford M. Lytle, *American Indians, American Justice* (University of Texas Press, 1984).

36 Lewis Meriam, *The Problem of Indian Administration* (Balti-

more: Johns Hopkins Press, 1928): 7.

37 Tom Holm, *The Great Confusion in Indian Affairs: Native Americans and Whites in the Progressive Era* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005).

World nations became pawns in political power struggles between factions (in this case, Protestants versus Catholics for the control of the Indian schools) who all had the same agenda at the root of their advocacy for the allotment policy: the opening of the West to white settlement (85), Adams (1988) concurs. He wrote that the deeper meaning for Native American schooling in the period between 1880 and 1900 was grounded in a trifecta of Protestantism, capitalism, and republicanism. The making of good citizens—defined by a commitment to the principles of market economics, shored up in Christian dogma (whether Protestant or Catholic)—ultimately served the state's primary objective which was the securing of more lands. Indian Commissioner Thomas J. Morgan, in 1889, made no secret of it:

[The] great economical fact is that the lands known as Indian reservations now set apart by the Government for Indian occupancy aggregate nearly 190,000 square miles. This land, for the most part, is uncultivated and unproductive. When the Indians shall have been properly educated they will utilize a sufficient quantity of those lands for their own support and will release the remainder that it may be restored to the public domain to become the foundation for innumerable happy homes; and thus will be added to the national wealth immense tracts of farming land and vast mineral resources which will repay the nation more than one hundred fold for the amount which is proposed shall be expended in Indian education. (Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1889; quoted in Adams, p. 19)

Viewing indigenous education through the prism of political economy, Littlefield (1993)

goes so far as to say "'proletarianization' better characterizes the efforts of the federal Indian schools than assimilation" (p. 43).³⁸ Assimilation as the solution of choice to the country's "Indian problem" was parallel to unfolding changes in the American economy. With the shift from agrarianism to industrialism, indigenous youth would be conscripted into the new economy through a blue-collar oriented education. Along with allotment, boarding schools were able to accomplish the twin goals of separating Fourth World peoples from their means of production and expose children to a money-based, material standard of living (p. 48). Littlefield notes that the outing system that provided vocational training in manual trades for boys and domestic work for girls amounted to "little more than a means of providing child labor to area employees" (p. 50).

The importance of delivering Fourth World nations from subsistence to a cash-based economy would figure prominently after citizenship was granted to them in 1924. In a bizarre citizenship ritual conducted by the Department of the Interior the values of hard work and money were symbolically enacted by men and women. In the male ritual a man was handed a bow and arrow that he was instructed to shoot after stating his indigenous name. After shooting the arrow he was told: "You have shot your last arrow. That means that you are no longer to live the life of an Indian. You are from this day forward to live the life of the white man. But you may keep that arrow, it will be to you a symbol of your noble race and of the pride that you feel that you have come from the first of all Americans." He then states his white name and is told "Take into your hand this plow [he takes the handles of the plow]. This

38 Alice Littlefield, "Learning to Labor: Native American Education in the United States: 1880-1930," in *The Political Economy of North American Indians*, (Oklahoma University Press, 1993): pp. 43-59.

act means that you have chosen to live the life of the white man—and the white man lives by work. From the earth we all must get our living and the earth will not yield unless man pours upon it the sweat of his brow. Only by work do we gain a right to the land or to the enjoyment of life.” The women were inducted into citizenship by a similar ritual and both men and women received a flag and a purse. The recitation went: “I give you a purse. This purse will always say to you that the money you gain from your labor must be wisely kept. The wise man saves his money so that when the sun does not smile and the grass does not grow, he will not starve.” The flag was presented as a “badge of honor” as an emblem of citizenship. At the end of the ritual the audience rose and shouted the white name of the individual followed by “is an American citizen.”³⁹

