LITERARY GEOGRAPHIES

'Healing, Belonging, Resistance, and Mutual Care': Reading Indigenous Ecopoetics and Climate Narratives

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Abstract:
Narratives of climate change place it alternately as an environmental justice issue, a national and global security issue, an apocalyptic threat to life on earth, an opportunity for social change, and more. In this article, I aim to bring critical geographic work on climate narratives into conversation with contemporary poetry, through close readings of specific poems. I argue that the work of contemporary poets, and in particular the work of Indigenous ecopoetics, is rich in poetic texts that offer imaginative practices for recalibrating climate change narratives. I look particularly to works by Craig Santos Perez, Kathy Jetn̄il-Kijiner, Allison Adelle Hedge Coke, Joy Harjo, and Linda Hogan. I approach the poems as both a critical geographer and as a poet, thinking through and with their form and content in relation to climate narratives, and in relation to a description of Indigenous ecopoetics by Perez. I meet these poems as stored energy, as actors themselves in a human and more-than-human collective. A close reading of the craft of creative texts—particularly to the level of the line in poetry—highlights the inextricable connection between form and content in how a poem acts and means in the world. As a non-Indigenous reader of texts by Indigenous poets, my goal is not to perform a 'master' reading or analysis of these texts, but rather to learn from the poems and in doing so attempt to decolonize my own thought, a process that is a constant practice.

Keywords: climate narratives; geopoetics; Indigenous ecopoetics; environmental justice; mutual care; climate change; poetry.

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Introduction

How the story of climate change is framed has lasting effects on how it is approached, both as an object of study and policy issue, and on how it influences individual perceptions of climate change. Narratives of climate change place it variously as an environmental justice issue, a national and global security issue, an apocalyptic threat to life on earth, or an opportunity for social change, to name just a few of the alternatives (Hulme 2009, Manzo 2012). Climate change is increasingly understood as a social challenge as much as a physical science challenge (Hackmann et al. 2014).

Geographers and other scholars have analyzed media responses to climate change (Boykoff 2011), artistic responses (Thornes 2008; Miles 2010; Buckland 2012), landscape visualization (Sheppard 2005), cartoons (Manzo 2012), key images such as the Burning Embers and Tipping Point images (Liverman 2009), and literary responses (Trexler and Johns-Putra 2011; Johns-Putra 2016).

Geographic work on climate narratives, however, has not intersected with detailed readings of contemporary poems that engage with climate change. In this article, I aim to bring critical geographic work on climate narratives into conversation with contemporary poetry, through close readings of specific poems. I argue that the work of contemporary poets, and in particular the work of Indigenous ecopoetics, is rich in poetic texts that offer imaginative practices for recalibrating climate change narratives. I will look to specific works by poets Craig Santos Perez, Kathy Jetn̄il-Kijiner, Allison Adelle Hedge Coke, Joy Harjo, and Linda Hogan.

I present this article as a conversation, taking a cue from trans-Indigenous methodologies (Allen 2012) and transpacific ecopoetics (Huang 2013) that are attuned to the politics of comparative projects, where 'the point is to invite specific studies into different kinds of conversations' (Allen 2012: xiv). As a trans-literary-geographic reading, my article does not aim to flatten difference and specific histories of particular nations and tribes into one identity. Rather, I will read specific poems in relation to climate narratives in the geographic literature from my standpoint as a human geographer and a poet. As a non-Indigenous reader of texts by Indigenous poets, my goal is not to perform a 'master' reading of these texts, but rather to learn from the poems and in doing so attempt to decolonize my own thought, a process that is a constant practice. This article also demonstrates how a close reading of the craft of creative texts—particularly to the level of the line in poetry—highlights the inextricable connection between form and content in how a poem acts and means in the world.

In the unfolding story of climate change as a key factor of the Anthropocene, geographers have argued for the role that the discipline should play in helping to shape the narrative (Castree 2014). Climate change is an issue that is here now, and not in some far-off future. Embodied local knowledge and traditional ecological knowledge are important sites at which to address climate change narratives (Lejano, Tavares-Reager and Berkes 2013). As Indigenous activists and allies are often on the front lines of resistance to extractive industries, geography would do well to look to contemporary Indigenous poetries in relation to climate change. Literature can both reflect and complicate climate

narratives, both ontologically and epistemologically. For example, the interconnections, interdependence, and interrelationship of Indigenous and Native science (Cajete 2000; Colorado 1988) reflect an epistemology that does not distinguish between art and science in the same way that Western traditions often do.

