## Cont - Settler Colonialism

### 1

#### Development of AI relies on resource extraction, especially from the Global South – that causes hazardous living conditions and environmental unsustainability

**Regilme 24** Regilme, Salvador Santino F (Dr. Salvador Santino F. Regilme is an Associate Professor of International Relations at the Institute for History at Leiden University.), Fall-Winter 2024, "Artificial Intelligence Colonialism: Environmental Damage, Labor Exploitation, and Human Rights Crises in the Global South." SAIS Review of International Affairs, vol. 44 no. 2, Fall-Winter 2024, p. 75-92. Project MUSE, <https://dx.doi.org/10.1353/sais.2024.a950958>, accessed 3/6/25, GGM - CW recut

In addition to the energy costs associated with AI, the development of AI hardware also relies on the extraction of rare minerals, a practice that has devastating environmental and social consequences. The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), for example, is the source of more than 70% of the world's cobalt, a mineral essential for the batteries that power AI technologies.[95](https://muse.jhu.edu/article/950958#f95) Artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) for critical minerals often causes environmental damage such as deforestation, soil erosion, and water contamination from toxic chemicals. **Human rights abuses are common, with workers facing unsafe conditions, lack of protective gear, and exploitation, including child labor.** Large-scale operators typically avoid ASM to evade these risks and costs, leaving problems unresolved. In the DRC, **cobalt mining has resulted in widespread deforestation, soil degradation, and water contamination, with toxic chemicals polluting local water supplies, harming human health and biodiversity**. **At least 25,000 children in Congo are among the artisanal mine**rs **working in hazardous conditions with minimal protective equipment**.[96](https://muse.jhu.edu/article/950958#f96) **This endangers lives and devastates the environment**. Cobalt extraction's ecological footprint is significant, as the forests destroyed during the process are vital for regulating the global climate by absorbing carbon dioxide.[97](https://muse.jhu.edu/article/950958#f97) Increasing demand for AI hardware will exacerbate environmental damage from cobalt mining, with severe consequences for local ecosystems and the global environment. Cobalt and nickel mining for AI hardware comes with severe environmental costs, including deforestation, toxic air pollution, and water contamination.[98](https://muse.jhu.edu/article/950958#f98) In the Philippines, seventeen nickel mines were shut down due to environmental issues, while in Norilsk, Russia, a nickel factory released 350,000 tons of sulfur dioxide yearly, heavily polluting the city.[99](https://muse.jhu.edu/article/950958#f99) Furthermore, communities near mining sites like Cerro Matoso in Colombia experience increased deformities and respiratory illnesses due to toxic exposure from mining and smelting. These effects underscore the urgent need for sustainable methods in sourcing critical materials for AI technologies.

The environmental degradation caused by AI development is not limited to the destruction of ecosystems or the depletion of natural resources; it also contributes directly to the global climate crisis.[100](https://muse.jhu.edu/article/950958#f100),[101](https://muse.jhu.edu/article/950958#f101) Data centers and the mining of rare minerals both generate substantial greenhouse gas emissions, accelerating the pace of climate change. This is particularly concerning for the Global South, where the impacts of climate change are already being felt with increasing severity. Countries in sub-Saharan Africa, Southeast Asia, and Latin America are experiencing rising sea levels, prolonged droughts, and extreme weather events that threaten food security, displace populations, and exacerbate existing inequalities. For example, in East Africa, where food insecurity is a growing concern, climate change has led to increasingly unpredictable rainfall patterns, worsening agricultural productivity.[102](https://muse.jhu.edu/article/950958#f102) **The expansion of data centers in this region only adds to the environmental burden, as they consume large amounts of electricity and water, further straining local resources and contributing to ecological collapse.**

**AI development causes extensive and inequitable environmental degradation. Through necroexportation, the Global North, which reaps the benefits of AI, transfers the environmental costs to the Global South, leading to ecosystem and community damage through resource extraction and energy consumption. This mirrors historical colonialism: the Global South provides labor and resources for the Global North's advancement while bearing the massive environmental and social consequences.**

### 2

#### Use of GenAI in education also enacts violence against indigenous peoples– it excludes non-Western thought, language, and culture while intensifying inequality and exploitation.

