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**Book Review: *Becoming Indigenous - Governing imaginaries in the Anthropocene* (2019)
By David Chandler and Julian Reid. London and New York: Rowman and Littlefield.**

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Management is increasingly devoted to the term ‘crisis’; climatic, ecological, pandemic, economic; all requiring strategies to adapt and cope, *alas* - become resilient (van der Vegt et al. 2015, Linnenluecke 2017; Conz & Magnani, 2020). Being touted by many as a panacea, the United Nations High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (2018:2) explains in a report branded “Together 2030”, using the slogan “From policy to action”, that “[a] broader concept of systemic resilience must be developed that recognizes the interconnectedness, volatility, uncertainty and complexity of challenges’. The management literature, however, is being slow to respond. A slowness that may result from ‘management’ seen as a practice *done to* ‘networked ecosystems, cities, organisations and institutions’ (Boyd and Folke 2012:preface). With a manager criticized by resilience proponents for being unrealistically and simplistically detached from ecological systems: a hubristic figure whose actions ‘intervene in ecosystem resilience’ from the outside and therefore causes irreparable effects (Folke et al. 2010:unpaginated). Alternatively, rational managers and instrumental management should be understood as inextricably linked to the complexity of ecosystems (Ibid).

The resilience agenda thereby paves the way for a manager learning to internalize crises by affirming their own responsibility and vulnerability thereto. A position equally popular in managerial self-help literature to ‘cope with daily life’ and not just with crises (McEwen 2011), whereby the manager still ends up as a commander in control, meeting crises with both agility and discipline (Harrald 2006), committed to deepening this balanced mental state in other souls. If employees in the early 21st century were obliged to learn about sustainability (Haugh and Talwar 2010), managers are now educated to stretch this sustainability agenda to a bottom-up organisational embodiment of resilience, to rebound and recover (Van Der Vegt et al. 2015). In effect adapt, transform and continue to develop as socio-ecological systems (Folke et al. 2010).

Though, with criticism of human superiority related to the Anthropocene, resilience is no longer recognized as enough. The human should be made more openly aware of its ecologically interconnected and dethroned state to give up on its last sense of ‘human’ autonomy, as critically exposed in the political science book under review: *Becoming Indigenous, Governing Imaginaries in the Anthropocene* (Chandler and Reid 2019). Following the political umbrage generated by calls for resilience (Evans and Reid 2014), Chandler and Reid show how the human still is configured to cope with complexity, but eerily capacitated with ‘indigeneity’ through the Anthropocene worldview. After resilience proponents erased beliefs in human capacities to secure itself and endorsed ‘an understanding of life as a permanent process of continual adaptation to threats and dangers’ (Chandler and Reid 2016: 53), this affirmation of vulnerability has been deepened by a revised sociability and ecological sensitivity based on the realization ‘that we are no longer separate, no longer in control, no longer not interested in other actors and agencies with which we cohabit’ (Chandler and Reid 2019:13).

A practical example of this is the promotion of indigenous perseverance, a coping mechanism identified and elevated in all sorts of subjects and too conveniently brought up as a necessary response to the future catastrophes of the Anthropocene. From the ‘grit’ of successful corporate leaders to leftists in the Occupy movement, to plants, by philosophy equipped to be undeviating ‘beings’ that, unlike most (mediocre) humans, continue to ‘grow stronger from setbacks’ (Chandler and Reid 2019:65). Hence, affirming indigenous perseverance would not only dethrone the human and make us all equals in the socio-ecological dominion, it would also create the sought-after

interconnection with nature on the level of a shared quality, and heal the nature/culture divide at the heart of its origin. Expanding on how 'resilience' first made the human ecologically interconnected, the book stepwise derives how indigenous knowledge has been attuned to accomplish such an enmeshed way of being. This is management through 'ontopolitics' – the politics of being – that the authors devoted to humanity raise arguments against (e.g. see page 71).

Mobilized by debates about the Anthropocene, ontopolitics is rooted in ontological assumptions that 'necessitate new ways of being and news modes of knowledge', where the human as a 'no-longer-modern being' is determined by nature, bereft of any possibility of transcending their state as a natural being (Chandler and Reid 2019:14). If the modern episteme conceived the human to be a political animal, with an explicitly human capability to move outside of nature, this is now over, the authors warn. In the wake of a human deprived of its political subjectivity, the book reveals how we are being even further disarmed, ontopolitically. Instead of speaking about a postpolitical condition, the concept of ontopolitics pinpoints how we are encouraged to learn from non-modern approaches to knowledge to become indigenous, to live more fully and rightly 'dispossessed'. The learning between the former colonial possessor and the indigenous - the 'civilized' and the 'uncivilized' - is thus inverted on the surface. Each chapter details this apologetic design of belated negative reciprocity and raise several questions about why the particularities of the indigenous have been left aside. Keeping to 'indigeneity', without details of indigenous ways of life, obviously plays in the hands of a general dethroning of 'the Human', needed as a universal less doom-laden solution to the Anthropocene taken to its next phase: a speculative exploration of other ways of being and knowing.

