10 Return of the posthuman

Developing Indigenist perspectives for social work at a time of environmental crisis

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Introduction

On the occasion of the 2019 Human Rights Day, and in response to arguably one of the worst bushfire crises in the country's history, the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) released a media statement in support of "young people's collective action to claim their right to a sustainable future" (AASW, 2019, p. 1). The Association notes that in the face of climate change, "young people are … fighting for … everyone's … human rights" and that, "seeing the lungs of the world disappearing in catastrophic weather events", they are "exercising their right … to advance what we are … experiencing as a national and global emergency" (Craik, cited in AASW, 2019, p. 1). This focus was appropriate to the occasion and in keeping with the global definition of social work, a profession dedicated to promoting "the empowerment and liberation of people" (IFSW/IASSW, 2014, p. 1). Still, it falls short of fully capturing what is at stake at the current conjuncture of climate change and related environmental emergencies, and, if not taken further, may amount to an opportunity missed.

Against this background, we ask: Should *humans* be social work's only, or even its most important, concern? And, is the current global climate emergency, as we have come to know it, best described in terms of *human* rights, or of *human* needs? What if we framed the issues at stake as *relational concerns*, focusing not just on human relations but also on relationships between *human* and *non-human* beings? At stake in these questions are particular European Enlightenment-based understandings, which attribute to humans a central, and privileged, position in this world. Within this paradigm, the ideal human, often represented as a white, prime-aged, able-bodied, heterosexual and economically independent male, is seen to relate to everyone and everything else along the lines of reason, rationality and progress. This ideology, exported by means of colonial conquest and rule, continues to dominate the contemporary world. It is, however, disrupted by the growing climate crisis, which cannot but affect a profession such as social work, constructed as it is around the meeting of *human* needs and the pursuit of *human* rights as its raison d'être.

As is the nature of crises, we should expect to see openings for positive, constructive change. To explore some of these possibilities, we will focus on a case which points us to alternative conceptualisations of what it means to be *human* in

relation to the *non-human* world, and to some of the implications this may have for social work. This is the case of the Adani corporation's coal-mining enterprise in central Queensland, Australia. We then engage with the case study from our respective posthumanist (Dorothee) and Indigenist (Glenn) positions, which we adopted in writing this chapter. Considering points of connection and divergence between these two interpretations, we argue that some of critical posthumanism's central concepts are familiar to, and correspond well with, Indigenist theorising and practice. We conclude that Indigenism and critical posthumanism can indeed be put to work together to challenge, disrupt and develop alternatives to social work's status quo. However, because colonial relations of power continue to shape its professional and academic endeavours, the two traditions are also placed within a highly unequal relationship. Thus, we caution against embracing posthumanism uncritically.

The case of the Adani coal mine development

This case study follows events that occurred between 2010 to 2019 in central Queensland, Australia, on the lands of the legally recognised Aboriginal owners, the Wangan and Jagalingou people, via the establishment of the Carmichael open-cut coal mine by a multinational corporation, the Adani Group, supported by Queensland state and Australian federal governments (Environmental Law Australia, n.d.). The Carmichael mine was established at a time when the contribution of coal burning to climate change was well documented. It is estimated that this mine will contribute an additional annual 79 million tonnes of carbon dioxide to the atmosphere (Climate Council, 2018). It will also extract and pollute 12.5 billion litres of ground water per year, which is more than the total use required for agriculture covering more than 1 million hectares. This is at a time when this region of Australia is experiencing a record-breaking drought.