**Nyaaba et al. 24** Nyaaba, Matthew, Wright, Alison, and Choi, Gyu Lim (no in-text author quals,) 06-07-2024, "Generative AI and Digital Neocolonialism in Global Education: Towards an Equitable Framework" AI4STEM Education Center & Department of Educational Theory and Practice, University of Georgia, <https://arxiv.org/abs/2406.02966>, accessed 3/27/25, CW

This paper critically discusses how generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) might impose Western ideologies on non-Western societies, perpetuating digital neocolonialism in education through its inherent biases. It further suggests strategies for local and global stakeholders to mitigate these effects. Our discussions demonstrated that GenAI can foster cultural imperialism by generating content that primarily incorporates cultural references and examples relevant to Western students, thereby alienating students from non-Western backgrounds. Also, the predominant use of Western languages by GenAI can marginalize non-dominant languages, making educational content less accessible to speakers of indigenous languages and potentially impacting their ability to learn in their first language. Additionally, **GenAI often generates content and curricula that reflect the perspectives of technologically dominant countries, overshadowing marginalized indigenous knowledge and practices.** Moreover, the **cost of access to GenAI intensifies educational inequality and the control of GenAI data could lead to commercial exploitation** without benefiting local students and their communities. We propose human-centric reforms to prioritize cultural diversity and equity in GenAI development; a liberatory design to empower educators and students to identify and dismantle the oppressive structures within GenAI applications; foresight by design to create an adjustable GenAI system to meet future educational needs; and finally, effective prompting skills to reduce the retrieval of neocolonial outputs.

### 3

#### Colonialism is founded on dialectical violence for the purpose of self-assertion—this hierarchy is sustained through genocidal erasure that settlers force onto Indigeneity to maintain their structural dominance.

**Monk 13** — [Monk, Lindsay, MA. “Decolonizing Home: A re-conceptualization of First Nations' housing in Canada.” Queen’s University, (2013).] \* “//” = Paragraph Break // vedh - CW recut

In fact, as Glen Coulthard points out in “Subjects of Empire: Indigenous people and the ‘Politics of Recognition’ in Canada,” Fanon anticipated this struggle when writing of decolonization in 1950s Algeria. As we saw in Chapter 2, Fanon argued that **colonialism maintains its hegemony** by acting on both economic and subjective fronts – **dispossessing** the colonized of **land and resources** and simultaneously creating a discourse that labels them as deserving of this treatment – and thus has to be attacked on both fronts in order to achieve decolonization. As such, Fanon argued against looking to the state for recognition (for example, of Aboriginal rights or an inherent right to self-government), as this merely bestows recognition upon the colonized and does not significantly modify the relationship between the two groups. Similarly, looking for economic redistribution from the colonial power does not account for the subjective trauma inflicted on the colonized. Fanon argues that it is only through struggle that the colonized can undergo fundamental self-transformation and achieve authentic freedom from the colonial relationship.254 Fanon’s, and later Coulthard’s, analysis utilizes Hegel’s **master/slave dialectic** to understand the relationship between colonizer and colonized. In Hegelian terms, the master/slave narrative is one wherein each requires for the realization of