

## Book Review: *The End of this World*

Reviewed by Carole Therrien

**Book under Review:** Alook, Angele, Emily Eaton, David Gray-Donald, Joël Laforest, Crystal Lameman, Bronwen Tucker. 2023. *The End of This World: Climate Justice in So-Called Canada*. Between The Lines Publishing

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In *The End of This World: Climate Justice in So-Called Canada*, six writers have co-authored a volume of essays that demonstrate the extent of climate injustice faced by Indigenous communities and what can be achieved by highlighting the structural oppression and evident racism experienced by Indigenous communities, when interacting with both state and non-state actors. Extensive, thorough, and passionately written, the text is exhaustive in its scope and referencing. A hybrid of interdisciplinary scholarly and literary work, *The End of this World* is a text that remains etched in one's memory.

After laying out six governing principles that would lead to substantive and decolonized climate justice, the book's objectives cannot be clearer: to bring to light "the violation of Indigenous peoples' inherent rights and sovereignty, and the fossil fuel economy that relies on this violation." (11). Further, the authors propose that a just transition allowing "everyone to meet their basic needs while remaining within global ecological limits" (89) will not occur unless settler capitalism in Canada is no longer the primary political economic structure. The authors argue that the recognition of Indigenous rights and sovereignty is central "to rescue a habitable planet" (6) and can no longer be considered an afterthought or add-on to the thinking among advocates of climate justice or state authorities. This is also a cornerstone for acknowledging past and current relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, and a path towards restoring a balance to a long-strained relationship.

The authors, who are academics, activists, and journalists, both settler and Indigenous, tackle five different ideas that define and propose to resolve the problem of climate injustice: the assertion of Indigenous sovereignty on Canadian soil and abroad; a commitment to maintaining the 1.5 degree Celsius threshold to stave the most destructive of potential climate damages; polluters and the wealthy paying their fair share; reliable and valuable work for women in a care-oriented economy; and a global equality.

The book's objectives and approaches are ambitious but consistent with the contemporary Canadian decolonization dialogue. All six authors claim that the dismantling of Western capitalism, which is based on fossil fuel extraction/production/transformation, is the only means to reach climate justice and bring attention to the many other injustices wrought by capitalist interests: violence, exploitation, land theft, inequality, greed, sexism, and racism. They argue that undoing the current way of operating is the only solution; by unweaving the complex interdisciplinary narrative, we find ourselves unwillingly complicit. At times, the book appears to be a manifesto, at others an ethnographic récit or academic treatise. From a literary perspective, this may appear contradictory but it is reflective of the non-linearity of the issues the book addresses.

The presented roadmap to short-term and long-term actions is very helpful for readers of this book who wish to inform themselves on the issue of Indigenous sovereignty and climate change; one cannot finish the book and not question the complexity of the issue nor dismiss any possible resolution. The call for an immediate end of everything that is familiar will intimidate settler readers reluctant to lean into discomfort. But it will motivate activists, proponents, and allies for greater Indigenous involvement in the climate debate.

While the use of extensive endnotes provides context or sources of information which contribute to the book's textual heft, it can disrupt reading at times. The absence of a formal bibliography of said references and sources made it challenging to find sources; some sources are inconsistently identified within the endnotes. In the spirit of decolonizing text, this is a metaphor for challenging or questioning the way one thinks of an essay compendium.

As a settler anthropological and political economy scholar who focuses on the impacts of change on women in structurally oppressed settings, I struggle to situate this compendium or call to action within any discipline-specific body of literature. Its interdisciplinary nature makes it difficult to pigeonhole and, as such, reminds me of popular activist texts such as *The Leap Manifesto* (2015) that bring together complex ideas and calls to action. The book does, however, sit well with other activist scholarship written by, for example, Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, Robin Maynard, and Deborah McGregor, whose collective works bring attention to the injustices by colonial institutional apparatuses to Canada's Indigenous and Black communities.

Published by Between the Lines, a self-proclaimed "social movement press," this is not a formal academic book. However, non-academic texts are also vital for contributing to the decolonization of the academy. Non-traditional academic texts can be particularly valuable for presenting Indigenous knowledge in a range of formats. This book's strength comes from its activist and interdisciplinary nature.

I would particularly recommend this book to readers who appreciate concrete examples and approaches that allow them to better understand a complex and historically charged modernity. Crystal Lameman makes a particularly strong contribution with her chapter on building a care economy where the expectation and delivery of care is based on human rights principles. Individual chapters would make interesting additions to academic syllabi in gender studies, Indigenous studies, Canadian studies, geography, or anthropology. The book in its entirety might also serve as a good think piece at the Canadian secondary-school level.

*The End of the World* is meant to question what many people ignore in Canada's contemporary political economy. It provides settler and non-settler strategies that can lead to climate justice. The book is written clearly and succinctly to unsettle, contend, explore, and instigate. As such, it presents a long-overdue and uncomfortable debate.