Insurrection in Energy Research

Discussing Energy Justice, Capitalist Warfare, & Decolonization in the Academy with Carlos Tornel and Alexander Dunlap

Alexander Dunlap, Carlos Tornel

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Introduction

Carlos Tornel (2022) recently published an article titled, 'Decolonizing Energy Justice from the Ground Up: Political Ecology, Ontology, and Energy Landscapes,' in *Progress in Human Geography* (PHG). While giving credit to energy justice research, Carlos confronts the state and policy centric articulation of energy justice, acknowledging how it shuns decolonial, autonomous and, consequently, anti-authoritarian struggle around energy infrastructure. These criticisms remain highly welcome as energy justice avoids the self-reflections made by 'critical' and 'decolonial' environmental justice scholarship and, as Tristan Partridge (2022: 91) recently shows, departs from the original concerns of the Energy Justice Network (1999). Carlos' article, then, generated a short formal exchange between us within the journal (see Dunlap, 2023; Tornel, 2023), illuminating issues with decolonial scholarship and the complications of struggles against extractive development. The dialogue below remains an extension of this exchange, seeking to further explore the issues related to energy and environmental justice, academic research and, most of all, thinking of expanding pathways towards post-developmental and pluriversal approaches for confronting technocapitalism and remediating socio-ecological catastrophe in the direction of total liberation—the liberation of humans and nonhumans together. To ensure clarity and accessibility, footnotes and citations are included along with minor edits throughout the text. We can only hope the reader finds this discussion intellectually stimulating and thought provoking to their projects and struggles.

—Alexander Dunlap

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Alexander Dunlap (AD): As you know by now, I was pleased to read your criticism of energy justice—it resonated with some deep seeded concerns I have with energy, but also environmental justice. Energy justice seeks to improve energy security or, said differently, reduce inequality and improve peoples' ability to access or afford electricity. Energy justice, likewise, seeks to fairly distribute the benefits and costs of energy services, which extends to better representative and inclusive decision making in matters of energy production (see Sovacool & Dworkin, 2015; Jenkins, et al., 2018). To get the conversation going, and to maybe get unfamiliar readers up-to-date, could you quickly summarize your position and concerns with energy justice that you expressed in your recent article?

Carlos Tornel (CT): It is really an honor for me to be discussing this with you, more so, because of what you have contributed to energy and environmental justice based on your own research, which I know we will get into later on. To answer the question, I would say that my main concern emerged from a climate justice conference held in Durham [UK] at the end of 2019. A few 'big names' of energy and environmental justice were invited and as I heard some of them speak I was surprised by the way they presented energy justice as a concept different from environmental or climate justice because it was 'free from an activist past'. To some of them, this was a virtue for energy justice. There seemed to be, in their mind, an apparent naïveté within environmental and climate justice groups in their demands for radical system transformations. According to them, it is good that energy research was led by and structured around economics and/or policymakers, and thus, it was better to speak directly to them instead of trying to promote naïve or 'impossible demands' (cf McCauley & Heffron, (2017: 664); Jenkins, 2018: 119-120). This immediately raised the hairs on my back. Wasn't energy justice, like environmental or climate justice, all about listening to people's demand for a fairer system? And aren't the goals of energy/

environmental justice researchers to draw attention to and support struggles against exploitation and extractivism arising from capitalist systems? This was particularly worrisome because at the time it seemed to me that it was becoming increasingly common knowledge that capitalism tries to solve the climate crisis of its own making via 'green capitalism'. Green capitalism, as everyone should know, expands extractivism by identifying new commodity frontiers, and creating new sacrifice zones that ultimately seek to perpetuate accumulation via the radical simplification of landscapes and by imposing plantation-like forms of development everywhere (see Sullivan 2009; Franquesa, 2018; Stock, 2022). Even when people do not use this language, they can see that capitalism is much more than an economic system, but that it is in fact an institutionalized social order that organizes people and places to sustain perpetual economic growth, a process that has systematically become more and more violent… (see Menton & Le Billion, 2021) and these researchers know this!

Consequently, the question for me became: if the purpose is to dissociate energy justice from what is happening on the ground then, how exactly can energy justice (or any other form of justice for that matter) account for these historically different realities? This is of particular concern in the Global South, where societies-in-movement and a few scholars have shown how energy systems continue to sustain material and ideological colonial regimes of power (see Dunlap, 2019; Allen et al, 2021). In other words, shouldn't peoples' lived experiences and different realities — for example the everyday experiences that shape colonial occupation, oppression and extraction—be key in shaping the discussion around energy systems? And if not, is it worth our time and effort to develop concepts like energy justice at all?

In the Global South, the term 'justice' is more often translatable to development - it usually means access to technology, financial aid and high-energy modernity. Consider the recommendations from the International Energy Agency (IEA) or the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which follow the exact same recipes that gave birth to neoliberalism during the 1970s in Latin America. For example, imposing universalized and top-down 'structural reforms' constructed around a Westernized understanding of well-being, completely detached from the realities on the ground; based on experts determining people's needs and not the other way around; and on an absolute reliance on financial and technological innovation. This is the same framework that drives energy justice and frames the energy transition. Renewable energy and decarbonization potentials are seen as 'green' and 'sustainable' allies in the fight against climate change, covering up the continuation of the civilizing mission that began over 500 years ago and that continues to present people as 'backward' or 'underdeveloped' and seeing places/landscapes as 'empty' or as 'wasted' with renewable energy potentials.

At the same time, the work by Cara New Daggett (2019) and Larry Lohmman (2021) was coming out challenging the conceptual framing of 'energy' as much more than a physical force with the capacity to do work, but as a concept loaded with imperialist dreams and entangled with the history of capitalism and colonial control. Meanwhile, a series of works from scholars focusing on Latin America, were also formulating a critique to the framework of environmental justice as a universalized and Westernized presupposition (see Álvares and Coolseat, 2020). These works influenced me greatly, and reflect what I think could sum up my main concerns in the article: *energy justice is being framed as completely detached from what is happening on the ground*. Energy justice relies on a Westernized idea of well-being and justice via distribution, recognition and participation, which rarely takes into account how everyday lives and different ontological understandings of the world are affected in places where energy systems continue

to reproduce colonial hierarchies, forms of extraction and exploitation. In the article I make this critique and propose another way of framing energy justice by first, acknowledging the ways that energy systems reproduce forms of epistemological and ontological violence—eliminating otherness or eliminating the other altogether. Second, by recovering a sense of place-based solidarity or 'grounded normativity'—that is, rules embedded in a sense of place, or a connection with otherness (nature, community, tradition, landscapes, and so on)—to shape the ways that energy is conceptualized and systems are designed from the ground-up, challenging abstract ideas such as development or justice.