oneself as a **self-determining agent** that one is not only recognized as self-determining but that also that one be recognized by another **self-consciousness** that is also recognized as self- determining, as “It is through these reciprocal processes and exchanges of recognition that the condition of possibility for freedom emerges. Hence, Hegel’s repeated insistence that relations of **recognition be mutual**.”255 Yet the **master** can only be **recognized by the slave**; this hardly **constitutes recognition** at all. Thus while the master continues to “wallow in a lethargic state of increased dependency,”256 the slave through his/her transformative labour is able to realize his/her independent consciousness. The slaves, having come to consciousness through transformative labour, do not reinscribe past injustice by becoming masters themselves, as this would merely recreate the situation and leave them the same fate as the former masters, but rather are the means of saving the master. This is echoed in Paulo Freire’s Pedagogy of the Oppressed, where he argues “As the oppressed, fighting to be human, take away the oppressors’ power to dominate and suppress, they restore to the oppressors the humanity they had lost in the exercise of oppression. It is only the oppressed who, by freeing themselves, can free the oppressors.”257 Thus, oppressors “concede the right to survival of the oppressed only because the existence of the oppressed is necessary to their own existence,”258 hence the dialectical relationship described by Hegel that he believed provided the conditions of possibility for mutual freedom. // Fanon’s crucial insight is that it is **not recognition** that the master wants from the slave in the colonial context, but rather **land, labour, and resources**. As such, “**colonial powers** will only recognize the collective rights and identifies of Indigenous peoples insofar as this **recognition does not** throw into question the background legal, political, and economic framework of the **colonial relationship itself**.”259 This mirrors the argument pursued in Chapter 3 of this thesis, where the federal government allows, and indeed encourages, Indigenous people to take control of their housing but without throwing into question the colonial relationship. The danger here is that attempts to pursue decolonization through the state or through state-sanctioned processes run the risk of subtly shaping the worldview of Indigenous people through this interaction. As I described in Chapter 4, this is the concern in relation to property rights. We risk changing Indigenous reality by choosing to understand Indigenous property rights as such – to name Indigenous practices or customs in a way not previously done re-describes those practices or customs. Re-describing Indigenous practices or customs in a way that resonates with settler culture risks subtly changing those practices or customs and, as such, colonizes by “creating a picture of society and reality that is not there.”260 Paul Nadasdy makes a similar argument with respect to the land claims processes in the Yukon, noting that Indigenous people were invited to come to the negotiating table and re-describe their traditional hunting culture in ways that could be translated into wildlife management frameworks. These frameworks originated in an entirely different culture, that of the titular bureaucrats, and thus Indigenous people in the Yukon risk losing their distinct way of viewing the world by participating in processes that alter their practices into a reality that is not there. They also have to forego actually practicing their culture in order to be present at the negotiating tables.261 The assimilative danger is thus very present in state-sanctioned decolonization processes.

