

---

**Angele Alook, Emily Eaton, David Gray-Donald, Joël Laforest, Crystal Lameman and Bronwen Tucker. *The End of This World: Climate Justice in So-Called Canada*. 2023. Toronto. Between the Lines. 219 pages. \$29.95 (paperback), ISBN 9781771136129.**

*The End of This World: Climate Justice in So-Called Canada* shows readers what a just, decolonial green transition away from oil and gas might look like. The book's six co-authors characterize such a transition as one that "allows everyone to meet their basic needs while remaining within global ecological limits" (89) and upholds the sovereignty of Indigenous peoples in Canada. Written in the first-person plural "we" and building on and towards clear policy proposals and action items that readers can bring to their networks, *The End of This World* stands out among reflections (and scholarly reflections especially) on life in the Anthropocene by showing readers how we might shape the world it describes.

The opening chapter, "No More Broken Promises: Asserting Indigenous Sovereignty," gives readers the historical and cultural context to understand treaty-making in Canada (including the ways treaties are conceived differently by Indigenous people and settlers), the concept of inherent rights, and how the Canadian state has failed (and continues to fail) to uphold both types of rights. This primer is useful to a wide audience and foundational to understanding the authors' insistence that Indigenous sovereignty must not only be upheld but centered throughout the conception and implementation of climate policies.

Chapter 2, "Delay and Deny: Canada's Approach to Climate Action and Indigenous Sovereignty," gives a recent history of Canadian neoliberalism, which allowed and allows government and industry leaders alike to delay responses to the climate crisis, a form of "delayism" the authors characterize as a new kind of climate change denialism. The authors tie this history of neoliberalism to specific corporate actors (such as Exxon or the Business Council of Canada) and government policies (including those that enabled the Trans Mountain Expansion pipeline's construction). In doing so, they avoid what could have been a nebulous policy lesson. By breaking down the problems with corporate-driven sustainability policies, namely the lack of science or "teeth" behind promises to green the fossil fuel industry, this chapter equips readers to reject carbon neutrality, carbon capture, usage, and storage, and other milquetoast policies that prolong the fossil fuel industry's lifetime and acceptability.

With that history in mind, Chapter 3 imagines what "A Just Fossil Fuel Phase-Out" might look like by sidelining oil and gas companies in favour of Indigenous sovereignty and, crucially, workers who bear the burden of deindustrialization. They plot out two different pathways this transition may take: regulation and/or public ownership of the energy industry. The authors stress the need for this transition to be both critical of the settler-colonial nation-state's authority and planned so that workers and communities are not left behind but instead benefit from the redirection of revenues from "a shrinking industry to life- and land-affirming projects and goals" (80).

These projects and goals are sketched out in Chapter 4, “Green Infrastructure for All,” which calls for the removal of essential goods and services from the market, so they may be provided through green infrastructure that can facilitate a just transition, such as climate-resilient social housing, public transportation, and small-scale energy projects promoting energy sovereignty. Importantly, the authors consistently remind readers that green energy megaprojects, such as the hydro development of James Bay Cree land in Northern Quebec, are not inherently ecologically sound or respectful of Indigenous sovereignty. Rather, we as a society will need to continue to make choices that enact a decolonial green transition.

Chapter 5, “Miyo-Wîcitowin: Uniting to Build a Caring Economy for All,” outlines the importance of centering care work in a decolonial just transition, drawing from the centrality of care in Indigenous economies and during Alberta’s fire seasons. This chapter pairs feminist theory with Cree concepts like miyo-wîchtowin kinâwasowin (good child rearing) and manâcittâwin (respect and reciprocity with living things), which show alternative values that can be centered in economies, work, and conceptions of wealth. The authors identify steps to transition away from what they call the “death economy” of fossil fuels into one that values care: restoring Indigenous sovereignty (and by extension Indigenous economies), fighting for policies that value care work (stressing that care work is often feminized and racialized), and clawing back harmful sectors of the “death economy,” such as military, police, and prisons. The mixture of prose, interviews, and reflective essays in this chapter is compelling. However, for the uninitiated, the connection between care work and climate change is fully fleshed out late in the chapter, when the authors point out that economic sectors marked by an absence of care “actively block work towards a just transition and care economy” by criminalizing land defenders, protecting violent Canadian mining operations around the world, and enforcing border-based violence (125).

Chapters 6 and 7, “Changing the Political Weather” and “Sihtoskâtowin,” work in tandem to outline the changes needed in Canada’s political climate for a just transition to take place. The authors emphasize the importance of a strong labour movement in the fight for a just transition and point to the ongoing Land Back and Defunding movements targeted towards the police, the military, fossil fuel subsidies, highway expansions, aviation expansions, and wealth redistribution through taxing the rich and corporations. The authors ultimately call for a left-wing populism to combat the rise of the far-right along with a list of strategies to mobilize communities around the issue of climate change.

Many of the strategies to mobilize and communicate with communities outlined in the book’s closing pages are recognizable from the authors’ prose throughout the book, beautifully illustrating the authors’ intent and the strength of their approach. Some of these actionable choices include how the authors consistently gesture to tangible examples of Indigenous and settler groups greening infrastructure or redistributing wealth, how they craft narratives that speak to the needs of people and their communities, and even how they undertook a cohesive and smooth co-writing process to write the book itself.

At once imaginative and grounded, *The End of This World* is a welcome departure from Environmental Humanities texts that describe a “better” world without connecting it to the material and lived realities of its readers. As such, I recommend this book to anybody interested

in energy transitions, energy sovereignty, and climate justice, and especially to the generations of young people riddled with climate anxiety who could use some help imagining not only how to survive in the Anthropocene, but how to thrive.

Reviewed by

Gabrielle McLaren

Associate Director – Deindustrialization and the Politics of Our Time (DePOT)

Centre for Oral History and Digital Storytelling

Concordia University

Email: [gabrielle.mclaren@concordia.ca](mailto:gabrielle.mclaren@concordia.ca)