Until August 2019, the Wangan and Jagalingou people held the Native Title to this land, which means that while the land and its resources were still considered Crown Land under Australian law, the Aboriginal Traditional Owners enjoyed increased legal capacity to protect it, and its beings, from development of any kind (Cawthorn, 2019). In this capacity, a majority of Traditional Owners reportedly 'voted', in 2016, in support of the mine's establishment, ostensibly on the justification that it would bring economic benefits to the human community via potential employment opportunities and an enhanced regional economy, and in exchange for an economic compensation package and land use agreement (The Guardian, 2016). However, it is also alleged that the Adani corporation selectively recruited and paid off highly vulnerable and impoverished people, many of whom were unclear about the voting process and its range of possible outcomes (Ker, 2016). Moreover, Craig Dallen,[1] a senior community leader and Native Title holder who at the time was supportive of the mine development, alleged that one of the most senior government bureaucrats, the Queensland Coordinator-General, pressured the Native Title holder representatives to accept the Adani offer. He also recalls that transport, accommodation, sitting fees and food for the attendees of a critical and legally binding decision-making meeting were all funded by

the Adani corporation, so that "no-one would be out of pocket", describing the arrangement as "rent-a-crowd".

However, there were Traditional Owners who opposed the mine. This opposition has been reported as that of a small minority, motivated by the desire to protect 'the environment' against exploitation for economic gain. However, this is not entirely correct. Firstly, the opposition amongst Traditional Owner groups has been widespread (Carey, 2019). Secondly, this narrative has tended to frame environmental protection in terms of a cost–benefit analysis, in which short-term economic benefits to humans are juxtaposed against the potential costs to human quality of life and long-term economic opportunity for the region. Considerable media attention has been paid also to the mine's potential impact on selected animal species, often identified by non-Indigenous conservationists as 'under threat'. While important in mobilising opposition to the mine among the wider Australian public, such contributions nonetheless fall short of engaging with the reasons provided by Wangan and Jagalingou Traditional Owners for *their* opposition to the mine, or with the worldviews underlying and informing them. Such views have been represented most publicly by Adrian Burragubba, who expressed grave concern "about the push … to open up the Carmichael Mine on our Traditional Lands", explaining that these lands are

> An interconnected and living whole; a vital cultural landscape. It is central to us as a People, and to the maintenance of our identity, laws and consequent rights.
>
> (Burragubba, 2014)

Mr. Burragubba added later that

> This mine … will affect the Rainbow Serpent Dreaming – the Mundanjarra. The natural springs feed the Carmichael River. They feed the Belyando River. They're some very significant waterways.
>
> (Gregoire, 2019)

Australia's media has reported the 'issues' in a manner that is familiar and meaningful within dominant non-Indigenous Australian discourse: the economy, human rights, environmental issues and as a political and legal argument around the Native Title legislation. While these framings do attend to important aspects of the debate, they nonetheless distort it by falling short of engaging substantively with the major concerns articulated by the Traditional Owners of the land.

Moreover, there appears to have been a privileging of corporate interests above all other agendas – human rights, environmental/conservationist, political and legal –, none of which have stopped the mine going ahead. This was demonstrated during the May 2019 elections when a majority of voters cast their ballots in ways that have been interpreted, at least in part, as a vote in support of the mine (Ludlow, 2019). And, whilst a minority 'green vote' expressed citizens' concerns about the mine's impact on humans due to environmental degradation, no effective political platform was formulated around the impact of the mine on

the human rights of Aboriginal Land Owners, and certainly no agendas were raised regarding any inherent rights of non-humans. By the end of 2019, therefore, based on the mandate from the voting public and despite significant local, national and international Indigenous and non-Indigenous protests, the Adani coal mine development received the final go-ahead from both Queensland's state government and Australia's federal government (Ireland, 2019). The argument that the exploitation and destruction of the non-human world for corporate profit and the anticipation of human economic advancement are more important than non-human existence, Indigenous ways of life and the impact on climate change won the day. As such, this case repeats the common prioritisation of short-term corporate gain over most other human and all non-human outcomes.

As a way of making sure that the Aboriginal Land Owners will not again be able to complicate matters, in August 2019 the Queensland government revoked the Native Title of the Wangan and Jagalingou, who thus lost any legal right to challenge the exploitation and destruction of their non-human kin and community on their Traditional Land (O'Sullivan, 2019).