### !—Genocide

#### Coloniality naturalizes a non-ethics of death and generalizes the condition of damnation – ongoing genocide, enslavement, ecological destruction and unending war is produced by and reproduces colonial epistemologies.

**Maldonado-Torres 8** [Nelson, (no in-text author quals), “Against War : Views from the Underside of Modernity”¶ Durham, NC, USA: Duke University Press, 2008. p 215-217¶ <http://site.ebrary.com/lib/utexas/Doc?id=10217191&ppg=52>] - cole recut

Dussel, Quijano, and Wynter lead us to the understanding that what happened in the Americas was a transformation and naturalization of the non-ethics of war— which represented a sort of exception to the ethics that regulate normal conduct in Christian countries— into a more stable and long-standing reality of damnation, and that this epistemic and material shift occurred in the colony. Damnation, life in hell, is colonialism: a reality characterized by the naturalization of war by means of the naturalization of slavery, now justified in relation to the very constitution of people and no longer solely or principally to their faith or belief. That human beings become slaves when they are vanquished in a war translates in the Americas into the suspicion that the conquered people, and then non-European peoples in general, are constitutively inferior and that therefore they should assume a position of slavery and serfdom. Later on, this idea would be solidified with respect to the slavery of African peoples, achieving stability up to the present with the tragic reality of different forms of racism. Through this process, what looked like a “state of exception” in the colonies became the rule in the modern world. However, deviating from Giorgio Agamben’s diagnosis, one must say that the colony— long before the concentration camp and the Nazi politics of extermination— served as the testing ground for the limits and possibilities of modernity, thereby revealing its darkest secrets.61 It is race, the coloniality of power, and its concomitant Eurocentrism (and¶ not only national socialisms or expressed forms of fascism) that allow the “state of exception” to continue to define ordinary relations in this, our so-called postmodern world. Race emerges within a permanent state of exception where forms of behavior that are legitimate in war become a natural part of the ordinary way of life. In that world, an otherwise extraordinary affair becomes the norm and living in it requires extraordinary effort.62 In the racial/ colonial world, the “hell” of war becomes a condition that defines the reality of racialized selves, which Fanon referred to as the damnés de la terre (condemned of the earth). The damné (condemned) is a subject who exists in a permanent “hell,” and as such, this figure serves as the main referent or liminal other that guarantees the continued affirmation of modernity as a paradigm of war. The hell of the condemned is not defined by the alienation of colonized productive forces, but rather signals the dispensability of racialized subjects, that is, the idea that the world would be fundamentally better without them. The racialized subject is ultimately a dispensable source of value, and exploitation is conceived in this context as due torture, and not solely as the extraction of surplus value. Moreover, it is this very same conception that gives rise to the particular erotic dynamics that characterize the relation between the master and its slaves or racialized workers. The condemned, in short, inhabit a context in which the confrontation with death and murder is ordinary. Their “hell” is not simply “other people,” as Sartre would have put it— at least at one point— but rather racist perceptions that are responsible for the suspension of ethical behavior toward peoples at the bottom of the color line. Through racial conceptions that became central to the modern self, modernity and coloniality produced a permanent state of war that racialized and colonized subjects cannot evade or escape. The modern function of race and the coloniality of power, I am suggesting here, can be understood as a radicalization and naturalization of the non-ethics of war in colonialism.63 This non-ethics included the practices of eliminating and enslaving certain subjects— for example, indigenous and black— as part of the enterprise of colonization. From here one could as well refer to them as the death ethics of war. War, however, is not only about killing or enslaving; it also includes a particular treatment of sexuality and femininity: rape. Coloniality is an order of things that places people of color within the murderous and rapist view of a vigilant ego, and the primary targets of this rape are women. But men of color are also seen through these lenses and feminized, to become fundamentally penetrable subjects for the ego conquiro. Racialization functions through gender and sex, and the ego conquiro is thereby constitutively a phallic ego as well.64 Dussel, who presents this thesis of the phallic character of the ego cogito, also makes links, albeit indirectly, with the reality of war. And thus, in the beginning of modernity, before Descartes discovered . . . a terrifying anthropological dualism in Europe, the Spanish conquistadors arrived in America. The phallic conception of the European-medieval world is now added to the forms of submission of the vanquished Indians. “Males,” Bartolomé de las Casas writes, are reduced through “the hardest, most horrible, and harshest serfdom”; but this only occurs with those who have remained alive, because many of them have died; however, “in war typically they only leave alive young men (mozos) and women.”65 The indigenous people who survive the massacre or are left alive have to contend with a world that considers them to be dispensable. And since their bodies have been conceived of as inherently inferior or violent, they must be constantly subdued or civilized, which requires renewed acts