Geopoetics as world-making or earth-making (*geo-poesis*, Magrane 2015), especially as connected to oral traditions and traditional ecological knowledge, can be a crucial realm for addressing climate change and the Anthropocene at their roots. Geopoetics builds on calls for an increased focus on the politics of geohumanities and creative geographies (de Leeuw and Hawkins 2017; Eshun and Madge 2016; Marston and de Leeuw 2013). Ultimately, the idea of the Anthropocene, in which humans have become a geologic force, should push us to re-examine assumptions about human nature, and how those assumptions lead to the reproduction of certain modes of living—economically, politically, and socially. Is human nature inherently driven by separation, duality, control, dominance, and competition? Or, is it just as (or more) accurate to take an alternative view of human nature, one based in interrelation and mutual care? While the former view of human nature has largely become embedded within dominant socioeconomic systems, the latter view may be precisely what is needed to create more just and sustainable futures.

Reading Indigenous Ecopoetics

Poet and postcolonial theorist Craig Santos Perez (2015a) has offered the following description of Indigenous ecopoetics:

> Indigenous ecopoetics foregrounds how the primary themes in native texts express the idea of interconnection and interrelatedness of humans, nature, and other species; the centrality of land and water in the conception of indigenous genealogy, identity and community; and the importance of knowing the indigenous histories of a place. Moreover, indigenous ecopoetics shows how native writers employ ecological images, metaphors, and symbols to critique colonial and Western views of nature as an empty, separate object that exists to be exploited for profit. Lastly, indigenous ecopoetics re-connects people to the sacredness of the earth, honors the earth as an ancestor, protests against further environmental degradation, and insists that land (and literary representations of land) are sites of healing, belonging, resistance, and mutual care.

This description is included in a collaborative glossary of 'Place-Relation Ecopoetics' curated by the poet Linda Russo in the online poetics journal *Jacket 2*. Perez, a native Chamoru from the Pacific Island of Guåhan (Guam), approaches Indigenous ecopoetics through both a poetic and a critical lens, having published a series of four books titled *from unincorporated territory*, as well as critical work. Of his work, Perez has written, 'I value poetic forms that creatively weave moments, languages, voices, and geographies to create multiple layers of meaning' (2015b: 256), and 'Poetry is a site of sharing, struggling, and recognizing the coloniality and aesthetics of power' (257).

In what follows, I will read four poems by Allison Adelle Hedge Coke, Kathy Jetn̄il-Kijiner, Joy Harjo, and Linda Hogan, in part through the lens of Perez's description of Indigenous ecopoetics, to explore how the poems recalibrate climate change narratives by embodying Indigenous themes and frameworks. Ecologist and writer Robin Wall Kimmerer, in an essay about learning her Potawatomi language, writes 'So it is that in Potawatomi and most other indigenous languages, we use the same words to address the living world as we use for our family. Because they are our family' (2013: 55). This ethic, embodied in language, points to interconnection and interrelatedness, much as in Perez's description above. To link this linguistic ethic to climate narratives, frameworks that link climate and environmental justice movements (Bond 2012) similarly call for an increased focus on 'systems of responsibility' that include 'webs of interspecies relationships' (Whyte 2013: 518).

As a reader, I meet these poems as stored energy (Rueckert 1996/2009), as actors themselves in a more-than-human collective and family. I approach the poems both as a critical geographer and as a poet, thinking through and with their form and content in relation to climate narratives and Perez's description. Form and content, in the best cases, are not separate, but rather are inextricable expressions of each other. How might this insight also relate to the bridging of theory and praxis in the face of climate change?

