SÁMI AND THE CLIMATE CRISIS: THE COLONIAL ANTHROPOCENE

by

STANIKOS DAVID JORDAN

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Approved: _____*David Meek, Ph.D.*_____
Primary Thesis Advisor

Indigenous peoples are among the most severely impacted groups by the effects of the climate crisis despite their negligent role in engendering environmental degradation. To many Indigenous peoples, the violence of the climate crisis is not a novel violence but rather an exacerbation of already existing violence. Crucially, the impacts of the climate crisis perpetuate historic and contemporary colonialist aims against Indigenous peoples. The Sámi, an Indigenous people in Fennoscandia, have contended with centuries of colonialism and are currently facing the dire impacts of the climate crisis as Earth's new human-dominated geological epoch—the Anthropocene—unfolds. In this thesis, I argue that both the direct ecological impacts of the climate crisis and "development" in response to this crisis are essentially continuations and exacerbations of colonialist violence against Sámi in Sweden. Utilizing a political ecology framework and primarily qualitative analyses of existing literature pertaining to the Sámi, colonialism, and the climate crisis, I explore the historical and contemporary intersections of colonialism and ecological breakdown in a Sámi context while arguing for the political institutionalization of the Sámi in Sweden.

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Introduction

Indigenous peoples, though often least responsible for environmental degradation, are among the most severely impacted groups by the effects of the climate crisis ("Indigenous Peoples Hardest Hit by Climate Change"). Earth's new geological epoch, the Anthropocene, is understood and defined both by this crisis and the recognition that our planet is now primarily "human-influenced, or anthropogenic, based on overwhelming global evidence that atmospheric, geologic, hydrologic, biospheric and other earth system processes are now altered by humans" ("Welcome to the Anthropocene"). Although it is commonly recognized that the current climate crisis facing Earth is intrinsically anthropogenic, recognition of this crisis as one chiefly caused by colonialism as well as one that intensifies already existing colonialist violence remains a recognition that is seldom made. Considering the urgent need for development in the Anthropocene to be ecologically-aware to avoid the most detrimental potential outcomes of the climate crisis, acknowledgment of the colonialist nature of this crisis as well as the value of Indigenous knowledge systems in building resiliency and adaptation becomes essential.

The focus of this analysis will be the Indigenous Sámi in Sweden. The Sámi are an Indigenous people that have been inhabiting the Northern reaches of Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Northwest Russia for millennia—a land referred to by the Sámi as Sápmi. Although there is no census for the Sámi, their population is estimated to be around 80,000 individuals: ~50,000 in Norway, ~20,000 in Sweden, ~8,000 in Finland, and ~2,000 in Russia ("Sami in Sweden"). The Sámi living in Sweden will be the focus of this analysis of the climate crisis, colonialism, and Indigenous self-determination due

to the precedence of historic and current colonialist encroachments in Sweden that identify the largely progressive nation as underdeveloped in the realm of Indigenous rights, particularly compared with its Nordic neighbors. The largely unaddressed colonialist circumstances in Sweden demand both historical recognition and contemporary reconciliation, and the beginnings of Norwegian and Finnish development from prior and current colonialist advancements identify Sweden as the Nordic country requiring the most urgent and expansive decolonization and Indigenous self-determination (Dixon et al.).

Analyzing the colonialist nature of the climate crisis and "developments" in response to this crisis in a Sámi context expands Indigenous climate studies while illuminating the plight and resiliency of an Indigenous people that remain marginalized in general discourses on Indigeneity both inside Sweden and internationally (Mulk). Highlighting the Sámi's historical and contemporary contentions with colonialism, the climate crisis, and development in response to the climate crisis contributes to a fuller understanding of the diverse experiences, pains, and resiliencies of Indigenous peoples during the Anthropocene and, moreover, how the climate crisis is a product of colonialism. Further, "The often close connection between indigenous peoples and their respective territories allows them to make detailed observations of how these changes transform the landscapes where they practice their daily activities," making Indigenous knowledge incredibly important in scientific and developmental understandings of anthropogenic climate changes (Horstkotte et al. 1). As the Arctic is the most rapidly transforming region of Earth climatically, the position and plight of the Sámi provides insight into early Indigenous experiences of the climate crisis (Kerby).

Moreover, as the “development” projects occurring in Swedish Sápmi are largely colonialist projects created or reimagined as “sustainable” responses to the climate crisis, examination of such projects enables critical analysis of both Swedish and international sustainability paradigms.

The climate crisis needs to be recognized as a crisis on multiple levels. The direct, environmental impacts of the climate crisis are the primary obstacles sustainable development and Indigenous self-determination face, yet much of the “developments” that have been created to fight against this crisis ultimately serve as aspects of the crisis itself. Beyond direct ecological damage, “developments” in response to the climate crisis perpetuate the colonialist violence that has provided the foundations for severe climatic transformations to occur on Earth, thus making such “developments” a part of this crisis. In a Sámi context, such “developments” have exacerbated violence affecting the Sámi and continue to play significant roles in provoking and sustaining environmental disruptions. Due to this, Sámi institutionalization and self-determination in Sweden are avenues of development that must be pursued if colonialist, capitalist, and industrialist socioeconomic structures are to be deconstructed rather than maintained and expanded. As Indian scholar and environmentalist Vandana Shiva offers, Indigenous knowledge has great ecological importance, and, “with the growing concerns about sustainability, its relevance increases” (“Vandana Shiva: Indigenous Knowledge”).

Political Ecology

The primary framework through which I will examine this topic is political ecology. Utilizing a political ecology lens to examine the Sámi in relation to the climatic and industrial colonialist circumstances impacting them and avenues for their institutionalization in decision-making bodies allows for a more widely encompassing analysis that underlines the significance of addressing the ecological ties between the human and more-than-human[1] worlds. Political ecology as a mental framework is also able to simplify and concentrate critical analysis that aims to interrogate political socioeconomic structures in relation to the environment. As the environment host to the Sámi has been and continues to be plundered and raped by industrial colonialist encroachments provoked by the capitalist socioeconomic system, political ecology as a paradigm is able to deconstruct such power relations and explore paths of development, adaptation, and resiliency that are Indigenously self-determined, sustainable, and ecological.

As is posited by geographer Paul Robbins, political ecology is "a field that seeks to unravel the political forces at work in environmental access, management, and transformation," and, moreover, "that politics is inevitably ecological and that ecology is inherently political" (Robbins 3). To illustrate, when analyzing the way colonial management of game reserves and national parks in the Serengeti has disrupted ancient human relationships with the more-than-human world in pursuit of the imposition and

[1] The term more-than-human is used in this thesis as an alternative to the word "animals" as well as a more general term for Nature and other entities on Earth that are not human. As the common usage of the word "animals" positions humans as beings both other than "animals" and more intelligent and valuable than "animals," utilization of the term more-than-human (a term I first came across in Norwegian psychologist and politician Per Espen Stoknes' book *What We Think About When We Try Not To Think About Global Warming: Toward a New Psychology of Climate Action*) reverses this notion and recognizes the more-than-human world with dignity, respect, and accuracy.

maintenance of colonially dictated concepts of wilderness, Robbins interrogates an "apolitical" approach to this issue. Apolitical ecology operates within a narrow framework and mistakenly directs interrogation towards specific actors without necessary deliberation on historical and political precedents. In the context of park management in the Serengeti, for example, apolitical ecology places blame on "trespassing" local people violating imposed laws and boundaries rather than considering the implications of a historical (and contemporary) colonial rule that artificially partitioned the human and more-than-human worlds that had been thriving symbiotically in the region for centuries. English and German colonial rule in the Serengeti created and enforced a concept of wilderness void of humans, thereby eroding the wilderness that the national parks were intended to conserve. Moreover, "the traditional residents of the region have historically acted to help create the very 'wilderness' that outsiders seek to preserve in their removal" (177).

In a Sámi context, political ecology enables a more holistic analysis of current climatic and "developmental" occurrences impacting the Sámi to be performed. As both the direct effects of the climate crisis and "development" in response to this crisis stem from deep legacies of colonialism in Sápmi, the politically enabled and historically charged separation and disappearance of the Sámi from Sápmi have instituted a politic in Sweden that engenders "sustainable development" in Indigenous territories without Indigenous consideration, inclusion, nor self-determination. The historical and current assaults on Sápmi land and Sámi culture are products of political exclusion and violence and must therefore be understood as inherently political. Colonialism and the climate crisis can be viewed as analogous and the sustainability of future and current

developments in Sápmi as depending on Indigenous self-determination and institutionalization in political bodies. Here, it is important to note that political bodies are not only governmental actors but corporate and civil actors as well.

Another benefit of utilizing political ecology as a theoretical lens in a Sámi context is its ability to incorporate the more-than-human world into analyses of ecological issues. As political ecology recognizes "that most of the main actors" in issues concerning the environment are not human, the intricate and dependent relationships between the Sámi and the more-than-human world of Sápmi are thus more easily deciphered and understood in relation to the political forces affecting them when political ecology is the primary framework through which these circumstances are analyzed (240). Robbins points to the specific cultural and historical differences found in perceptions of grizzly bears in early colonial North America as a primary example of how culture—which originates from political structures—directly impacts ecology. As Anglo-Saxon settlers perceived grizzly bears as "demonic and frightening presences, which confronted and challenged settlers and farmers" while Indigenous peoples of the Americas largely recognized grizzly bears as "part of a sacred order" and "a brother figure that—though fearsome—would never be considered evil," the anthropogenic perceptions affecting the more-than-human world in this context reveal themselves to be "so overlain with stories, discourses, and ideologies that their [grizzly bears] actual physical presence would have little bearing on struggles over their protection, control, or elimination" (239). Indeed, political cultural paradigms found in Anglo-Saxon settler groups have persisted and enduringly inflicted immense violence against grizzly bears in North America. In a Sámi context, as the Natural landscapes and more-than-human

beings (particularly reindeer) of Sápmi are intrinsic to the vitality of Sámi culture and thus inform their livelihoods, the devaluation of the more-than-human world by invading colonialists and industrialists is recognized as the fundamental force disrupting Sápmi ecology in a political ecology framework.

Here, it is important to consider the intricacies of any concept of Nature[2]. In William Cronon's *The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature*, the concept of a Nature or wilderness separate from humanity is complicated. Cronon argues that the specifically Western creation of Nature is a cultural construction. As the pre-christian ecological understandings of Europe were replaced by Abrahamic inventions of hierarchies and binaries following the conquest of christianity, centuries of Western beliefs have been defined by separating humanity from Nature to then demonize Nature and position her as a body to be raped and murdered (Inglis). Although the advent of environmentalism in the West has triggered a deterioration of some of these notions, they persist nonetheless—particularly in the way many Western individuals tend to view Nature as separate from themselves, regardless of if their opinions of Nature are positive or negative (Cronon). Considering the Sámi, their traditional understandings recognize the inherent unison of humans and the more-than-human world, their culture and worldview defined by a "deep relationship to nature" that "is difficult to imprison in words" (*The Sami Parliament's Living Environment Program)*. In relation to political ecology, addressing these Indigenous understandings is crucial in a Sámi context as the political forces negatively

[2] The words Nature and Natural are capitalized throughout this thesis out of respect. If it is to be understood that words of importance are capitalized in the English language, then it is essential to capitalize the most important of all. This is a language mechanic that I first came across in Arne Næss' *Self-Realization: An Ecological Approach to Being in the World*.

impacting them do so because of their assault against the more-than-human world that the Sámi largely remain in harmony with.

Common property theory—one of the foundational theories of contemporary political ecology—also serves as a particularly valuable tool for analyzing the colonial ecological circumstances of Sápmi. As common property theory "rests on the understanding that fisheries, forests, rangeland, genes, and other resources, like many of the environmental systems over which struggles occur, are traditionally managed as collective or common property," it can identify managerial inadequacies and inefficiencies that have been engendered through colonial and industrial political aims. Interrogating the socioeconomic structures that have instigated ecological and cultural breakdowns in Sápmi through common property theory enables these breakdowns to be recognized as deriving from "failures in the specific structure of rules that govern a collective property, by virtue of increasing scarcity or value of the resource or alterations in local social structure and culture" (Robbins 51). Indeed, the Sámi's political exclusion in Sweden has enabled governmental, corporate, and civil actors to exploit raw materials and lands in Sápmi and thus assault the cultural fabric of the Sámi themselves. Due to this, revitalizing traditional collective property notions in Sápmi is essential, and the current predominant socioeconomic systems that disturb such notions are made simpler to understand and deconstruct through the utilization of common property theory.