AD: Okay! Heavy. I had no idea (until recently) that Energy Justice advocates were *openly* framing their research to shun or deprioritize movements and struggles on the ground. I have recognized this general policy and statist disposition and, likewise, have pointed out how energy justice has been used to domesticate terms like "colonialism" and consequently erase more combative elements out of political struggles against wind energy development (see Dunlap, 2021a). This expression of energy justice, however, seems to be a more general trend within academia that transposes a liberal politics onto everything. I might even argue that, in combination with the inundation of people with rare earth minerals and digital interfaces, the university is designed to domesticate and enclose 'Marxist', decolonial or 'anarchist' praxis. More to the point, researchers often do not know how to identify politics and political tensions taking place on the ground, ignoring militant factions—Maoist, anarchists, autonomists, and narcotic traffickers to name a few—to fit everything into a sanitized liberal framework that suites the reality researchers and students are most familiar with or are able to comprehend. It makes a nice story complementary to their worldview, no? There are obviously exceptions, but this remains a strong tension I have noticed.

This politics expresses itself by prioritizing and focusing on the middle-road within struggles: People or populations that, *by whatever means and reasons*, want a fairer and less destructive modernist development. And these are real desires or political tensions, and, to use jargon speak: it is a byproduct of technocapitalsit and infrastructural hegemony. But this reformist perspective is reinforced by researchers who have not internalized combative tensions or understand the "politics of attack"—in whole or in part—and this likely corresponds to their life experience. Being a researcher seems like a way for many 'students' to live their life through the lives or struggles of others. Research, in many ways, seems more important than the struggles themselves. When people are conducting research and not living within that community in struggle, but the nearest big city for example, it is easy to build the towers of liberalism anywhere, it's the dominant hegemonic practice. This perspective only intensifies with 'academic research' being a job, not a political commitment to learning and understanding the reality of political terror and ecocide, to use general all-encompassing terms. This is how researchers end up believing it when Maoists are marketing themselves as anarchists in interviews and proudly end up applying defunct academic terms they heard from David Graeber to areas that are a living political praxis influenced by Marxist-Leninism, Zapatismo, party politics and anarchist insurrectionism—among others(!)—that collides with Indigenous and "non-Indigenous" religious and cultural traditions in these areas. Political conflict and struggle are a mess, a violent mess, which is then converted by academics into environmental or energy justice struggles—which sits crooked in my stomach. But I am getting carried away.

Getting back on track, how about we empathize with and speak directly to energy justice a bit. Maybe it is a generous reading, but isn't energy justice responding to the failures of political

struggle? Isn't energy justice an expression to make gradual change and to work from 'inside the system'—like most academics—to make the world a better place or perform 'harm reduction' in the face of the Global Capitalist Mega-machine or Worldeater? And how are insurrectionary or resurgent struggles related to Indigenous autonomy and anti-state politics not demanding the impossible in practice!?

CT: Thanks again for this exchange, it is proving to be a very insightful conversation! To answer these three questions, I would first say that yes, energy justice is responding to the failures of political struggles, but I think the twist is that those failures give the appearance of being failures attributed to social movements, when in fact it is the capitalist system itself! Not the people struggling to protect ecosystems and their livelihoods. Energy justice frames the problem as a problem with activism itself and not as a result of capitalist modernity and its enduring products: colonialism, racism, extractivism and patriarchal hierarchies.

Secondly, I would again say the intention is 'yes', but again, I think there is a twist. The notion that we can change the system from within the system is a very old idea. I heard it countless times. For example, In Mexico, Ecuador or Bolivia when the 'left' won, in the case of Mexico, for the first time in 2018, social movements were decimated because many people joined the government. The three governments doubled-down on extractive activities and mega-infrastructural development to 'modernize', meanwhile repressing opposition and difference and institutionalizing and domesticating alternatives to development like Buen Vivir (see Altmann, 2020; Wilson, 2023). Instead of the World Bank propping up extractivism, it is a populist consensus with China moving in. The government is still expanding foreign direct investment, the only difference, albeit a very perverse one, is that extractivism, exploitation, militarization and expropriation are framed as 'Indigenous' and 'for the good of the poor/ sustainability/ progress/ development' or even in the name of Pachamama (see Tola, 2014). Sadly, the fantasy of the state, of taking power, is still alive and well, despite the fact that states are nothing but capitalism's policemen: it is used to discipline and control people and envrionments, something that capitalism cannot do by itself. The state facilitates 'political stability' to allow enclosure, commodification and extraction, meanwhile suppressing, imprisoning and killing opposition to its political and economic agendas.

Yet some Marxist, degrowthers, and people on the 'left' continue to support the idea of transformation through the state via politics, even when politics are a direct continuation of war. As Nelson Maldonado-Torres (2008) argues, war is the beginning of everything in Western thought, and thus, to perpetuate the 'ontology of war' - to see war as natural avenue for politics—even if it is 'by other means'—it is to perpetuate a form colonial oppression. For a very long time now, left and right have meant almost nothing. What is left now is a choice between either supporting the politics of death by continuing to focus on electoral power and democracy, or we support the politics of life, by looking to other horizons beyond the state and for autonomy. As the Zapatistas (EZLN, 2016) remind us, this war is real and it is a total war, because it is waged everywhere, in all forms and in our everyday lives. To actually call for a transformation we should accept that war exists, but refuse to fight it in these statist terms. Raul Zibechi (2022: 5) has a wonderful phrase that expresses this paradox: "We accept that the world has changed and that the experiences of seizing power have failed, but our critical thinking has remained attached to concepts and proposals born in another historical period." This is why I think we should demand what is erroneously called 'the impossible'. A breakthrough of decolonial theory is that it invites us to think beyond the State because the state is irredeemably a creation of capitalist modernity, and

to imagine something different—what some call 'decolonizing the imaginary'—which in practical terms would mean to learn, to listen to the other. Indigenous and other land struggles in Latin America are doing precisely that, as some political ontologists such as Arturo Escobar, Mario Blaser and Maria La Cadena have shown.

I think this goes back to your point about academia and the University. There is a risk that when we use terms without an actual connection to struggles we can end up in a 'citations game' with no actual possibilities of inciting change. Something that Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui (2012) has highlighted about some decolonial scholars. We also run the risk of domesticating, sanitizing terms when we make reality fit the theory and not the other way around. There is no such thing as a neutral academic position, and especially not in a context of total war. This is why the liberal justice framework—behind energy/environmental/climate justice—is problematic: it continues to convince us to believe in the state and in this liberal framework created around identities distracting and dispersing communal efforts that seek transformation, reinstating and subsuming rebellion and insurrection into a domesticated and tolerable politics for uptake within the University.

