This Planet Knows my Name: Cosmologies of Emancipation Against Ecologic Collapse

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In the times of Reconciliation, more and more voices are challenging the myth of Canada as a benevolent nation towards racialised and Indigenous communities, despite its celebrations of cultural diversity. Controversies like those surrounding the TransMountain pipeline expansion or the Taseko Mines trial reveal the contradictions of the settler nation-state in its relations with Indigenous peoples. Especially since the approval of Bill C-45 and its changes to Canada's Navigable Water Act, the Indian Act, and the Environmental Assessment Act, the mobilization of Indigenous Peoples galvanized on platforms such as Idle No More has increased exponentially to confront an extractivist worldview of the colonial Canadian Government which is antithetical to an Indigenous way of knowing and relating to the land. The resurgence of the extractivist model and the economic dependence of the colonial governments on these activities that degrade the environment and perpetuate the dispossession of natural territory have shown their consequences via the increase in pandemics, climate change, or the 2020 wildfires in Australia. Faced with the neglect of colonial governments and the narrow-mindedness of progressive movements, it would be advisable to recognize Indigenous forms of intelligence and patterns of life in order to adopt sustainable economic models and avoid ecological collapse. These communities have been at the forefront of ecological collapse, territorial dispossession, and the cultural, economic, and spiritual consequences of land degradation for centuries due to settler colonialism.

These concerns are also reflected in the growing presence of Indigenous writers of fantasy, science fiction, and what Anishinaabe scholar Grace Dillon calls

Indigenous Futurism. These genres explore the capacities of science fiction to envision possible Native futures, hopes, and to make sense of the present moment, expanding the expectations of Indigenous writing beyond "reservation realisms" and surpassing the tropes of science fiction. Speculative fiction has often been regarded as a genre disconnected from the material reality we know in everyday life. This take ignores the genre's orientation towards the present rather than the future and its potential to express concerns, fears, raise questions, and reflect on the world from different perspectives informed by race, sex, or nationality. The genre's potential for conceptual disruption allows it to pose more open questions that are apparently detached from reality. In turn, this allows one to imagine the future that the material conditions of the present will bring us if taken to their final consequences. This potential can be seen in the growth of critical scholarship addressing cultural and political phenomena through the analysis of Afrofuturism, Indigenous Futurism, and post-colonial speculative fiction and fantasy (see: Dillon; Eguibar-Holgado; Hopkinson and Mehan; Lavender III; McLeod; Perez-Garcia; Rifkin).

In this article, I explore the potential of such Indigenous Futurism stories as representing a domain for the expression of collective self-recognition through relationships established based on the reciprocity between human and non-human forms of life and also to give meaning to new futures. This article addresses Cherokee and Scots-Irish author Celu Amberstone's Indigenous Futuristic novella "Refugees" to explore the possibility of articulating decolonial politics, exploring new forms of sovereignty in decolonization, and interconnection with the land versus the impending ecological collapse and fiduciary gridlock exercised by the Canadian neoliberal and settler-colonial state.

To carry out this analysis I will deploy a conceptual framework based on Indigenous modes of knowledge and resurgence from Indigenous authors such as Zainab Amadahy, Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg scholar Leanne Betasamosake

Simpson, and Yellowknives Dene scholar Glen Sean Coulthard. I will also include input from geographer Doreen Massey's sociology of space. From the positions raised by these scholars—especially by Coulthard—the fight against climate change, ecological collapse, and the extractivist cosmology that generates these patterns in settler nations must be approached from an anti-colonial perspective, not just an anti-capitalist one.

Coulthard's approach stems from the Marxist theses of the historical processes of primitive accumulation to propose colonialism as a form of structured dispossession. According to these theses, the birth of capitalism is linked to colonial practices that sought to dispossess non-capitalist societies and communities of their means of production and subsistence through whatever means were necessary—conquest, enslavement, robbery, murder. This dispossession would be a condition of possibility for capitalist accumulation and the reproduction of capitalist relations of production. In the process, it would obliterate Indigenous and non-capitalist societies by stripping them of their land and life. From the colonial point of view, sectors of the territory that were collectively held by Indigenous societies were divided up and privatized, and natural resources were also privatized. In the long run, this would contribute to including these societies in the labour market under the auspices of their survival in the new regime. Coulthard, however, makes some adjustments to Marxist theses to adapt them to the Indigenous reality of continuing colonialism and land dispossession. Mainly, he rejects Marx's idea that primitive accumulation is only a historical phenomenon confined to a particular period—a preliminary, transitional stage to the next stages of capitalist development. According to Marx, economic relations mark the dominance of the capitalist over the worker. Coulthard switches the Marxist emphasis on the capital relation to the colonial relation, showing that the oppression of the worker takes a temporal dimension (the theft of time) while Indigenous peoples experience oppression on a

spatial dimension (the dispossession of land), and this is a continuing process that structures Indigenous-settler state relations.