Moreover, as both historical and contemporary colonialist encroachments in Swedish Sápmi have been furthered by political bodies to expand the national economy at the explicit expense of Indigenous culture and the well-being of the more-than-human

world, political ecology enables interrogation of the socioeconomic structures that drove and continue to drive such infringements through recognition of how these structures form “a larger social engine” and “a *broadly defined political economy*” (59). Crucially, Robbins offers “No explanation of environmental change is complete, therefore, without serious attention to who profits from changes in control over resources, and without exploring who takes what from whom” (59). As the colonial history and present of Sápmi has been defined by changing control (and theft) over lands, materials, bodies, and cultures, positioning the plight of the Sámi in relation to political ecology offers a holistic overview of Sámi contentions with colonialism and the climate crisis and an Indigenously self-determined, sustainable developmental path forwards that identifies the political obstructions in Sweden requiring deconstruction.

The Climate Crisis

Reality

No contemporary analysis of any subject would be complete without discussion of the implications of the climate crisis—least of all any analysis concerning the positions of Indigenous peoples and the more-than-human world during the onslaught of the Anthropocene. Thus, proper, holistic recognition of the anthropogenic climate crisis unfolding before us must be made, and the truth at the heart of such recognition is of the most sorrowful variety.

Synthesis of academic journals and publications from research institutes on the climate crisis and its implications for ecosystems, economies, and societies leads to, as strategist and educator on social and organizational change Jem Bendell succinctly offers, “a conclusion there will be a near-term collapse in society with serious ramifications…” (Bendell). Considering this, let us first examine recent facts provided by NASA and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration: nineteen out of twenty of the hottest years on human record have occurred during the past twenty years, the past decade on Earth was the hottest ever recorded, the past five years are the five hottest on record, and 2019 was the second hottest year on record (Dennis et al.). These records have all been made within my lifetime. Notably, although changes in both temperature and climate since the industrial revolution have been observed across all regions of the planet, these transformations are particularly pronounced in the Arctic (Kerby).

Denial of the anthropogenic foundations of these transformations is a denial of truth. As it is the most rudimentary of scientific knowledge that industrial human activities emit enormous amounts of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere and that increased atmospheric carbon levels directly increase Earth's global average temperature, discerning the legitimate connection between the advent of the industrial revolution and Earth's remarkable shift in climate since said revolution as well as the ecological extermination required of it is therefore exceedingly simple ("The Carbon Cycle"). Nonetheless, the full catastrophic effects of the climate crisis are still unknown. However, what is critical is that since around 2014, data collected relating to this crisis is often consistent with non-linear changes in the environment. Non-linear changes (as opposed to linear changes) in Earth's climate provoke impacts that are both swifter and more severe than linear changes (Bendell). What triggers such non-linear trajectories is the surpassing of "tipping points" in Earth's ecological systems (ibid). Surpassing these tipping points ultimately leads to "runaway climate change," or climate change that transcends the ability to be stifled by humanity (ibid).

One of these "tipping points" is 1.5^{o}C of global average temperature rise from pre-industrial levels, a temperature increase whose purported "carbon budget" will be depleted in around eight years if future emissions within this timeframe are to be like those from the past few years (Mortillaro). However, carbon dioxide emissions are not decreasing or plateauing, but increasing (Bendell). In fact, carbon dioxide emissions hit a record high in 2019 (ibid). Regardless, the notion that there is a "carbon budget" is notably absurd. As the catastrophic violence of this crisis is already being inflicted upon the most vulnerable of this planet—chiefly the more-than-human world and Indigenous

peoples—such a “budget” is only relevant to the most privileged. As increased atmospheric carbon levels directly translate to increased catastrophe, particularly to groups at the frontline of such impacts, the concept of a “carbon budget” is not legitimate in any manner. Furthermore, the commonly asserted belief that a 1.5ºC climate scenario is possible to achieve at this point is greatly controversial with many scientists estimating that existing carbon dioxide in the atmosphere—without incorporating inevitable future carbon emissions—will already lead to global temperature rises well over 5ºC within this century (ibid). To contextualize the world that would exist in such a scenario, prominent author and environmentalist Mark Lynas offers that Earth between five and six degrees of warming since pre-industrial levels would resemble “the Sixth Circle of Hell” (241).

Regardless, the science at the heart of the IPCC does not consider such a tipping point nor any of the abundant feedback loops and other chaotic behaviors of Nature that are incited from this wide-scale, industrial poisoning of Earth (Shukla et al.). Crucially, compounded effects from critical events such as the melting of the Arctic’s permafrost are wildly missing from the calculations of the IPCC and thereby the targets and proposals of the UNFCC (ibid). Beyond obvious implications of sea-level rise from this melting, there are such large amounts of carbon and methane stored in the Arctic’s permafrost that it is estimated that by the middle to end of this century this feedback’s carbon impact will be equivalent to the second strongest anthropogenic source of greenhouse gases: land use change (Gray). In fact, one of the most renowned climate scientists on Earth, Peter Wadhams, asserts that Earth’s Arctic will be ice-free during

the summer of one of the next few years, thereby increasing the warming caused by the carbon dioxide produced by humans by 50% (McKie).

Even if the extremely conservative estimates of the IPCC's science were to be considered true, complete adherence to the Paris Agreement that was built on this deceptive science only affords us with a 50% chance of staying below 1.5°C (Shukla et al.). What is more, the predictions of the IPCC fully rest on the assumption that every molecule of carbon dioxide that has been emitted since 1987 as well as every future molecule of emitted carbon dioxide be sequestered from the atmosphere with nonexistent technology that, even if it did exist, would likely cause just as many problems as it would solve (Shukla et al.). Chillingly, not one nation on Earth is on-track to meet its Paris Agreement goals with the most prominent player, the "United" States of America, having fatally pulled out of the landmark agreement under the nation's current fascist leader (Plumer).

Meanwhile, 200 species go extinct every day (Vidal). Between 1970 and 2010, over half of global wildlife was lost (Rohr). The existence of vast human infrastructure on Earth further imperils other species in ways not seen in prior extinctions; as the more-than-human world becomes surrounded and limited by the encroachment of human constructions—such as roads and the infrastructures of industrial agricultural systems and extractive industries—those within the more-than-human world are left with nowhere to flee (Mineau). Whereas many species survived the violence of past mass extinctions through migration and adaptation, the entrapments humanity has built disable the movement of most species and therefore consign them to death (ibid). Further, consulting the most trustworthy science on this issue reveals that the extinction

patterns plaguing the globe were only matched 65 million years ago—the time of the last mass extinction (Plumer, “There Have Been Five Mass Extinctions”). If these patterns are to continue unabated, the effects such immense death would have on human time scales “would be effectively permanent because in the aftermath of past mass extinctions, the living world took hundreds of thousands to millions of years to rediversify” (Ceballos et al.). What is more, “If we don't curb greenhouse-gas emissions by the end of the century, it's predicted that the concentration of CO2 in Earth's atmosphere could reach 1,000 parts per million; that's the same as the level during the early Eocene,” a time where, “In the Arctic Circle, there were crocodiles, palm trees, and sand tiger sharks” (Watson).

Though most humans living in industrial nations have become disconnected from Nature, failing to truly see the devastating transformations that are descending upon them, much of the rest of the world has noticed. We are living amid the Sixth Mass Extinction on Earth (Plumer, “There Have Been Five Mass Extinctions”). This catastrophic extinction—an anthropogenic phenomenon that has been occurring for centuries but has rapidly intensified in recent decades—spells humanity’s ultimate demise (ibid). No level of human ingenuity or creativity—debatable qualities that have been increasingly channeled into marketing and consumerism rather than societal advancement—can sustain a species living alone. Through the industrial world’s collective forgetfulness of the unison of all things, we have been deceived into believing we are separate from Nature, beyond Nature, and that it is possible to continue life as we know it armed only with our “superior intelligence” to defend us from the unimaginable violence looming before us. Humanity is a part of Earth as everything

else, and exterminating Earth's fragile, deeply complex ecosystems that enable the pollination of our food, the purification of our waters, and the wonderment and love that transcends the genetic differences of species denies humanity life as well. Earth's complex ecosystems need only a few building blocks removed for the entire ecological structures to topple.

This is the reality we face, yet holistic acknowledgment of this reality is seldom made. The climate crisis is both a product of and perpetuation of colonialism, particularly against Indigenous peoples and the more-than-human world, and any discussion of such topics would be sorely misinformed if the implications of this crisis were not explored. With the violence of the climate crisis as the backdrop to analysis of the position of Sámi in Sweden amidst the Anthropocene, a broader understanding of how the intensely pervasive impacts of this crisis serve as purveyors of colonialism as well as existential threats to the Sámi is enabled. Moreover, full acknowledgement of the immense devastation that will be executed through the climate crisis is necessary if future development in Sápmi is to potentially engender resiliency.

Hope

The facts that have been presented here may provoke feelings of despair and hopelessness. Many would assert that such an explicit discussion of the climate crisis is not conducive to generating hope and therefore damaging to prospects of resiliency and adaptation, yet if we do not fully recognize and contend with an issue, we will never surpass it. Moreover, hope should not be a prerequisite for doing the right thing. As Norwegian academic and politician Per Espen Stoknes offers in his aptly titled book *What We Think About When We Try Not To Think About Global Warming: Toward a*

New Psychology of Climate Action, a shift in the predominant modes of thought ingrained in industrial societies is necessary to deeply adapt to the climate crisis, and this shift must be "from a modern to an ecological mind-set. From seeing our earth as boundless, robust, and determined by Nature to a mind-set where it is seen as finite, fragile, and human-dominated" (197). Such a monumental realization and paradigm shift can only be achieved if the full devastations of this crisis are recognized.

Further, Stoknes implores us to consider the many varieties of hope that have been cultivated during this crisis. Those that insist that humanity will survive this epoch and incessantly pressure themselves and others to adopt a singular, blind optimism irreverent of scientific consensus are described as either "passively" or "actively optimistic" in Stoknes' *What We Think About When We Try Not To Think About Global Warming* (220). While the passive optimist rests comfortably on the belief that "Maybe a little bit of nature is dying, but it will take care of itself" and the mantra "Don't worry, be happy," the active optimist insists "There is no end to human creativity and ingenuity; where there is a will, there will be a way" (220). To defend these types of hope, one must unflinchingly believe that the outcome of events will be positive and, more broadly, that humanity is inherently good. Through such optimism, one becomes attached to certain imagined outcomes, and "if the outcomes threaten to turn dark, this type of optimism easily crumbles into pessimism" (221). As optimism to the degree demanded by passive and active optimists is scientifically unfeasible to support, "is pessimism then inescapable, and hopelessness inevitable? No." Here, Stoknes calls for "true skepticism," or "a view of the future beyond optimism or pessimism" (221).

Considering alternatives to either passive or active optimism, Stoknes identifies two modes of true skepticism: the "passive skeptic" (one who is "sturdy and hardy, not clinging to optimism, but still making no proactive effort to dream or influence the future") and the "active skeptic" (one who does not deny reality but is nonetheless committed to doing the right thing and engendering change, regardless of the outcome) (222). The active skeptic—what Stoknes himself identifies as—admits "There's no reason to be optimistic, but we're going for it anyway" (222). Critically, active skepticism does not impose nor expect any unattainable (nor even imaginable) outcome as a necessary genesis for hope and action; instead, true hope through this paradigm "is grounded in our being, in our character and calling, not in some expected outcome" (222). Moreover, when confronting the reality of the climate crisis, the active skeptic maintains "yes, it's hopeless *and* we're going all-in. The active skeptic gives up the attachment to optimistic hope and simply does what seems called for. There is a deep freedom in that" (222).

In an Indigenous context, despair over the realities of violence inflicted through colonialism and ecological suffering have often been integral to survival. Indeed, a "range of ancient wisdom traditions see a significant place for hopelessness and despair" (Bendell). Recognition of negative realities effectively trigger "a new way of perceiving self and world, with hopelessness and despair being a necessary step in this process" (Bendell). To flatten and neutralize the full range of thoughts and emotions necessary to live truly and thus take informed action to build a better tomorrow is perhaps one of the greater disturbances capitalism has induced among humanity. The universally imposed norms of positivity and denial of a wider recognition of truth

denies humanity the creative energies of our survival. Abandoning the hopes that we have constructed is not an admission of failure nor surrender; “In abandoning hope that one way of life will continue, we open up a space for alternative hopes” (Lynch).

Further, in *Radical Hope: Ethics in the Face of Cultural Devastation*, philosopher Jonathan Lear explores cultural collapse and extinction through the experiences of Indigenous peoples of North America, ultimately promoting a form of radical hope that involves neither denial nor optimism; “What makes this hope *radical* is that it is directed toward a future goodness that transcends the current ability to understand what it is” (103). Lear offers that the “imaginative excellence” of certain Indigenous chiefs in dreaming of and creating ethical values that adapted and sustained aspects of their cultures that could then be incorporated in their new lifestyles on reservations is what enabled their peoples and their cultures to survive (84). Genuine and willing awareness of the implications of the climate crisis is thus fundamental for survival, particularly in an Indigenous context.