Positioning ourselves in response to the Adani coal mine development: Critical posthumanism and Indigenist theorising and practice

Critical – including feminist, anti-racist, anti-oppressive, anti-imperialist and post/anti/decolonial – scholars have long insisted that neither an objective representation of facts nor a universally applicable representation of ethical arguments in relation to these facts are possible or even desirable (see, for example, Braidotti, 2013; or, in social work, Dominelli, 2018). Considering ourselves part of this tradition, it is thus important to try and tease out how our respective locations in Australia as Indigenous (Glenn) and non-Indigenous (Dorothee) social work educators may have impacted our understanding of the case study before returning to consider points of convergence, tension and their implications for social work. We begin by laying out Dorothee's position, which remains rooted within Eurocentric, academic traditions. This is followed by Glenn's response, who has spent much of his working life trying to resist the dominance of European thought and practice within a variety of settings by helping to mainstream Indigenist articulations of what it means to be in this world.

A critical posthuman position

My (Dorothee's) perspective on the Adani coal mine development is informed by sequences of personal and professional developments which have drawn me increasingly to Braidotti's conceptualisation of critical posthumanism, which she articulates comprehensively in her seminal work, *The Posthuman* (Braidotti, 2013). One of Braidotti's (2013) key propositions is to replace "the unitary subject of Humanism" (p. 26) with one whom she describes alternatively as "complex and relational" (p. 26), "posthuman" (p. 60) and "nomadic" (p. 86). This is a subject framed by "embodiment, sexuality, affectivity, empathy and desire" (p. 26),

and which is continuously evolving in "flows of becoming" (p. 89) through never-ending loops of "interaction with multiple others" (p. 89). In this way, Braidotti's (2013) idea of posthuman subjectivity represents an alternative to "the grandiose and aggressive universalism" of the European Enlightenment, assuming instead a "situated and accountable perspective" (p. 53).

Braidotti's (2013) critical posthumanism is infused with Baruch Spinoza's monistic philosophy. One of the central tenets of Spinozist philosophy is the idea that *all* life – whether human or non-human, spiritual, material or virtual – comprises only "one", yet "infinite, substance", which is indeed "the only substance that exists" (Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, n.d.). Spinoza's monism informs critical posthumanism's radically democratic commitment to "zoe-egalitarianism" (Braidotti, 2013, p. 103), with the term *zoe* denoting a "vital and self-organising matter" (p. 86) and "a non-human definition of Life as … a dynamic and generative force" (p. 86). In short, Braidotti (2013) pushes back against the kind of exceptionalism according to which humans relate to non-human animals and earth-others by way of fearing, loathing, (ab)using, loving and projection, but never fully recognising them as equals. Because Braidotti's proposed zoe-egalitarianism seeks to inspire humans to relate more equitably with the non-human world, she contends that it thus becomes a "means of re-grounding claims to subjectivity, connections and community among subjects of the human and the non-human kind" (p. 50).

If, however, subjectivity is not an attribute of humans alone, it follows that it cannot be conceived as a function of human self-consciousness and reason either. Instead, Braidotti (2013) proposes that subjectivity should be regarded as "transversal, relational nomadic assemblages" (p. 103), formed on the basis of "the immanence of relations" and attributable to humans, non-human animals and, in fact, to "the earth as a whole" (p. 82). This then opens opportunities to re-conceptualise what it means to be human in the world – namely, to form "new transversal alliance[s] across species" that are not confined to negative kinds of bonds "in terms of sharing the same planetary threats". Instead, they are constituted by qualitatively different, because enlarged, affirmative and "ethical forms of belonging" (p. 103) and draw on both "affective" and "intellectual resources" (p. 104).