The response to inequality in social relations of production or the response to combat climate change and environmental deterioration, divorced from the framework of colonial relations, could be formulated based on a progressive political agenda that would leave the colonial structure unaltered. This answer could propose an economic and territorial redistribution and return the commons. However, it would simultaneously ignore the close relationship of Indigenous First Peoples with their land that has been taken. Apart from economic subsistence, the commons (or land in Indigenous gnoseology), plays a fundamental role in Indigenous modes of knowledge and in maintaining reciprocal and interdependent relationships with the natural world, human, and non-human forms of life. Without paying attention to these particularities and the central role of territorial dispossession, we run the risk of trying to mitigate the environmental problems derived from extractivism by maintaining the same colonial structures exerted on Indigenous peoples. Or, in the worst case, trying to negotiate the inclusion of Indigenous peoples in the extractivist system as intermediaries or lucrative participants in the extraction of resources from their lands.

On her part, Simpson affirms the direct experience of what capitalism and extractivism can do. After millennia of living in sustainable societies outside the framework of capitalism, the few centuries of direct experience of extractivist capitalism and territorial dispossession have shown Indigenous people an apocalyptic devastation of land, animals, and plant life-forms. Faced with an extractivist model that is non-reciprocal and based on relations of domination and exploitation of the land—in addition to the displacement of former inhabitants—Simpson advocates recovering a stewardship relationship that recognizes the relationship of interdependence between human beings, the natural space and non-human forms of life, caring for regeneration so that life can continue.

According to Nishnaabeg intelligence knowledge is relational and comes from the spirits channeled through the land (Simpson, *As We Have Always Done*). Knowledge originates in the spirit world and is received through dreams, visions, and ceremonies. It is given by the spirits and ancestors that inhabit the earth, land, and where the spirits of humans, plants, and animals interact. Therefore, to achieve knowledge it is necessary to be aligned with these forces through ceremony and the embodiment of the teachings that a person already has and to be able to generate supportive relationships. This is why environmental collapse and pollution have such devastating impacts on Indigenous peoples. Simpson calls for a change in the cycle through resurgence to create new forms of sustainable life and economy. She advocates turning to Indigenous knowledge and escaping from the cycles of Indigenous victimhood that reinforce the structures of settler colonialism and its terms of exploitation. For example, in her acclaimed essay "Aambe! Maajaadaa! (What #IdleNoMore Means to Me)," Simpson proclaims:

> I support #idlenomore because I believe that we have to stand up anytime our nation's land base is threatened—whether it is legislation, deforestation, mining prospecting, condo development, pipelines, tar sands or golf courses. I stand up anytime our nation's land base in threatened because everything we have of meaning comes from the land—our political systems, our intellectual systems, our health care, food security, language and our spiritual sustenance and our moral fortitude.

Amadahy and Mi'kmaq scholar Bonita Lawrence also insist on the idea of interdependence and reciprocity in the Indigenous understanding of the land.

They highlight that

> probably the most fundamental principle of many Indigenous cultures is human interdependence with other life-forms in non-hierarchical ways. Creation Stories, for example, emphasize the interdependence of two-

> leggeds (human beings) with the plants, animals, sun, moon, and the land itself (116).

The ramifications of these cosmologies have implications for all human beings at the levels of governance, economy, education, land tenure, and ecological sustainability. Embracing these teachings of Indigenous resurgence would imply valuing ecosystems for their intrinsic existence, reciprocity, and interdependence rather than valuing them for the resources we can extract from them (Amadahy, "Interview").

Stemming from the framework of colonial and Indigenous relations with the land, we can attend to the role played by territorial dispossession—extractivism and ecological collapse—in the economic perpetuation of the colonial structure. We can analyze the consequences this force has for Indigenous ways of life and knowledge, and finally approach from positions such as Indigenous resurgence and grounded normativity. That is, the ethical principles generated by the relationship with a particular place, with space, with the land through Indigenous knowledge and gnoseology—a series of ethical potentialities capable of reversing the colonial structure in favour of a more sustainable and humane socio-political and economic order.