Fourth World Self-governance

The capitalist paradigm imposed by the federal government to displace kin-based social and economic systems in Fourth World nations during the Progressive Era signaled the depth of entrenchment of the paradigm shift. Throughout subsequent policy eras it can be seen as a central organizing principle dominating discourses on federal Indian policy. It began as a thinly veiled mechanism ultimately designed to benefit the state (through land acquisition), cloaked in the language of civilization (for the nations’ own benefit). But the rationale for policy change would become more conspicuously defined by economics with (among other things) the Meriam Report in 1928, driven by the trust relationship, still known in this era by its earlier incarnation as guardianship. Guardianship assumed that Fourth World nations were under federal

tutelage⁴⁰; we can see this tutelage, arguably, as a state of political development within the context of the capitalist state to which indigenous peoples were being conscripted. Fourth World nations as wards of the government were still subject to the strict control and discipline of the Department of the Interior under the Bureau of Indian Affairs and its individual agents. The abuses of the system and corruption of individual agents would become the target of a new generation of legislators and indigenous advocates who pushed for reform on the heels of the disastrous allotment policy. The Meriam Report, which named the failure of assimilation, recognized the failure measured by health, education, and economic standards. It begins by stating:

The poverty of the Indians and their lack of adjustment to the dominant economic and social systems produce the vicious circle ordinarily found among any people under such circumstances. Because of interrelationships, causes cannot be differentiated from effects...Recommendations: The fundamental requirement is that the task of the Indian Service be recognized as primarily educational, in the broadest sense of that word, and that it be made an efficient educational agency, devoting its main energies to the social and economic advancement of the Indians, so that they may be absorbed into the prevailing civilization or befitted to live in the presence of that civilization at least in accordance

40 The terms “tutelage” or “pupilage” appear in various congressional hearings, Supreme Court opinions and other federal documents during this era. It appeared, for example, in the language of John Collier’s original bill, H.R. 7902 which later became the Indian Reorganization Act. The opening sentence of the bill read: “A bill to grant to Indians living under Federal tutelage the freedom to organize for purposes of local self-government and economic enterprises...” *The Indian Reorganization Act: Indian Congresses and Bills*, ed. Vine Deloria, Jr. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002.

39 Department of the Interior. Ritual on admission of Indians to full American citizenship.

*with a minimum standard of health and decency*⁴¹ (*bold italics mine*).

It goes on to criticize the Indian Service's "tendency...toward weakening Indian family life and community activities than toward strengthening them."⁴² While the report comes close to acknowledging the government's deliberate displacement of kinship systems it frames the solution to the Fourth World nations' problems in socioeconomic terms. The passage is also striking for its articulation of the government's goal of assimilating Fourth World peoples into the "prevailing [settler] civilization," and is an excellent example of the way the settler paradigm crystallized into a structure, and became encoded into law and policy.

Contrary to popular understanding, the Meriam Report was only one factor leading to the passage of the Wheeler-Howard Act (aka the Indian Reorganization Act) in 1934 (Deloria and Lytle, 1984). The IRA would come to encompass a far more sweeping vision of policy reform than the Meriam Report offered, thanks to the appointment of John Collier as Indian Commissioner with the election of Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1932. The Indians needed some form of self-government, Collier argued, in order to gain economic independence and thus counteract the other social ills they were experiencing. This was achieved through the establishment of "tribal governments," organized by an experimental form of incorporation called a federal municipal corporation.⁴³ The issuance of corporate charters served to enable nations to manage a range

of financial affairs, highlighting the distinctly business-oriented nature of the organization. The preambular statement of the Wheeler-Howard Act reads:

*An Act to conserve and develop Indian lands and resources; to extend to Indians the right to form business and other organizations; to establish a credit system for Indians; to grant certain rights of home rule to Indians; to provide for vocational education for Indians; and for other purposes.*⁴⁴

Thus the IRA vision for at least a modicum of Fourth World self-governance was framed in decidedly economic terms. It provided for other functions of nations' organization, including land transfers and congressional appropriations, but overall it extended to nations the governing principles of the United States grounded in the centralizing language of economic development—those normative values for proper government inherent within the capitalist state.⁴⁵ The result was "cookie cutter" tribal constitutions that to this day still govern many Fourth World nations in the United States, legally organized as corporations.

The stage was set: the imposition of the settler state-structured paradigm shift from indigenous kin-based relationships with land and the natural world to a commodity-fetishized concept relative to self-governance was made. Not that kin-based world views disappeared,

41 Lewis Meriam, *The Problem of Indian Administration*: 7 and 21.

42 *Ibid.*, 15.