of conquest and colonization. The survivors continue to live in a world defined by war, and this situation is peculiar in the case of women. As T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting and Renée T. White put it in the preface to their anthology Spoils of War: Women of Color, Cultures, and Revolutions: A sexist and/or racist patriarchal culture and order posts and attempts to maintain, through violent acts of force if necessary, the subjugation and inferiority of women of color. As Joy James notes, “its explicit, general premise constructs a conceptual framework of male [and/or white] as normative in order to enforce a political [racial, economic, cultural, sexual] and intellectual mandate of male [and/or white] as superior.” The warfront has always been a “feminized” and “colored” space for women of color. Their experiences and perceptions of war, conflict, resistance, and struggle emerge from their specific racial-ethnic and gendered locations. “Inter arma silent leges: in time of war the law is silent,” Walzer notes. Thus, this volume operates from the premise that war has been and is presently in our midst.66 The links between war, conquest, and the exploitation of women’s bodies are hardly accidental. In his study of war and gender, Joshua Goldstein argues that conquest usually proceeds through an extension of the rape and exploitation of women in wartime.67 He argues that to understand conquest, one needs to examine: 1) male sexuality as a cause of aggression; 2) the feminization of enemies as symbolic domination; and 3) dependence on the exploitation of women’s labor— including reproduction.68 My argument is, first, that these three elements came together in a powerful way in the idea of race that began to emerge in the conquest and colonization of the Americas. My second point is that through the idea of race, these elements exceed the activity of conquest and come to define what from that point on passes as the idea of a “normal” world. As a result, the phenomenology of a racial context resembles, if it is not fundamentally identical to, the phenomenology of war and conquest. Racism posits its targets as racialized and sexualized subjects that, once vanquished, are said to be inherently servile and whose bodies come to form part of an economy of sexual abuse, exploitation, and control. The coloniality of power cannot be fully understood without reference to the transformation and naturalization of war and conquest in modern times. Hellish existence in the colonial world carries with it both the racial and the gendered aspects of the naturalization of the non-ethics of war. “Killability” and “rapeability” are inscribed into the images of colonial bodies and deeply mark their ordinary existence. Lacking real authority, colonized men are permanently feminized and simultaneously represent a constant threat for whom any amount of authority, any visible trace of the phallus is multiplied in a symbolic hysteria that knows no limits.69 Mythical depiction of the black man’s penis is a case in point: the black man is depicted as an aggressive sexual beast who desires to rape women, particularly white women. The black woman, in turn, is seen as always already sexually available to the rapist gaze of the white, and as fundamentally promiscuous. In short, the black woman is seen as a highly erotic being whose primary function is fulfilling sexual desire and reproduction. To be sure, any amount of “penis” in either one represents a threat, but in his most familiar and typical forms the black man represents the act of rape—“raping”—while the black woman is seen as the most legitimate victim of rape—“being raped.” In an antiblack world black women appear as subjects who deserve to be raped and to suffer the consequences— in terms of a lack of protection from the legal system, sexual abuse, and lack of financial assistance to sustain themselves and their families— just as black men deserve to be penalized for raping, even without having committed the act. Both “raping” and “being raped” are attached to blackness as if they form part of the essence of black folk, who are seen as a dispensable population. Black bodies are seen as excessively violent and erotic, as well as being the legitimate recipients of excessive violence, erotic and otherwise.70 “Killability” and “~~rapeability~~” are part of their essence, understood in a phenomenological way. The “essence” of blackness in a colonial anti-black world is part of a larger context of meaning in which the death ethics of war gradually becomes a constitutive part of an allegedly normal world. In its modern racial and colonial connotations and uses, blackness is the invention and the projection of a social body oriented by the death ethics of war.71 This murderous and raping social body projects the features that define it onto sub-Others in order to be able to legitimate the same behavior that is allegedly descriptive of them. The same ideas that inspire perverted acts in war— particularly slavery, murder, and rape— are legitimized in modernity through the idea of race and gradually come to be seen as more or less normal thanks to the alleged obviousness and non-problematic character of black slavery and anti-black racism. To be sure, those who suffer the consequences of such a system are primarily blacks and indigenous peoples, but it also deeply affects all of those who appear as colored or close to darkness. In short, this system of symbolic representations, the material conditions that in part produce and continue to legitimate it, and the existential dynamics that occur therein (which are also at the same time derivative and constitutive of such a context) are part of a process that naturalizes the non-ethics or death ethics of war. Sub-ontological difference is the result of such naturalization and is legitimized through the idea of race. In such a world, ontology collapses into a Manicheanism, as Fanon suggested.72