For the Sámi, the realities of the climate crisis are unavoidable, and although the effects of this crisis threaten the ability of Sámi culture to be maintained through the Anthropocene, the new world that awaits—if it is acknowledged—is ripe to be influenced and imagined through their determination. As Lear exhibits, many Indigenous groups in North America still maintain their ancient cultural traditions and traditional knowledges despite the deeply violent colonial forces they have contended with for centuries. As the Sámi also have deep collective histories and memories of having to adapt to new, often violent circumstances to survive, radical hope that is Indigenously self-determined is possible. The ways in which Sámi culture has been

reimagined and adapted throughout history, creating realities and futures that would have likely been inconceivable to the Sámi of prior centuries—such as the use of snowmobiles for reindeer herding and the building of international alliances to strengthen Indigenous rights the world over—suggest that Sámi culture will continue to exist and be resilient no matter the outcomes of the Anthropocene.

Colonialism and the Sámi

Sámi History and Culture

Shifting focus to the specific colonialist and climatic circumstances impacting Sámi in Sweden, it is crucial to first establish a general comprehension of Sámi history and culture as well as Sámi injuries afflicted by colonialism. Originally hunter-gatherers, many Sámi began to herd domesticated reindeer in the 17th century, a practice that is now carried out by 10% of the Sámi population and considered an activity of deep cultural and ecological significance (Cohen). The colonial history in Sámi country—known as Sápmi—is not largely recognized, at times even being denied, and knowledge of this history is limited within the geographic region of Fennoscandia as well as the rest of the world (Ojala).

A hallmark of Sámi culture and self-identification is deep unison with Nature, even an inability to exist without the Natural landscapes that they have dwelled within for millennia. The Sámi view themselves in relation to Nature as "a soulful living whole" (Pinto-Guillaume), and the Sámi Parliament's official environmental perspective is as follows:

> We are a part of the landscape in Sápmi. Our lives – our trades and cultural expressions – adapt flexibly in order to balance what nature can give and what we can take without depleting nature.
>
> Our deep relationship to nature is difficult to imprison in words. To live in nature and to live directly from what nature can give, creates an immediate relationship between us and nature (animals, each other).
>
> We rely on a living relationship to Sápmi, our home. If we – or someone else – destroy nature, it will also harm our culture. The environment in

> Sápmi is delicate. A resilient nature requires that we use it very carefully. (*The Sami Parliament's Living Environment Program* 4).

In a contemporary Western interpretation, it has even been argued that Sámi individuals primarily involved with traditional Sámi activities "still live within a frame that can be called animism" (Helander-Renvall 45). The Sámi consideration of the more-than-human world as possessing of its own inherent voices and spirits deserving of respect reflects the ancient, Indigenous spiritual understandings of pre-christian Europe. Critically, erosion of the division between the physical and the spiritual in holistic Sámi thinking allows Nature to be recognized as divine. Further, as traditional Sámi subsistence activities rely on a close, direct, and aware relationship with the more-than-human world, an "ontology of dwelling" thereby forms. Such a perspective entails a way of living that is rooted in the Natural environment and aware of humans as "beings-*in*-a-world" (Helander-Renvall 46). This mode of living and thought stands in stark contrast to the industrial distancing imposed upon the human and more-than-human worlds that has driven colonialism and provoked the climate crisis, analogous phenomena that engender direct detriment towards the Sámi.

A strong conception of these deep relations is necessary to better discern the way impacts of the climate crisis and colonialist developments acutely affect the viability of Sámi culture being sustained in both the near-term and long-term futures. As Natural landscapes are recognized as living entities that actively relate to other beings and are "intelligent actors in their own right," the destruction weathered by the Sámi is thereby revealed as an omnipresent violence and extermination (Nadasdy 30). Further, "The Sápmi area is rich in natural resources and mineral deposits. Therefore, much of

the colonization and modernization processes in Sápmi have evolved parallel with the exploitation of these resources" (Ojala, "Sámi Prehistories" 74).

Introduction to Colonialism in Sápmi

Contact between Scandinavian groups and Sámi groups occurred during prehistoric times and throughout the Middle Ages (Lantto and Mörkenstam). During most of the Iron Age and Early Middle Ages, territorial relations between the Sámi and their neighbors were—although not necessarily peaceful—generally stable (ibid). It was during the 16th century, a time of budding colonialism and intensification of christianization in Sweden, that the Swedish Crown began to take interest in Sápmi (ibid). Beginning in the 17th century, the Swedish Crown began to build churches in Sápmi while missionaries and clergymen crusaded against traditional Sámi beliefs and practices. Economic and political aims were supported by religious means and religious rhetoric, and these occurrences resulted in the disruption of ancient relationships between the Sámi and Sápmi (Ojala, "Mining Sápmi"). Coinciding with the Swedish Crown's erosion of Sámi culture was the exploitation of Sápmi land and bodies through, among other intrusions, mining and metal production that the Sámi were forced into labor to support (ibid). These industries ultimately bolstered other global colonial endeavors at the time such as the slave plantations in North America and the Caribbean (ibid).

Following the theft of Sápmi lands and the heavy taxation of the Sámi, "Sweden's Sami policy in the last decades of the 19th century was influenced by racial biology" ("The Sami – an Indigenous People in Sweden" 14). Due to the imagined "racial characteristics" of the Sámi, they were further identified as inferior to the rest of

the population of Sweden, and "they could not live like 'civilized' people in proper houses since they would become lazy and neglect their reindeer (14). All the Sami would become beggars as a result, since herding reindeer was the only thing they could do" (14). Sweden's policies regarding the Sámi in the 20th century exacerbated this oppression, and "In 1928 Parliament decided that Sami who did not pursue reindeer husbandry were not entitled to Sami rights. They no longer had the right to hunt and fish in areas where their ancestors had lived," and "The government thus drew a sharp line between reindeer-herding Sami and those in other occupations" while Sámi culture and identity were filtered through a colonial essentialism (14). Sweden's racial policies even progressed to forced sterilization of the Sámi, and the nation's "racial purity" program was approved by the State until 1976 (Bates). Josefina Lundgren Skerk, vice president of the Sámi Parliament in Sweden, stated in an address to the U.N. "'The Swedish state may not have killed all of us, but they have undoubtedly done a lot to eradicate the Sami people in more subtle ways, like banning language, culture and dividing us into rival groups, as well as enforcing their view of who and what is Sami instead of using ours'" (Hartley).

Sweden's concept of racial biology during this period aligned with the dominant Western notion of eugenics and "racial purity," yet Sweden's ideological relations to broader colonialist aims are not only found during this period. Considering Sweden's relation to the global colonial context of earlier eras, the nation was far from benign. When Swedish colonialism intensified during the 17th century, members of the Swedish Council themselves marked correlations between their encroachment North into Sápmi and the Anglo-Saxon breach of the Americas (Ojala, "Mining Sápmi"). Carl Bonde, a

member of the Swedish Council, identified this similarity in the 1630s, stating of Sweden's colonial intrusion into Sápmi: "We hope that this with the help of God will become the West Indies [i.e., America] of the Swedes" (11). Critically, Sweden's history of colonial encroachment into Sápmi has served as both ethnocide and ecocide; deterioration of Sápmi land was (and is) analogous to deterioration of Sámi culture. Since this initial intrusion, Sweden's colonialist aims have advanced into varying forms.

Mining in Sápmi

Introduction to Mining in Sápmi

A historically deep and violent legacy of colonialism still thriving and expanding in contemporary Sápmi is mining. Sweden stands as Europe's leading mining nation, accounting for 91% of the continent's iron ore production, 9% of the continent's copper production, and 24-39% of the continent's lead, zinc, silver, and gold production ("Learn more about Swedens mining industry"). As mining was one of the first major colonial transgressions by Sweden against the Sámi, the industry's enduring violence against Sápmi land and Sámi culture is a deeply entrenched facet of Sámi experience and collective memory. The violent impacts of the mining industry in Sweden unavoidably intersect with Indigenous rights as "98.5% of the value of the mineral extraction is situated on Sami traditional territories" (Lawrence). Further, as the Natural landscape is recognized as possessing of its own inherent spirit equal to and symbiotic with the Sámi in traditional understandings, the severe injury inflicted from the mining industry thus stands as a significant assault against the Sámi themselves.

History of Mining in Sápmi

Historically, mining in Sweden began in the Middle Ages and opened the gateway for more invasive industrialization to eventually take hold within the nation in the 19th and 20th centuries (Ojala, "Mining Sápmi"). Despite prior and ongoing taxation and christianization of the Sámi during the Middle Ages and onward, their continued nomadic, "inferior" way of life was enduringly perceived as a threat against the vitality and expansion of the Swedish Crown (ibid). Crucially, as the Sámi sustained a

relationship with the Natural landscape that stood as a direct antithesis to the industrial, colonial, Abrahamic conception of territory and "cultivation" of wilderness that had by the Middle Ages overtaken Sweden, Sámi existence therefore marked the far North as "untamed" and the Sámi themselves as ripe for expulsion.

What is more, a notion of emptiness in Sápmi—one that contributed to and was built on a global ideology of an "uninhabited" boreal North—enabled easy acceptance and promotion of colonization and exploitation in this region (Nightingale). Moreover, "The abundance of space combined with rich natural resources and relatively few people translated into a particular kind of spatial and representational logic" that mythologized extractive, exploitative industries in such regions as industries that engender little to no social or ecological impacts (ibid). Despite blatant knowledge of the presence of the Sámi—not to mention the essential taxes to the Swedish Crown that the Sámi provided—as well as the more-than-human world, the North was and is consistently considered empty while simultaneously a cornucopia of raw materials awaiting exploitation (ibid). Further, nationalist and colonialist expansion became a national characteristic of Sweden during this historical period. With Swedish king Gustav Vasa declaring in 1542 "all permanently uninhabited land belongs to God, Us and the Swedish Crown, and nobody else," Sápmi became formally positioned as a body to be raped and stolen from— "first for furs, then for minerals, timber, and energy" (Nightingale). This ambition is what particularly identifies mining and the occupation of Sápmi as colonial in a Swedish context.

The Swedish Crown considered the "issue" of Sámi culture and movement as having the potential to be "solved" through the settling of Swedish farmers in Sápmi

(“Colonization”). The devastating eventual colonial settlement of Sápmi was chiefly made possible through the Swedish Crown’s discovery of rich raw materials in the region and subsequent Crown policies aimed at exploitation of these materials—processes that identify the mining industry as one of the most powerful historic and contemporary purveyors of colonialism in Sápmi (ibid). As early Swedish efforts to settle Sápmi typically garnered little interest in the general Swedish population, the 1634 discovery of silver in Nasafjäll (a mountainous region located in Sápmi) was viewed as an enormous potential economic advancement for the Swedish Crown and ultimately bolstered efforts to colonize the North (ibid). Following the discovery of this economic potentiality, the Swedish Crown began to ramp up colonialist efforts to settle Sápmi, thereby increasing levels of mining activity in the region (ibid).

Moreover, the domestic and global contexts of the 17th century found the Swedish Crown taking an increasingly active role in the metal industry, a phenomenon concurrent with the Swedish entry into the Thirty Years’ War in 1630 (Leone). During this time, the nation went through a metal-industry boom, and both Sápmi land and Sámi bodies were regarded as assets to the Swedish Crown and, to industrialists, as entities to exploit for economic profit (ibid). Crucially, the Lappmark Proclamation of 1673 proclaimed that Swedes who settled in Sápmi were granted tax exemption for fifteen years and would not be required to serve as soldiers in any wars (“Colonization”). The regularity of wars involving the nation during this historical period—wars fueled by the Swedish mining industry—made the prospect of settling in the North particularly enticing to many Swedes (ibid). The Swedish Crown’s tightening control over Nature, culture, trade, taxation, religion, exploitation of raw materials, and

even general perceptions of the Sámi themselves were aspects of the same colonial process of tying Sápmi and Sámi closer to the Swedish Crown to ultimately capitalize upon and erode (ibid). The mining industry laying the foundations of industrialism in Sweden also further buttressed the structures that, critically, would cumulatively cause the anthropogenic climate crisis currently threatening the Sámi as well as the rest of the world.