In your own work you have identified insurrection as a form of political ecology of transformation, something that goes beyond identity, what Japhy Wilson (2022) would call an 'insurgent universalism'. I think this goes back to your point about cities and the transformations/insurrections that are needed everywhere. How then, would you say, can we frame a form of energy transformation, or an energy insurrectionary research/praxis that can sustain a radical transformation of reality in support of these struggles?

AD: Okay, I like where this is going! Before I get to our direct question, you speak about many things that concern me, some of which I am curious about. And, 'yes', to change the system from 'within' or 'inside' is very old and remains the discursive sleight of hand to justify people dedicating themselves to bureaucracy, giving all their power to institutions and to 'make things a little better,' because a little better can help some people. I have heard this from diplomats justifying their participation in the Iraq War on the ground to do 'harm reduction' against 'US stupidity' and literally everyone justifying their bureaucratic entanglement, material and social status—often sealed by having kids and university debt. Capitalism and statist society is a tough game, so people tell themselves and justify all sorts of things to justify their privileges and actions within prison society.[1] This, however, links back to energy justice: People want to feel meaningful and see results for their actions, which—I assume—social movements and direct action did not fulfill fast enough or was able to sustain. This, of course, is all speculative, but what do you think holds people to this narrative and binds people to perpetuating capitalist modernity? Honestly, it is pretty pathetic—and I am speaking about myself here—the way academics and universities are scarified and gutted to propel corporate publishing and profiteering—which then invests in hydrocarbon and arms industries—I am looking at you Elsivirus!

And I guess, getting to a more contentious point, this relates to understanding colonial-statist society as war. While I completely agree with Maldonado-Torres (2008), I believe if you are not viewing this system like a war to domesticate and control human and nonhuman resources—then what are we talking about? The writing is on the walls, humans and nonhumans are killed to con-

[1] Societies organized on the same ideologies, logics, morals and materials as prisons. A term coined by Max Stirner and theme developed by Jaque Ellul, Micheal Foucualt, Freddy Perlman, Alfredo M. Bonanno, Jean Weir and many others.

trol land, acquire so-called 'natural resources' and produce the modern wonders of automobility and computational technologies, meanwhile we are literally confined in toxic waste: Asphalt, concrete, steel, hazard chemical mixtures, wires and so forth. We do not litter in cities, yet the whole assemblage is toxic waste smothering ecosystems and marshlands! I agree with Foucault's (1995 [1977]) so-called "war hypothesis" and outline of the prison society, which—like most of anarchist thought—reveals the reality of colonial society, the abhorrent disciplinary oppression necessary to exist in it and, thereby, the vested interests we have in stopping the state system here and elsewhere. But this is war, no? A war with no rules, employing civil-military schemes and, thinking of Patrick Wolfe, creating a structure of conquest: Replete with its own national culture, self-reinforcing bureaucracies, policing forces and economy that, overall, is designed to create a system of control, domestication and systemic exploitation and extraction of everyone and everything deemed exploitable! This reality seems unnecessary and a waste of living—it does not have to be this way, at all! To create this system has been nothing short of systematic 'conventional' and 'asymmetric' warfare to create borders, discipline populations, form armies, steal things from your neighbors and keep that machine going in the face of systemic revolt. The scale of this genocidal and ecocidal system is depressing, but that is the point. I feel when people say, or when I myself say (!), it is best 'to work from 'inside the system,' it is because we are defeated and demoralized! And this military language, counterinsurgency and the overall objective of the state—or colony in earlier phases—is rather useful to make sense of the existing and its continuation. The real question, which I made a stab at in a book bringing back Fredy Perlman's (2010 [1983]) "Worldeater," is asking who and what force is doing this!? (see Dunlap & Jakobsen, 2020). Why are industrial humans—but to a degree most humans—being so stupid to destroy so much beauty and life? Ruling class, transnational capitalist class, elites and so on, says something important but is unsatisfactory given the depths of this separation from ecologies, carelessness and violence taken against all life.

And, yeah, like Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui (2012 [2010]: 102) and, later, Ramon Grosfogul (2016) who went so far as to accuse the "new gurus" of academic decolonial thought of "epistemic extractivism," I agree. As you know, I make a distinction between academic/mainstream and other forms of decolonial through emerging from struggle. While I know many have found academic decolonial thought useful, I have found it regressive, statist and a blatant disrespect to the anti-colonial and anti-state fighters who have died and are fighting. And that is the issue, I feel mainstream decolonial academia is burying struggles that are here and now in favor of decolonial archival work, discursive analysis and narrowing that focus to the Zapatistas, Buen Vivir and the Haitian Revolution (see Dunlap, 2021c, 2022). This is important work, but it is wedded to authoritarian politics, identity essentialism, university systems and—really—is not direct or human in how it communicates: the endless volumes do not seem interested in communicating with people outside academic career. So, 'yes', Japhy Wilson's (2022) latest intervention to confront these tendencies in academic decolonial thought and their excellent—and practical—example of confronting a hydrocarbon company in Ecuador is desperately needed in the academy to remind people the realities of political struggle (see also Wilson, 2023). Yes, academic decolonial thought—as opposed to anti-colonial struggle on the ground—really seems intent on dividing and stifling political struggle in favor of statist identity politics, academic curriculum and erasing anti-authoritarian struggles that exist—I really feel it has internalized and re-projected what it claims to fight. Then again, everyone—especially myself—needs to worry about becoming what they hate and that psychosocial entanglement of power relations that fuels colonial systems.

And, yes, "insurgent universality." I tried to read the book after a rude and arrogant reviewer suggested it to me—and I couldn't. I read five pages and I could not read about insurgent universality in an Oxford University Press book, taking a cultural study prose and recycling Fanon for the umpteenth time with all the predictable academic examples—this was my impression, remember I did not read the whole book (Tomba, 2019). Yet it failed to pull me in—and I am sure the book is great in many aspects, but the way the book wanted to talk and approach the issues was not my priority at that moment. Yet, Wilson's deployment and use of the term in Ecuador was great! I found their decolonial critique, discussion of the 'edge' and example as timely and convincing. This ideas of "insurgent universality," however, echoes Mikhail Bakunin's (1990 [1873]: 29, 1871: 7) "spirit of popular uprisings" or "the spirit of revolt" that Oscars Wilde (1891) would then go out to repeat and expound upon it in more poetic terms. So, yes, insurgent universality remains a nice intervention, at least Japhy's approach—that was warm and delicious to read. Yet, I do prefer the spirit of revolt: it speaks to the soul and doesn't start using catchy bravado words that the state likes to employ to criminalize people with—even if this bravado and ethos of the insurgent is rightfully attractive. An insurgent—especially as it is used in academic discourse—is often just people loving and caring for things the state wants to control, subjugate or kill, and some people decide to stop it with all they got.