Allison Adelle Hedge Coke: 'In the Year 513 PC'

Allison Adelle Hedge Coke's first book of poetry, *Dog Road Woman*, won the American Book Award from the Before Columbus Foundation in 1997. An Indigenous writer of Huron, Metis, and Southeastern Native ancestry, as well as European ancestry including French Canadian, Portuguese, English, Scottish, and Irish, she is the editor of numerous anthologies, including *Sing: Poetry from the Indigenous Americas* (2011). Her work takes multiple forms, including poetry, memoir, music, and film. Here I focus on her prose poem 'In the Year 513 PC,' from her 2014 collection *Streaming*, which shapes a narrative of severe weather events around an ethic of collaboration, making explicit both the centrality of collaboration and the dire socio-ecological consequences of a response that fails to include such mutual care.

The poem's title and opening lines set time differently from the dominant Gregorian calendar: 'In the year 513 PC—post-contact, post-Columbus, post-cultural invasion...' (Hedge Coke 2014: 57). Time, in other words, is measured not in the conventional terms of 'AD' or 'CE' but from the moment at which Columbus arrived in the Americas, ushering in an age of invasion, colonialism, and violence against Indigenous peoples throughout the Americas. The poem then gathers force and movement, in part through its prose (paragraph) form, in which language accrues and turns within and among sentences through repetition and association: 'In the year 513 PC, we heard fluting sounds from southern feathered, feathered never here before this rhyme, never here without zookeeper logic trace' (57). In this example, the repetition of 'feathered' acts as a turn or pivot into the stream-of-consciousness phrase 'zookeeper logic trace.' When the poem is read aloud, it feels like a storm barreling toward the shore: in the absence of line breaks that would

allow the reader to catch a breath, the long, unlineated sentences of the poem fill the page and the throat. With its energy looming and circling around repeated words and phrases, the poem itself resembles a hurricane.

513 PC (i.e., 513 years after Indigenous contact with Columbus, or 2005 C.E.) is indeed the year of Hurricane Katrina, and Hedge Coke's poem makes many references to New Orleans. As well as referencing Katrina, Hedge Coke alludes to shifts in both phenology and species distribution as demonstrative of climate change: 'Now robins sing early, leaving them hungry for later worms,' 'we heard fluting sounds from southern feathered, feathered never here before' (2014: 57). The poem both situates itself in New Orleans and connects with other locations:

> Now no bird's leaving, tides receding, waters capture sand like evening fog: Virgin Islands, Galápagos Islands, Cook Islands, Belize Barrier Reef, Red Sea Reefs, Great Barrier Reef, Tokyo, Jakarta, London, New York, New Orleans—we've seen it quarter blown—engraved. Big Easy slipping far past fate of no return, her trumpets flaring. We're all a jazz funeral display, singing, dancing, masking ourselves to crypt enclave… (Hedge Coke 2014: 57)

The inadequate response to Hurricane Katrina highlights questions of adaptation, risk, and vulnerability (Pielke et al. 2007) and climate change as a social justice and biopolitical issue (Brox 2015; Giroux 2007). While articulations of risk and vulnerability within climate adaptation discourse can be critiqued as framings in which the 'vulnerable' are rendered as 'other' and as marginal (Bankoff 2001), Hedge Coke's poem doesn't rest solely in a frame of vulnerability. The first person plural narrator of the poem—and New Orleans itself—is a vulnerable subject as expressed in the precarious tone of phrases such as 'slipping far past fate of no return' and 'we're all a jazz funeral display.' However, the poem also has power and resistance: crucially, the poem itself begins in resistance through the alternative time frame ('PC—post-contact, post-Columbus, post-cultural invasion,' Hedge Coke 2014: 57) posited by its title and opening lines. Hedge Coke ends her poem with the following: 'If we'd only seen the writing, bird tracks left etched on earthen wall. 513 you'd scarcely remember until it had all been drowned. Someone still calling, 'Saving the Earth is not a competition, but an essential collaboration' (57).