Celu Amberstone's "Refugees" tells the story of Qwalshina and her Indigenous community. In the story, Qwalshina recounts how a race of lizard-like aliens called Benefactors have been populating the planet Tallav'Wahir with Indigenous fosterlings to save them from the ecological collapse and destruction of the Earth. The Qwalshina community—rooted Natives who follow an Indigenous, community-centric, and land-based pattern of life—have inhabited Tallav'Wahir for more than seven generations and revere the Benefactors as their saviours. The second generation of humans (known as fosterlings), however, were rescued before the supposed collapse of Earth. They are mainly urban Indigenous peoples from

Vancouver, BC, disconnected from Indigenous forms of knowledge, and they manifest problems with adapting and express distrust towards the Benefactors.

Amberstone's narrative shows how Qwalshina's initial trust in the Benefactors begins to crumble as she questions ideas of belonging on this foster planet and the problems of fully connecting with it. From the beginning of her story, Qwalshina shows the difficulties to connect with this foster planet, which she does not come to consider as her true home. At the beginning of the novella, Qwalshina performs a ceremony at the Mother Stone, above the knoll of her village. This ritual involves shedding her blood on the Mother Stone as a seasonal offering to Tallav'Wahir, so the planet will know her. However, her blood is red, "an alien color on this world and "Tallav'Wahir is kind, but there is something in this adoptive environment that is hard on us too. We aren't a perfect match for our new home, but the Benefactors have great hopes for us" (161;163). Nevertheless, Qwalshina and the rooted Natives make efforts to evince an ethic of grounded normativity on this planet. They are attuned to the life patterns and Tallav'Wahir cycles of life, seasons, food, and non-human forms of life.

At the beginning of the story, the Benefactors convey the destruction of the land to Qwalshina's group, explaining that they have to quickly relocate the fosterlings within the collective:

> Today our Benefactors confirmed our worst fears. Earth is now a fiery cloud of poisons, a blackened cinder. When it happened, our ancient soul-link with Earth Mother enabled us to sense the disaster even from this far world across the void. Tallav'Wahir felt it too. But we told our foster planet mother that our life patterns were sound. Our Benefactors would help us. Such a tragedy would never happen here. There was a great outpouring of blood and grief at the Mother Stones all over the world. The land ceased to tremble by the time the ceremonies ended. (162)

Qwalshina's words infer—and later explore more thoroughly—that this collapse is due to greed and poor human decisions, supported by a cosmology of extractivism and sustained development that led to the environmental collapse of Earth: "Our Benefactors teach us that technology must never interfere with our communion with the Mother, lest we forget the Covenant, grow too greedy, and destroy our new home" (165).

Relying on the notion of Indigenous intelligence conveyed by Amadahy and Simpson, the collapse is due to the lack of what Coulthard calls grounded normativity and Indigenous sense of place-based on reciprocity with nature (13). Grounded normativity in this case pertain to the ethical principles generated by the relationship with a particular place, with space, with the land through Indigenous knowledge and gnoseology (Coulthard 13; Simpson *As We Have Always Done;* Simpson & Coulthard 22). These Indigenous forms of knowledge and practices inform the construction of Indigenous reality and the forms of interrelation and interdependence experienced alongside other non-human life forms, people(s), nations, and natural spaces. Grounded normativity abounds in the idea of complex networks of interrelation between human and non-human beings, so the balance of these relationships influences the proper functioning of Indigenous societies. This system of balance requires a spiritual, emotional, and social connection that fosters and, in turn, depends on the interdependence, communion, and self-determination of the individuals who act in the community. For this reason, the well-being of individuals affects that of families and communities. When an individual is going through a difficult time or a traumatic process, the impact is felt throughout the system, and it is necessary to respond to it to safeguard one's own well-being and that of the larger community. Indigenous education and relationships with the physical and spiritual world are a lifelong process and, although each member of the community acquires the skills and wisdom to ensure their own survival, their existence depends on the interrelationships of reciprocity, humility, and respect for

the rest of the elements of creation and non-human forms of life (Simpson, *As We Have Always Done*). For this reason, pollution and deterioration of the environment are deeply negative for Indigenous peoples, their knowledge structures, and their physical and spiritual survival beyond the economy.