## Framing

### 1

#### Prioritize settler colonial violence.

#### Error replication - prioritizing legal debate and sticking to Western ethical frameworks prevents academics from questioning the foundation of power structures; solvency is a temporary illusion that fails to address indigenous communities as people

### 2

#### Appeals to procedural fairness only uphold the settler state, assimilating indigenous peoples into settler norms to maintain “civility”

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Despite the importance of acknowledging Indigenous genocide within the U.S., acknowledgment is insufficient to challenge settler colonialism. Settler colonial ideology is internalized and naturalized among non-Native and Indigenous communities through internal modes of colonialism. Settler colonialism moves beyond a re-telling of history to establish policies and procedures that uphold the settler state and ensure settler futurity. Due to the pervasiveness of settler colonialism, settlers do not have a framework for “another” way within the U.S. Settler colonial ideals and values including, private property, individualism, Christianity, patriarchal systems, lineage, and governance, medicalized healing, and capitalism are embedded within U.S. policies, structures, families, schools, churches, and every space within the settler state.Further, the pervasiveness of settler colonial ideology is most clearly demonstrated by the presence of these ideals within Indigenous communities. Within Indigenous tribal nations, settler colonial ideals have infiltrated traditions and have become naturalized as the “way it’s always been.” For instance, heteropatriarchal ideals have supplanted Indigenous traditions of gender and sexuality diversity within many Indigenous communities. The same-sex marriage bans within the Cherokee and Navajo Nations demonstrates the pervasiveness of heteropatriarchal settler colonial ideals (Nenetdale, 2017, Justice, 2010). Additionally, the discrimination against Indigenous Two-Spirits within their own communities/nations demonstrates the infiltration of heteropatriarchal settler colonial ideals (Gilley, 2006). These examples of heteropatriarchal ideals within Indigenous tribal nations represents the internalization of settler colonial ideals. However, Indigenous Peoples have and continue to be pressured to conform to settler colonial culture in order to gain legitimacy and to be perceived as “civilized.” The internalization and naturalization of settler colonial ideals is not the only issue associated with simply acknowledging Indigenous genocide. Many Indigenous scholars argue that “genocide” is inadequate to acknowledge the continuation of colonial processes within the U.S. and Canada. Essentially, Indigenous scholars argue that genocide framework often positions harm in the past, ignoring the ongoing settler colonial structures and processes (Simpson, 2014). The U.S. and Canada already position harms to Indigenous Peoples as situated in the past as evidenced by Canadian Prime Minister, Stephen Harper’s apology in 2008 and the U.S. apology written in 2009. Both apologies refer only to past events, ignoring the ongoing settler colonial processes and structures. While neither Canada nor the U.S. formally acknowledge Indigenous genocide, the naming of Indigenous genocide would not change the ways these settler states navigate their relationships with Indigenous Peoples. Specifically, the designation of genocide would likely prompt more apologies for past actions, after all, the Canadian apology only referred to the harms associated with the residential school system and not any other settler colonial actions. These apologies fail to address the ongoing settler colonial policies and structures that continue to harm Indigenous Peoples. Further, they continue to position Indigenous Peoples in the past when referring to their relationships with land, traditions, and sovereignty. Any acknowledgment of Indigenous genocide must address settler colonialism, or it will further perpetuate settler colonialism. Simply, settler colonialism will not disappear just from the inclusion of Indigenous genocide in the U.S. and Canadian narratives.

### 3

#### Indigenous communities exist in a postapocalyptic state not captured by traditional media – utilitarian frameworks fail to consider the ritualistic apocalypse experienced by native peoples both historical and contemporary.

**NoiseCat 20** (Julian Brave NoiseCat – vice president of policy and strategy with Data for Progress, indigenous author, journalist and activist, PhD Oxford. “Apocalypse Then And Now.” Columbia Journalism Review, Winter 2020. <https://www.cjr.org/special_report/apocalypse-then-and-now.php>) sf