Finally, the understanding of zoe-Life as a dynamic and generative web of relations that connect, through complex feedback loops, all conceivable forms of being within continuous processes of becoming has important implications for a critical posthuman understanding of power. In a context of coloniality, where "the invisible threads of power that emerge[d] in colonial situations … extend well beyond a strictly colonial setting and period" (Giraldo, 2016, p. 161), the Adani coal mine development displays a multitude of such threads. For example, the disregard of the Wangan and Jagalingou people's perspectives and voices, the manipulative processes employed to obtain their 'consent' and the revocation of their Native Titles on Aboriginal Land all combine to relegate the Aboriginal Land Owners back to the sub-human status they were afforded during Australia's colonisation and its aftermath. As a social worker of non-Indigenous origin, therefore, I relate to this case in a manner that attends to my own entanglement with the historical and contemporary webs of injustices at play. The idea of a

posthuman, nomadic, complex and relational self is helpful here in that it opens up possibilities for exploring hybrid kinds of being, relating and doing things that are not confined to assuming essentialist binaries of settler/colonised, or to hoping for 'redemption'. Instead, they are committed to acknowledging and seeking to repair severely damaged relationships.

One such way of being would entail the humble task of respectful listening, but this is hardly a new insight (see, for example, Tervalon & Murray-García, 1998). Where Braidotti's critical posthumanism adds a new dimension is with regard to what it is that clamours for attention. Intriguingly, when listening to the Traditional Owners in the case study concerned, it becomes apparent that critical posthumanism is hardly new. Regarding land as "an interconnected and living whole" dissolves the nature–culture divide (so central in European Enlightenment ways of framing in the world), as does the reference to land not as a property or an investment but as a "vital cultural landscape". Similarly, the reference to "the Rainbow Serpent Dreaming – the Mundanjarra" points to the limits of rationality and reason, suggesting instead that if I am to find any meaningful access to understanding at all, my European-trained self must allow itself to be affected as I follow my desire to understand. My response to contemporary environmental crises – that is, my hope for helping to resist the processes and logic of destruction at their root – then, does not require a 'reinvention of the (critical posthuman) wheel'. All the workings of coloniality notwithstanding, it has been turning for a long time. To me, this insight implies that it is possible to (re-)envision social work as an art of listening and of genuinely seeking to become infused with such insights regarding more equitable ways of relating to our human and non-human *Others*, as offered by the Traditional Owners of the land at stake in this case. Drawing on Foucault, Braidotti (2013) reminds us that power is both "polycentric" and "dynamic" (p. 27), constituting both "restrictive" and "productive" forces (p. 26), which in turn renders power inherently unstable and lacking in coherence.

As such, it should be possible for social work to position itself more creatively and constructively in relation to the unfolding environmental crises rather than to merely re-state the centrality of *human* rights. What remains unanswered at this point is the question of what such "new forms of resistance" might entail, and how we should go about developing them.

An Indigenist response

My (Glenn's) approach comes from an Indigenist perspective, developed via a journey of more than 20 years working at the 'cultural interface' between the western academy and Indigenous – more specifically, First Nations Australian – knowledges and practices. It is supported by my life-long experience within the broader socio-cultural interface between First Nations families and communities and settler/immigrant families and communities. It is these understandings which qualify me to contribute here, not my so-called ethnicity, race or, indeed, 'mixed race'. I do not believe that the latter comes with any innate capacity to critically respond to complex phenomena such as the one considered in this chapter,

particularly when definitions of race and ethnicity have been assigned via a colonising process.

Indigenism and Indigenist perspectives have provided Indigenous-led critical analysis for more than 20 years (see, for example, Churchill, 1996; Hart, Straka & Rowe, 2017; Rosiek, Snyder & Pratt, 2019). Indigenist theorising draws on the knowledges, worldviews, values, philosophies, ideological standpoints and practices of Indigenous peoples to "advance critiques of", and to "conceptualise alternatives to", the current "social, political, economic and philosophical status quo" (Churchill, 1996, p. 509). More specifically, Fejo-King (2014) states that "Indigenist theory is one of emancipation and empowerment developed by Indigenous academics and researchers, both nationally and internationally, which works towards a paradigm shift that privileges Indigenous knowledges" (p. 60). Considering this case study from an Indigenist perspective, and more specifically an Australian Indigenist perspective, is to refuse to locate humans above all other beings and life forms. An ecocentric rather than an anthropocentric perspective, and perhaps best described as ecokinship (Wurst, 2001), Indigenism highlights the significance of human relationships with, and connection to, the earth and non-human life forms as fundamental to the creation of meaning, the process of governance and the maintenance of wellbeing (Rose, 2011). This represents a profound difference to the anthropocentric, humanist belief systems imposed on Australia's land and its beings.