The implication, in the case of "Refugees" and Qwalshina, is that humans must live in harmony with the land, human, and non-human forms of life on the foster planet, or else they will condemn this planet to the same fate. On the other hand, embracing grounded normativity and Indigenous senses of place has allowed the rooted Natives to adapt with relative ease to the cycles and environment of Tallav'Wahir. This could be due to the perspective of Indigenous resilience described by Laurence Kirmayer et al:

> Aboriginal notions of personhood root identity in a person's connections to the land and environment. […] Thinking about the person as fundamentally connected to the environment dissolves the opposition between nature and culture. The human predicament then becomes one of working with powerful forces both within and outside the individual. Approached with respect, the natural environment provides not only sustenance but also sources of soothing, emotion regulation, guidance, and healing. (88-89)

However, a fundamental issue in the story is the role of the Benefactors and Amberstone's veiled analyses of colonial power relations. Although the rooted Natives of Qwalshina and the urban fosterlings try to settle and develop ties in Tallav'Wahir under an ethic of grounded normativity, we cannot ignore that they have been rescued—or brought in by force—by the alien Benefactors. Ultimately, they are confined to a planet by a race of aliens who control transportation in and out, and who further establish the terms of existence on that planet. Some of the fosterlings want to leave the planet and check if the earth has truly been destroyed by ecological collapse. After trying to take the Benefactors' ship by force, they are annihilated. Ultimately, Tallav'Wahir becomes a metaphor for an Indian reservation,

or a representation of the fiduciary gridlock exercised by the Canadian government as a ward of Indigenous peoples in Canada.

The Benefactors claim to have the best intentions for the humans. Nonetheless, they keep them held in a space other than their own, enclosed. The Benefactors also control the means and mechanisms of transportation and Tallav'Wahir's economy, and they will ultimately decide if the Qwalshina's people deserve to die as penance for the rebellion sparked by the fosterlings and some rooted-natives. In addition, the language used to refer to humans is similar to that of eugenics or agriculture; they speak in terms of seeding, bringing new humans to reseed the population of Tallav'Wahir or even implying the need to cross-breed them with new, compatible life-forms (Amberstone 170;181). The biopolitical and extractive turn of the Benefactors reaches the heights of implanting alien technology in the rooted Natives and fosterlings to be able to communicate with them in the language of the Benefactors. This serves to echo the imposition of western languages in the colonization of Turtle Island and the processes of eliminating worldviews and Indigenous cultures contrary to those of the settler.

In Canada, federal policies aimed to "assimilate" the Indigenous, to eliminate the "Indian" part of the peoples and their cultures, to turn them into "people" in the eyes of the colonizing government. The main tool for accomplishing that task was the Indian Act of 1876, a law that applied to all Indians who, under section 91 (24) of the Canadian constitution, were the responsibility of the federal government. Instead of being considered citizens or members of a Nation, Band or Tribe, the Indian Act made all "Indians" wards of the State under the supervision and administration of the government:

> As Indian Act Indians, we were considered legally incompetent until such time as we enfranchised and became full citizens of Canada, at which point we were no longer recognised as Indigenous and, consequently, lost our

> political voice within our Nations, lost access to, or ownership of, any lands we shared an interest in on reserve, and so on. (Raybould-Wilson 32)

Although life in a kind of community isolation in Tallav'Wahir has allowed the maintenance of Indigenous culture and traditions, there is a degree of dependance upon the tutelage of a Benefactor, assigned as an agent to maintain control of the community and ensure that they adapt to the planet. Also, the isolation affects the economy of Qwalshina's group. They produce crafts like weaved blankets and ceremonial capes that are highly prized by the Benefactors, some of whom "pay high prices for our artwork on their Homeland" (Amberstone 168). This, on the one hand, could place Qwalshina in a captive reservation economy in which her group has no power to set prices since the Benefactors are the only buyers. On the other, it could be a form of economic subsidy outside the subsistence economy of the rooted Natives, in a similar mode to that proposed by Coulthard as a possible alternative to the Indigenous resurgence economy. Alternatives deriving from anti-capitalist Indigenous political economies based on the sustainability of specific territories can include the reinforcement of traditional subsistence practices and local manufacturing, renewable resources through activities such as hunting and fishing, and combining these with other contemporary economic activities, or cooperative structures led by Indigenous people. In the case of Coulthard's own Dene Nation, this would revitalize the traditional mode of production, emphasizing the harvesting and gathering of local and renewable resources, and partially subsidizing these activities by other economic activities on lands communally held and managed by the Dene Nation.