For this critic at least, these last lines of 'In the Year 513 PC' speak fundamentally to the nature of human-environment relationship. Who is the 'Someone still calling' in the poem? I read that 'Someone' as the speaker of the poem; I also read the last lines as a statement on a poetics of care and collaboration. The lines move from loss ('If we'd only') through resistance ('Someone still calling') to a prophetic declaration ('Saving the Earth is not a competition, but an essential collaboration'). In a note to her poem, Hedge Coke writes of 'references to multiple climate change occurrences—and Indigenous prophesies regarding their coming—with the arrival of Europeans upon the Americas' (2014: 143). With this note in mind, it's useful to return to Perez's (2015a) description of an Indigenous ecopoetics that (first) 'shows how native writers employ ecological images, metaphors, and symbols to critique colonial and Western views of nature as an empty, separate object that exists to be exploited for profit,' and (second) 'insists that land (and literary representations

of land) are sites of healing, belonging, resistance, and mutual care.' The last line of Hedge Coke's poem, 'Saving the Earth is not a competition, but an essential collaboration,' is an embodiment of the latter contention – the poem as a site of mutual care. By ending on this declarative statement rather than on a concrete image, the poem makes an argument about the need for an alternative view of human nature—collaboration rather than competition—that may be necessary for adaptation.

Here, I also want to articulate some of the echoes that this conception of mutual care has with traditions of mutual aid in geography, particularly in anarchist traditions (Kropotkin 1902/2013). The communitarian vision of mutual aid takes a wholly different view of human nature than that of the dominant economic and cultural order of capital. Rather than a notion of the survival of the fittest that reifies competition, mutual care supposes human nature as cooperative. Mutual care also resonates with recent feminist geophilosophy that looks to more-than-human collaboration as an alternative orientation to the materialities of the world, one not based primarily in use and exploitation (Yusoff 2013). In addition, feminist critiques of the Anthropocene that problematize the essentializing of human experience and erasure of difference also resonate with Perez's conception of Indigenous ecopoetics and with Hedge Coke's poem. Rutazibwa, Last, and Yusoff (2016: 1), for example, in a discussion of how to decolonize the Anthropocene, point to how the 'term Anthropocene masks not an essential human fault, but the consequences of oppressive systems, such as capitalism and colonialism.'

Both Indigenous ecopoetics and these critiques of the Anthropocene highlight the need to foster alternative subjectivities in the face of global change. The echoes between Indigenous ecopoetics and feminist and anarchist geophilosophy point to an opening for increased conversation. The question is how to break through and change the social organizations, patterns, and naturalization of detrimental practices and powers that imperil all life on the Earth. Perhaps the 'healing, belonging, resistance, and mutual care' (Perez 2015a) of Indigenous ecopoetics can help point a way.

Kathy Jetn̄il-Kijiner: 'Dear Matafele Peinam'

Kathy Jetn̄il-Kijiner is a Marshallese poet, performer, and climate activist. Her performance of a poem at the 2014 UN Climate Summit in New York, as well as her participation in art events at the 2015 Conference of Parties (COP) 21 climate negotiations in Paris, have established her as a leading voice in climate activism. Her first book of poems, *Iep Jāltok: Poems from a Marshallese Daughter*, was published in 2017. Throughout *Iep Jāltok*, and particularly in the poem 'Dear Matafele Peinam,' Jetn̄il-Kijiner builds a climate narrative that elides generalized conceptions of the Pacific Islands solely as sites of climate-related vulnerability and loss by foregrounding an ethics of activism and protest, grounded in connectedness to one's ancestral home.

The immediacy of 'Dear Matafele Peinam,' the poem that Jetn̄il-Kijiner performed at the 2014 UN Climate Summit, comes through its direct address to Jetn̄il-Kijiner's daughter. Its opening lines begin in the second person, in a celebratory tone:

Dear Matafele Peinam,

You are a seven month old sunrise of gummy smiles
you are bald as an egg and bald as the Buddha
you are thighs that are thunder
shrieks that are lightning
so excited for bananas, hugs and
our morning walks past the lagoon (Jetn̄il-Kijiner 2017: 70)

In the stanzas that follow, Jetn̄il-Kijiner applies the poetic device of anaphora, through repetition of the salutary address 'Dear Matafele Peinam.' In the second stanza, the poem shifts to first and third person, and in doing so, changes tone from celebratory to cautionary:

I want to tell you about that lagoon […]

Men say that one day
that lagoon will devour you

They say it will gnaw at the shoreline […]

They say you, your daughter
and your granddaughter, too
will wander
rootless
with only
a passport
to call home (Jetn̄il-Kijiner 2017: 70)

The third person plural here—'men say,' 'they say'—is an important technique that distinguishes the voice of the speaker of the poem from those who Jetn̄il-Kijiner then calls out in lines like 'no greedy whale of a company sharking through political seas/ no backwater bullying of businesses with broken morals/ no blindfolded bureaucracies gonna push/ this mother ocean over/ the edge' (2017: 71).