If most readers may recognize this UN sanctioned shift to non-modern forms of knowledge co-production (Banerjee, 2011), one that is being legitimated by theories ranging from posthumanism to object-oriented ontologies, all of which question the nature/culture divide, and which are folded into constructions of the Anthropocene, Chandler and Reid genealogically locate this shift to the field of anthropology. Modernity, they suggest, 'was not killed off by critical theorists or political struggle, nor by the Anthropocene and global warming, but by the discovery of 'indigenous knowledge' as the futural alternative to the modernist episteme' (Chandler and Reid 2019:47). In comparison to the outdated teaching of 'cultural' specificities about the indigenous *per se*, indigeneity consequently invites to a novel analytical position:

Thus, indigenous knowledge as analytics does not make practices or things more 'exotic' but rather 'objectifies' the world to being merely a set of transmutable effects available for the speculative anthropological imagination. In effect, indigenous analytics empties the world of things of all meaningful content, reducing the world to a mere foil for speculative thought. (Chandler and Reid 2019: 60)

A flat criticism of the re-colonization of indigeneity is consequently not their main focus, even if the authors are openly suspicious of the uncontested soothing way in which many scholars re-evaluate indigenous knowledge in support of their own critical projects against 'progression' in obvious tension with a privileged gaze. From Donna Haraway, Bruno Latour, Anna Tsing, Timothy Morton, Judith Butler to indigenous peoples themselves and their alleged allies, the book details influential debates and arguments, as well as differences in perspective on how to advance indigenous knowledge, on which the intellectual projection of a *certain* image of indigeneity has thrived.

The word *certain* is here fundamental for understanding how the authors' critique is being persistently pursued. The chapters are not only rich on examples of how the privileged thinker has excluded distinctiveness among the indigenous, closing off what alternatively could have been there

to learn. The authors also trace how this *certain* image is based in a pluriversal politics, one that sees indigenous knowledge as constitutive of a pluriverse (many worlds). After ontologising indigeneity, and infusing the will to learn a certain way of being and thinking ethically and critically, this reduction of ways of being are thus still positioned as an amenable counter to modern assumptions of life lived in one common objectifiable world. As these assumptions are shredded and the world is enriched with a pluriversal politics that enlivens differentiation, the human is increasingly interlocked in a world in its processual becoming. So once it was permitted by anthropology, the authors argue the proposition to become indigenous now involves an intellectual construction of a universal subject for human 'becoming', one that counters the modernist conceptualisation of a universal, objectifiable world. Just as the figure of the manager was interpellated by resilience, so has a universal subject been asked to move ahead by reaching beyond linear temporality and cause-effect rationality, in effect to realize that it 'can no longer act upon the world but only speculatively adapt *within* it, suborned to processes beyond its control', (Chandler and Reid 2019:82 my emphasis). Consequently, this universal subject even encompasses those who already identify as indigenous, but differently so.

The dethroned embodied and relational 'indigenous' knowledge position is thereby showed to have an effect on the access to, and understanding of, knowledge itself. Knowledge is no longer possible to conceive as a product of various perspectives applied to the same world, of use to escape the self-management its production also is known to be dependent on. Knowledge has on the contrary in itself been de-politicized, now inaccessible to mobilize in efforts to transform or liberate. That is, if we are to seek 'other' ways of knowing, un-learn the outcomes of various perspectives and methods, and erase the intellectual flexibility to experimentally play around and use these very human tools, in favour of a specific way to produce knowledge 'speculatively', then knowledge production itself becomes a problematic redundant activity – a necessity that 'dissolves the subject into its context' (Chandler and Reid 2019:83-86). The academic responsibility for the ongoing re-colonization of indigeneity by the making of it into a universal alluring process of posthuman becoming thus widens page by page, and it is not mainly due to the scholarly invention of the Anthropocene epoch. The circle is thus closed and the reader is swiftly taken back to where it all began, in the first critique of the neoliberal subject who revels in resilience, uncertainty and vulnerability (Evans and Reid 2014).

To disturb this assurance of becoming indigenous, the authors bring neglected aspects of indigenous imagination to life, and position these against the most influential intellectual debates. It is a rhetoric that envisions beyond the critique of recurring, clichéd images of indigenous people and knowledge, for example the elevation of their connectedness to nature, non-instrumentality and perseverance. With the same rhetoric the book also professes indigenous alternatives to the uniform, analytic position of speculation. From chapter 2, which highlights the anthropological conundrum surrounding Don Juan's impressive possessive register and self-mastery; to chapter 7, which engages with Sámi poetry as a tactic to ensnare language via imagination, the book should perhaps be understood to have a more positive future in sight for the human. Despite re-colonizing tendencies, the authors' message seems to be that the indigenous is where to our imagination can be let to wander freely, if we find little respite in other sources, but need to infuse our capacity to possess our selves. The indigenous are, after all, good at defending their autonomy 'to the death', and at resisting language traps created by knowledge producers and policy institutions (Chandler and Reid 2019:153). According to empirical evidence, the human is thus not universally prepared to adapt, cope and persevere to continue on a life in perpetual struggle with crises and complexity, but on the contrary, prepared to die as a consequence of its imaginations of what it is to be.

A bridging between political science and management can obviously create unknown outcomes. If the intellectual appeal to become indigenous is as strong as demonstrated, then the modern rational

manager and its organisational hosts, with clear reliance on cause and effect mechanisms, would soon be extinct. Logically extended from the argument in the book - killed by anthropology supported by the Anthropocene. Both the manager and the organisation would then be revived in a more resilient form, vulnerable yet persevering: in effect what is already being practically promoted in the management of 'crises' (Van Der Vegt et al. 2015, Linnenluecke and Griffiths 2010). After learning about the irreparable effects on the Earth that 'management' is held responsible for, the manager may indeed take posthumanism seriously and be smitten by invitations to become indigenous. Nevertheless, the managerial subject would in the field of management probably be considered the last human apt to dethrone, after all others have been efficiently empowered thereto. So even if calls for a universal indigenous subject exist in management and organisation studies as well, and is requested by environmental and anti-capitalist activists alike, 'management' is in practice far from letting go of its exceptional capacity to align the most contradictory ontological assumptions and imaginations, within one and the same figure - the manager. There may be as much for others to bring out from management knowledge, in its persevere display of instrumental utilisation and committed decision-making, as there is to learn from neglected indigenous practices of possession and hunt for power - if convinced by how the book refuses our ontopolitical present.

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