Okay, I have been rambling on for a long time now and still have not gotten to your main question. Yes, I have made a call recently in the conclusion of a horribly overpriced Elsevirus book, that then butchered the title—deleting the word "insurrection" from it—that made a call for an insurrection in energy research. I have some ideas about how we can "frame a form of energy transformation, or an energy insurrectionary research/praxis that can sustain a radical transformation of reality in support of these struggles." But, at this point, I have talked a lot and I am curious how you would reply to these questions you inspired. I want to return to this question, but now we have entered some new territory. Let's return to this question, but first, I am curious what you think about what actually binds people to liberal narratives and perpetuating capitalist modernity and also recognizing the colonial-state as a structure of conquest and war? And, really, what do you think is driving this system to kill everything, to create a Necrocene, when every other way of living is possible!?

CT: I think that the traditional answer retains enduring value even if it is limited: that what drives capitalism is endless accumulation for accumulation's sake. Despite being quite accurate, this response might be too short an answer to give justice to your insightful provocation. It is only fair to go into more detail. I agree with you that trying to understand why people continue to support the system can be baffling. I think that the idea that 'there is no alternative' that shaped neoliberalism really goes beyond the economic sphere, it became embedded into our hearts and minds like a lethal parasite. We were taught, during the last 30 odd years, that there is in fact, no alternative to statist liberal capitalism; that we are individual people, without community and without attributes and the only thing that we can do and that may have an impact is to limit ourselves to choosing between commodities. Said differently, we influence neoliberal governance through policy, by how we select our 'leaders' and shop at the supermarket—vote with your dollar! Vomit. These 'freedoms' are presented as the only way forward, but they are in fact types of imprisonment. Notions like entrepreneurship, competition and innovation are celebrated constantly. In Mexico and mostly everywhere, universities take these words as mottos and 'shape' people to become the epitome of the *homo œconomicus*.

As some decolonial scholars have shown, one of the great successes of capitalism is that it makes those at the bottom think like those at the top (see Grosfoguel, 2022: 307). This is the same thing that happens within colonial hierarchy: even after colonialism has supposedly ended as a political project and time period, colonial values, ideals, imaginaries and hierarchies continues to infect the hearts and minds of people perversely. It is then the colonized that absorb, enact and use the tools of the colonizers to perpetuate the structure of hierarchy, exploitation and racism. I'm thinking of Mexico—and most of Latin America—where the elites identify with the European ideals and then go on to exploit and apply the same racist principles to those at the bottom, framing them as 'backward', 'uneducated', 'lazy', 'poor', etcetera.

These are attitudes that sustain colonialism, because, as Abdenur Prado (2018:22) argues, colonialism is about harvesting. You plant a seed—which ends up colonizing the imaginary of people—and progressively, even if the official political project of colonialism has ended, the seeds of those colonial occupations are still spreading and growing through and within the colonized. Now people subject to colonial systems reject their own traditions, their own identities, their own religions and their own knowledge—because they are convinced that their ways are backwards. There are those of course, who have resisted and this is why I think 1994 was an awakening to some of these realities. The Zapatista uprising in Chiapas helped us become aware that, not only that there are many other worlds, but that these worlds are here and offer plenty of alternatives!

I'm thinking about how this applies to energy justice and energy transition narratives today. The way that the Green New Deal (GND) is framed in the Global North serves as a case and point. It follows the same narratives and structures, promoting the hegemonic view of energy transition that is based on technological substitutions. This presently mythical substitution of so-called renewable infrastructures— that you have accurately labeled as Fossil Fuels + technologies (see Dunlap, 2018a, 2019)—invisibilizes and ignores the mineral extraction, processing and fossil fuels dependence of wind, solar and hydroelectric infrastructures, which has real and serious operational impacts. Policies like the GND usually frame the problem of sustainability, of transition and of justice within their own logical confines. This is why people within the 'walls' figuratively and literally of the US or think of 'fortress Europe' as a rallying cry of the far right (see: TNI, 2021) continues to demand change through their system, and yet, their freedoms, their 'progress', their 'sustainability', their 'transition' is usually done at the cost of other often distant places, peoples and natures. As Grosfoguel (2022) reminds us, when people try to better the situation of those within the walls, they usually leave the walls intact, they don't see them as the problem…

This might go back to the point you were making about decoloniality and decolonial scholarship. I think that we have learned quite a lot from the decolonial perspective. Some might argue that we have known this since Césaire , Fanon and Gonzalez Casanova were writing in the 50's and 60's. What people like Enrique Dussel, Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui and Ramon Grosfoguel have done, is bring these analyses to help understand how capitalism continues to operate today and how capitalism can only be racist. To me these are useful contributions because they show that the multiple fights going on today related to feminism, anti-racism, environmentalism and so on, are bound together in their struggle because they must all necessarily be anti-capitalist, otherwise they risk becoming hand-maidens of capitalism. However, I do agree with you that at times the decolonial scholarship has become captured by the neoliberal academy, the key task would be, at least in my view, to keep our understanding and our thinking coming from specific territories. *Caminando, preguntamos* (as we walk, we ask questions), as the Zapatistas would say. This means that decolonial thinking is much more than a political choice, it is in fact an urgent call

for action that emerges from societies in movements, where most of this knowledge comes from where we can effectively have a dialogue, instead of the imposed monologue of development, that is pluriversal and that offers an alternative to development in-and-of-itself.

Finally, just to clarify and to add to your point. The phrase I borrowed from Maldonado-Torres (2008) is built on the idea that modernity—that is capitalist modernity—is built on a paradigm of war. I'm not trying to say that we should deny that capitalism is war, it is war par-excellence! What I'm trying to say (and grapple with) is, how do we act in the face of this total war? How do we combat and resist the continued advance of capitalism's extractive frontiers and its propagation of false solutions, technologies, discourses and institutions that form an assemblage of exploitation and expropriation of everything? I agree with the statement that politics is the continuation of war by other means, but the problem for me comes when people then try to use the state as an instrument of/for socio-ecological transformation. I know we agree on this: the state cannot lead us towards emancipation or autonomy. Instead if we really want autonomy we should reject the state, because again it is a modern/colonial institution that is now indistinguishable from capitalism.

