

**Without Destroying Ourselves: A Century of Native Intellectual Activism for Higher Education.** By John A. Goodwin. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2022. 247 pages. \$60.00 cloth; \$60.00 ebook.

Through weaving them together into a single narrative, this text layers figures and contexts previously presented as discrete and distinct. Indeed, “like the many twisting wires that form a steel cable” (page 183), Goodwin reveals the strong movement in self-determined Indigenous education that we see today. As someone working in this field of paradigm shift, before reading this book I did not fully comprehend the great debt I owe these individuals and the struggles they met and overcame. For me, Goodwin constructs an “inquiry circle” (page 137) of the shapers of this movement, making visible their relatedness; links the past with ongoing battles; offers insights into where this movement has come from and where it needs to go; and outlines how to make meaningful contributions to it.

An initial figure in this text is Ho-Chunk intellectual Henry Roe Cloud, who warned that the struggle for equitable Native education would not resolve itself quickly, and rather than give in to hopelessness, to instead ignite, mobilize, and unify the talents of many in common purpose. This lengthy struggle, Cloud suggests, held the potential to cultivate a “lasting resilience of a shared idea for change” (page 15).

I could visualize Henry Roe Cloud—not as a person theorizing without taking direct action but as a person who modeled what he was trying to achieve. Although living at a time much later than Cloud, Goodwin mentions Vine Deloria Jr. wanting something similar from the new generation of Native intellectual leaders; he did not want them simply churning out more theories but rather to mobilize their ideas in real time. Cloud activated existing Native intellectual leaders to nurture and support those of the next generation. At the same time that he imagined and created the new Indigenous educational system, he served as a “tangible embodiment of adaptable leadership by drawing on Native and non-Native teaching techniques and languages” (page 80).

The new system being formed out of the one created to strip Native people of identity and spirit was to be “grounded in Indigenous culture, identity, and community” (page 18) and bring that into existence—a critical understanding of the past to shape active and relevant contributions to the future. Cloud imagined a system that would help students “participate with competence in both the Indian and non-Indian worlds, and to appreciate the merits of both” (page 187). This was imagined as a community-based education process centered on tribal values and orientations that also incorporated concepts and technologies of modern education that seemed most appropriate.

Goodwin mentions that “assimilation” was an early attempt at inclusion, and that Cloud believed citizenship should not require a renunciation of identity. Goodwin also draws readers’ attention to the careful considerations of Native intellectual leaders who, having been products of the system themselves, were careful in the adoption and adaptation of the dominant culture’s customs into their performance to be heard by white audiences. He mentions that Native intellectual leaders must have struggled to optimize this duality and not be compromised through these engagements. It required strategic adaptation to leverage power and access resource channels. This was often done in a way that was so nuanced it was hard to detect, raising criticism from other leaders who could not see it. Cloud also saw the necessity for community leaders who could express their Indigeneity—and for that to occur, the next generation would need schools that supported adaptability rather than assimilation.

Goodwin discusses how residential school policy was designed to ensure Native students learned the “habits of industry” while simultaneously disengaging them from tribal belonging. In addition, the vocational aspect of residential school was aimed at creating products sold to support school operation. Native child labor was being used to fund the systematic stripping of Native identity and community. Goodwin makes it easy to see that residential school programs did not integrate Native students into a place of equity in the modern world; rather, “integration” was a kind of servitude that would never pose a challenge to the existing comfort level of the mainstream, and, in fact, could strengthen it. Cloud’s vision was a paradigm shift; he wanted funds allocated for the germination of Native talent to find their unique place in the modern world as intellectual leaders.

Cloud saw that Native schools should be of and for the land. If Native people were to be resilient and thrive within the shrinking boundaries of reservation existence, they would have to know everything possible about their land and its care to do so. This would require a depth and breadth of education that has not existed in the mainstream, a system continually built on seemingly limitless exploitation for capital gain. Cloud felt that this would be challenging to achieve, but not beyond the capabilities of Native people—and it was of dire necessity. He and other leaders agreed that Native intellectual leadership would need to “build on a flexible range of Indigenous skill sets” (60), and that a system must be created and offered to support that development. It needed to be a system that served the goals of *all* Native people. Native people would also require high levels of training in defending land on many fronts to protect against the encroachment of extractivism. This point makes me aware of how Indigenous education of this sort is a model that all contemporary education should strive toward as we realize the boundaries of a finite planet and need to optimize the problem-solving contributions of diverse populations.

This could not be achieved through memorizing and vocational training for minimum competence, but rather in strong and adaptable, self-actualized people capable of critical thinking. This kind of education can only be brought about by a deep knowledge of how to “implement knowledge as a holistic experience, involving constant interaction between an individual and his or her surroundings” (110) within the embrace of community. Again, this makes me think of how this model could

inform the kind of education we need within the mainstream to equip students to meet the challenges of ever more complex issues facing our world. I believe this book will help those involved in this work clearly understand how their efforts are linked to, emerge from, and carry on the legacies these leaders began.

*Mae Hey*  
Virginia Tech