

Fly Me To The Moon - Imagining A Future Beyond Extraction

CERLAC, Baptista Lecture, York University

11 November 2020

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When I imagine a future beyond extraction, that imagination is based on certain foundational beliefs. Here are four:

1. Ecocide is not a Human Right

Humans are not ordained or entitled to consume and destroy Planet Earth, the moon, the asteroids, Mars or anywhere else in the universe. The world is not a Natural Resource that provides us with Ecological Services whose value is based on our perceived needs. Everything has its own life under its own terms. No the billions of gallons of water flowing in a river to the sea are not being wasted if not diverted for human use. A river is a river and has its own life and intrinsic value completely unrelated to any human conception of a river.

2. The world we live in is not inevitable

In my lifetime I have experienced the introduction of materials, technologies, ways of being that did not exist before. There were no plastic bottles in Jamaica when I was a child. Plastic bottles are not an inevitable historical evolution. What we consider necessary and can't live without, the human species has lived without until the last approximately 150 years and can happily live without again. We can live without 24 hour

electricity. We do not need string beans grown in Kenya to be eaten in London. We do not need the avalanche of industrial, technological and consumer goods that end up as an avalanche of waste.

3. Wealth must be eradicated

In the 1940s, with the creation of the United Nations, the World Bank and similar organizations, the post war era was designed by the powerful to maintain their power and control by selling the world on a developmental model that did not acknowledge the stolen source of that wealth, nor did it require reparations or the curtailing of the over consumption of the wealthy. Instead, almost all the world suddenly became defined in terms of under development and poverty and poverty eradication became the focus. The lie that was told was that if all the inferior nations adapted the habits of the superior nations, they too would attain First World standard of living, and so the colonial and post-colonial world adopted this shiny developmental model with the promise of growth and prosperity to their nations. Wealth became the goal at all costs. And so we have normalized that billionaires, corporations and global capitalism are our saviors. When wealth is eradicated then poverty will be eradicated because minimal material consumption is not poverty. There is no way to continue a growth based economy in a finite world. Anti growth is the only option.

4. We cannot save the environment by destroying the environment

The Green New Deal, Build Back Better, Green Recovery etc are all green washed employment and economic recovery projects. Massive green infrastructure, smart cities and industrial renewable energy projects whether hydro, bio fuels, solar, wind, tidal, all rely on extraction and are immensely destructive. There is no kinder, gentler, more ethical or more responsible way to blow up a mountain. People often speak about the rise and fall of civilizations with the inevitable collapse when resources are exhausted. But the aboriginal peoples of Australia have had a continuous culture and society for over 50,000 years. Any collapse has been directly related to genocide not to extraction because they are not an extractive people. Their longevity has to do with the choices they have made, their values, their knowledge, their philosophy, their cosmology, their intelligence. Their priorities have not been building monuments and huge structures that require slave labour and exploitation. They have not dug out the Earth or destroyed the seas. They do not worship accumulation and the display of material wealth. When I imagine a future beyond extraction it has to be informed by those with such knowledge and experience.

I end the same way I end my film, with the words of Arundhati Roy:

“The first step towards reimagining a world gone terribly wrong will be to stop the annihilation of those who have a different imagination, an imagination that is outside of capitalism as well as communism, an imagination which has an all together different understanding of what constitutes happiness and fulfillment. To gain this philosophical space it is necessary to concede some physical space for the survival of those who may look like the keepers of our past but who may really be the guides to our future. To do

this we have to ask our rulers can you leave the water in the rivers, the trees in the forest, can you leave the bauxite in the mountains.”

Bright Green Lies

Derrick Jensen, Lierre Keith, Max Wilbert