The phrase by Audre Lorde (2007: 111) I think is used constantly but with little actual reflection to what it means: 'the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house, they may allow us temporarily to beat him at his own game, but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change." The state is part of that tool set, and yet people refuse to see this. The issue is that there seems to be no apparent way to change the system, and hence the best course of action is to continue with 'what is available'—the state. I believe this is never the case in moments that lead to actual and sustained transformations. While this might be a simplified take on 'why' we should live without the state, the 'how' is what interests me. As you are well aware, we cannot get rid of the state immediately, but our politics must be prefigurative, in the sense that we must work, act and think in ways where the state progressively becomes unnecessary. But now I might have gone on for too long, perhaps we can go back to the question about insurrection and the role of energy and energy research. I also alluded to post-development and pluriversal thinking/praxis, and I know you have a lot to say about that. Do you think these are tools that might help us dismantle the master's house? Specifically in terms of energy, what can post-development and pluriversal thinking contribute to our understanding of energy 'justice' and/or the energy transition?

AD: I would like to make some denunciations and clarifications before getting into the questions. First, if this is true, which I remain hesitant to believe, that people really believe that 'there is no alternative,' then this is one of the greatest psychosocial poverties—or thinking of Ivan Illich (1978)—"modernized poverties" I have ever heard. This lie, this stifling of imagination and toxic myth must be digested and composted as soon as possible! What do universities do!? This myth is the result of centuries of military conquest, forced labor, factories discipline, police occupation, mass media, and banal urbanization that organizes life around capital. I guess monocrop design—in all facets of life—are about robbing life, experience and adventure from people.

Second, like using propaganda words to refer to low-carbon infrastructures—for example, "clean," "green," "renewable," among others—we must stop referring to colonialism as something in the past. Yes, there was a colonial era and there has been a reshuffling of power—how it is dispersed and who uses it—there have been new actors and, among those actors, new invasive and convenient technologies along with higher population densities, but the colonial system is still with us—it never left. It only evolved, struggled and mutated. Fredy Perlman's (2010) description

of this evolution from civilization to state formation with artificial worms clashing, mutating and competing with octopuses, turning to beasts and forming Worldeaters remains the best—and most creative—description of the colonial process to my knowledge. And really, the poetic depth emanating from Perlman to describe how people are digested within the entrails of the mechanical worms, with colonial servitude and captivation accumulating into people as masks and armor that binds itself to peoples skin and faces remains the most accurate portrayal of internalizing colonial logics and orders I have ever read. I think Perlman embodies the decolonial tension and writing genre—rejecting academic structure entirely in *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*—better than most I have read in academia. It will not be long before there will be a course on Perlman, but the point is to reject this compartmentalizing of colonialism as a past and recognizing that, like people, colonialism is not static but evolving and mutating. This will help identify a common problem, create greater opportunity to unite various struggles and force people—who are in denial or make exceptions to accommodate their authoritarian or liberal politics—to realize that the state is the colony 2.0 or 10.0. The state is (neo)colonialism in its most advanced technological, economic, bureaucratized, cybernetic, and murderous form (see Dunlap, 2018b, 2021b; Dunlap & Correa-Arce, 2022).

It is true, the state has become more precise, it has moved from a preference for mass killing to "harvesting" and accumulating energy in different ways, while attempting to slowly captivate and extract life from everyone. People have been defeated, increasingly divided and, now, self-identify with a manufactured national culture and political economy to a degree that allows the state and capital—to be cliché about the phrasing—to move into a more strategic and advanced phase of vital extraction. Meanwhile technological enchantment through entertainment and computational devices, convenience in everyday life and forceful capabilities enabled by them serve to consolidate loyalty and (neo)colonial power which is a power currently aiming to colonize and terraform other planets with space exploration and mining. The Theory of the Genocide Machine was raising this issue in 1973 (Davis & Zannis, 1973), which was taken up by Ward Churchill (2001) and other critical genocide scholars (Moses, 2002; Short, 2010). This is why I write (neo)colonialism, with the 'neo' in brackets to nod to technological shifts that reinforce the colonial trajectory and establish continuity the last two centuries if not longer. It is the colonial, or statist, present, with intensified colonial logics, the same military techniques adapted to technological innovation, racist divide and conquer strategies, political economy and modernist infrastructures that are outliving people as well as evolving in more frightening ways. This farming metaphor you mention by Abdenur Prado (2018) is painfully accurate. It reminds me how Majid Rahnema (1997) and Lorenzo Veracini (2014) refer to development and colonialism as a virus and bacteria. This approach resonates deeply with me, and I like how Prado's (2018) approach can allude to the plantation and monocrop that, like bureaucracy, remains the core of the colonial-statist political economy. I wonder if bureaucracy is not the urban equivalent of monocrop design? Parado's take mixes well with eco-anarchist theory that contends that when you unleash violence and coercion on ecosystems and animals, it is just a matter of time before it is done to other humans and violent hierarchies and divisions of labor proliferate.

Yes, I like what you are saying… looking narrowly within your walls, your cell or your block, people forget it comes at the cost of another land, people or neighbor. This is why Eduardo Galeano (1997/1973) message, in so many words, from Latin America looking North should haunt

everyone left, right, north, south and center when he exclaimed: "your wealth is our poverty."[2] This message will endure until struggles aim for total liberation and reject the material and immaterial cells, walls or prison infrastructures that require an exorbitant amount of life to be killed and converted into 'resources' and 'energy'. I greatly appreciate some of the decolonial scholars you mention, I feel some of them rattling the comfort of academia. Aimé Césaire (2001/1955) was a bit more direct than Hannah Arendt (1962/1951) when he called it out: *Colonialism is fascism*, see and feel the monster you have been harboring and exporting overseas for over a century in Europe—and stop it! I feel decolonial scholars are crucially important—especially Cusicanqui, Grosfoguel, Gord Hill, Klee Benally and countless others in struggle— who show that it takes being more than anti-capitalist. Leninist think they are anti-capitalist—ignoring his state capitalism (and 28,000 people Lenin executed between 1917 and 1923 not including the civil war)[3]—and Verso [press] authors are preaching Luxury Communism or attacking degrowth in the name of celebrating socialist accumulation and the Green New Deal—this is madness! Anti-capitalism has become a low-bar, often just refashioning extractivism, modernist infrastructure, factories, and state bureaucracies, meanwhile projecting ontological materialism onto the more-than-human natures to ensure their sacrifice to the altar of modernist progress. So, I agree with you, but I would say we need to set a higher-bar than anti-capitalism and instead aim for total liberation.