This adaptability to the environment, despite its reservation-like character, underscores practices rooted in respect for land in the foster planet of "Refugees," embracing land-based relationality and a survival based on sustainability and reciprocity rather than extractivism or economic gain. Survival and habitability come from respect for the planet and the lands they inhabit. In a confrontation between

Sleek—a young female fosterling who reminds Qwalshina of her daughter—and Qwalshina, the latter tells Sleek that they do not live following traditional customs out of obligation, but because it is the best for them and the planet:

> We know about the high technologies,"I told her quietly. "We use what you would call computers, air cars, and other technical things too. But to help you make the repatterning, we decided that a simple lifestyle would be best for all of us for a time. There is no shame in living close to the land in a simple way, daughter. (165)

It is also important to consider the perspective of the story's fosterlings, urban Indigenous peoples who grew up separated from Indigenous forms of knowledge, grounded normativity, and relationship to the land. Qwalshina and the rooted Natives were relocated to the reservation-planet of Tallav'Wahir seven generations ago, allowing them to develop and preserve Indigenous epistemologies and a sense of cultural identity. However, the fosterlings only know urban, western culture and epistemologies and what they have received from the settler culture in Vancouver. The change is traumatic for them and forces them to abandon all the memories and belongings they had from their previous life on Earth. This connection with their previous home prevents them from adapting to Qwalshina's group, producing a profound imbalance throughout the broader collective. This point reflects the efforts made by the settler state to assimilate those Indigenous worldviews that contradict or question settler primacy. By eliminating Indigenous worldviews through its absorption in western gnoseology, territorial dispossession, and the exploitation of resources in Indigenous lands can be perpetuated.

Both Simpson (*As We Have Always Done*) and Lawrence (*Real' Indians and Others*) agree on the importance of establishing links between urban Indigenous peoples without access to land-based knowledge and rural Indigenous peoples to keep Indigenous knowledge and intelligence alive. The effectiveness of any Indigenous resurgence model will be largely conditioned by the success in

addressing Indigenous dispossession from the reserve and land-based perspective, but also from the urban perspective of those Indigenous peoples who do not have access to land-based knowledge. It is necessary to organize around the conditions of poverty and social inequality in urban and reserve communities as different manifestations with an aligned political cause. Lawrence advocates for a reconceptualization of Indigenous identity and nationality that takes into account urban in addition to reserve-based realities. This drive includes overcoming colonial divisions that contributed to the separation and reactive essentialization of identities through policies such as enfranchisement. Although it is possible to establish or reproduce Indigenous traditions in an urban context, Lawrence draws on her work and her own life experience to argue for access to land as an essential condition that must be agreed upon (232) Both communities are Indigenous on Indigenous land, so trying to strengthen relations between urban and reserve-based Indigenous peoples is a necessary step to build a movement capable of taking effective strides towards decolonization.

As the levels of tension and distrust expressed by the fosterlings and some rooted Natives towards the Benefactors increase, Qwalshina's group begin to believe that the land has not been destroyed and that they are part of a cruel alien experiment. This theory is never evidenced one way or the other, and we might well wonder if there really has been an ecological collapse or rather if the Benefactors keep the humans in this reserve as an experiment while they exploit the remaining resources on Earth. In any case, when the authority of the Benefactors is questioned, the answer is swift and violent; the human rebels die. Once the revolt is quelled, the Benefactors meet to decide the future of the rooted Natives peoples: some claim they are genetically flawed and should be destroyed whilst others believe they should be interbred with other species. Although humans are not allowed to participate in the deliberation over their own destiny, faced with the possibility of annihilation Qwalshina returns to the Mother Stone of the planet to

continue with the blood offering, in order for the planet to recognize her. However bleak the chances, she still carries out the ritual and keeps the Native traditions alive in any way she can: "Blood. The old people say it is the Carrier of ancestral memory and our future's promise […] My blood is red, an alien color on this world." (Amberstone 182)

If we understand the existence of Qwalshina and the rooted Natives as Indigenous peoples in a system of reservation or cultural recognition for as long as they do not gainsay the Benefactors, their vigilantes, and those who hold power, we can extrapolate this to gesture toward the current colonial reality of settler states like Canada. In both cases, tolerance or recognition is negotiated in terms established by the side who has power—that is, Benefactors or settler government—and is predicated on following colonial prerogatives of capitalist overexploitation and extractivism, with the condition that Indigenous worldviews do not threaten those interests. In a Foucauldian sense, settler-colonial rule, as structure, functions as