43 Vine Deloria, Jr. and Clifford Lytle, *The Nations Within: The Past and Future of American Indian Sovereignty* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1984): 68.

44 *The Indian Reorganization Act (Wheeler-Howard Act)*, June 18, 1934: 1.

45 It is fair to note, however, as legal scholar Dahlia Tsuk Mitchell has argued, that one of the prime architects of the IRA, Felix Cohen as a legal pluralist was deeply committed to the principles of collective self-government and property ownership as a way to empower tribes in their economic affairs. At its core, legal pluralism acknowledged the limitations of the liberal state and reflected the progressive ideological commitments of Indian reformers of the time.

they hadn't; but they did assume a different place in the face of the capitalist agenda that came to dominate indigenous governance. A new generation of Fourth World peoples emerged, outfitted with a new way of doing things, and robbed of much of the traditional life of their parents. Wanting to retain as much of their traditions as possible, they were what Deloria and Lytle (1984) referred to as "quasi-traditional." As the authors observe, "...the revolution that Collier had wrought, when it reached the reservations, manifested itself in new economic activities, not political sophistication" (p. 170).

The IRA's delegation of new governing powers⁴⁶ to Fourth World nations (however limited) paved the way for the discourse of guardianship to be understood in terms of trust.⁴⁷ By the 1940s a conservative government looking to cut federal expenditures and dismantle New Deal programs targeted Fourth World nations for termination, recasting the government trust responsibility as government "restriction" from which nations needed to be liberated. Dozens of nations lost their federal recognition and lands, their sovereignty was erased, and the trust relationship between them and the government was eliminated.⁴⁸ At the same time, the efforts of Democrats to fend off termination during the 1950s and 1960s increased through economic development partnerships with corporate America in the form of land leases and resource develop-

ment on reservations,⁴⁹ and this became the focus of indigenous governments' assertions of self-government. By the 1960s, with the civil rights movement in full swing and a new liberal agenda established, another shift in the direction of greater Fourth World independence emerged. Over a period of several years laws were enacted that enhanced nations' political standing as a result of the activism of indigenous leaders who asserted nations' inherent sovereignty and right to self-government (Ryser, 2012). The passage of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (aka Public Law 93-638) in 1975 is typically regarded as heralding a renewed U.S. commitment to fostering indigenous self-government, now framed as self-determination. But once again, the policy shift was more about money, as its primary objective was to allow nations to contract directly with the BIA to provide funds for programs rather than to refine self-government as a political process.⁵⁰

The conservative backlash of the 1980s, during the Reagan and Bush years, delivered crippling budget cuts to indigenous communities and entertained ideas reminiscent of termination and forced assimilation.⁵¹ It did this at the same time it affirmed the "government-to-government" relationship with Fourth World nations, all the while emphasizing

46 The IRA was amended on October 25, 1934 with a document called The Powers of Indian Tribes. It represents the beginning of the sovereignty discourse by recognizing a host powers that were inherent, i.e. powers that were not delegated (Deloria and Lytle, 1984).

47 The trust responsibility was articulated as early as 1921 with the Snyder Act which "gave the secretary of the interior general authority to expend federal monies for Indian 'benefit, care, and assistance..." (Deloria and Lytle, 1983): 242.

48 Ibid., 20.

49 Deloria and Lytle, *The Nations Within* (1984): 196. They cite the passage of the Act of August 9, 1955 as signaling in earnest this trend (194).

50 Deloria and Lytle (1984) assert that "[t]ribal governments became surrogates for the federal government during the sixties, and this trend extended into the seventies, clothed ironically not as termination but in the new language of self-determination" (197).