And, of course, Maldonado-Torres (2008) identifies the Western paradigm and we do agree that capitalism "is war par-excellence!" And, you ask the question that will haunt us for the rest of our lives: "how do we act in the face of this total war?" The short answer is to tap into our humanity, developing empathy, love, tolerance and committed struggle—all flowery things easier said than done. As this question can quickly become a life or death question *if* you don't have a choice or, voluntarily, take anti-colonial politics seriously—this immediate risks life, death, torture and imprisonment. I believe many in academia—or at least myself—are avoiding the confrontational reality of this question. That is not to say that the university and the life that surrounds it is not a place for struggle—it is! But I believe academics overstate it, tell themselves a story to justify their actions, lie to themselves and students, while slowly devolving into statist liberalism as designed by the present political and infrastructural environments. Again, maybe I am just speaking about myself. But there are many ways to struggle, and there is a need for everyone to breathe without the pressure of suffocating asphalts, addictions, starvation, shit jobs, servitude, hetero-patriarchy and the general exhaustion and intolerance that travels with it. But within this multiplicity—or pluriverse of ways—the state remains a violent technology of pacification—in the widest and not only negative sense of the term—that will enliven coloniality, (in)security and the logic of control. To quote an old anarchist militant, "activists do not change the state; the state changes them." And I have always been of two minds about Audre Lorde's famous quote. I never read the second half of the quote, because you can dismantle the master's house with the master's tools, but Lorde and you are correct—the state is that tool. The state is the colony. Lorde embodied anarchistic sensibilities, and we should never stray too far from separating our means and ends. But this is my concern with many academic decolonial scholars, they act like they will use the state to dismantle the colony—but it is a newer version of the same thing!

[2] The direct quote from Galeano (1997: 2) is "our wealth has always generated our poverty by nourishing the prosperity of others…."

[3] This is a reference to James Ryan (2012: 2) summarizes that Lenin performed "28,000 executions (excluding battlefield deaths) on average per year directly attributed to the Soviet State, a sharp contrast with the approximate total figure of 14,000 executed by the Russian Tsarist regime between 1866 and 1917."

Oh my… I just will not stop talking. Trauma and discord is so productive. The Big 5 Publishers need to thank trauma as their greatest source of profit! I am tempted to say we need to get back to talking about energy justice, but this discussion illuminates the baggage that energy justice tends towards ignoring or only paying superficial lip service. The issue is that energy justice tends towards accommodating a desired assimilation or 'consolation prize' after a legacy of colonial and statist degradation and—more immediately—the domesticating manipulations, abuse and fear that accompanies the encroachment of extractive energy projects. Energy justice, even if people have acquired, and learned, a modernist desire for it, leaves the colonial statist system intact, while better distributing its lifestyle more equitably at the expense of mountains, rivers, trees and those people organized as underclasses and labor for those mines, factories and waste and recycling dumps. So yes, we need an insurrection in energy research and, in academia in general. This entails turning universities into forest gardens, breaking the dominance of the linear lecturing model, curriculums, allowing everyone access to universities and—most of all—stop allowing ourselves and libraries to be plundered by the corporate publishing circuit. This change feels far away, but it is not impossible! I do want to answer your questions, really, but I have taken up so much time and space, so maybe it's time to hear from you and then let's go deeper into post-development and an insurrection in energy research.

CT: Thank you for your answer, I think you made very good points and there is a lot to talk about! You started to answer my last question in the last part of your answer, so in the interest of coming back to that, I will try to briefly respond to some of the points you made and then add a bit to this last part because I feel it's a very important contribution. First, I do think that the idea that 'there is no alternative' has been absorbed in the most perverse way. We reproduce this idea all the time, mostly because it is convenient for some people: We rarely have to get our hands dirty, kill or catch our food, worry about generating energy, etcetera. We can go to the supermarket and get everything; we 'accept' this without looking at what this type of lifestyle entails for other humans and nonhumans—as they are actively produced as non-existent. Universities, hospitals and the food-producing-industrial-complex are part of this same problem. You mentioned Ivan Illich, and I think it's good to go back to some of his writings. Illich (1973) famously said that the choice should not have been between capitalism or socialism, but between convivial societies and the relentless idea of progress and industrialization, including the toll it has on people and nature.[4] Illich saw how 'needs' became a technocratic word that made people distrust their gut and their instincts, relying instead on experts and institutions for basically everything. This is a process that eventually leads towards more social ills than benefits: universities keep producing MBAs and teaching neoclassical economics (see Gills & Morgan, 2021)—The Nobel committee continues to grant prizes to people like William D. Nordhaus—governments continue to build and protect infrastructure in the name of sustainable *development* (like the case of the Maya

[4] The full Illich (1973: 18-19) quote is: "The transition to socialism cannot be effected without an inversion of our present institutions and the substitution of convivial for industrial tools. At the same time, the retooling of society will remain a pious dream unless the ideals of socialist justice prevail. I believe that the present crisis of our major institutions ought to be welcomed as a crisis of revolutionary liberation because our present institutions abridge basic human freedom for the sake of providing people with more institutional outputs. This world-wide crisis of world-wide institutions can lead to a new consciousness about the nature of tools and to majority action for their control. If tools are not controlled politically, they will be managed in a belated technocratic response to disaster. Freedom and dignity will continue to dissolve into an unprecedented enslavement of man to his tools."

Train in Mexico). Medical facilities and drug companies continue to produce more sickness and debt, than cures for diseases and so on….

Perhaps this has begun to change, but overall, this is still very much the way that things are lived and taught. I've been in conferences where educated people continue to push back on simple fact that economic growth has not—and likely cannot—be decoupled from material input and greenhouse gas emissions. The green growth argument focuses on technological efficiency, innovation and 'human ingenuity' as the silver bullet to save capitalism and prevent the intensification of the Necrocene. This is easier to call out as there is a lot of studies and information to do so now (see Hickel and Kallis, 2020; Parrique et al., 2019; Vadén et al., 2020; Tilsted et al., 2021). But the issue with the state is a bit more complex, it is mixed with convoluted histories of Marxism, with dystopian-utopian imaginaries of revolution and socialist accumulation, like you mention, relate to and with our everyday lives where the state appears to be a form of 'common sense'.

This leads me to your point that colonialism is alive and well, with which I completely agree. This is why decolonial scholars reject the term 'post-colonialism' as it gives the impression that we are referring to a time that came 'after' colonialism, something that is very much not the case. These neo-colonial forms that you speak of are worth mentioning, because yes colonialism (or coloniality) evolves, or at least the medium through which it operates. Perhaps, in our time it has been *sustainable development*, with its new incarnation comes with the 'green' or the 'renewable' technologies. As Illich long argued, no technology is without politics, or is neutral. This is why we cannot detach the ideas such as sustainable development or the energy transition from their colonial past.

Then coming back to energy justice, I think you hit the nail on the head when you argue that energy justice becomes the best possible option *within* the existing system. And yes, if people get energy justice, it is 'a consolation prize' that leaves a legacy of colonial and statist degradation intact. Starting with the idea that everything can be distributed, that cultures are commensurable, and that participation, under these conditions, offers a solution, the paradigm of energy justice then tends to reproduce harms rather than offer actual solutions. Energy justice fails to confront the entrenched legacies of colonial oppression and exploitation seriously. So perhaps it is time for us to move away from notions like *justice*? You alluded to this earlier, but going back to your point, this is where I think we can begin to think of energy research through the 'spirit of revolt', that is, think of the way that energy research can actually contribute towards insurrectionary energy transformations.