Fundamental to the Indigenist perspective is the significance of building sustainable relationships in place and of place (Rose, 2011) as this provides, literally and relationally, a *common ground*. It thus becomes vital to maintain the wellbeing of this common ground above all else. In contrast, the case study highlights polar binaries and entrenched ideological division: for example, between the agents and targets of colonising incursions; between capital owners and impoverished rural populations; between investors and the land being invested in or developed; and between humans and their non-human *Others*. These opposing binaries have the potential to destroy life itself. They also exemplify a lack of connection via the public discourse to the *place* where the Adani mine is being developed and, consequently, a lacking sense of responsibility to protect and sustain *all life* within and around it. Yet, from an Indigenist point of view, failure to sustain this integrity of connection means failing to fulfil a fundamental requirement of being (Rosiek et al., 2019). Thus, in saying that "our Traditional Lands" are "an interconnected and living whole" and "a vital cultural landscape" which is "central to us as a People, and to the maintenance of our identity, laws and consequent rights", Burragubba (2014) does not distinguish between humans and 'the environment', nor does he create a hierarchy of value and importance between humans and other beings. From a humanist perspective, he may be interpreted as talking only of *human* rights; however, his Indigenist conceptualisation of rights and the protection afforded by those rights extends beyond humans to the "interconnected and living whole".

At a time of deepening environmental crises and escalating climate emergencies at a global scale, it becomes increasingly apparent how deeply the social and other impacts of humans' anthropocentric worldviews and actions are entangled.

Against this background, the benefits of applying Indigenist theory and practice to understanding and responding to these challenges are clear. The dominant discourse, which has framed the problem with the Carmichael mine as an argument of 'economic opportunity' versus 'environmental consequences', is a case in point: making sense of the broader reality of ongoing developments such as this mine, in the face of global climate crisis, may be best achieved via an Indigenist paradigm. Whilst humanism may be considered more intellectually evolved, liberating and empowering than the monotheistic paradigms from which it emerged (Davies, 2008), the growing suggestions of its limits are bound to impact modern professions like social work, which have placed humanism – and the human – at their ontological and epistemological centre. Moreover, in contrast to the recent thinking that has developed from, and even in opposition to, humanism (Davies, 2008) – such as critical posthumanism – Indigenist worldviews represent humanity's most long-lived and continuously developed reactions and responses to the mysteries, dynamics and changes of the cosmological, social and physical world, from the internal landscape of self through to the broadest consideration of outward existence. Perhaps most significant is that Indigenist theorising and practice has proved to be a way of seeing, being, doing and valuing that has allowed all of existence, as far as we can perceive it, to thrive whilst maintaining a strong sense of purpose and wellbeing in human society (Sveiby & Skuthorpe, 2006).

Yet despite the opportunities presented via an Indigenist paradigm or Indigenist perspectives, Indigenism doesn't appear to have gained much traction within scholarly discussion. It is not possible to state categorically why this may be happening, but it seems reasonable to suggest that it may be linked to established racist beliefs that Indigenous peoples lack sufficient intellectual sophistication to justify their knowledges being recognised as equally worthy (Anderson, 2012; Rosiek et al., 2019). Within western society, Indigenous peoples' ways of understanding, being in and relating to the world continue to be considered as primitive, fossilised at some point in the distant past and thus located outside of, and placed in opposition to, the contemporary social and intellectual landscape (Bodkin-Andrews & Carlson, 2016). Social work does have an established tradition of interrogating its own collusion, across time and space, with a wide range of systems of power and governmentality to abet, rather than resist, the colonisation, subjugation and oppression of humanities' *Others*. However, the profession could go much further in allowing itself to be affected by paradigms, theories and practices outside of western academic traditions (Baines, 2011).

