

Coyote and Raven (P)re-visit Environmental Education, Sustainability, and Run-away Capitalism

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Abstract

Together with ubiquitous agent evocateurs, Coyote and Raven, the authors engage trickster discourse and narrative shapeshifting as they share research protocols and community conversations based on their research with the four Lower Stl'atl'imx communities (Xa'xtsa, N'Quat'qua, Skatin and Samahquam First Nations) of British Columbia, Canada, in their efforts toward language and cultural regeneration, community sustainability and self-determination.

Résumé

En collaboration avec les personnages évocateurs et omniprésents que sont le Coyote et le Corbeau, les auteurs, par la voix du Filou et la narration des métamorphoses, exposent les protocoles de recherche et les discussions communautaires d'après leur étude auprès des quatre collectivités Lower Stl'atl'imx (les Premières Nations Xa'xtsa, N'Quat'qua, Skatin et Samahquam) de Colombie-Britannique, au Canada, dans le but de régénérer la langue et la culture, d'atteindre une durabilité communautaire et de susciter l'autodétermination.

Keywords: environmental sustainability, community regeneration, language revitalization, self-determination

coyote and raven are sitting under a beautiful cedar tree on the banks of lillooet lake up in *stl'atl'imx* territory in the coastal mountains of southwestern british columbia *inshuckch* mountain stands behind them with the sun high overhead they are thinking about the 5th world environmental education congress to be held in montreal later in the spring they have been invited to give a keynote that speaks to the theme "the earth is our common home" the organizers are hoping to encourage ministries and faculties of education to recognize environmental education as a vital part of a child's education

whew it's hot for this time of the year those alaskans must be playing their haarp I feel tingly

you lost me what does playing the harp have to do with the weather

not h a r p h a a r p the high frequency active auroral research program they're bombarding the ionosphere with massive quantities of radio waves for military and commercial purposes

hey coyote how about a paddle down lillooet lake you paddle I'll steer

sounds good I need a break from all this relaxing let's go! *kalan7wi* raven my friend you seem to be missing your paddle

ohh I must have uh forgotten it that's okay I'll just rest my feet in the water on each side of the gunwale and steer that way like back in traditional premodern post paleo times

hmmm I think we can do better than that put your arm out *coyote measures* let me get you one *coyote being a trickster and shapeshifter shapeshifts a paddle from a piece of driftwood whooooooosh* here you are raven 62 inches with a voyageur blade your favourite

thank you coyote nice carving job you didn't have to sand and oil it too *mutter mutter mutter lifting his feet from the water removing his pillow and earphones*

coyote and raven load their picnic basket and a fishing net and camping equipment into the canoe push off into the lake and start paddling south along the western shore
paddle paddle rest rest paddle rest

coyote I'm thinking that we should start our talk by acknowledging the aboriginal peoples on whose traditional territory we will be speaking the ancestors the descendants the coming generations that is the proper protocol as a guest

of course raven we'll thank the animal and plant nations the stones the sky people the star people and the ones that went before using both coyotec and ravenese dialects which I hope the translators can handle as well as the ubiquitous talking 'indian' language

kukwstum creator for the sky our brother who gives us breath and rain and wind
kukwstum for the earth our mother from which our bodies come
and to which they return thank you for the waters
the oceans rivers lakes bays bights inlets fjords streams ponds sloughs wetlands
and muskeg

you'll have to pick up the pace raven or people will fall asleep or leave or they'll start texting or playing with their cellphones

kukwstum elder brother sun who warms and sustains us grandmother moon who regulates the tides of our blood our cells our spirits and an extra prayer for the moon herself for the rocket bombs that the americans are shooting at her

ahhh raven it's so good to be in this place of land and water and sky
the *stl'atl'imx* have called this home for fifteen thousand years
sachteen skatin samahquam xa'xtsa where the creatures continue to follow

their original instructions without benefit of formal education
or ministry approved curriculum

before the coming of the churches residential schools and prisons
before we knew how we knew we knew
education with and on the land was how and what and where we learned