> a relatively diffuse set of governing relations that operate through a circumscribed mode of recognition that structurally ensures continued access to Indigenous peoples' lands and resources by producing neocolonial subjectivities that coopt Indigenous people into becoming instruments of their own dispossession. (Coulthard 156)

Contemporary colonialism, then, does not operate through coercive methods that limit freedoms, but through the very appearance of freedom, changing the cage of domination for a chain. Despite granting more movement and management capacity, freedom continues to be held, offered, and withdrawn by the hand of the settler state. The liberal "politics of recognition" as an approach to reconcile of Indigenous peoples' sovereignties with the sovereignty of the Canadian settler state focus on accommodating identity-related claims by Indigenous people in the negotiation of agreements on land, self-government, and economic development.

However, scholars like Taiaiake Alfred (Kahnawake Mohawk), Coulthard, and Patrick Wolfe maintain that this approach does not entail a substantial change for the lot of Indigenous peoples. Their relationships with the settler state only change superficially since structures and practices of land dispossession continue to function unabated, and the self-determination of Indigenous peoples is denied.

And yet, when the legitimacy of colonial authority is materially questioned or subject to direct action—such as the riot of the novella's fosterlings, or roadblocks to impede access to Indigenous lands and prevent resource extraction—we see the emergence of explicitly violent countermeasures, with the deployment of snipers, dogs, and RCMP commandos to expel activists and resume the extraction of resources that maintains the settler state's economy. The extractivist production model requires the settler state to maintain stability and its authority over territory if it is to attract capital and investments that perpetuate the expansion of capitalist accumulation. In this sense, land-based protests such as blockades and other Indigenous practices to reaffirm sovereignty weaken the image of the settler state, its control of the population, and sharpen the acrimonious state of its relationship with Indigenous peoples. The chances of attracting investment in a climate of protest are limited. The blockades, then, represent a spatial practice to ligate the power of the settler state, preventing it from accessing Indigenous territories over which it does not have sovereignty, dealing a double blow—both material and symbolic—to the state.

Without the backing of grassroot activists and members of Indigenous communities and their allies risking their safety through mobilization and direct action, negotiations with the state would lack an element of critical mass to support compelling words and arguments. Without activists and land-based actions, there would hardly be any negotiations over Aboriginal rights and title in B.C. through the land claim process. Nor would there be any meaningful Royal Commission on

Aboriginal Peoples without the massive mobilizations of Indigenous communities across Canada, including the Haida of Haida Gwaii.

These mobilizations impose a blockade of the circulation and extraction of resources and merchandise that seeks to affect the bases of the capitalist economy in settler states. The roadblocks of access to Indigenous lands are anti-capitalist attacks and signs of resurgence for Simpson since:

> While the mainstream media might focus on the blockade aspects of these actions, which are important in their own right, there is also a taking back of space in that the communities that maintain the blockades are often reinvigorating Indigenous governance, ceremony, economic systems, education, and systems of caring. These are bubbles of resurgent life. (*As We Have Always Done* 242)

One recent and high-profile incarnation of discontent with the state's denial of Indigenous territorial sovereignty occurred with the establishment of Unist'ot'en Checkpoint. Raised on the unceded territory of the Unist'ot'en clan of the Wet'suwet'en First Nation peoples in northern B.C., this checkpoint was created to block the construction of pipelines and industrial infrastructures. The forced entry of the RCMP in January 2019 and again in 2020 to enable the construction of infrastructure resulted in several people being arrested and visible protests in B.C. and Canada, questioning the genuineness of the Canadian government's overtures toward the implementation of Reconciliation policies.

Indigenous sovereignty and antithetical worldviews to that of colonial capitalist extractivism, as we have seen, are sources of knowledge and life patterns to avoid ecological collapse. Yet they encounter strong opposition at the same time, due to the same character that questions the legitimacy of the economic model which depends on the settler state. Any sincere and committed negotiation would demand the settler state renounce the pillars of its sovereignty as understood in the Westphalian sense. That is, renounce the absolute and uncontested authority

of the state throughout its demarcated and internationally recognised borders and the construction of homogeneous national identities coterminous with the state's territories. Indigenous claims to sovereignty and land that challenge the extractivist economy also challenge the prerogative that the settler state is the sole source of authority. The western liberal-capitalist worldview—in which the earth is a commodity owned and exploited by man—clashes with Indigenous worldviews whereby peoples belong to the earth and are connected by relationships of reciprocity and interdependence, and mutual sustainment. From this clash, it could be possible to offer an approximate definition of Indigenous sovereignty and how to mobilize it to short-circuit ecological collapse using alternatives embedded in an ethic of grounded normativity.