Sweden's encroachment into Sápmi to construct mining infrastructure and further the Swedish Crown's broader colonialist aims in other capacities unveils the intrinsically analogous relationship between the destruction of Sápmi land and the destruction of Sámi bodies. In an invasive, extractive industry such as mining, such violence becomes necessary for the industry's survival, and as the erosion of Sápmi land increased, the Sámi began to weather the same violence. As transport of ore to smelters and then to markets was integral to the Swedish State's economic expansion as well as the fueling of the many wars the nation was involved with at the time (one violent act fueling another), the Sámi—who were "too weak and lazy to dig ore, but useful for transporting it"—were ordered along with reindeer to carry ore sixty kilometers between Nasafjäll and the smelting center at Silbojokk ("Mining for Silver"). Sámi that refused to comply with these orders out of fear that the work would interfere with reindeers' herding cycles were violently abused (ibid). The following is an account from a Swedish miner of one of the forms of violence employed against the Sámi individuals that refused enslavement: "We tied them to a couple of timbers, pushed them down into the rapids a few times and then pulled them up to allow the water to run out of their mouths again" (ibid). The reindeer greatly suffered from the violence of this

colonial enterprise as well, their bleached skeletons lining the road between Nasafjäll and the smelting center at Silbojokk “long after mining finished” (ibid).

Violence Inflicted by Mining

As a wider, concerted effort by the Swedish State to expand North and uproot the Sámi, this colonialist, capitalist endeavor effectively initiated a sharp, intended transformation in Sweden’s economy, environment, and social structures (Bernes & Lundgren). Indeed, Sweden owes much of its historic and contemporary economic growth to mining, and in a similar vein as the imposition of wind turbines and other “developments” in Sápmi, the more-than-human world has faced and continues to face dire consequences due to this industry’s invasive operations within Sápmi through disruption and destruction of entire ecosystems and ancient migration patterns (ibid). Additionally, mining in Sweden also impacts human worlds—both Indigenous and non-Indigenous—constituting and surrounding the land subjected to exploitation. The mining operations at Kiruna, a town in Sápmi, are the focus of this analysis.

The construction of mines is deeply invasive and requires complete alteration of Natural landscapes. With vast tracts of forest cleared for dynamite to then tear apart the land itself, the severe exploitation inherent to mining is diametrically opposed to traditional Sámi understandings and practices (Fprss). The imposition of mining infrastructure does not only necessitate devastation of the land in question but also includes other disastrous constructions that are more widespread such as road and rail infrastructure (ibid). These constructions further disturb the more-than-human world Sámi culture depends on, and the location of the clear majority of Swedish mining pits on Sámi territories integral to reindeer herding directly imperils the ability of this

cultural and economic activity to continue. In Kiruna, the construction of the largest and deepest underground iron ore mine in the world completely devastated sacred Sámi lands, wholly transforming the landscape (Nightingale). Entire mountaintops were destroyed to extract the rich iron deposits, and the far-reaching violence of this construction is described as follows:

> The work was dangerous, and pollution from the pit and tailings piles was notorious. Sulfates contributed to acidification both of local watersheds and larger regional watersheds. Acids leached toxic heavy metals from rocks, where they had been safely locked up, into river systems where they contaminated food chains that eventually included people. Smoke from smelters contained heavy metals such as cadmium and lead, which were captured by lichen and then accumulated in reindeer and the people who ate them. Mine tailings were stacked in enormous terraces, and winds blew toxic dust over reindeer pastures. Sediments washed over fish-spawning beds (ibid).

Contextualizing the sheer totality of such devastation in a Sámi context, it is essential to view their culture and worldview in juxtaposition to such industrial, colonialist "development." When a Sámi individual was brought to court because of their protesting of a hydroelectric dam being built in Sápmi, they stated the river was "'part of myself'" (Næss 521). For the Sámi, "all living things and natural elements—which other cultures may not even consider alive such as rocks and mountains—have a connection to one another" (Pinto-Guillaume). The Sámi's sense of deep interconnectedness with what is considered the "separate" Natural world in industrial societies is critical to their way of thinking and their livelihoods, and when a culturally and ecologically necessary area where every rock and tree has a voice is substantially

altered and exterminated by foreign industry, the Natural order—and thereby the Sámi —are thrown into disarray.

Further, the construction and activities of the mining operations in Kiruna have disturbed Earth so immensely that the entire city is now being forced into migration, identifying mining—especially in a Sámi context—as one of the most invasive purveyors of colonialism (Michael). Indeed, Kiruna is being relocated in its entirety to avoid collapsing completely into Earth due to the world's largest iron ore tunnel mine engulfing the region from below (ibid). As the lands and mountains of Kiruna are sacred to the Sámi, the ultimate destruction of this landscape stands as a deeply violent act against them.

Deconstruction of Mining in Sápmi

What is particularly sinister and complex about the continuation of mining in contemporary Sweden is that it is driven by a paradigm that views Swedish mining practices as integral to the nation's wider conception of a national and international "sustainability" agenda—an agenda that has been acutely exclusionary towards the Sámi. As the expanding "development" of "sustainable" industries in Sápmi to allegedly reduce the impacts of the climate crisis has essentially furthered colonialist aims of ecological and cultural destruction against the Sámi, it is apparent that "sustainability" does not consider nor include Indigenous interests and perspectives in a Swedish context. Indeed, despite the well-known detriment mining activity engenders against the Sámi, "The Swedish government has a clear goal to strengthen its position as the EU's leading mining country" ("Learn more about Swedens mining industry"). It is estimated that by this year "there could be as many as 30 metal mines in Sweden…

By 2030, there may be as many as 50 mines in operation in Sweden" (*Sweden's Minerals Strategy*). Five years ago, there were only 16 mines in Sweden (Fprss). It has also been asserted by the Swedish government that "Along with the goal of increased ore production comes a heightened need for sustainable operating methods, as well as a need for sustainable and attractive communities to be built in the areas around the mines" ("Learn more about Swedens mining industry"). Although it is clearly identified in this statement that increased ore production is a "goal" for Swedish mining, it is not identified if "sustainable operating methods" are also part of a clear goal and not just a "heightened need" for the industry. Moreover, the Swedish government's expressed "need for sustainable and attractive communities to be built in the areas around the mines" essentially erases the Sámi in a familiar, colonialist pattern. Here, no mention is made of the Indigenous people who have for millennia been sustainably residing in the lands disturbed by Swedish mining activity. In both historical and contemporary Sweden, the Natural landscapes that have been assaulted and Indigenous culture that has been uprooted by mining infrastructure are seen as empty spaces within which to build "sustainable and attractive communities" as if such communities do not already exist.

What is more, the economic "justifications" of the burgeoning of mining in Sápmi are intrinsically exclusionary towards the Sámi and their own economic positions. For example, the imposition of a mine on lands essential to Sámi reindeer herding in Kallak was marketed "as a lifeline for northern inland communities" facing population decline and "a dearth of steady employment opportunities" (Fprss). This narrative spun by the corporate actors profiting enormously from this mine's extraction

completely excludes the Sámi, essentially othering them within their own ancestral lands (ibid). While the Sámi living in this region are to be economically decimated due to this mining project, non-Sámi individuals residing in the area “are skeptical that the mine will deliver the promised jobs and benefits, and also fear the ecological risks of contamination and waste” (ibid). Assessing whose economic benefit or detriment is engendered through mining activity in Sápmi reveals the inherently colonialist politics of major actors affecting the region.

Further, the Stockholm Environment Institute has asserted “human rights issues and Indigenous rights issues are likely to remain unaddressed” within the Swedish mining industry unless the industry chooses to significantly alter its approach to land disruption (“The Swedish Mining Sector” 5). With no current sign of such systemic transformation being made, it is clear “sustainable development” within the Swedish mining industry is—with respect to tradition—“development” that is exclusionary of Indigenous peoples and perspectives. Moreover, Swedish governmental and economic aims to meet the demand set forth by “sustainable” mining projects ultimately unveil the Swedish mining industry’s ignorance of and violence towards Sámi culture. With current projects advanced to feed “The expected continued growth in global material demand” without questioning the basis of such a paradigm nor the “need" of “emerging economies” for “development” dictated by industrialized nations of the Global North (nations profiting economically from such “demand”), “sustainability” is perhaps undesirable (7). What is sustained by the Swedish mining industry’s enduring destruction of Sápmi is an industrialist, capitalist socioeconomic order that supports both foreign and domestic colonialism. With the contemporary Swedish mining

industry standing on the shoulders of historic colonial encroachment, it is apparent that such foundations still maintain and further the exploitation of Nature required by unfettered economic growth as well as the marginalization of Indigenous perspectives that contend with these theoretical foundations.

Considering political ecology, the impediment of Sámi self-determination in the circumstances thrust upon them by the Swedish mining industry has induced an ecology in Sápmi that not only functions without them but actively against them, thus identifying Sweden's socioeconomic aims through mining activity as intrinsically colonialist. The imposed anthropogenic environmental conditions of Sápmi would not exist were it not for the political circumstances of Sweden—circumstances which have been built through and on colonialism. Thus, ecological and cultural deterioration in Sápmi is due to a flawed politic. Indeed, "While the Swedish state has traditionally played an important role in the steering of development and the population's welfare, the regulation of resource activities on traditional Sami lands has been weak, if not non-existent" (Lawrence).

Although "sustainable" rhetoric by the Swedish government has frequently drawn attention towards the violent intersections of mining activities and Indigenous interests in Sápmi, these words remain duplicitous. In Sweden, "Mining laws are particularly lax, despite the fact that industrial developments have far-reaching consequences for traditional Sami land uses," and "Mundane, everyday and seemingly benign planning processes effectively ignore, extinguish, or at best compensate, Sami for their loss of reindeer pasture lands to industrial developments" (ibid). What notably identifies Sweden as a nation that is adept at upholding a favorable image of itself

internationally while simultaneously allowing legitimate and pressing issues to remain unaddressed within its borders is the political systems in Sweden that project a façade of concern and inclusion while engendering little to no substantive action.

In terms of mining, it is statutorily required for applicants for mining concessions to conduct impact assessments that examine the effects of proposed mining infrastructure on lands to be exploited—including effects on the Sámi—yet there is no legal requirement in Sweden to consult Sámi communities that will be affected by the disturbances (ibid). In fact, "The majority of mining proponents have thus historically undertaken impact assessments without any consultation or contact with affected Sami communities" (ibid). It is in such inherently political arenas where economic benefit and power is solely allocated towards industrial interests antithetical to Indigenous interests, identifying Sámi institutionalization in these decision-making bodies as imperative.

Legal Implications

When examining colonialism's ability to flourish in contemporary Sweden, it is critical to understand the way the Swedish state bypasses international human rights laws to allow colonial endeavors to be conducted and furthered within its borders without consequence. Concerning international obligations, conventions, and protocols, ILO Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries—the only international convention exclusively concerning Indigenous rights—states that "Governments shall ensure that, whenever appropriate, studies are carried out, in co-operation with the peoples concerned, to assess the social, spiritual, cultural and environmental impact on them of planned development activities. The results of these

studies shall be considered as fundamental criteria for the implementation of these activities" (Szpak). ILO Convention 169, first adopted in 1989, is conveniently not ratified by Sweden (ibid). The self-determination ILO Convention 169 safeguards for Indigenous peoples has been disregarded by Sweden for decades while development projects concurrently and increasingly damage Sámi lands and livelihoods within the country, ultimately contributing to the nation's legacy of colonialism (ibid).

In a like manner, the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples declares "[i]ndigenous peoples have the right to participate in decision-making in matters which would affect their rights, through representatives chosen by themselves in accordance with their own procedures, as well as to maintain and develop their own indigenous decision-making institutions" (ibid). However, as this convention is a framework rather than a legally binding declaration, there is very little influencing Sweden to properly take the convention into account when carrying out development projects (ibid). Moreover, when the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples—one of the only actors established by the UN to supervise the enforcement of this convention—investigated the plight of the Sámi in Scandinavia in 2016, the report reprehended Swedish environmental law for ignoring the interests of the Sámi (Bungerfeldt). In June of 2017, the Council of Europe—the body responsible for monitoring compliance of the European Convention on Human Rights—issued a report detailing the dissatisfaction of Sámi representatives with their lack of influence on matters concerning exploitations of land and raw materials that directly impact them and the people they represent (ibid). Joined together, both the Council of Europe and the

UN's Special Rapporteur called upon Sweden to ratify ILO Convention 169 following their evaluations of Indigenous rights abuses in Scandinavia (ibid).