51 For example, on the TV talk show *Conservative Counterpoint* on January 19, 1983 Secretary of the Interior James Watt was highly critical of what he saw as "socialistic government policies on the reservations" which exaggerated all Indians' social problems. He advocated giving Indians "freedom" and "liberty," ostensibly by dissolving the reservations and assimilating Indians into the urban masses (Castile, 2006: 58).

economic development via private enterprise on the reservations.⁵² The federal government's apparent ambivalence sent the message that if nations were to continue existing they were going to have to pay for it themselves, implying that self-governance was synonymous with capitalist development. By 1987 allegations of budgetary mismanagement, waste, and fraud in the federal Indian bureaucracy had surfaced in the media.⁵³ The now normalized language of self-determination, self-governance, and a "government-to-government relationship" with the United States produced a response to the fraud allegations with the amending of P.L. 93-638. The Tribal Self-Governance Act (P.L. 102-184) was passed in 1994 to give Fourth World governments even greater leeway to control fiscal resources and redesign federal programs to better serve reservation communities and minimize BIA control through compacting. While the self-governance compacts minimally advanced relations between federal and indigenous governments by formalizing the government-to-government relationship (Ryser, 2012), overall self-government compacting falls short of providing a full measure of self-governance for many reasons, not the least of which is its primary focus on subvention. Moreover, with almost 40 percent of federally recognized nations participating in self-governance,⁵⁴ it is considered a "program" with the Office of Self-Governance housed in the Bureau of Indian Affairs.⁵⁵ Like the IRA constitutions, the self-governance compacts are

implemented in cookie-cutter fashion and are drafted by the United States with little reflection of the character and needs of individual nations.⁵⁶

Conclusion

The prism of political economy provides us with the clearest view into indigenous histories of uninterrupted existence as political players on the world stage and is a living example of how Fourth World nations are always in a process of political development. It reminds us that as nations they have always exercised their collective will in relation to each other and foreign peoples, both within and beyond the boundaries of the North American continent. From this birds-eye view, the current Westphalian state system is only a blip on the temporal radar into which Fourth World nations have been swept, due to the aggressive migrations of European peoples who respected no boundaries. The existence of the United States is an even briefer moment in the grand scale of time, despite the continental amnesia induced by settler American master narratives. Indigenous memories, on the other hand, are long and at times surprisingly clear and where they do lack, good scholarship helps to fill in the gaps

52 It is no coincidence that tribal gaming was initiated during the Reagan years.

53 *History of the Tribal Self-Governance Initiative*, http://www.tribalsegov.org/red%20book/the%20history%20&%20goals/history_of_the_tribal_self.htm.

54 Bureau of Indian Affairs website, <http://www.bia.gov/WhoWeAre/AS-IA/OSG/index.htm>. Accessed April 2, 2014.

55 Office of Self-Governance website, <http://64.58.34.34/osg/Default.aspx?Info=BackGroundInformation>. Accessed April 2, 2014.

56 "The compacts themselves were essentially drafted by the United States which means that the instrument of agreement (like most of the treaties) was inspired by US government interests" (Personal email communication from Rudolf Ryser, April 1, 2014). Dr. Ryser was involved from the beginning of the self-governance project as an advisor to Quinault Indian Nation President Joe DeLaCruz. In the same stream of communications with me he asserted that the BIA has basically hijacked many of the Compacts and turned them into variants of PL638 contract programs. Funds in the Compacts are supposed to be used as General Funds or however a Council chooses to use them. The problem is now the BIA prescribes boundaries and uses in the self-governance program. This has confused many tribes to believe they are self-governing when in fact they are merely functioning as extensions of the BIA. This is not true of all Indian governments, but it is true of MOST Indian governments.

and debunk entrenched narrations of native primitiveness and savagery. Only by shattering these fallacies can Fourth World nation histories be taken seriously and gain legitimacy as counter-narratives to those privileged by dominant settler societies.

Through the lens of political economy, understanding Fourth World nations in terms of their political evolution over time recognizes the agency they have exercised, even in moments of monumental constraint. It also reveals a certain tension when we contextualize the exercise of that agency within settler colonialism as a structure rather than an historic event, and it raises questions. How do we conceptually reconcile the temporal aspects of Fourth World political evolution with the theoretical commitment of settler colonialism as a structure, not a historic event? And how are we to understand indigenous resistance, empowerment, and agency—the fact that they haven't gone away—within settler colonialism's project to eliminate the "Native"? Both phenomena are true; Fourth World nations evolve over time, and settler logic demands the acquisition of Fourth World lands and maintains technologies for their elimination. It may be enough in the short run to think in terms of Fourth World "agency within constraints" but I suggest these are questions that will continue to demand scholars' attention in the future.

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