The notion of Indigenous sovereignty is not state-centric, nor is it considered a conferral from an absolute sovereign power (Alfred). Indeed, it is often not deployed with the western connotation of original and supreme power over people and territory, rejecting its hierarchical character and maintenance by force (Corntassel 105-112). Indigenous sovereignty has a decolonizing dimension since it seeks to recover and restore the legitimacy of Indigenous models of organization and governance in the face of colonial political structures and forms (Clavé-Mercier 99-119). All this means that Indigenous sovereignty does not necessarily focus on the state form as an ideal and seeks to detach itself from the domestic colonial state that tries to define its scope, its content, and the rights and identities linked to it. Lastly, Indigenous sovereignty is based on deep relationships with the land, which is considered —alongside the community—to be the source of its power. For this reason, the relationship of the people with the land is central in the exercise of sovereignty, and this explains why Indigenous sovereignty is often considered on a reduced scale, closely bound with a sense of locality. In the western imagination, sovereignty is the concept that is closest to expressing this type of relationship with the land that goes beyond a simple property right, thus explaining

its mobilization by Indigenous peoples to fight for political self-determination. Indigenous sovereignty, then, clearly emphasizes interdependence between the human world, the natural world, and even the spiritual world.

Similar visions can be seen in Qwalshina's praxis in Tallav'Wahir, guaranteeing the sustainability of relations with the land with human and non-human forms of life. Specifically, Qwalshina's final gesture, making a blood offering of communion with the foster planet primes the preservation of Indigenous traditions despite the uncertainty of their fate. This reflects the Indigenous resurgence approach that Indigenous scholars like Simpson, Coulthard, and Alfred aver, based on self-recognition and the generative refusal of colonial systems of recognition. Both Alfred and Simpson encourage Indigenous communities to abandon the prospects of liberal reformism of recognition policies and seek to revitalize Indigenous political values and traditional practices to build a national liberation movement. They call for the people to seek Indigenous decolonization on their own terms, "without the sanction, permission or engagement of the state, western theory or the opinions of Canadians" (Simpson *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back*, 17-18).

Decolonial approaches from the perspective of Indigenous resurgence, rebuke the idea that more ethical and egalitarian relationships can be established with non-Indigenous peoples and with the land through Indigenous participation in the capitalist economic system. This system is based on the accumulation of capital and sustained development through ecological exploitation and racial-, sexual-, and class-based models of inequality. The inclusion of Indigenous people in this system would only benefit the system itself and the owners of the means of production. Simpson points towards a deployment of Indigenous political thought and land-based epistemologies to revitalize sustainable local economies:

> People within the Idle No More movement who are talking about Indigenous nation-hood are talking about a massive transformation, a massive

> decolonization"; they are calling for a "resurgence of Indigenous political thought" that is "land-based and very much tied to that intimate and close relationship to the land, which to me means a revitalization of sustainable local Indigenous economies. ("Aambe!")

The transformation of the political economy is a key element in the reconstruction of Indigenous communities beyond the parasitism of capitalism. Even profit redistribution policies that do not dismantle the capitalist structure will continue to hinge on the ongoing dispossession and exploitation of natural resources and people. On the other hand, Coulthard dedicates several chapters to developing anti-capitalist and anti-colonial Indigenous alternatives, based on the experiences of the Dene peoples to seek a sustainable Indigenous political economy that guarantees Indigenous sovereignty. Such an approach to resurgence would see Indigenous people reconnect with their lands and land-based practices on either an individual or small-scale collective basis. This includes refamiliarization with landscapes and places that give Indigenous peoples' histories, languages, and cultures their shape and content. It involves engaging in sustainable land-based harvesting practices like hunting or fishing and/or cultural production activities like hide-tanning and carving, all of which also assert indigenous sovereign presence on their territories in ways that can be profoundly educational, empowering, and not contingent from settler state recognition.

These sustainable alternatives would pose a threat to capitalist accumulation and would promise ecological sustainability for several reasons. In the first place, these activities reconnect Indigenous people with land-based cultural and economic practices and forms of knowledge based on relationality and sustainability, values which are antithetical to global capitalism and the extractivist cosmology. Second, they offer means of subsistence and self-sufficiency through the local and sustainable production of material resources and food, eliminating dependence on the capitalist market. Finally, an Indigenous approach to contemporary economic

activities could improve decision-making regarding economic sustainability, equitable redistribution of resources and benefits in Indigenous communities, and political and economic empowerment for those Indigenous peoples who want to pursue livelihoods in the economy outside of the Canadian Bush.