The language of Jetn̄il-Kijiner's poem, in phrases like 'backwater bullying' and 'blindfolded bureaucracies,' carries resistance, shifting the tone once again from cautionary to defiant. The consonance, through repeated hard 'b' sounds, builds a sonic effect that merges with the content to build a forceful, critical, oppositional tone; the sound of the poem itself conveys the resistance, merging form and content. In contrast, the language employed when the poem shifts back to first and second person is hopeful and infused with care: 'we are […] the rich clean soil of the farmer's past […] petitions blooming from teenage fingertips' (Jetn̄il-Kijiner 2017: 72). By moving back and forth through these two tones, the poem is able both to employ a critique of power and injustice and to call for and

bring a hopeful future into vision, embodying Perez's (2015a) 'healing, belonging, and resistance.'

How texts circulate, and how audiences respond, can point to the kind of work that poems can do in the world as stored energy, to use Rueckert's (1996/2009) phrase. As of November, 2017, Jetnīl-Kijiner's performance of her poem at the United Nations has received more than 300,000 views on YouTube, while a version that includes video footage from the Marshall Islands has received more than 140,000 views. Comments from viewers (Jetnīl-Kijiner 2014; United Nations 2014) include:

- 'Incredible. I cried this was so moving.'
- 'Marshallese pride!'
- 'That brought me to tears. What a powerful poem — one that shows how we all need to be a part of this clean new future in order to thrive.'
- 'True and heartfelt opening statement. The Poem… is truly emotional and inspiring, a call for action and collaboration.'
- 'We are drawing the line here! We are ready to fight! Fists raising up! Canoes blocking coal ships! There are thousands out on the streets chanting for change NOW! We won't let you down. You'll see.'

In short, the poem struck a chord with many of those who have viewed it. While it has reached people in an emotional sense ('I cried'; 'brought me to tears'), many viewers also responded to the poem as a call to action and as motivation to stand up for climate justice ('a call for action and collaboration'; 'We are ready to fight'). In arguments for the role that art and poetry have in creating the cultural momentum for action on climate change, Jetnīl-Kijiner's work is a clear example.

My own experience as a teacher for courses including Climate Change and Poetry, Environmental Studies, and Sustainable Development attests to the effectiveness of Jetnīl-Kijiner's poem and performance. After reading the poem in class, multiple students have told me personally that the poem affected them and stayed with them after the class was over. As a text, 'Dear Matafele Peinam' helped ground and personalize our discussions of climate justice, and it instigated student involvement in environmental activism. The poem critiques power and injustice and—as indicated in both my students' responses and the example responses to the video noted above—instigates a vision of collective resistance.

While both Jetnīl-Kijiner's and Hedge Coke's poems are relatively recent pieces, from 2014 and 2013 respectively, the following two poems by Joy Harjo and Linda Hogan are from books published (respectively) in 2000 and 1993. While neither of these poems explicitly addresses climate change, both are relevant to a discussion of healing, belonging, resistance, and mutual care. Each of these poems is a map poem. Maps can, of course, be approached as spatial representation; in what follows, however, I want to focus primarily

on these two map poems as instructions and directions that, when followed, may lead to innovative yet practical responses to climate change centered on collaboration with and respect for all forms of earthly matter.