In March 2019, HuffPost sent me to the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, home of the Oglala Lakota Nation in South Dakota, to cover the work of an affordable-housing program. My editors had a particular story in mind, and so I was dispatched to source the material to write it. The article would be a piece of “solutions journalism,” positive in outlook and neatly framed, part of a philanthropically funded series called “This New World.” My assignment letter included potential headlines: “How The Poorest County In The U.S. Is Solving The Housing Crisis”; “How The Poorest County In The U.S. Is Breaking The Poverty Cycle.” But a week before I arrived in Pine Ridge, a different story began to unfold. The reservation was pummeled by a blizzard. Gusts reached seventy miles per hour. The snowbank along the highways towered over the cars driving past. Then the storm became a bomb cyclone, the snow melted, and the reservation’s creeks overflowed. Pine Ridge sits on plains that are typically arid, so these extreme weather events were unusual—a result of shifting jet streams and increasing ocean evaporation driven by climate change. They were also catastrophic. Roads became impassable, cutting families off from medicine, food, and outside assistance. Water lines across the reservation broke, depriving eight thousand people of drinking water. At least four deaths were reported. Amid the flooding, I drove all over the reservation to survey the damage, eventually arriving at Wounded Knee, site of the infamous 1890 massacre and 1973 American Indian Movement occupation. I parked and trudged up a small hill, the mud pulling at the heels of my boots. At the top was a mass grave of one hundred forty-six Lakota. Feeling the weight of this solemn place, I was compelled to offer a prayer. Lingering awhile at the peak, I watched residents of a nearby housing development walk along the highway to the closest post office to collect rations from the National Guard. I checked Twitter and learned that Gov. Kristi Noem, a Republican, had driven onto the reservation with a convoy of military vehicles carrying potable water. She was not welcome. Just two weeks earlier, Noem had passed a bill that held protesters opposing projects like the Keystone XL oil pipeline liable for what the state called “riot boosting.” (The Oglala were among the tribes opposed to the pipeline and the bill.) Here before me, in one scene, were the interlocking forces of genocide, ecological apocalypse, resistance, and repression—the imperial roots of the climate crisis and their colonial fallout. After my visit to Wounded Knee, I could not in good conscience write the story that my HuffPost editors had assigned. A fifteen-hundred-word article treating the housing program as a worthy but isolated effort felt like a betrayal of the material I had gathered on the ground. As an Indigenous journalist, I decided the only appropriate way to tell a story like this was to simultaneously hold in frame poverty, climate change, and resilience, and to layer all this on the history of colonization, settlement, and genocide—one apocalypse on top of another. To be **Indigenous** to North America **is** to be **part of** a **postapocalyptic community and experience.** Indigenous journalists have always grappled with earth-shattering stories: either as historical background to current events or in the deep despair of the still-unfolding legacy of Indigenous dispossession, displacement, and death that brought nations like the United States and Canada into being. This perspective tests the limits of journalism, asking reporters to cover marginalized subjects unfamiliar to most readers with an eye on the people, histories, and systems buried and erased by colonization—all without losing the thread of the narrative. “The forms and styles that are dominant in journalism practice don’t always allow us to get at the historical context that is vital.” Igot my start in journalism through a fellowship covering Indian Country for HuffPost. The challenge of the beat was to turn stories about an invisible people into news. I generally employed two strategies. The first was to work from a timely headline. “Fight For Marriage Equality Not Over On Navajo Nation,” I wrote, the week after the Supreme Court ruled in Obergefell v. Hodges. The second was to jujitsu ignorance into curiosity. One of my most-read articles was “13 Issues Facing Native People Beyond Mascots And Casinos,” with the clickbait subhead “These are the problems you’re not hearing enough about.” These two approaches succeeded in attracting readers, but neither felt adequate. The former forced Indigenous stories into existing media narratives. The latter hinged on disproving misconceptions or explaining unknowns, implicitly re-centering a colonial perspective. I knew there were complicated and emotional stories afoot in Indian Country, and those were the stories I desperately wanted to tell. Yet they felt much bigger than my beat and my skill set at the time. In the years since, as a freelance writer, I’ve tried to hone my craft so my journalism can rise to the challenge of my subjects. This is the premise from which journalism begins: the assumption that well-trained reporters can go out into the world, gather up the facts, and shape that material into narrative and argument**. Indigenous stories test the limits of this enterpris**e. They require journalists to draw upon centuries of history, elucidate structures of annihilation, and build trust with people who have learned to be wary of misrepresentation. The task feels almost ludicrous, like balancing a skyscraper atop a tiny plinth. When you consider a news market in which few consumers are seeking Indigenous media and would rather spend their leisure hours with the New York Times or HBO, it feels nearly impossible. Kyle Whyte, a Citizen Potawatomi philosopher and professor of environment and sustainability at the University of Michigan, described the challenge facing