we called it living in the village

but when the newcomers came they wanted our land so they pathologized us
to make us unworthy unable unwell and in need of fiduciation
they enacted the pretense of civilizing us
our children were imprisoned in residential schools
where the white man's language and religion and ways of life were forced on them
the little ones were punished for speaking their own language
for practising the old ways they were beaten to make them forget their connections
with the land the sacredness reciprocity and relationality that we had known
and lived since forever the old indian ways became taboo *res non grata*

that reminds me do you remember when we were teaching in *aotearoa* and
there was an opportunity for universities and schools to choose environmental educa-
tion as a new core subject area of curriculum but technology education won out
technology meaning computer and industrial-commercial-oriented technologies
not indigenous technologies not *maori* ways of knowing being and doing
the *maori* insisted that *maori* technology education *hangarau* was more than
being simply a direct translation of the *pakeha* technology education curriculum
they made sure that *maori* spiritualities were an intimate part of *hangarau*
thank you for your inspiration hirini melbourne
*Haere atu raa ki Hawaiki nui, ki Hawaiki roa, ki Hawaiki pamamao, ki te hunga
wairua, ki te kainga tuuturu mo te tangata.* thank you Professor Agnes McFarlane
who is Hirini Melbourne's niece for that requiem

in british columbia environmental education is left up to teachers
to find ways "to integrate environmental concepts into teaching and learning"
(BC Ministry of Education, 2008/2009, p. 7)
okay class today we're going on a field trip to the vancouver stock exchange
followed by a container cargo ship cruise and then an *in camera*
between developers and city councilors bidding for re-election

coyote i've been getting the distinct impression that the newcomer groupthink
is that education means using only western ideas and western ways of thinking
back in the horse and buggy days we called that blindered thinking
it's okay if you don't want the horse to know where it is or where it's going
but when wearing blinders becomes normalized then it's a problem
but we're all wearing blinders all the time does it really matter how

we're being fooled by our own belief systems isn't it just that we assume that we are in control of what we believe and what we think we know

what is referred to by western trained psychologists as 'cognition' has very little to do with what is important to us up home— spirit touch smell taste feeling intuition family responsibility today schooling seems to be about creating consumers and psychology is a central weapon of the colonizer's arsenal it is about analysis categorizing destroying the wholeness of creation

remember raven when we were teaching an educational technology class at a new jersey university and the students were watching an interactive video on trees and ecosystems I asked them to put on their coats and we went outside I asked them to stand with their backs against the big oak and maple trees and close their eyes and breath deeply so that they could hear and feel and sense the rhythm and life and process of the tree

yes I remember how excited they were about trying this out with their own students teaching environmental sensitivity and awareness

ironically or perhaps tragically the bc environmental curriculum guide was developed by the environmental educators' provincial specialist association in consultation with bc hydro the same organization that works hand in hand with other branches of the bc government to expropriate and flood and destroy our traditional lands our living environments our homes our sacred burial sites so that the settlers can have tv's and computers air conditioning and cold beer

coyote you can bet your curly tail that there were huge compromises in that environmental education conversation all this talk is making me hungry come on let's put on the big wheel

so coyote and raven paddle hard to the end of the lake where the stl'atl'imx elders have gathered

paddle paddle paddle swoosh paddle

it is late afternoonish when coyote and raven pull their canoe up on shore however the rugged heavily treed mountainsides are on fire and there's smoke and coughing and running around everywhere much of the stl'atl'imx territory has been on fire for weeks now accelerated by high winds and abundant understory two elders getting into a rusted out '76 ford pickup tell coyote and raven to head back up the lake they had been told to evacuate the communities the fire is fast approaching the shoreline coyote and raven paddle as fast as they can back to safer ground and pitch their tent for the night

make some tea raven fluffs his feathers and sits on a huge rock
coyote leans against the cool trunk of an eight foot diameter cedar

you know coming from *Xa'xtsa* we were taught
that the grizzly bear and sasquatch are our helpers our guides
the wolf and black bear and the frog are there to help us to teach us
as we walk this earth and when we pass over to the other side