Joy Harjo: 'A Map to the Next World'

Joy Harjo is a poet and musician; a member of the Mvskoke Nation, her first book was the 1975 chapbook *The Last Song*. Since then, she has been a major figure in contemporary poetry, publishing many books and receiving awards such as the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Native Writers Circle of the Americas. Here, I look at 'A Map to the Next World' (from the book of the same title) which begins

> In the last days of the fourth world I wished to make a map for those who would climb through the hole in the sky.
>
> My only tools were the desires of humans as they emerged from the killing fields, from the bedrooms and the kitchens.
>
> For the soul is a wanderer with many hands and feet. (Harjo 2000: 19)

Following these stanzas, Harjo provides a kind of map, one that is 'of sand and can't be read by ordinary light' (2000: 19). The poem moves through long lines that are often formed as declaratory and instructive statements, such as 'Take note of the proliferation of supermarkets and malls, the altars of money./ They best describe the detour from grace' (19). The language of the poem moderates between rage, depression, and loss ('Flowers of rage spring up in the depression. Monsters are born there of nuclear/ anger,' (19)) and remembering and hope in tribal communities ('Fresh courage glimmers from planets,' (20). The poem's juxtaposition of these two tones might be read as both an inventory of loss and a map to find one's way out of loss. In this sense, it is work of both witness and transformation, an imaginative practice of route-finding that, when applied to climate narratives, both infuses them with emotion and provides a connection between emotion and action.

To return to Perez's conception of Indigenous ecopoetics, I want to make a note of the first part of the following formulation: 'Indigenous ecopoetics… insists that *land (and literary representations of land)* are sites of healing, belonging, resistance, and mutual care' (2015a, emphasis added). Harjo's poem concludes:

> Yet, the journey we make together is perfect on this earth who was once a star and made the same mistakes as humans.
>
> We might make them again, she said.
>
> Crucial to finding the way is this: there is no beginning or end.

You must make your own map. (2000: 21)

Through personification of the earth ('who was once a star/ and made the same mistakes as humans'), the 'we' of the poem and the earth are brought together in kinship. If the earth 'made the same mistakes as humans,' there is a connection between the humans and the earth, one where the human 'we' of the poem may learn from the earth. This is not a way of being in the world based on domination or use, but of collectivity. If humans are inextricably part of the earth, perhaps climate change can be read as a collective material mistake, where certain organizations of matter have gone awry. Ultimately, it is the human relationship with other materialities of the earth, namely the burning of fossil fuels, that has hastened anthropogenic climate change. As important as it is to limit our use of fossil fuels, the focus on 'use' itself should also be in question (Yusoff 2013). What other arrangements may be possible? As Yusoff asks, if we were to take an orientation toward fossil fuels not based in use and extraction, but one based in collaboration between human and mineral, what would it look like?

Map poems like Harjo's address this question by referencing a tradition that perhaps knows what this would look like: 'In the legend [of the map] are instructions on the language of the land, how it was we/ forgot to acknowledge the gift, as if we were not in it or of it' (2000: 19). Note the prepositions 'in' and 'of.' Prepositions convey spatial relationships, and can hold within them whole ontologies. Here in Harjo's last line, 'in' and 'of' connote a relational world in which the first person plural 'we' of the poem is not separate from the materialities of the Earth. In contrast, the preposition 'on' (i.e., 'as if we were not on it') would imply more of a separation between the 'we' and the Earth. This separation, then, would lead more easily to an orientation toward the Earth in which maps become a colonial tool for control, plunder, and extraction. This is the collective material arrangement that the poem implicitly critiques, as does the next poem I address, by Linda Hogan.

Linda Hogan: 'Map'

Linda Hogan is a Chickasaw poet and writer whose work often addresses human and animal relationships and the environment. Her first book, *Calling Myself Home*, was published in 1978, and she has since published many books of poetry, essays, memoir, and fiction. She is the Writer in Residence for the Chickasaw Nation. 'Map,' from Hogan's *The Book of Medicines*, opens with the lines

This is a world
so vast and lonely
without end, with mountains
named for men
who brought hunger
from other lands,
and fear
of the thick, dark forest of trees… (Hogan 1993: 37)