However, Coulthard warns firmly against placing all hopes on approaching negotiations with the settler state apparatus. Furthermore, he calls for overcoming rights-based/recognition-oriented mobilization of Indigenous movements in favour of "resurgent politics of recognition that seeks to practice decolonial, gender-emancipatory, and economically nonexploitative alternative structures of law and sovereign authority grounded on a critical refashioning of the best of Indigenous legal and political traditions" (Coulthard 179). To weave the alliances necessary to press for Indigenous sovereignty requires the efforts of resurgent indigeneity and political activism. In an interview, Amadahy invites us to embrace decolonization as a learning process of Indigenous relationships to land. It is land, rather than bloodlines, ethnicity, or cultural heritage which becomes central to indigenization, to be Indigenous to a place:

> To be Indigenous is to take direction on how to live from a specific place (a bio-region) where all of life-forms model sustainability, interdependence, and "good mind" in relation to how to live well in that area […] Fundamentally, it would involve a huge shift of mindset because if you can't understand and imagine an alternative to the current dysfunctionality of colonial society, then you can't transform it. […] This doesn't mean, by the way, that everyone has to "become Indian." You keep your stories and identities but everyone's culture is modified to fit what is sustainable on this land. I think that is healthier and more desirable—in fact, it's more survivable than modifying culture to fit the colonial Canadian or U.S. mythologies. (*Feral Feminisms*)

From this perspective, we can incorporate Massey's relational idea of the sense of place to advance a sense of Indigenous space in the way advanced by Amadahy

and theories of Indigenous resurgence. According to Massey's body of work on a sense of place, places are contingent on the relational processes that create, sustain, and dissolve them. The coexistence of multiple spatialities and worldviews in places undermines a unitary, and simplistic sense of place. This does not mean that there is no hegemonic conception or configuration of relationships and structures that contingently give meaning to a place. Against this hegemonic sense, social agents such as Indigenous peoples are mobilized through direct anti-colonial and anti-capitalist actions, whether via are blockages to capitalist extraction flows or through the preservation and active practice of Indigenous traditions and ways of life.

If we start from this understanding of a sense of place and geographical thinking and apply it to the formation of the state, we cannot consider it as an immutable essence. The formation of the state must be seen as the fluid result of the processes of construction of places, in which the different moments of the relationship with nature, production processes, social relations, technologies, mental conceptions of the world, and structures of daily life intersect in a world full of borders to turn a fluid entity into a solid "permanence" of social power. This relational construction of the state helps to free political imaginations and energies to re-examine what is the optimal form of political-territorial organization of human societies, such as Indigenous ones, in order to achieve specific socio-ecological objectives (Harvey 310-311).

In this article, I have tried to provide an approach to Indigenous knowledge and epistemology that can contribute alternatives and forms of intelligence to face the climate challenge. Given that the economies of settler colonies like Canada rely heavily on the exploitation of natural resources and the territorial dispossession of Indigenous peoples to perpetuate themselves as a colonial authority, I have drawn from the Indigenous resurgence methodologies of Glen Coulthard and Leanne Betasamosake Simpson. In their approaches to the resurgence of worldviews

antithetical to capitalist extractivism, and the rejection of recognition as a tool that perpetuates primitive accumulation through dispossession, we can learn and adopt alternatives to environmental collapse that imply a difficult change in the sovereign model.

The role of literature, especially Indigenous Futurism, is essential in providing, on the one hand, Indigenous meaning to past and ongoing colonial experiences, and on the other, projecting an Indigenous presence and epistemology into the future on its own terms. In such texts we can find tools to critique the present and project the future, rewriting prevailing power dynamics and finding liberation in terms of Indigenous modernity. To imagine an alternative future to the present of settler colonial society and ecological collapse is the first step to transform it. Indigenous resurgence, Indigenous sovereignty, and Indigenous Futurism aim to reverse the appropriation of colonial sovereignty by rewriting the content of the concept from the perspectives of distinct worldviews, the possibilities of their contexts, and their ultimate objectives. The future will tell us if Indigenous struggles will lead to true sovereign reformulations and if, indeed, we are in time to achieve a paradigm shift that can avoid collapse.

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