I just hope it's not clearcut on the other side filled with winged tourists
real estate speculators politicians and ski resort operators

as kids we learned about the environment by being part of it by getting dirty
and tired and wet and dusty and cold books were not a big part of it

ha ha ha mud all over us eating dirt and rocks biting sticks breathing in camp smoke

we knew from our grandparents' stories that these tall snow covered mountains
had always been our home they are our relations our ancestors

today a new part of environmental education for us is how to drive
a beat-up gas guzzler indian car or truck or van that's held together
with bailing wire and duct tape on a logging road with a load of groceries
pets and kids and a broken washing machine leaking gaskets and tires
without getting run off a cliff by logging trucks and t/our/orr/ists

we're only 30 40 or 50 kilometres from pemberton on those radio controlled roads
but we're light years away from being economically sustainable

in the old days everybody knew lots about lots and if we didn't have the tools
we needed we knew how to make them from local materials
without electricity or iron tools or youtube instructions

but it's so much easier today to just go to the store you don't have to fix anything
just buy a new one it's cheaper

in the old days everybody knew the value of co-operation it meant survival
today if you talk about co-operation in anything above a whisper
people look at you like you're a nutcase or a socialist
today we're told everywhere we turn that we have to compete
get more than the other person or just more than you have now
it won't be long before we'll be charged with sedition for not wanting more

my mother had french and mohawk blood my father was old irish black irish
those people were wise and patient they had keen understandings
of when to plant crops and harvest where to fish and they knew intimately

the earth's relationship to the stars and sun
look at the 5000 year-old new grange passage tomb in county meath
that lights up at sunrise on the winter solstice now that's technology
no moving parts except the earth moving around the sun
and light and shadows dancing photons racing

lions sabretoothed tigers (which were lions) and wooly elephants
once walked this land giant bison wooly rhinoceros cave bears cheetahs
giant beavers and sloths horses and camels and before them dinosaurs
greetings to those ones we are on their traditional territory too
many ice ages separate us many glacial maxima have come and gone
now the long toothed ones are gone the tuskers and the thunderwalkers
but their ancestors' spirits remain they live on in stories
everything that lives lives in stories
stories written in the wind on the stones and in the heart
and on the sunbeams that penetrate new grange photon mediated narrativity
weather permitting which in ireland on the first day of winter is anybody's guess

the stl'atl'imx were all but destroyed by settler and military incursion
and introduced diseases we were told that we got sick and died in such numbers
because we were heathens the blackrobes told us
that if we became christians god jesus mary and the saints would save us
biological warfare was a new kind of environmental threat
mix that in with guns religion capitalism alcohol tobacco and junkfood
and these together constitute the final straw from the pailleface
Rengifo (1998) from peru refers to this tragedy as the terrible "plague"
that was enacted on indigenous and tribal peoples
he says that we brought it on ourselves because we had lost our way
we had strayed from the path of our ancestors

raven do you remember when glaciers covered this whole land
mountains of flowing ice doing a slow dance north and south east and west
every time the ice came we left and when it left we came back
like musical chairs there were first peoples communities everywhere
and with no indian act just indians acting enacting
their aboriginal instructions

ah fresh glacier water coyote sure tastes good when you're weary

in today's ice age we're buried underneath three kilometres
of frigid federal bureaucracy icy provincial regulations
snowpacked curriculum guidelines zero degrees kelvin white papers
redtape and doublespeak and frosty filefolders everywhichwhere
with Indians stuck inside those folders poured into words
so everything lies nice and flat and ordered

so it can be filed without much ado about anything
aboriginal people take up a lot less room once you change them into words
and theories and numbers and policies

it wasn't long after the blackrobes arrived that families moved
to the fraser valley near mission city to be near their children
who were forced to attend st mary's residential school