Moreover, as Swedish authorities are legally bound to the European Convention on Human Rights, it is unjust that industries such as the mining industry have been allowed to continue on Sápmi land without halt (ibid). Such lack of governmental intervention reveals the inappropriate dearth of difference between legally binding and non-legally binding international human rights conventions in a Swedish context. The continuation of detrimental "development" projects in Sápmi becomes even more absurd when it is considered that the Swedish state has been publicly chastised by extremely significant international organizations for failing to comply to international conventions regarding Indigenous rights while still evading any responsibility for such transgressions or creating any systemic changes to address them. Despite Sweden's Department of Culture's 2017 legislative proposal—crafted in response to both the Council of Europe and UN's Special Rapporteur's condemnations—that suggests a legal obligation for the Swedish government and its subsidiary bodies to consult the Sámi parliament on matters that concern the Sámi, nothing has been done to suspend or reevaluate the further construction of mining in Sápmi (ibid). Notably, even if such legislation was followed, the consultation order does not grant the Sámi the right to initiate such consultations themselves (ibid). Once again stripped of their right to self-determination, such a legal evolution would still confine the Sámi to a lower position of power concerning matters that directly and most deeply affect them.

One of the only rulings in favor of the Sámi in Sweden is their right to use of their ancestral land derived from their urminnes rätt (ancient right); this right was

established by Skattefjällsmålet, the Swedish Supreme Court, stating that samebyar (Sámi villages and communities) can organize themselves into legal entities to stand up for their right to continue living in their land with traditional, centuries-old customs (ibid). Further, according to the Reindeer Herding Act in Sweden, "persons of Sámi origin have the right to use land and water resources to take care of themselves and their reindeer" (Koivurova et al.), a right mining and other "development" projects in Sweden flagrantly violate. If arguments on the intrinsic value of Indigenous rights have no sway on the further implementation of such a deeply violent industry, one would assume legality would, but the expansion of mining in Sweden reveals that this is not the case and therefore serves as another unfortunate example of corporate interests dominating Indigenous interests.

Further, as large corporations are the actors chiefly involved in the destruction of Sápmi in contemporary Swedish colonialism, the state now serving primarily as a willfully blind watchman, the role of incorporating Indigenous Sámi perspectives—including risk assessments for the Sámi—is largely neglected in favor of solely economic interests. This reality mirrors centuries of prior colonialism in Sápmi that effectively marginalized and stigmatized Sámi people and culture in pursuit of the exploitation of land and raw materials for economic gain. In fact, a study analyzing corporate actors' integration of Sámi interests and livelihoods in their cumulative effects assessments revealed that only 21% of the assessments considered any social or cultural impacts their developments would incur on the Sámi (Larsen, Österlin, and Guia). Of the few assessments that did include mention of potential impacts the developments would have on the Sámi, the "analyses" were paltry, vague, and brief

(ibid). As corporations in these contexts “only acknowledge the presence of ‘stakeholders’, ignoring the status of, e.g., Sami groups, as *rights holder*s,” the interests and livelihoods of the Sámi are not recognized in relation to “their *rights* to land, resources and culture” but rather “as local interest groups” (“The Swedish Mining Sector”). Indeed, “the Swedish mining industry has tended to explain the mounting conflict between mining interests and reindeer herders solely as a problem of communication, rather than genuinely engaging with Sami rights claims” (ibid).

Overall, deconstructing the colonial power dynamic between the political bodies in Sweden that promote and sustain mining and the Sámi necessitates equitable dialogue and mechanisms to ensure Sámi knowledge and interests are fully incorporated into all levels of project development. Inclusive environmental and cultural impact assessments are essential, and revenue from allowed mining and other projects in Sápmi should entail economic compensation to the Sámi. Further, the failures of the Swedish government in respecting Indigenous rights and following international law require decolonization and Indigenization. Involving Sámi individuals in political decisions and requiring their consent in all decision-making matters affecting them would help enable these processes to occur.

The Swedish state holds the most responsibility to change legislation concerning mining in the nation so that it adequately protects the rights of both the Sámi and more-than-human world. Furthermore, mining corporations need to display industry leadership and become global leaders by internally restructuring their systems of land extraction and relationships with Indigenous peoples and interests. Such corporations would need only to institutionalize clear, inarguable commitments within their

management systems that make respect and inclusion of Indigenous peoples' desires in all decision-making processes mandatory. Furthermore, as both the mining industry and Swedish government "tend to have limited ability to implement new commitments on human rights and Indigenous rights, it would also be worthwhile to organize independent quality assurance and follow-up, for example via a certification system for responsible Swedish mining" (Lawrence).

Wind Energy in Sápmi

Introduction to Markbygden

The tyranny of colonialism endures strongly in Sápmi in ways that transcend the boundaries of the mining industry. One of the most nefarious novel expressions of contemporary colonialism in Sápmi is in the form of renewable wind energy projects. The focus of this analysis, the Markbygden wind project, is a wind turbine project in Sápmi which is to cover 450 km^2 of the land by the year 2025, making it the largest wind park in Europe (Lee). The project is located 30 km west of Piteå and partly based in Östra Kikkejaure, an area where eight Sámi families reside and rely on the land in question for reindeer herding (CEMUS). After completion of this project, there will be 1,101 wind turbines in the area (Avila).

The Markbygden wind energy project is a perpetuation of colonialism against the Sámi, further reducing their ability to sustain their ancient customs and unity with Nature and further destroying the livelihoods of the more-than-human beings affected by the construction of the turbines. The Markbygden wind project fights directly against notions of Indigenous self-determination, and the project has been positioned in the heart of Sápmi despite its severe detriment to the Natural landscape as well as the Sámi, the reindeer, and all other more-than-human beings that will be affected by this encroachment. The land marked for this project was chosen by the company Svevind—backed by many corporations financially invested in the proposal—due to its “favorable conditions” as well as low cost of establishment, and, as of now, the project is proceeding without effective interruption (CEMUS).

Violence Inflicted by Markbygden

The problems surrounding this project are multiple. The creation of this wind park will directly cause severe damage to both the Sámi and the reindeer themselves who reside and depend on the land as the construction and operation of over 1,000 wind turbines in the region will directly "limit their movements and endanger their animals" (Avila-Calero). An estimated ~25% of the reindeer's winter grazing land will be directly impacted by the construction of the park, and disruptive land fragmentation will further imperil the reindeer's movements (CEMUS). Moreover, such developments do not merely inflict damage upon the Natural landscape itself, posing just minor physical obstacles to more- than-human beings navigating the landscape, but rather completely drive away more-than-human beings, particularly reindeer (Lee). More-than-human beings typically remain at least 5 kilometers away from the machines due to visual aversion as well as the noise of the engines (ibid). It may initially seem that the construction of wind turbines to generate "renewable" energy would align well with the essential notions of sustainable development, but when examining the actual environmental impacts of such technologies, this belief is problematized.

Wind power clearly disturbs life in the air that depends on Natural wind cycles and sound systems, but terrestrial mammals are also heavily negatively impacted by wind turbines (Helldin et al.). Specifically examining reindeer, not only do wind turbines ruin their ancient patterns of movement across their Natural landscapes, but the implementation of wind turbines often leads to increases in recreation, hunting, and leisure traffic, all endangering the reindeer and other more-than-human beings residing in the disturbed areas and therefore the Sámi (ibid). Noise emissions from the machines

also disturb more-than-human beings' communication and visual stimuli, and more-than-human beings may leave the site where the wind turbines have been imposed altogether, contending ecosystems that have thrived for thousands of years with a state of complete breakdown (ibid).

Moreover, when Svevind considers the land to be breached for this project as having "few opposing interests" in its way, whose interests are considered here? The inherently anthropocentric worldview maintained by the Markbygden wind project does not consider the rights of the more-than-human world and the violence this project inflicts upon those within it. As is called for by Per Espen Stoknes in *What We Think About When We Try Not To Think About Global Warming*, a shift "from a modern to an ecological mind-set" is essential, and such a paradigm shift necessities a deconstruction of colonialist systems and the institutionalization of Indigenous perspectives and plans for self-determination (197). Indeed, it is often Indigenous knowledge systems that possess deep ecological awareness and recognize the fragility and complexity of ecosystems, and this knowledge can most sensitively guide future development in Sápmi. In contrast to such ecological awareness, the Markbygden wind project has been conducted with a starkly utilitarian framework dominating its composition. The "positive" aspects of this project's choice of location derive from the cultivation of an artificial and disconnected binary of "advantages" and "disadvantages" that can subsequently be "weighed," deeming the project one that is just while wholly ignoring concerns about sustainable development and the preponderance of paradigms that continually inflict violence upon Earth and Indigenous peoples. If this project had been approached from a political ecology framework, the colonial politics impacting both

Sámi and more-than-human rights would be identified and deconstructed, creating a sustainable path towards Indigenous inclusion in Sweden.

Deterioration of Land, Deterioration of Culture

Focusing on the intersections between Indigenous knowledge systems and practices and the environmental risks posed by the wind industry, Indigeneity and environmental well-being are intrinsically connected in a Sámi context. As reindeer herding is an activity with profound cultural significance to the Sámi, it is imperative to understand the symbiotic nature and shared fates of both Sámi culture and the more-than-human world. With the loss of the land that has traditionally been used for this practice, their way of life will be rendered untenable. Simply, "If the Sámi lose the reindeer, they lose their language, culture, traditions, and ability to move in Nature" (Avila-Calero). According to Anna Skarin, a researcher at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences who has extensively studied industrial impacts on reindeer grazing lands, the scale of the wind projects planned in Sápmi could spell the end of Sámi culture and the ancient movements and livelihoods of more-than-human beings that have resided in the area since time immemorial (Lee).

If "development" occurs at the extent to which wind projects have been planned in this region, measures against the negative effects of such developments would be stretched to a breaking point. Skarin posits that "if everything is built, it will really be a big impact on the ecosystem. We've already seen it beginning" (ibid). Åsa Larsson-Blind, president of the Sámi Council, considers the development of wind projects in Sápmi as a "life or death" situation, declaring "it will be impossible to carry on the traditional lifestyle [embodied by reindeer herding]... If you can't continue that way of

life and pass on the culture, you have no culture" (ibid). Regardless of what the corporations responsible for this annihilation say about "sustainable development," it is undeniable that their industrial practices and breaches of Nature will, if carried out in full, fulfill the original colonialist desire for the extermination of Sámi culture, beliefs, and knowledge systems. The Markbygden wind project as an extension of this industrial encroachment is a terrifyingly effective tool for achieving the aims of colonialism in Swedish Sápmi.

Markbygden as a Purveyor of Colonialism

The roots of colonialism in this project are also unveiled through the perspectives of members of the Sámi community. Ingrid Inger, president of the Sámi Parliament, has asserted that the Markbygden project is "just the latest chapter in a longstanding struggle between Sámi reindeer herders and industrial interests" (Avila-Calero). Further, to Larsson-Blind, the wind industry is one of, if not the, greatest threats to the Sámi. In an interview with Larsson-Blind, she highlights the disconnect between the wind industry and Indigenous perspectives, stating "I believe it thinks it is easier to accommodate than it actually is. I think it has a naïve view that it is just putting up some windmills, not taking away [reindeer] pastures" (Lee). This severe lack of knowledge of Indigenous and ecological issues combined with diametrically opposed views of how development should be conducted in Sápmi result in a situation where more powerful actors are able to devastate vast tracts of land with deep importance to more-than-human beings as well as the Sámi. This system enables colonialist ambitions to be realized while Indigenous interests are further marginalized in a familiar pattern. As Sweden is one of the most progressive countries in the world concerning the

majority of issues, it is concerning that Indigenous perspectives—especially connected to colonialist activities—are almost completely ignored. This surprising complacency of the Swedish government represents a legacy of allowing colonialism to grow untethered within the nation's borders. Throughout history, Sámi culture and Sámi people have been targets for direct eradication, and although the contemporary annihilation of the Sámi is not playing out in a necessarily blatant fashion, the continued disrespect towards the Sámi and the destruction of the land and livelihoods of the more-than-human beings they are intrinsically tied to is a purely colonialist furtherance of historical attempts at eradication and demands recognition as such.

Moreover, the furtherance of colonialism in Sápmi also trumps legal considerations. As the mining industry in Sweden continues without regard to Indigenous rights, so does the wind energy industry. Despite the blatant detriment inflicted by this industry upon the vitality of Sámi culture, legalities such as the Reindeer Herding Act that promises "persons of Sámi origin have the right to use land and water resources to take care of themselves and their reindeer" (Koivurova et al.) are wholly ignored without any repercussions. Additionally, ILO Convention 169 that mandates "Governments shall ensure that, whenever appropriate, studies are carried out, in co-operation with the peoples concerned, to assess the social, spiritual, cultural and environmental impact on them of planned development activities. The results of these studies shall be considered as fundamental criteria for the implementation of these activities," remains an international obligation not ratified by Sweden (Szpak). Sweden's disregard for Indigenous rights legally unveils the inherently colonialist nature of "development" in Sápmi.