Geographers, of course, have deconstructed maps as representation of power (Harley 1989) and as actors in cartographic history and postcolonial sovereignty struggles (Sparke 1998). Within literary studies, Johnson has pointed out that Indigenous maps, particularly as presented in Native women's writing, have been used 'as a means of asserting, maintaining, and advocating political and cultural sovereignty' (2007: 116). We can approach the opening of Hogan's poem similarly. Power, control, and colonialism are critiqued by the speaker, who singles out the act of naming mountains for the invading 'men/ who brought hunger.' These names, memorializing histories of injustice, write over the Indigenous names of the land; naming is, in itself, a political and imperial act. However, the poem's first stanza ends by evoking the ultimate failure of this form of colonialist naming: 'as if words would make it something/ they could hold in gloved hands,/ open, plot a way/ and follow' (Hogan 1993: 37). The 'words' the speaker refers to are those that posit a certain orientation of control upon the world, which the poem will go on to dispute. I would argue that many dominant climate narratives continue to replicate an orientation that separates humans from the rest of the living world; it is this orientation itself that is arguably at the root of the climate crisis. In contrast, in her preface to *Dwellings*, a book of essays published two years after *The Book of Medicines*, Hogan writes that

> It has been my lifelong work to seek an understanding of the two views of the world, one as seen by native people and the other as seen by those who are new and young on this continent. It is clear that we have strayed from the treaties we once had with the land and with the animals. It is also clear, and heartening, that in our time there are many—Indian and non-Indian alike—who want to restore and honor these broken agreements. (1996: 11)

Perez's (2015a) conception of Indigenous ecopoetics (specifically, Perez's notion of an Indigenous ecopoetics that 're-connects people to the sacredness of the earth, honors the earth as an ancestor, protests against further environmental degradation, and insists that land (and literary representations of land) are sites of healing, belonging, resistance, and mutual care') echoes much of this sentiment, which also finds its expression in the final lines of 'Map':

> There are names each thing has for itself,
> and beneath us the other order already moves.
> It is burning.
> It is dreaming.
> It is waking up. (Hogan 1993: 38)

Respect, honor, and a relationship of care to the animal other are all present in the acknowledgement of the 'names each thing has for itself.' The poem—as in the title of the collection it is included in, *The Book of Medicines*—is a kind of medicine. Notice particularly the cadence of the last three lines of the poem. The repetition of 'It is' followed by the present participle ('burning,' 'dreaming,' 'waking') give an animacy and power to 'the other

order' (Hogan 1993: 38), a kind of 'grammar of animacy,' to use Kimmerer's (2013: 48) phrase. In terms of rhythm, note how after two lines of four syllables, the final line includes five syllables and ends with a stressed syllable, the percussive word 'up.' This variation of rhythm and accent in the final syllable of the poem helps to punctuate the ending with force. Read the lines out loud to hear how the form and content are inextricably linked; the song and rhythm of the poem, as well as the meaning of the words, express its power.

Conclusion

Words, songs, stories, and poems are more than representations of the world. They can inspire multiple audiences and call alternative worlds into being. They are actors in the world. Hogan, in her novel *Power,* puts it this way: 'Stories are for people what water is for plants' (1998: 227). Hedge Coke, in the introduction to her anthology *Sing: Poetry from the Indigenous Americas*, expresses a similar idea:

> In movement, songs reveal what approaches need to be made to sustain and continue… Sometimes songs present themselves in the most unfamiliar moments, improvisationally. Sometimes songs connect, familiarize. Sometimes the orchestration of tones, or words, heals. Sometimes we actually learn to let go and let them lead us. Sometimes we follow to sing. (2011: 1)

What if poems and songs hold some of the keys to mitigating and adapting to climate change? What if poems and songs are some of the best methods for connecting social justice and climate action? I often think of poems and songs as organisms themselves. Thinking this through Indigenous ecopoetics—in my case, through reading Indigenous ecopoetics, and trying to do so with an orientation of respect and openness, as an attempt to decolonize my own thought—makes sense. I go to, listen to, and read poems to try to re-situate hegemonic habits of mind, knock them off kilter.

Poetry can enact resistance and inform our attempts to imagine other paths forward, as embodied in the work of Perez, Jetnīl-Kijiner, Hedge Coke, Harjo, and Hogan. Poems are not static texts but actors in the world, making poetry a rich site for literary geography, particularly in its ability to foster alternative subjectivities in the face of climate change. I have approached this article as a conversation, in which the poems at hand complicate dominant climate narratives. Moving forward, I hope that alliances based in interwoven care and respect in the broadest sense—in contrast to separateness, fear, and control—may proliferate.

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