so raven this education the settlers are forcing on us now more subtly
including environmental education
it continues to try to separate us from our relationships with the land
the animals the fish the insects the plant nations the star people
and the other communities of the night sky
so that we will lose (no not misplace 'actively lose') our 'indianness'
it is presumed that we are to forget the land and our connection with it
so that we can move forward with milton friedman stephen harper
gordon campbell and the national post
riptides of western common sense and tsunamis of science are meant
to pull us away from our cultures our languages our relationships
replace them with opportunity success *leucophony leucoplasty leucophilia*
but we're pretty stubborn we still hang on to the old ways
while also taking up many of the new ones

yes coyote we're not good subjects or objects objectives datives genitives
our spiritualities have not been replaced b(u)y the illusions of capitalism
and the presumption of democracy
our paleo-deconstructivities demonstrate that we are ruts in the road
of western progress blemishes in the conscience of the canadian state
where there is precious little and little precious aboriginal history
aboriginal environmentalism aboriginal anything taught in public school
there is that terrible silence that is the biggest part of the canadian identity
what happened to the Indians? who will take responsibility for genocidic policymaking?
not me I wasn't alive then not me I'm a new immigrant pass the buck
pass the bottle pass the needle pass (it) on pass out

ooooh so there are no new settlers brought to canada
to prop up a birthrate so much in decline that without immigration
the national population would decline and that would affect 'our' economy
I recognize the economy part but it's the 'our' that I fail to see
first person plural 'our' is supposed to mean yours plus mine
but I don't see mine anywhere just mines strip mines yours!

oh yes sustainability it's one of the buzzwords that is supposed to mean
that we are caring about the environment but it actually just means
business as usual but with green food colouring

sustainability is for us about speaking our languages practicing our cultures
creating sustainable communities sustainability means giving back more
than you take otherwise it's not sustainable
if the frog jumps 3 leaps forward and 4 back s/he/it will never get out of the well
nor will we

many of our young ones those who attended elementary or secondary school
have dropped out or been made to drop out
because the educational system is alienating them
many of these young people have substance abuse problems
pills drugs alcohol gasoline lysol cigarettes
people of all ages all generations suffer from fetal alcohol spectrum disorder
and diabetes many of our children commit suicide
it makes moving forward a real challenge where did this come from
and where does it fit in with the 'sustainability' targets
of the federal government and anyway what exactly is it that is being sustained?
the *status quo* the status Indian? or the much vilified "national interest"?

what does retention or revitalization of aboriginal relationships
with land and culture and language have to do with sustainability?
our language is endangered there are fewer than 100 fluent speakers of *ucwalmicwts*
and our cultures are endangered people prefer to watch tv or play bingo
or get together on facebook to going out onto the land
and learning the *ucwalmicwts* language people want drugs and alcohol
they want to escape from their lives from themselves
if there is no sustained journey of self-empowerment
there is no impetus to revive the language or the culture
and it will be gone in a few years

so the glass is not half full

coyote archaeology is a very young science a western construct
of the newcomers the people of the land have seen and understood
the bones the skeletons etched into stone the marks on the mountains
people from uphome have been reading bones and tracks and signs and traces
on rock and soil and tree and grass and water and air for thousands of years
we have always been literate iterate
you had to be a good tracker to survive including after contact
tracking what is today called 'the past' before the white man came
before the white linguists twisted our languages into white artifacts *artifacts*
we didn't have a past tense a future tense so history was not about time
it was about geography it was about place
'academic' was not even on our horizon even on the horizon's horizon
our world has never revolved around the epistemologies and methodologies
of the newcomers has never rotated around their centre of gravity

this is still true today we have to know how to read the system
how to track the promises read the traces in the treaties
the legislation the court decisions the hidden and invisible risible curriculum
we may have been prehistoric according to the visitors' estimation
we may have been illiterate according to european educational standards
but we could read our environment well enough to survive
for tens of thousands of years *in situ*