Corporate Dressing of Markbygden

Analysis of the way corporations present the construction of Markbygden also leads to a fuller understanding of the Markbygden project's furtherance of colonialism. To illustrate, in the summary of the Markbygden project on the Green Investment Group website, the first phrase one sees associated with the project is "Another step forward" ("Markbygden Onshore Wind Farm"). The page depicts the Markbygden project as a progressive step forward towards a wind-dominated future when it is but another step forward for colonialism. Intriguingly, Green Investment Group diverts minimally from its focus on the economic and mechanical marvels of the project in its summary, viewing the growth of wind power purely in economic terms that highlight the cost of the project, the type of turbines to be utilized, and the large corporate entity backing the project (ibid). Despite the presence of "Green" in their name, no mention is made of sustainability nor positive and negative environmental impacts of the project, let alone the Sámi (ibid). This exclusion ultimately reveals the project as an economic tool for industrialists and capitalists who do not genuinely wish to sustainably develop make unimaginable amounts of money through taking advantage of the latest trends in renewable energy systems.

This sidelining, exploitative view of Nature and reverence of economic gain regardless of Indigenous livelihoods echoes the centuries of colonialism the Sámi have endured. Furthermore, GE—the company responsible for providing the turbines for Markbygden—presents the project in a popular media article as "GE Is Helping Build a Huge Wind Farm on Santa's Doorstep, Europe's Largest" (Pomerantz). The article, which fails to mention the Sámi and any negative environmental impacts inflicted by

the project, propagates a false narrative that erases the Sámi completely (ibid). The article states “In Markbygden forest in northern Sweden, the temperature drops to minus 10 degrees Celsius in the winter and bitter winds blow. That makes this area 60 miles south of the arctic circle uncomfortable for humans, but the sparsely populated region, where real reindeer roam, is perfect for a wind farm” (ibid). According to GE, Santa exists but the Sámi do not. Although Sápmi is where “real reindeer roam,” it is convenient that no mention is made in the article of the project’s complete expulsion of said reindeer due to its severely damaging “development” (ibid). The aims of such corporate entities are completely antithetical to Indigenous interests, fundamentally destroying Sápmi’s fragile ecosystems and Indigenous culture through a colonialist framework of development.

Public Perception

Non-Sámi individuals residing in municipalities adjacent to the land to be violated for the Markbygden project reveal generally dismissive attitudes towards both Nature and the Sámi, favoring instead the unequal economic benefits of the development. A study exploring these citizens’ attitudes towards the wind energy project discovered that most individuals surveyed believed that the increase in job opportunities and economic developments stemming from the project were more important than ecological and Indigenous considerations (Ek and Matti). The researchers state, “it is still interesting to note that in the public framed sample, local economic development was valued more highly than the protection of reindeer herding and bird nesting despite the ethical and ethno-political dimensions of, in particular, the former of these attributes” (ibid). The researchers noted that participants in the study in

support of the wind project might be so due to their desire to fight against the climate crisis, yet the energy conducted by Markbygden will not be powering these people's homes or used for any necessary public benefit (ibid). The massive amounts of energy produced by this wind park will be sold to the company Norsk Hydro for them to continue manufacturing aluminum ("Markbygden Onshore Wind Farm"). Aluminum is a material whose mining, refining, and smelting is deeply harmful to the environment as well as any living beings residing in proximity to these operations (Poppenheimer).

Despite what corporate actors may want one to believe, the Markbygden project does not stand as a win for sustainable development. Overall, it is integral in this context to address how colonial mindsets express themselves not only through corporate and governmental actors, but through most of the local populace as well. The breadth of colonial ideology in Sápmi exhibis the vast political intricacies of the Sámi's oppression. Further, when economic gain is discussed, the economic position of the Sámi is never considered. Although it is true that the Markbygden project will create certain job opportunities in the near-term future, seldom in most discourses surrounding the project and wind projects more generally is there a true analysis of the economic effects of this project on the Sámi. Indeed, reindeer herding is not only an important cultural aspect of Sámi livelihoods, it is the main source of income for members of the Sámi community involved in the activity (Ek and Matti). This exclusion also manifests itself in the way the Markbygden wind project has not been assessed in relation to its interactions with other "developments" in the area (Larsen, Österlin, and Guia). The proposal for what would be Sweden's largest open pit copper mine allowed for only two sentences on the devastating project's dangerous interactions with the Markbygden

project, indicating a lack of cohesion and necessary planning between powerful corporate actors, particularly regarding their projects' impacts on the Sámi as well as more-than-human beings and the Natural landscapes themselves (ibid).

Deconstruction of Markbygden

Despite the Markbygden wind project's ability to generate 12 TWh a year once complete, the project's foundational basis is tainted with a violent and disconnected worldview that perpetuates notions antithetical to the ideas at the core of sustainable development as well as the rights of Indigenous people and should therefore be at least minimized if not halted completely to prevent the inevitable loss of Indigenous knowledge and Natural significance that this project necessitates. As the vitality of Sámi culture rests on the vitality of the land and more-than-human beings that created it, any injury the land endures is also endured by the Sámi. The construction of wind turbines in Sápmi is not a win for sustainable development, but a tragic loss.

Moreover, when including Indigenous knowledge in the creation and execution of development projects, it is vital to recognize the nuances of Indigenous perspectives. Concerning Markbygden, the Sámi are, crucially, not against wind power absolutely, but rather wind park projects on the scale of Markbygden that completely devastate ecosystems (Szpak). Indigenous self-determination necessitates the institutionalization of Indigenous perspectives into decision-making processes to incorporate the deepest available knowledge of local ecologies, and had the Markbygden project—which facilitated no proper consultations of the Sámi—been informed and led by such knowledge, wind power could have been utilized in Sápmi in a manner that induced the least amount of harm ecologically and culturally.

The halting or minimization of the Markbygden wind project will prevent Sweden from gaining 12 TWh in “renewable” energy a year, possibly prompting an increase in the use of nonrenewable energy sources as well as the lowering of revenue for Svevind and the rest of the project’s monetary benefactors, but despite this, larger concerns over Indigenous rights and the fundamental way humans view and treat Nature outweigh these short-term concerns. For colonialism to be deconstructed in Sweden, colonial, corporate interests must be rejected in favor of further research and application of the knowledge systems of the Sámi—guided in principle through their own self-determination—to Indigenously determine the future through the creation and adoption of renewable energy technology that safeguards the interests of Nature. A sensitive, aware, Indigenized path of development is necessary for Sweden and the rest of the world to deeply adapt to the climate crisis and the ecological and civilizational collapses it guarantees. Investment in a diversity of alternative, less invasive renewable energy sources is both possible and necessary, and action must be taken to not only positively shift our inhabitation of and vital relationship to Earth’s body, but our foundational premises on what sustainable development is, whom it is for, and how we think about the more-than-human world.

A strange paradox is created when a project such as Markbygden is considered sustainable and in the greater interests of a planet brought to her knees by the climate crisis. For the Sámi, the colonial pursuit of renewable energy sources to allegedly avoid the full impacts of the climate crisis fundamentally destroys their way of life just as the climate crisis in its full, devastating power would regardless. To quote from Sweden’s own Greta Thunberg, “If our house was falling apart... You wouldn't talk about buying

and building your way out of a crisis that has been created by buying and building things" ("EU Parliament – April 16"). Action to substantially scale down this project, eventually halting it completely, would need to be taken as soon as possible to reverse the trend of ongoing colonialism and rape of Nature intrinsic to the Markbygden wind project. Moreover, recognizing and deconstructing the inherently colonial and political circumstances that have enabled this project to be reimagined as sustainable in public, private, and civil spheres of Swedish society is necessary for deconstruction to be made possible.

Direct Impacts of the Climate Crisis

Introduction to the Climate Crisis in Sápmi

With mining and wind energy "developments" in Sápmi furthered in response to the climate crisis, the Sámi continue to endure the violence of colonialism, yet it is the direct impacts of the climate crisis on the ecology of Sápmi that have engendered perhaps the greatest threats against the Sámi. Therefore, analysis of the direct environmental impacts of anthropogenic climate changes in Sápmi are necessary for building a holistic understanding of the position of the Sámi during the Anthropocene. Analyzing the direct impacts of the climate crisis on the Sámi and their culture entails an examination of climatic effects on the Natural landscapes and more-than-human beings—particularly reindeer—that constitute traditional Sámi culture. As the Sámi and more-than-human world of Sápmi function in a cyclical, symbiotic manner, the detriment weathered by Sápmi and more-than-human beings residing in Sápmi directly impacts Sámi culture and livelihoods. Crucially, the direct effects of the climate crisis exacerbate and maintain prior and current violence inflicted by colonialism through the erosion of Sámi culture and knowledge systems—impacts of the climate crisis that fulfill original colonialist aims against the Sámi. In a broader context, exploring the position and collective experience of the Sámi provides insight into the current and future climatic violence that will be inflicted upon Indigenous peoples on the frontlines of the climate crisis' devastations.

Focusing on the effects of the climate crisis in Swedish Sápmi entails specific consideration of the geographic location of much of this region above the Arctic Circle.

This geographic distinction is significant due to heightened climatic transformations in this area of the planet. Indeed, as the Arctic is the fastest warming region on Earth due to the climate crisis, such transformation's effects are felt earliest and harshest in this area of the world (Kerby). Such transformations inflict substantial detriment to ancient patterns of climate and movement that Sámi culture and knowledge systems have evolved and matured with for thousands of years, and Sápmi's Arctic positioning makes the direct impacts of the climate crisis monumental and all-encompassing to the Sámi. Further, the cultural and ecological dynamics of traditional Sámi activities are grounded in cooperation (not antagonism nor management) with weather, and Sámi reindeer herders must also "'carry out [their] work according to the reindeer'" (Horstkotte et al. 6). Due to this, the exacerbated effects of climatic changes in Sápmi are inescapable to the Sámi, and the geographic, cultural, and ecological intricacies of Sámi culture and knowledge systems greatly increase their vulnerability to the ecological breakdowns engendered by the climate crisis.

Direct Impacts of the Climate Crisis in Sápmi

In recent interviews conducted with Sámi reindeer herders in Sweden, they expressed that over the last 30 years, significant transformations have occurred in the environment and weather of Sápmi (Furberg et al.). However, these are not types of climatic changes familiar to the Sámi (ibid). Climatic and environmental alterations provoked by the climate crisis—such as longer, wetter, warmer Autumns and late-freezing Winters—have altered ancient ecological expressions in Sápmi (ibid). The erosion of the ability of flora in Sápmi to thrive and function in the environment in the manner they have since time immemorial has accordingly instigated ecological

breakdowns affecting fauna residing in Sápmi (ibid). As the intimate relationship between Sámi culture and the specific more-than-human world of Sápmi functions "as an instrument to shape the structure, function, and cultural relevance of the pastoral landscape," increasing unpredictability of weather patterns in this region threatens to eradicate this ancient bond (Horstkotte).

Considering specific occurrences in this context that are markedly damaging towards the livelihoods of Sámi reindeer herders, impacts of ecological breakdown on the livelihoods of the reindeer themselves remain the most detrimental. The inability of reindeer to feed and move in their traditional ways has brought the reindeer starvation and death and essentially decimated much of the cultural and economic vitality of their herders (Furberg et al.). Increased weather and climate variability in Sápmi has induced disarrayed weather patterns that have caused unnatural fluctuations between rains and snowfalls during periods when, traditionally, snow would remain on the landscapes for months (ibid). These new weather conditions alter the native growth patterns of flora in Sápmi, thereby negatively impacting reindeer grazing ability (ibid). Such alterations in ecology are multitudinous and impact all species in Sápmi, and these changes also engender various feedback loops that further damage ecosystems (ibid).

The diverse types of environmental degradations in Sápmi vary seasonally, geographically, and in intensity and may result in earlier freezing, earlier warming, or harsh, enduring fluctuations between freezing and warming (ibid). An example of a novel environmental transformation that is a particularly fatal dietary hindrance to reindeer in Sápmi is how new weather conditions bolstered by the climate crisis have begun to freeze lichen that reindeer depend upon for sustenance in sheets of ice

impossible for the reindeer to reach (ibid). Other sources of vegetation for reindeer in Sápmi have also undergone similar alterations that inhibit reindeer from feeding in the ways they are accustomed to, and these critical transformations in vegetation ruin the vital ecological ties between species in Sápmi (ibid). Delayed freezing of water in Sápmi has disordered reindeer migration and grazing as many of the bodies of water both the reindeer and Sámi have traditionally crossed while frozen to reach key Winter grazing lands and Sámi villages now freeze at much later times (ibid). The long, abiding cold periods essential to ecological and cultural flourishing in Sápmi have already completely ceased, and warmer Winters, early, sudden Springs, varied Summers, and warm, wet Autumns have dramatically altered the ecology of Sápmi (ibid). According to one Sámi reindeer herder, “it's as if everything has been regeared, the whole year has kind of changed gear…” (ibid).