I do agree with you that even now the term anti-capitalist might not be enough. I've thought a lot about this after your last response. This is why the notion of the pluriverse seems so important and why I think we should also try to articulate energy research with post-development thinking aiming towards total liberation. The work of Gustavo Esteva (2022) remains in my view as one of the most comprehensive explorations of post-development and pluriversal thinking. Esteva reminds us that war is everywhere and hence, struggle is everywhere all the time. This, I think, goes back to my question on "how do we resist?" *or what to do?* Esteva would say that resistance happens in everyday life, when we substitute nouns like education, health and food for 'learning', 'healing', 'caring' or 'eating', we take control over institutions and governments and progressively so that we can toss them to the dustbin of history. I think this approach could then help us articulate the forms of emancipatory, radically autonomous and insurrectionary en-

ergy transformations and research. But again I'm dragging on a bit and I'm curious to hear your thoughts on this…

AD: You are not dragging on! I love this conversation, it is heavy! These are the types of explorations academia should be having, confronting the existential issues and socio-ecological crises of our time! But let's get into these questions and maybe mix it into this conversation. There are three questions from what I can count, and I want to take them seriously. To restate them a bit, as they are scattered throughout this conversation: First, do I think post-development and pluriversal approaches are tools that might help us dismantle the master's house? And related, secondly in terms of energy, what can post-development and pluriversal thinking contribute to our understanding of energy 'justice' and/or the energy transition? Thirdly, is it time for us to move away from notions like justice? Oh man… all good and heavy questions, it's an honor to have someone be curious of my thoughts on this.

I guess there is a certain distinction that matters between academic and non-academic commitment. The job of academia, unfortunately, is to reify and make a 'thing' out of everything; from human activity to struggles—separating people from the world in which they inhabit. We might relate this to linear perspective vision, which has taught us to see the world through a window—observing, drawing and hypothesizing about the world—instead of living it! (see Romanyshyn, 1989). Linear perspective vision is the root of scaled drawings, anatomy and viewing the world as a researcher alienated from our environments—instead of living within them! This is why some Daoists reject reading or maintain a critical awareness of reading as a technology, as it puts us in our heads instead of being immersed in our environments, living and connecting with natures—or at least this is what my dear friend and Kung Fu teacher told me. So post-development and the pluriverse are the best, most open, critical and potentially insurrectionary spaces within the master's house—the university and industrial society. There, unfortunately, is a tendency, once people are in the university, to look with some fear and alienation outside its windows at the trees, animals and unknown people, which extends to many people relating to them only as things to be integrated into the house as wood, food, workers or, worse, servants. And, I guess this is what energy justice seeks to do: Integrate excluded people into colonial development, meanwhile intensifying its spread—more grids, extraction, energy and economic growth. While, of course, preferable to freezing to death or starving, this approach fails to question the roots of modernist development and stifles alternatives to development. So the answer is, yes, these studies have the potential to help, but given the way I have seen post-development merge into the pluriverse, become increasingly abstract with—many jargon worlds and abstract explanations—I feel academia further separates these ideas from the combative struggle that they entail.

I think this relates to the last thing you mentioned. I agree with Esteva, and he knows the reality and hardship and political struggle better than anyone else, yet 'learning', 'healing', 'caring' or 'eating' often implies a fight that is minimized, or ignored, within decolonial and pluriversal rhetoric. There is a tendency to react against the individual within this literature, often reinforcing the false individual-community dichotomy. The byproduct is the reification—or making a thing—of community, which entails ignoring how tyrannical communities infused with religious-based patriarchy can be—and I am thinking of Evangelical Christian and Catholic norms that propagate patriarchy and the life threatening out-migration of rural villages in Central America—that are seriously oppressive, even if they are not all 'bad' or have positive aspects as well. I have witnessed, tasted and been included to some degree in community in many places—as an outsider and/or co-creator—which has a great capacity to make decisions and combat state and

transnational corporate forces. And this relates to my comment in reply to your paper in *Progress in Human Geography*, which acknowledges the violent counterinsurgency repression placed on communities openly resisting and declaring struggles for autonomy, as well as the militancy and hardship endured by autonomous and anarchist fighters—Indigenous and non-indigenous. Pluriversal and decolonial scholars tend to largely ignore this repression and militancy outside historical examples, the Zapatistas, Buen Vivir and Afro-Colombian farmers. I raised this issue, acknowledging eco-anarchist struggle across the world, in the article "I Don't Want Your Progress… It Tries to Kill Me!" (Dunlap, 2022a). This, however, is just a long winded ways to say 'yes:' post-development, pluriversal and decolonial schools are the best within academia, and can open things up wider outside academia, but it seems—maybe wrongly—to become more detached from autonomous and anti-authoritarian struggles. I hope there are new generations of committed researchers that challenge legal codes, engage in "Renegade Research" (Wilson, 2018: 24) and subvert oppressive norms, but this detachment from struggle makes sense when becoming a successful academic is also silently synonymous with becoming or staying middle-class.

Speaking to the second question, I think your article in *Progress of Human Geography* is a good example of what post-development and decolonial thinking can bring to energy studies (Tornel, 2022). It really shows the limitations of energy justice as a policy-centric, pro-state and anthropocentric program that stifles alternatives to development and, as you and now Partridge (2022) have shown me, energy justice deprioritizes movements and extra-legal struggle. I refuse to say "activist." This term encloses, commodifies and labels political activity, meanwhile promoting domesticated, even colonial, forms of organizing related to mainstream social movements. In academia, while the word "activist" can create an identity, it also is used against people as not being 'objective' as if something like this exists within academia. I speak to this briefly in the "Many Directions of Ecological Insurrections" (Dunlap, 2020a), but this was an issue raised eloquently by Andrew X (2009) in 1999 in the pamphlet: "Give Up Activism."

But, yes, as my first question alludes, I think post-development thought—as it relates to anti-authoritarian struggles—deserves a strong revival and can extend to acknowledging committed land struggles in Europe and the Americas much better. This means connecting these struggles; how to employ a diversity of tactics; what tactics and strategies are being used against people and, meanwhile, how *not* to treat these struggles like specimens to dissect within the petri dish of academia. I am not sure just labeling everything environmental justice struggles, imposing a pacifist politics (that is only partial to the story) and mapping them is adequate. While I am an advocate of degrowth literature, I have been rattled by how degrowth curriculum and materials have ignored—in full or in part—the relevance of so many militant land struggles in Europe, not to mention Latin America, Africa and Asia. The Hambach Forest anti-coal mining struggle in Germany, the countless Zone-to-Defend (ZAD) land reclamation sites in France, the No High-Speed Train (NoTAV) fight in Italy and the No high-tension power line (NoMAT) struggle in Catalonia, among so many others, ought to be cases and fights to share, discuss and talk about in the academy (see Dunlap, 2020b). The focus is predominately on community gardens and civil disobedience actions and groups. The response from this criticism was beyond concerning and dissatisfying.