we have lived at least in the foreseeable past for 14 thousand years
in the coastal mountains give or take but now somehow
nancy greene owns our land intrawest manages it and \$10 billion
is being spent on a two week olympic sporting event in 2010
much of it at or near whistler-blackcomb which has a dozen overlapping land claims
on the land it claims including our own claim
alex peters from up home was born over 90 years ago at green lake
a hoot and holler from whistler village and blackcomb mountain
but the white people own it too they own everything
because they are the government they created government as a category of
whiteness
they own 'own'

although whistler is on part of our traditional territory
after the olympics we will still have no electricity up home
except what we make ourselves no running water no phone service
no paved roads no salmon no fourleggeds no possibility of jobs
but we will still have clearcuts polluted rivers
coercive relationships between some of the alteric elite and the government
and we will have the indian act the white bible of indian messianism
these olympic games will not help us nor will it help most other aboriginal peoples
from up our way it is for the elites for developers business people
corporations
the international olympic committee is the main beneficiary of the games
it is a multi-billion dollar organization centred in switzerland
an elite of elites made up of the national olympic committees of 205 countries

pause

raven they want us to talk about what role environmental education might play
in adding meaning to our personal and collective lives
how it might contribute to social innovation and influence public policy

entr'acte enter narrator as coyote and raven go into freezeframe

narrator

all cultures have tricksters oral both-and-or gestured gesticulated narrativities
which have evolved from being [seen as being] troublesome primitive notions
of epistemic wild type progenitors and first filial generation savageisms
which set in(to) motion the subtending of subduction zones and transverse fractures
of the topographies of euroamerican modernity and neoclassical excess
together with their imported intellectual conventions as troubling and troublesome
zones of cognition within colonial epistemologies *rubricosome ad portas* threatening
empire not only *post modum* but retroactively intermittently and saltatorily
as *post hoc inter ex sub propter hoc usque* foundations and templates
of the majority hegemon and this despite cognitive barricades and barriers which
prevail upon alteric the unready to put off negotiation with the rapids and backeddies
snags and deadheads standing waves choosing rather to take out the survival gear
and portage around
the one true story of how when where which why nottoforget whose

tricksters are beginning to show up even in western literary zones
even in places where they have always been though not seen nor recognized as such
take for instance the juggling act of the spiral methodologies of western science
with the engagement nay enjoining with double helices in the case of dna
and single spirals with rna presumed molecules in the speculated shape
of purines and pyrimidines are gospelized postpaleopentateuched
into emerging metanarratives of sacred choreographies
whereby *la vida verdad* becomes a set of rationalized scientized diminishment
of possibilities laid waste through the essentialization of observer bias
the tetragrammaton of inchoate enjambment as tautology as ontology as proof as
dissemblance as doubletalk skipping ditty
give me an a proton until it is 10^{16} years old a photon until it has travelled a trillion
light years a transuranic element until it is into its 9th half life
and I will make of it an anti-universe that is the gift of western scholarship
exit narrator into mist and silence *coyote and raven unfreeze*

raven if we're going to actually plan and organize this talk
even on someone else's traditional territory
let's share a narrative about the time we were hiking up on tom cole mountain
near pavilion first nation *ts'kw'aylaxw*

okay (*drumbeat Coyote and Raven sing women's warrior song*) it's early morning
a spring day warmish but with brisk winds whisking up
from the surrounding glaciers and protruding cold fronts

coyote [says the man] how is it your people never took advantage
of the natural fertility of the land up this way?

we did take advantage of it we ate the berries and the rodents and the 6-leggeds
and from time to time the finned ones and flyers
who were the products as well as producers of the fertility
we engaged in nature with all of our alimentary tract
as well as our sensory and cognitive systems
what went out one end fertilized what was to go into the other end
our genes are scattered throughout this whole territory
so we are actually part of its fertility our ancestors' remains
and even their day to day existence co-mingle with the whole of the landscape
from before birth until after death as well as in between

I wasn't trying to get into a philosophical journey of your dna's journey

but that's what fertility is about the macro and micro the exo and endo the inter
trans and cis that's why I became an epidemiologist

was this before or after or *à la même fois que* you became a forensic anthropologist
though you never limited yourself to anthropos and in fact
had to look up forensic in the dictionary?