Through a fatal combination of devastating climate and weather transformations, rising tree lines, changes in vegetation, and increases in surrounding “developments” (such as wind energy projects and forestry), Sápmi in the Anthropocene is rapidly becoming unrecognizable. Many of the herders interviewed, particularly elders, expressed “they do not recognize themselves any longer” (ibid). Morosely, it is the unison, harmony, and origin of the Sámi with and in Sápmi that portend the inability of the Sámi to live, think, and be in ways ancient and sacred to them. Indeed, “Herders are now being forced to do the opposite of what old, unwritten rules have always said, such as staying out on the mountains all winter or migrating to the summer-grazing lands at the wrong time” (ibid). With the loss of Natural landscapes once dear and familiar to the Sámi—landscapes they have always spoken with, listened to, depended on, and loved—

a profound loss of self, identity, and will has emerged that provokes contemplation both within and outside Sápmi on the future position and vitality of Sámi people and culture during the Anthropocene. More broadly, such circumstances also provoke reflection on the survival of all Indigenous peoples and knowledge systems amidst the profound violence of this geologic epoch.

Deterioration of Land, Deterioration of Culture

With Sápmi land integral to traditional Sámi culture and knowledge systems increasingly being lost to industrial encroachments, the disappearance of traditional Sámi skills and knowledge has emerged as a chief concern for Sámi reindeer herders (ibid). This concern is not without merit; the most impacted regions of Sápmi have already been rendered impossible for reindeer and Sámi to continue migrating within (ibid). In Sámi villages where traditional land-based migration has been made impossible, “the new generation will never learn how to herd reindeer en route and traditional knowledge will be lost forever” (ibid). Additionally, the deterioration of other aspects of Sámi culture exacerbates the violence inflicted by climatic alterations as “cultural and language loss among Saami population due to assimilation policies produces mental and social problems among Saami and the burden is passed on to future generations” (Jaakkola et al.).

Stress compounded by ecological, economic, and cultural deteriorations has disabled the Sámi from mustering the time, resources, and energy required to fight against the immensely powerful industries—such as wind energy, mining, and tourism —that are engulfing and laying waste to Sápmi lands (ibid). Meanwhile, the reindeer themselves are becoming increasingly disturbed by hunters and tourists assuming Sápmi

lands in greater expanses and periods of time, and the poor financial conditions of reindeer herding have made it extremely difficult for the industry to survive on its own without subsidies (Furberg et al.). Such state-funded subsidies still do not provide adequate compensation to the Sámi, “and the vast majority of herders need to have another job on the side” (ibid).

Moreover, the severe ecological transformation of Sápmi provoked by the climate crisis has fomented profound fear among the Sámi—particularly Sámi reindeer herders (Jaakkola et al.). The assault on Sámi mental health engendered by the ecological breakdowns of the climate crisis has made the Sámi fearful of the future, and, as this fear centers on the “disappearance of cultural knowledge and traditions,” it becomes “overwhelming” when combined with both socioeconomic and governance pressures (ibid). It has also been revealed that younger Sámi individuals hoping to be involved with reindeer herding in the future are “particularly susceptible” to the negative impacts of the climate crisis due to anxiety about the viability of their goals and sustainability of their culture (Kowalczewski and Klein). Yet, even among younger Sámi individuals with an expressed interest in maintaining Sámi culture, the way they and other young Sámi individuals conceive of their own health and manifest health-seeking behaviors is markedly different from the way their ancestors once evaluated and understood their health (ibid).

Crucially, younger Sámi individuals have adapted to the surrounding culture’s health systems and health-based beliefs (ibid). Indeed, “the Sámi no longer define their health in the context of the environment like they did around 100 years ago,” revealing another cultural violence analogous to the climatic violence inflicted upon the Natural

landscapes of Sápmi (ibid). Such cultural deterioration also further highlights the actualization of the distancing between the Sámi and Sápmi intrinsic to colonialist aims against the Sámi. When coping with the immense stress engendered by cultural and ecological breakdowns, traditional Sámi medical knowledge and beliefs are considered "taboo" by younger Sámi individuals and avoided in pursuit of conventional Western medical frameworks. Thus, "what is and what is not good health is no longer dictated by Sámi culture" (ibid).

Focusing further on younger Sámi individuals, the outmigration and cultural assimilation of a substantial proportion of them greatly threatens the sustainability of Sámi culture in the near-term future (Kelman and Næss). As Sámi financial situations remain bleak while Natural landscapes integral to Sámi culture and knowledge systems are rapidly disappearing due to negative climatic transformations, "Young people often leave the region to seek education, larger settlements, or more varied livelihoods" (ibid). With the lifeblood of future Sámi culture draining from Sápmi, it is clear "Social structures in Scandinavia will be affected by climate change" (ibid). Moreover, as direct impacts of the climate crisis have been the primary drivers of a colonially dictated ousting of Sámi from Sápmi and erasure of Sámi culture, such effects characterize the climate crisis as a significant purveyor of colonialism.

Further, as traditional Sámi activities are based in Indigenous knowledge systems that have evolved intimately with the specific ecology of Sápmi for millennia, Fennoscandia's new climate has diminished the applicability of such knowledge systems in the Anthropocene. Indeed, "As Scandinavia's climate shifts into a new regime—a regime which has not been experienced there since human habitation—the

relevance of traditional knowledge for future operational decision-making is likely to decrease" (ibid). With traditional Sámi knowledge systems becoming "less of an anchor" for the Sámi to their sacred lands and culture, the loss of Sápmi ecosystems has resulted in the abandonment of many Sámi from their ancestral homelands (ibid).

The increasing disconnect between traditional Sámi knowledge and the realities of Sápmi in the Anthropocene disable crucial Indigenous knowledge from being applied to the conditions young Sámi individuals will face if they are to remain in Sápmi, and "If the environment changes beyond the scope of their knowledge, there might be less incentive to stay in an unfamiliar environment" (ibid). Critically, political circumstances in Sweden that bolster the encroachment of colonial, industrial actors in Sápmi with little to no support for Sámi self-determination have influenced Sámi livelihoods in such a way that avenues for Sámi adaptation and resilience from the climate crisis have become severely limited (ibid). Due to this, the already highly violent effects of the climate crisis on the Sámi are exacerbated, thereby exhibiting the culmination of these effects as inherently colonialist, political, and in urgent need of transformation.

Furthermore, phenomena that were once never seen in Sápmi are becoming commonplace due to the environmental breakdowns rampant in this region. The classic "Tragedy of the Commons" has begun to play out in Sápmi with reindeer herders requiring larger herds to make up for their substantial financial losses. "With large herds and constantly shrinking grazing lands, the pasturage is being grazed too intensively and has too little time to recover," and such land use changes that have been triggered by the direct impacts of the climate crisis have cultivated inherently unsustainable practices in the reindeer herding industry (Furberg et al.). Considering the inability of

traditional Sámi reindeer herding to be sustained and the pivotal utilization of industrial inventions such as snowmobiles to herd surviving reindeer herds, Sámi reindeer herders have determined “traditional methods are not compatible with today’s climate” (ibid). Examining these ecological and cultural deteriorations in relation to common property theory, it is apparent that the imposition of scarcity and competition in Sápmi is due to colonial intrusion and reordering of land use. Sweden’s lack of equitable governance in this capacity has effectively ravaged lands integral to the vitality of both the Sámi and more-than-human beings, replacing the Sámi’s traditional notions of collective property.

What is more, the diminishment of traditional Sámi cultural and economic activities due to the impacts of the climate crisis also engenders violence towards the physical and mental wellbeing of the Sámi (Jaakkola et al.). The traditional Sámi diet of reindeer meat, fish, and berries induces positive health benefits while reducing the risk of chronic diseases common in industrial Western lifestyles, yet the physical and cultural encroachment of the surrounding industrial world in Sápmi has resulted in less physical activity amongst the Sámi and traditional, wholesome Sámi diets “being partly or completely replaced with western diet” (ibid). It has been indicated that if such “cultural and socioeconomic changes continue among Saami population effecting the traditional lifestyle and diet, it is likely that diabetes mellitus will become a public health concern among Saami population” (ibid). Furthermore, the cultural and ecological violence of the climate crisis endured by the Sámi has also resulted in detrimental usage alcohol with “50% of non-natural deaths among Saami reindeer herders in Sweden occurred under the influence of alcohol” (ibid). What is more, sexual

and physical violence and ethnic discrimination have been experienced by a major part of the Sámi population, and, crucially, the cultural and social factors that have been shown to decrease the prevalence of mental health problems and increase resiliency among the Sámi—namely "living in Saami core areas, involvement in reindeer herding, Saami as a native language, strong family ties, and communality"—are the precise aspects of Sámi culture that are being exterminated through the impacts of the climate crisis (ibid). Thus, the climate crisis' impacts unveil themselves as expressions of colonialist genocidal aims to disable the Sámi from maintaining their cultural traditions, make their knowledge systems obsolete, and replace these Indigenous knowledge systems other paradigms.

The culmination of the varying impacts of the climate crisis in Sápmi indubitably provoke severe mental, emotional, and cultural distress upon Sámi individuals that partake in and rely on traditional Sámi cultural activities rooted in direct involvement with the more-than-human world, such as reindeer herding. It is integral to recognize that the assault upon Sámi mental health executed through the violent effects of the climate crisis is acutely exacerbated due to the cultural lifeblood constituting Sámi economic livelihoods harmed by such effects. Critically, being a Sámi reindeer herder is not only a job but rather a historic, significant position that is elemental to Sámi culture. Indeed, being a reindeer herder is "the strongest Sámi symbolic act in Swedish Sámi culture," and due to this, hardships and failures connected to Sámi reindeer herding do not solely perturb Sámi reindeer herders' perceptions of their worth or success in relation to their livelihoods but rather their identities as integral figures and sustainers of ancient knowledges and ways of being in their culture (Kaiser et al.).

Due to this, the depression and anxiety levels found in Sámi reindeer herders are notably higher than in the depression and anxiety levels found in non-Sámi urban and rural populations in Sweden (ibid).

The incursion of the climate crisis' direct effects on the cultural fabric of the Sámi is rooted in colonialism in a variety of ways. Chiefly, as the damaging environmental effects of the climate crisis in the Arctic risk the complete destruction of ecosystems within Sápmi and therefore traditional Sámi cultural activities and livelihoods, these impacts essentially bolster historical and contemporary colonialist aims to eradicate Sámi culture. Moreover, as colonialism and the Indigenous genocide and environmental exploitation intrinsic to its survival and propagation is what has laid the foundations for the industrialism that birthed the climate crisis, it is apprehensible that both environmental and Indigenous annihilation is furthered.

Colonialist Roots of the Climate Crisis

Such tragic conditions demand examination through the lens of political ecology. As victims of circumstance, the Sámi's increasing reliance on foreign industrial technologies, capitalist paradigms, and orderings of land use that have—among other degradations—instigated a "Tragedy of the Commons" is due to historic and contemporary colonialist ideology. With colonialism as a guiding ideological paradigm for nations the world over, Nature has been imagined as "a blank slate, to be reconfigured and rendered useful" (Voskoboynik). Historically, "Where colonizers arrived, maps were redrawn, inhabitants ousted, and new methods of production installed. Collective land management practices were shredded," and sacred lands were handed "over to concessionary companies and settlers" (ibid). As colonialism

concretely sought and continues to seek “commodities: metals, crops, minerals, and people” to promote “economic growth and industrialization,” this ideology has unavoidably instigated unsustainably extractive relations with Indigenous peoples and the more-than-human world across the planet (ibid).

Such extraction has built and fueled a socioeconomic engine that has exploited and injured Earth to the extent that her fragile ecosystems have been rendered unrecognizable and no longer able to sustain the beings that have relied on and evolved with them for thousands if not millions of years. “Since there was always more land to conquer and acquire, sustainability was irrelevant. The model was simple: exhaust the land, abandon it and clear new land” (ibid). The carbon-intensive processes of this exterminating model have expanded so severely in recent human history that anthropogenic climate disaster is guaranteed. Indeed, as colonialist ideology has been at the heart of political actions that have devalued and sequestered Nature—triggering cataclysmic climatic and environmental transformations—the ecologies of Sápmi and all colonized regions of Earth are immanently political.