Indigenous journalists succinctly: “In the space of a short piece that’s widely accessible, how do you write in a way that includes a structural analysis and a sense of history that many readers don’t initially understand?” For insight, I called Candis Callison, an associate professor at the University of British Columbia’s School of Journalism and a member of the Tahltan people. She described her preferred approach as “systems journalism”—a methodology that treats news items not as isolated events but as “windows into what’s happening in underlying systems and structures.” The narratives we tell about our past and present delineate possible avenues for future action, Callison said. She urges journalists to consider how white and colonial perspectives frame our current society as normative and permanent, erasing the history of genocidal colonialism that brought us here. Systems journalism often brushes up against established methods, however. “The forms and styles that are dominant in journalism practice,” Callison told me, “don’t always allow us to get at the historical context that is vital.” As a model, Callison pointed to the work of Tanya Talaga, an Anishinaabe journalist. Talaga, a former investigative reporter at the Toronto Star, is the author of Seven Fallen Feathers, which examines the deaths of seven First Nations youths in the town of Thunder Bay, Ontario. To tell stories about immense pain and loss, Talaga developed close relationships with her sources, many of whom she keeps in touch with today. “Be careful, be kind, be respectful, and listen,” she said. “There’s nothing worse than being one of those journalists who crashes in and out of a community, takes a story and leaves.” That last point is vital. When I called up Waubgeshig Rice, a member of the Wasauksing First Nation who produced broadcast and radio pieces for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) for fourteen years, he said something similar. “White journalists assigned to Indigenous or marginalized communities think about the story until the end of the workday,” he told me. While they might be empathetic, their relationship to the story is different. “You get to go home where you’re comfortable and white and it’s not there anymore. It’s not there until the next time you’re assigned to one of those stories.” CBC segments often adhered to a formula, Rice added: In the morning he’d get an assignment. Then he’d do research, schedule interviews, and head out to record. He’d do two or three interviews, shoot relevant visuals, write, edit, and go live at six o’clock. That experience, he explained, sometimes pushed him into uncomfortable situations; he’d be asked to go into Indigenous homes and communities, extract a story, and be ready to air by evening. “The nature of broadcasting conflicts directly with our old ways of telling stories,” Rice told me. **Knowledge of the apocalypse caused by colonialism helps make Indigenous peoples aware of ongoing tragedies.** Recently, I picked up Moon of the Crusted Snow, Rice’s dystopian novel. In the book, a mysterious apocalyptic downturn has led to a mass blackout, bringing the formal economy to a halt. Evan Whitesky, a traditional hunter, and his Anishinaabe community find themselves uniquely prepared for these events. This is a new spin on an old idea in Indigenous literature—the notion that Indigenous peoples are survivors. Gerald Vizenor, an Ojibwe literary critic, calls this “survivance.” It’s an intriguing idea—one that could bring Natives from the forgotten margins to the center of the humanities in an era of apocalyptic circumstances. **“Understanding who we are as Indigenous peoples is about understanding how our lives were impacted by colonialism, which was the ending of a world**,” Rice told me. “**The knowledge of the apocalypse also helps us make people aware of what the consequences of apocalypse are—understanding those ongoing tragedies.”** Since writing the book, Rice has left the CBC, though he maintains his practice as a journalist. His years in the field, he said, have informed his literature, but he’s not yet sure how his fiction might shape his nonfiction. As I write, another apocalypse feels close at hand. The coronavirus has killed more than a million people worldwide. Vast swaths of California and many other parts of the western United States have been devastated by wildfire. At times the air quality in Oakland, my hometown, was the worst on earth. The sky looked like a scene out of the Blade Runner sequel. Much of the news coverage has rightly connected the wildfires to climate change, but a reporter keen on telling a more complicated story—one that illuminates the structures underlying the crisis—might visit the gentrifying flatlands of West Oakland, to understand how the tech boom pushed families out of the Bay Area and into the smoldering urban-wildland interface. Another might consider how the near extermination of Indigenous peoples, and their land and fire management practices, transformed the Golden State into a tinderbox. A third might consider how past epidemics opened the land to settlement in the first place. All of these stories would, of course, require deep and trusting relationships with sources. Our stories, field notes, and communities ask a great deal of us as journalists—and, particularly, as Indigenous journalists and journalists of color—especially in moments of grave consequence, like the present. It’s hard, and in some cases impossible, to give yourself, your audience, your community, your sources—and perhaps also your land, your water, your relations—everything they want and deserve in your work. **Indigenous experiences and perspectives challenge** the **notion that a press corps equipped with notepads and recorders can capture the whole truth.** More often than not, I’m convinced that reality defies the disciplined space of stories, waging an epistemic resistance against the tyranny of language, text, and form—something we Indians can relate to.