I'm talking about our shared journeys as tricksteremes knitted verbatings within the
linked carbon bonds of the environment

verbatings?

you know!! verbs that enact their verbness in a perfect as well as progressive and
participial manner rather than verbs that are little more than post cryogenic nouns
hardly thawed out at all most nouns in the english language are so static that
without verbs they'd starve to death though there would be no verb/infinitive
"to starve" so prepositions would have to 'carry' the day though I'm not sure
if I prefer noun declension to verb conjugation
it depends on the etymological genealogy
and how the relationality is contextualized

walking in nature with you is like walking in a wordworld
it's so easy to get off topic though at times it's almost as though
there were a kind of throughline
rather than a linethrough I'll take that as a compliment
the english language is so fossilized
in its use by academics and politicians and policy makers that a mere cliché
would be a welcome change which is itself a cliché which is itself a cliché

when I was asking you about your ancestors not taking advantage of the natural
fertility up this way I meant how is it none of them ever took up farming?

farming? oh that's easy it hadn't been invented yet or is it 'discovered'?
that didn't happen until human beings started proto or ur-urbanizing themselves
and domesticating simulacracizing hams and hamlets ur-hamlets
which includes giving a new home to all the lives that live on and in
the pigs cows chickens sheep horses donkeys cattle and heaven forbid goats

you could have followed the lead of the squirrel clan or the grizzly bear clan
or the ravens who either bury cache or hide excess sustenance
and in so doing grow forests flowers hedges and berry farms
where do you think the cascadian rain forest came from following the last ice age?
you can't plant a forest it's a co-operative albeit not wholly conscious undertaking
companion eating (by which I do not mean eating your companion) companion eating
can be a way of ensuring that certain things will not be digested in the digestive tract
and will in fact make the body into a virtual seminary and the body's elimination
system a form of seed spreader
I heard that charles darwin grew 80 species of plants
from the mud off a bird's foot

dirty foot farming was never a big conversation at our kitchen table though we
didn't actually have a kitchen or a table and it wasn't really a conversation mostly a
monologue by my father about how to avoid the traps farmers and ranchers set out
for coyotes anyway why duplicate what the two-legged are already doing a
good job at?

and I speak in italics and aside at least some of them are good at farming
the andeans the mohawks nahuan wendat it was their thing

[sings] *you put de seed in de ground and da plants come up*
you put de seed in the ground and da plants come up!!

I didn't mean this to be an inquisition or disquisition about your choice of career
career? I hardly have time for that it gets in the way of my life!

I was just wondering about how it is that you do what you do
because this has been a big farming and ranching area since the first white and black
and asian goldminers came up here looking for the end of the rainbow
we're lucky to get rain up here let alone rainbows in fact people up here put
more value on water falling from the sky than seeing white light broken into its
constituent colours like ravens we too buried food either to soften it up or age it or
to dig up at a later time
when food was scarce but we weren't trying to grow things
farming wasn't part of our *ab* original instructions

and you think farming is part of the original instructions for human beings?

I think that farming as practised by some cultures was part of the birth of capitalism it's one thing to put some food away for the leaner times and quite another to make it into a commodity by selling it imagine owning something that's alive that has its own spirit even creating an idea a notion a verb like "to sell" is rather odd to my way of thinking

from my conversations with them most white people don't seem to believe that their crops have a spirit at least those who have been converted to the religions of the middle east judaism christianity and islam food and farming prefigured standing armies and wars over ideas and power and food

my relatives kind of liked the early farmers before they developed expertise in trapping and hurling projectiles and making traps and poison baiting it was nice to have a little bank of chickens to choose from like the modern atm please enter pin number: xxxx activity: withdrawal account: rhode island red would you like a receipt yes I'll use it as a napkin

you put a lot of faith in your own oral tradition don't you think that might be seen to be presumptuous? human beings of western persuasion like to see things written down so that they can be filed and registered and subpoenaed