Moreover, without the political exclusion and rampage of Indigenous peoples and perspectives integral to the colonialist agenda, the current anthropogenic climate crisis would never have been able to occur. Under colonialism, “The eradication and exploitation of nature was conjoined with the eradication and exploitation of peoples. Ecocide came hand in hand with ethnocide. The Guanches, Lucayas, Charrúa and Beothuk are just some of the many peoples massacred on the altar of lucre” (ibid). Therefore, it is unsurprising that the Sámi are forced to adapt to colonialist, industrial ways of being to survive. The colonialist ambition to ensure Indigenous peoples are

eradicated and their perspectives made untenable and thus replaced by paradigms that widen the artificially constructed gap between the human and more-than-human worlds is effortlessly furthered when the greatest product of colonialism—the climate crisis—sows its violence in lands sacred to Indigenous peoples. Considering this, the political socioeconomic systems that have severely damaged Sápmi ecology must be recognized as the primary instigators of this violence and the primary structures that must be dismantled and Indigenously reimagined if their violence is to cease.

The Future

Indigenous Institutionalization and Self-Determination

With recognition of the inherently colonial history and present of the climate crisis, the future of the Anthropocene for Indigenous peoples remains undefined. The immense, impending violence of this crisis made certain due to humanity's innumerous failures threatens the lives of not only Indigenous peoples but all peoples of Earth—human and more-than-human alike. Regardless of the outcome of this violence, the right of Indigenous peoples to their livelihoods and cultures remains absolute, and it is with active skepticism and an unerring belief in a just tomorrow we can never fully conceive of that Indigenous self-determination will be able to imagine, shape, and define the future.

While reflecting on issues Indigenous peoples face within the U.S. settler state, Potawatomi scholar-activist Kyle Whyte identified three key themes evident in these issues that offer distinct points of entry into climate crisis discourses. They are:

> 1. Anthropogenic (human-caused) climate change is an intensification of environmental change imposed on Indigenous peoples by colonialism.
>
> 2. Renewing Indigenous knowledges, such as traditional ecological knowledge, can bring together Indigenous communities to strengthen *their own* self-determined planning for climate change.
>
> 3. Indigenous peoples often imagine climate change futures from their perspectives (a) as societies with deep collective histories of having to be well-organized to adapt to environmental change *and* (b) as societies who must reckon with the disruptions of historic and ongoing practices of colonialism, capitalism, and industrialization. (Whyte)

As the Sámi have been forced to adapt to colonial intrusions for centuries, the advent of the climate crisis and "developments" in response to this crisis are, as is stated by Whyte, changes that are not novel but rather correspondent with the "deep collective histories" of the Sámi (ibid). Despite the bleakness of the Sámi colonial history and present, these experiences have also provided strength and resiliency to the Sámi that have enabled them to begin renewing their traditional knowledges to forge their own self-determined paths through the Anthropocene.

Elina Helander-Renvall, head of the Arctic Indigenous Peoples Office at the University of Lapland, offers that "Sami people have much to teach the world about how to adapt, survive, and thrive" (Tisdall). The colonialist violence of the climate crisis and "developments" in response to this crisis—although devastating—is a violence the Sámi have endured for centuries. The Sámi experience has been defined by adaptation and persistence, and through every prior and continual attempt at eradication, they have remained steadfast. As resiliency is imperative for survival during the Anthropocene, the sheer strength of the Sámi serves as a valuable lesson for all. What is more, the Sámi possess critically valuable knowledge and awareness of the ecology of Sápmi; "'They have the most precise knowledge about the weather conditions, about the plants, the diet, the resources. The Sami people have an ethical relationship with nature; a respect for nature that also has a spiritual side'" (ibid). Incorporating Indigenous perspectives in development projects and allowing for Indigenous self-determination is not only morally necessary, it is ultimately beneficial. Through application of the most intimate, aware knowledge of the environment—especially during a period of such ecological transformation and deterioration—development that

is cognizant, sensitive, and educated is enabled. The deep relationship between the Sámi and Nature is one that involves unison, respect, and love; if such a mindset was adopted by all humans, societies both sustainable and equitable would assume the world. Indeed, the precarious position of our planet—particularly in the Arctic—demands humanity to shift from an industrial mindset to an ecological mindset to survive, and "if it is to weather the storm, it would do well to adopt Sami methods of land and resource management, communal co-operation and communication, local knowledge and best practice" (ibid). "Knowing where it is safe to build, how to site the foundations for a new road, airstrip or pipeline, what terrain to avoid, and how to do so responsibly while protecting biological diversity" are all invaluable understandings only the Sámi possess, and Swedish political bodies would greatly benefit from Indigenous direction (ibid).

The Sámi have already exhibited astounding resiliency and adaptation in the face of the climate crisis despite the terrible forces they contend with. Professor Monica Tennberg of the Arctic Research Centre has stated "'We've seen how the community adapts, for example finding new ways to deal with floods. We've seen better co-operation, better municipal leadership, better communications, better early warning systems'" (ibid). Tennberg even posits that many Sámi have fostered "tighter communal discipline" because of the climate crisis (ibid).

In Finland, the Skolt Sámi have paved their own path towards resiliency from the climate crisis and industrial colonialist endeavors impacting them, unveiling the vast potential for Sámi to become institutionalized in political decision-making bodies. Considered "the most traditional Sámi reindeer herding and fishermen group because they retain their native language and continue to rely on a centuries-old customary

governance system, a community council called Sääbbar in Skolt, that makes decisions about land use, fishing, and herding," the Skolt Sámi, as all Sámi, have been forced to change and adapt their way of life for centuries but have persisted and remained. Under the guidance of Skolt Sámi elders, Tero Mustonen founded Snowchange Cooperative in 2000 "to advance the role of traditional knowledge in environmental policy and practice" (Raygorodetsky). Growing "into a respected international community-based network making important contributions towards global recognition of traditional knowledge in climate change adaptation and mitigation," Snowchange has contributed to the Arctic Climate Impacts Assessment, the Arctic Biodiversity Assessment, and the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (ibid).

The "Skolt Sámi Survival in the Middle of Rapid Change" project, a collaborative venture between the Skolt Sámi, the Snowchange Cooperative, and the United Nations University Traditional Knowledge Initiative, centers on "developing a community-based climate change adaptation plan" through the application of "community-led self-reflection, evaluation, and future-visioning based on local worldviews and traditional knowledge" (ibid). Identifying avenues for resiliency, the partnership drafts plans of action that are Indigenously determined and discussed with relevant actors including government representatives. Through such undertakings, the Skolt Sámi "are hopeful… that in the coming years their climate change adaptation project will help shift the balance of power and engage state officials and other stakeholders in a more equitable dialogue about the future of the Näätämö" (ibid).

Indigenously directed organizations such as the Snowchange Cooperative and the "Skolt Sámi Survival in the Middle of Rapid Change" project reveal how

development can be Indigenously determined both in Sápmi and internationally. Crucially, such endeavors have effectively shifted the political ecology of these regions to be inclusive of and determined by Indigenous interests and knowledge. Understanding the inherently political limitations of current development and avenues for decolonization are integral aspects of these projects and have served as the primary reasons for their success. The blueprint of these projects can be applied and tailored not only to the Swedish Sámi, but all Indigenous peoples.

Lingering Violence

In Sweden, both positive and negative developments have occurred in recent times regarding the political institutionalization of the Sámi and the acknowledgement of Indigenous rights. On January 23rd, 2020, a landmark decision was made in the Swedish Supreme Court that ruled the Sámi village of Girjas "had an exclusive right to fishing and hunting in Girjas reindeer-herding areas on the basis of *urminnes hävd* (their presence there from time immemorial)" (Hofverberg). Further, "Not only can the Sami village confer hunting and fishing rights on others without the Swedish state's permission, but the state does not have a right to confer these rights" (ibid). As the Sámi of Girjas originally sued the Swedish government in 2009 "to obtain a declaratory judgment that it has the sole fishing and hunting rights in the area in which it also holds reindeer-herding rights," the decision of the Swedish Supreme Court is pivotal and represents an uncharacteristic shift towards Indigenization in the country (ibid). The adjustment of Swedish politics under Sámi determination affects varying aspects of the country, particularly the environment and more-than-human world of Sápmi. Such critical decisions also impact the advancement of the climate crisis and its effects as

paradigms centered on a harmonious relationship with Nature implemented politically ultimately lead to the normalization and universalization of Indigenous knowledge systems intrinsically grounded in sustainability.

Shifting the political ecology of Sweden is essential for the advancement of the rights of both the Sámi and the more-than-human world, but political ideologies affect the Sámi in spheres outside of the government. A month following the landmark decision of the Swedish Supreme Court in establishing the rights of the Sámi of Girjas over the use of their ancestral lands, reindeer of the Sámi were brutally tortured and murdered in an act the Swedish Sami National Organisation established was connected to the Supreme Court's case. "'One of them had been shot far down on the neck and had therefore been hurting, mortally wounded, for a long time. You can see in the snow that it had been kicking around itself for many hours, and it was still a bit warm when we found it, even though it was -15C,'" recounted Sara Skum, caretaker of the murdered reindeer and member of the Girjas Sámi village (Liljeström). Butchered reindeer carcasses stuffed in plastic trash bags and strewn alongside the road were the first signs of this violence, and hate and threats were soon directed towards the Sámi both online and in person, with a local man telling Lars-Ola Jannok, head of the Baste Sámi village, "'If you come here with your reindeer we will shoot them, I've already shot seven. And if I come upon you alone in the forest I'll shoot you too!'" (ibid). However, this violence is not new to either the Sámi of Girjas nor the Skum family. Dag Skum, Sara's father, recounted an evil assault against the reindeer in 2015, stating "'Their legs were dismembered, they had driven over the back of one reindeer. You could see that they

had driven fast machines. Their horns were broken and scattered around the forest'" (ibid).

Inner Transformation

Shifting the political ecology of Sweden to respect and allow for the self-determination of the Sámi requires political transformation within the Swedish government, yet political actors transcend the boundaries of governmental offices. True political change does not only demand changes in laws and regulations but changes in people's hearts. When political advancement occurs in one arena, political violence is triggered in another. Even if the Sámi are given the political space and power to enact their imaginative excellence and forge new developmental paths through the Anthropocene that are sustainable and ecologically-centered, the question of how to alter the hearts and minds of those still laboring under the violent trauma of centuries of colonialism remains unanswered. Indeed, the Anthropocene is inherently colonial not only due to the colonial circumstances that provoked the defining event of this epoch—the climate crisis—but also because colonialism is still deeply rooted in the paradigms so many humans operate from. Therefore, political revolution must originate internally.

As Norwegian philosopher Arne Næss posits, an actualization of deep ecology requires a shift in the "ecology of self" (*Self-Realization*). This "ecology of self" is rooted in a person's "process of identification" (516). Næss argues that "there must be identification in order for there to be compassion and, among human beings, solidarity" (518). Through identification with Indigenous peoples and the more-than-human world, the rest of humanity "may come to see that their own interests are served by conservation, through genuine self-love, the love of a widened and deepened self"

(519). The transformation of ecology is rooted in the transformation of ourselves, the enrichment of our inner worlds. “The concept of self-realization as dependent on insight into our own potentialities makes it easy to see the possibilities of ignorance and misunderstanding in terms of what these potentialities are,” and experiencing and acting from the realization that everything—Earth, the skies, the waters, entire ecosystems—are all inherently bound to each other is what creates the “ecological self” (520).

The concept of an “ecological self” has been preserved in Sámi culture and other Indigenous cultures since time immemorial, and it is a way of being that Earth demands us all to remember. Understanding “that the destruction of Nature (and our place) threatens us in our innermost self” is essential for building and shaping a politic that is holistically ecological (522). The self is intimately conjoined with what we identify with in our surroundings, and Næss points to Gandhi as a human example of ecological self-realization. Gandhi “let snakes, scorpions, and spiders move unhindered into their bedrooms—as animals fulfilling their lives… He believed in the possibility of satisfactory coexistence and he was proved right” (524) Moreover, “Gandhi recognized a basic common right to live and blossom, to self-realization in a wide sense applicable to any being that can be said to have interests or needs” (524). This manifestation of ecological unison deriving from an internal self-realization is perhaps the most substantial change humanity can make towards engendering deep adaptation and resiliency from the climate crisis.

Laws and rulebooks can be rewritten, but unless the political ecologies of Sweden and the world undergo a spiritual revolution that decolonizes the internal landscapes of the humans living within these worlds, the Sámi as well as all people will

not be able to collectively build a future founded on mutual respect, understanding, and love. Current predominant socioeconomic systems must be altered and deconstructed to engender broad, systemic change, yet that journey begins within each of us. Lay hands on a tree, let your entire presence and being rest on a flower. Feel the wind whispering to your spirit. Allow Nature to speak with you again, and allow yourself to listen. Begin to live and think as many Indigenous peoples always have. If we learn to recognize ourselves in relation to all the love that is shining about us, there will always be hope for the future.

"Love everyone. Every leaf. Every ray of light. Forgive" (*The Tree of Life*).

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