“We cannot allow false solutions to destroy the Earth’s balance, assassinate the seasons, unleash severe weather havoc, privatize life and threaten the very survival of humanity. . . . Indigenous peoples’ systems of resource management have existed for millennia, sustaining us even in the face of colonialism.” These are the voices of a diverse coalition of indigenous people and allies who met in Kari-Oca, Brazil, in June 2012. Their declaration is emblematic of recent indigenous gatherings addressing unsustainable colonialist and capitalist development models.

European and non-Western imperialisms have had genocidal consequences for many indigenous peoples and the intergenerational trauma continues. Some 370 million indigenous peoples survive today; many are now working out what it would mean to move beyond surviving to thriving. Resilience, when celebrated among indigenous peoples, is centered in the foodways, worldviews, heritage, play, and spirituality of ancestral homelands and wherever home is today. (More than two-thirds of the world’s indigenous peoples today live in urban areas.) But many indigenous communities contend with grinding poverty, threats to food security, and ongoing resource extraction or pollution. They would be the first to urge caution in romanticizing resilience. Surviving the unnatural disaster of the Canadian Tar Sands, the world’s largest open-pit oil extraction regime, or the catastrophe of uranium mining for Indigenous Australians or American Indians—many communities do not see themselves as resilient but perhaps as resistant. They might remind us that their choices were few. Living with pollution or poison or radioactive contamination in the waterways and foodways, indige-
nous communities have faced an imperative to make themselves stronger, to grow flexible and lithe. And yet the scale and velocity of these crises are unlike anything indigenous ancestors might have faced.

In the mini-photo essay below, I introduce several modalities of embodied resilience. If one were to render resilience in terms of human affect, it might be described as determination, reverence, defiance, buoyancy, and humility. Each speaks to community efforts to exercise self-determination—considered the linchpin of indigenous rights—and local choices of how to honor heritage praxis, imagine modes of living, and tend the local wilds. Each image instantiates a recipe for the ingredients we might strive to cultivate in our intellectual practice. In my vision, our intellectual psyche should be firmly rooted in the local communities where we reside, if not in scholarly content then through outreach, by extending our energies into and firmly inhabiting the local. In research with living communities or their descendants, ethical exchange is imperative. And drawing from indigenous models, we might rethink the individual development driven ideology of higher education in exchange for an inter-generational classrooms. The landscapes and ecosystems we and others inhabit will not be inherited by single generation communities, but by multi-generation communities. With a view toward cultivating resilience in these places, we might shift toward a pedagogy of greater diversity in generation as well as ethnic makeup.

NOTE
1. “Kari-Oca 2 Declaration.”

WORK CITED

Fig. 2. *Humility*. Indigenous Ainu in Monbetsu, eastern Hokkaido, Japan, bow deeply to first salmon in the Kamuy Cep Nomi ritual. The Mopet Ainu community revived this ceremony after more than a century of colonialism. And then in 2009 an industrial waste treatment facility was sited upstream from the spawning grounds. Community resistance continues. Photograph by author.
Fig. 3. Defiance. Indigenous community members in Wet’suwet’en march against the Enbridge pipeline project. Together with the Keystone xl Pipeline project, several pipelines are in the works to transport tar sands oil from Alberta to coastal regions across North America. Photograph by Ben Powless. http://www.flickr.com/photos/powless/4809669928.

Fig. 4. Confidence. An Ainu paddler gazes at canoe of fellow paddlers during landing ceremonies for Tribal Journeys 2010, an annual canoe revival project now featuring some one hundred tribal canoes from across the Pacific Northwest. For this young paddler, joining Tribal Journeys lent her the confidence to be frank about Ainu identity among peers back in Japan. For her, this was life changing. Photograph by Ayumi Nakamura.
Fig. 5. Repatriation. Colonization and curio collecting stripped Ainu of many heirlooms and objects of antiquity. Visits to museum collections have now become the basis for making replicas and repatriating ancestral knowledge in the body, through learning the techniques. This Ainu master artist and clothworker has conducted research in museums worldwide to repatriate her ancestor’s knowledge. Photograph by author.