Critical posthumanism and Indigenism: A difficult conversation?

The two positions articulated in the preceding section contain points of both convergence and tension. Critical posthumanism's idea of species egalitarianism and the Spinozist philosophical roots from which it is derived, and Indigenist conceptualisations of land as a place where nature and culture merge – that is, as a common ground for building sustainable relationships for the mutual wellbeing of all – correspond much more closely than humanism's anthropocentrism and Indigenism ever could. Moreover, critical posthumanism's inherent reflexivity

regarding its Eurocentric roots and orientation suggest a particular openness to Indigenists demands for recognition. This is evident in its reconsideration of subjectivity: embracing a relational ontology, critical posthumanism considers the self as continuously (re-)reconstituted, in constant processes of becoming, and, hence, as nomadic and intrinsically prone to hybrid ways of understanding the world. To the extent, therefore, that social work seeks to overcome individualistic and human-centred notions of rights and seeks to move beyond framings of human relationships with 'their environment' in transactional terms, critical posthumanism's understanding of subjectivity is helpful. It is also helpful in trying to avoid a kind of identity politics by which, while trying to action social justice, non-Indigenous social workers relate to their Indigenous *Others* in sentimental, essentialising and ultimately patronising ways. It would appear, then, that critical posthumanism's search for new and qualitatively different forms of community and for enlarged, affirmative and ethical kinds of belonging provide a good rationale and starting point from which to mainstream Indigenism into social work theorising and practice.

Yet, there is still a need to explore Braidotti's (2013) contention that re-envisioning the human subject and its ways of being, relating to and understanding the world must be done "within an understandable language" (p. 82). Arguably, the Indigenist perspective, as articulated by the Traditional Owners of the land onto which the Adani coal mine development is being imposed, might be perceived as less academically compelling than the highly intellectualised work of critical posthumanists such as Braidotti (see also Rosiek et al., 2019). This highlights an important fault line within the conversation we are attempting here: the tension between that which might resonate at the felt, intuitive level and that which might seem more familiar, rational or important at the scholarly level. This points to a coloniality of power, operating within the sphere of social work theorising and practice. As such, it would impact how members of the profession decide who and what is meaningful and important, who should be listened to and why. This would help, in turn, to explain why many of the responses to phenomena such as climate change – including the AASW statement about Australian children's climate protests cited above – whilst admirable, fall short of what is required.

Dorothee referred to critical posthumanism seeming like a wheel being re-invented. We could then say that the Indigenist story is about a wheel that has been tested and is working successfully on a very long journey. For a time beyond what most of us can perceive, the Indigenist perspective on the relationship between the human and non-human, along with the responsibilities humans hold within those relationships, has sustained this journey successfully (Sveiby & Skuthorpe, 2006). This world, where the interdependence of all beings was understood to be irrefutable, has been, and continues to be, damaged. It suffers damage each time there is a renewed incursion into the little lands left in the custody of Indigenous peoples, and whenever resistance to such incursions is dominated by discourses that show little sign of being led by Indigenous peoples themselves, nor of engaging with the worldviews underlying and informing their responses. In comparison, the academic, critical posthuman story is one that is still to prove its worth. Yet, it stands a real chance of being considered better and more useful than the

one it appears, if partially, to reinvent (Rosiek et al., 2019). Importantly, its roots within critical theory notwithstanding, it remains part of the European academic tradition. Either subsuming, prohibiting or undermining Indigenous perspectives, knowledges and practices, this tradition has played a key role in the colonial enterprise (Hölscher, Bozalek & Zembylas, 2020). Social work's colonial inheritance comprises, among others, the continued marginalisation of Indigenous knowledges and practices. Critical posthumanism does reckon with this tradition, but it remains entangled with it.