So let us wrap this up on my end. Yes, we need to advance post-development thinking and connect it to the militant struggles on the ground. This connection should at the least acknowledge the depth of these struggles within the academy, and if possible go into greater depth in a respectful way—which might be difficult if people have not been to these places or have worked

with people there or are from these struggles. I would also say, as it stands, there is no energy transition—it is a lie propelling technological fixes already intensifying conflict and ecological degradation, even if accounting ignores it or remains limited in documenting the extent of ecocide (see Dunlap & Marin, 2022). If there is such a thing as real energy transition it will come from the pluriverse and post-development approaches emanating from civil society, autonomous and anarchist initiatives that will crosscut and include many other identity categories and cultures. And, yes, I do not think it is time for us to move away from "justice." For me, I relate this term to colonial courts I have been subjected to, a bullshit statist rhetoric that is synonymous with injustice and oppression and, even in its positive sense, I see it as being transposed onto other people and cultures—even if, yes, everyone wants 'justice'—whatever that means exactly. "Justice" is like the word "violence," it is a moral category that can mean so many things to so many different people. My main issue is that I feel it sucks the air and life from concepts such as autonomy, self-determination and self-governance even if justice can easily be implicated within these terms. I think Foucault's (1980/1971) dialogue with Maoists on the concept of "popular justice" is instructive in this conversation. I have an article coming out about this in *International Development Policy* discussing extractivism debates and environmental justice, but suffice it to say I think we can be more specific or have better phrasing that better supports autonomous struggles and is not imbued with a statist or western-centric trap door.

This means I am an advocate for an insurrection in energy research—to rise above policy-centric, economistic and reductionist research approaches, meanwhile aiming for energy autonomy and degrowth energy ecologies. I have outlined, as mentioned, a call for an insurrection in energy research that challenges (see Dunlap, 2022b), first, how people separate or imagine hydrocarbon systems separate from low-carbon infrastructural systems that ignores supply-webs and succumbs to popular advertising. Secondly, to challenge quantitative epistemology and ontology that produces highly surreptitious and manipulative models based on abstract data to more-or-less affirm the trajectory of public policy and capitalist enterprise: green capitalism is viable and decarbonizing extractive industries can continue the existing! [sarcasm dripping] It might continue, but it is coming at an enormous and, possibly irreversible socio-ecological cost—a priceless cost that cannot be calculated. This insurrection in energy research, then, rejects manipulative labels, or Orwellian Newspeak, such as "clean," "green," "farm," "park," "renewable" and so on. Because it is a lie! At best, it is less destructive, but this still does not account for supply-webs, the proliferation of data centers and so-called 'smart' technologies or even the ambition to propagate 'less-bad' technologies with the spread of wind and solar infrastructures.

Let's call it what it is: A factory, energy extraction, fossil fuel+ technologies and low-carbon technologies—even if the latter is questionable. This insurrection in energy research includes pushing towards creating systems that are actually socio-ecologically renewable and are aiming to degrow material production and energy consumption. Degrowth, and developing degrowth energy ecologies, will be crucial in fermenting a needed insurrection in energy research. Finally, I advocate experimenting with novel modes of organization—challenging traditional organizational models and aiming for less energy and time intensive ways of producing energy and organizing ourselves. This means moving beyond dictatorship and democracy to create more liberating modes of energy management and social organization. All of this is a call to develop and to further tamper with existing energy research. The idea is to promote post-developmental and pluriversal creativity that actually seeks to redress socio-ecological catastrophe, real socio-ecological renewability and all that might encompass.

Energy autonomy, literally and metaphorically is about taking back one's' power. This means organizing micro-or-community-scale urban or rural energy systems so people gain greater knowledge and control of the production and consumption of energy systems. I can go on at greater length in all of these, but I worry I am seriously dragging this on. The last thing I will say, is the weak point of energy autonomy is that it does not address the histories of extractivism and profiteering related to states, companies and elite groups. Energy autonomy does not attend to expropriation, uprising or necessary 'justice' that will be enacted, but I believe—at this moment—people need to learn to manage their own power and electricity before devising strategies of expropriation and popular justice for crimes against the pluriverse. Because real energy justice—if such a thing exists—will not be wedded to the legacy and injustice perpetrated by the state. But how to survive and confront this existing reality—if not war—remains to be seen and this means engaging the state but this does not mean ignoring energy autonomy and hesitating to begin a process of composting the existing colonial and capitalist relationships and infrastructures that presently dominate.

CT: Thanks for that detailed answer! I have found this dialogue with you quite revealing. In the interest of space, I would just like to offer my own conclusions, starting by saying that I agree with you: Not only is the energy transition not actually happening, but this is as good a time as any to move away from the notion of justice in favor of other framings. I also see that the pluriverse and post-development can offer a way forward to what you (and now I) are calling an insurrection in energy research, as insignificant as that might be. Yet, until now the dialogue between energy studies and pluriversal thought remains relatively unexplored. While the decolonial critique is useful in showing how conceptualization of justice from the West or in the North can reproduce other forms of colonial oppressions, I believe that the pluriversal and post-development approach could lead towards not only a critique of the dominant energy system but can help articulate the multiple ways in which people can "take back their power" both materially and politically, as you mention.

This, more than anything, entails a decolonization of the imaginaries of what is possible, but it also implies a reforestation of the imagination: that is, multiple ways of transforming power politically and energetically into collective, emancipatory, radically democratic, autonomous and historicized practices. These five points that you put forward for creating an insurrection in energy research, I think, are already advancing us towards that direction. Perhaps our task as researchers is then to continue to denounce these false solutions and their multiple incarnations—like the example you use with 'smart technologies'—while at the same time bringing to light, supporting and creating the possibilities for different energy autonomies in a context of material degrowth and a pluriversal definitions of well-being. The notion that we can and should recover a sense of *intimacy* with energy (see Cariou, 2017) is perhaps a fitting first step: as long as energy remains abstracted, alienated and fetishized as a commodity it will be impossible to enroll it as a tool for conviviality. The task would be to decommodify, defetishize in order to bring energy back to the socioecological context in which it exists. This is perhaps a good way to see energy as a socio-ecological relation, one that is set within the limits of what is collectively and locally possible.

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