At the same time, the Indigenist perspective is not as unfamiliar as it might seem. On the contrary: if any knowing can be said to be embedded deeply in our being, it is the knowing that has guided all of our ancestors successfully, even if this knowing was neither written down nor researched. In the face of globally unfolding catastrophic climate and weather events, it is clear that there is a lot of work to be done, whether social, cultural, economic, political or ideological. For those desiring to meet these challenges, it is critical to listen carefully and respectfully not only to the voices of those who maintain our most sustainable perspectives, but also to the collective voice of our own ancestral wisdom. There will be more Adani-style projects forced on the land and more resistance by Indigenous peoples, inspired and motivated by beliefs and perspectives that any human may choose to live by, especially given that not so long ago in the scheme of things, we all did.

Conclusion

We wrote this chapter at a time of unprecedented environmental crisis in Australia and in response to the Australian Association of Social Workers' support of young people's right to fight for "everyone's … human rights" (AASW, 2019, p. 1). While fully supportive of children and young adults resisting environmental injustice on behalf of all those who cannot or will not do so themselves, we questioned whether, by denoting these concerns as ones of *human* rights, the AASW's framing of its support amounts nonetheless to an opportunity missed. In pursuit of this question, we presented the case of the Adani coal mine in central Queensland, Australia. We focused on the role of the Traditional Owners of the land, their treatment by both the mine developers and Australia's relevant governments, and the public discourse surrounding the events. We discussed this case from our respective, critical posthuman and Indigenist perspectives, both in their own right and in conversation with one another.

We found considerable convergence between critical posthumanism and Indigenist theorising and practice. This is particularly due to the former's reconsideration of dominant understandings of subjectivity, which comprises a number of interrelated moves, including the assertion of a relational and radically egalitarian ontology and epistemology. This amounts to a disruption of human exceptionalism, which regards subjectivity as humanity's prerogative alone, and of anthropocentrism, which regards all non-human beings in relation to humans' rights and needs. Thus, it sits well with Australian Indigenist understandings of egalitarianism amongst all beings, ecokinship and the land as a living breathing relative, not as a commodity to

be bought, sold or traded. Both perspectives, therefore, would be highly critical of social work limiting its response to the escalating global climate crisis, to one that is conceived in terms of *human* rights, as this bears the risk of remaining within a narrow anthropocentric, individualist and transactional framework.

Notwithstanding these convergences and the opportunities for social work that lie within bringing them into conversation, we also drew attention to at least one important tension between critical posthumanism and Indigenism, which we articulated with reference to coloniality: both the profession of social work and the philosophy of critical posthumanism are entangled in humanism's colonial enterprise. In spite of social work's critical traditions and critical posthumanism's reckoning with humanity's past and contemporary atrocities, the two are linked. As such, we want to caution against any naive embrace of either critical posthumanism or Indigenism. However, a commitment to decoloniality requires us to be open to the idea that some of what critical posthumanism offers has been available for a long time but not embraced. In this spirit, we attempted to bring these perspectives into conversation on equal epistemic terms and to be open to what might emerge in its wake.

We conclude that for social work to disrupt colonial continuities of power within its theorising and practice means being more open to listening to and learning from Indigenous peoples, be they scholars, activists or ordinary people. This would entail not just supporting, but also being guided by First Australians' resistance to the economic development of their lands; being more attentive to Indigenous peoples' practices in the protection of these lands and all the beings connected to them; considering how this might enlarge and enrich social work's own practices; and allowing social work theorising to become more infused with the philosophies underlying Indigenist theorising and practice. Not only would this be congruent with social work's support of popular resistance in the face of climate change, it would also open opportunities to attend to its underlying dynamics and to consider social work's responsibilities in relation to them. It would align with critical posthumanist thought, and it would, additionally, contain possibilities for attending constructively to some of the wrongs in social work's colonial past.

Note

1 For Dallen's comments, see: www.sbs.com.au/nitv/nitv-news/article/2019/05/16/inside-look-how-adani-dealt-traditional-owners

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