I think that you and I both know that history ended before it even started the narrative of being and becoming is just a way of invoking social evolution and of filling in time between eating sleeping procreating and easing nature if you want a medicine wheel just look at the bodily functions including the continuity of the species

just think though about the lean times planning for famine

have you ever seen a fat coyote even in a zoo famine and eating in moderation or even below moderation if you are surrounded by plenty though different in terms of causative agency are not so much about satiating one's needs and desires as making do with enough or even a little less than enough the *stl'atl'imx* people from the *sachteen* area used to say they had 4 numbers 1 2 3 and enough though with variations depending on the size of the family community and of course planning ahead for winter what about the times when there's not much to eat if you had a ranch of say rabbits wouldn't that be handy?

you mean all fenced in and everything have you ever tried to fence without thumbs holding a hammer or using a stapler and there was no chickenwire back then and no chickens or phds

hmm?

post hole diggers for rabbits you have to put your fenceposts and your wire down deep otherwise they'll just dig their way to freedom or chew down the posts besides it has never been our way to deny freedom to our fellow creature sure we'll remove their freedom by killing them and eating them but not by making their lives captive

but to farm you don't have to ranch

so no chickens pigs rabbits cattle ground squirrels guinea pigs llamas water buffalo yaks goats and sheep

no just planting seeds

ah but you have to dig up the ground there's the nub coyote skeletons and muscle structures aren't built for that kind of labour we were made more for skulking sneaking and ambushing

hmm sounds like human beings

mm and ravens

we're much more in the open we work with the mind we con- rather than in- fuse

hmm yourselves for sure though you are good at getting a fellow creature's sustenance away freeing them of it anyway getting back to farming when we walk through the bush

and do our business at some point things grow from what comes out of us the spent refigured nitrogen and phosphorus

nobody ever doubted that

but you see we do farm in our own way some of us dig a bit of a depression when we do our stuff but some just go under a bush

are you saying that you are responsible for the existence of the forests here and the sage brush the wetlands the prairie not alone mind you but we all do our part in returning to the earth so it remains fertile we just do the farmers job without having to put in the labour of fencing off land finding food for the captive animals building shelter for them having a bunch of animals living together that wouldn't give each other the time of day if they lived in the bush

time? nobody worried much about the time we knew when it was time to eat or sleep or cruise the airwaves start a family whatever time wasn't held captive in a clock or an hourglass time for us was space the toc without the tic

or *vice versa* it wasn't even about heartbeats
or drum beats or measuring anything

during the last big freeze up when the glaciers covered most of the province there were no forests or streams or biospheres unless you count the lichen growing on the dirt that blew around in the wind and landed on the snowpack everything that used to be there was now crushed beneath advancing or retreating glaciers

it was tough finding anything to eat there were moss munchers lichen slurpers and rock chompers without anybody to kill or corral or brand them

mammoths mastodons musk oxen caribou living in transspecific peace

don't forget those nasty urwolves urbear sabretooth felines

whewww! and it was cold up there on the ridge

but we collected musk ox fur made *qiviut* sweaters leggings head cover

knowing it would be a few thousand years before ecosystems started to develop following the retreating of the glaciers the melting of the ice caps that's when shapeshifting comes in handy you can change into something that doesn't get hungry or you can migrate quickly to where the food was

everybody seemed happier back then there was less carbon dioxide

ah but there was more nitrous oxide accompanied by increased faunal flatulence the dance of nitrogen and hydrogen the scent of...
global warming which when it was minus 90 degrees in the shade sounded like a good thing

but also caused some difficulties for the then dominant species there was lots of disgruntlement amongst the furred ones the fatliners the behooved the feathered ones

but they only had themselves to blame I mean they were the ones widening the hole in the ozone with their gaseous digestive byproducts

don't forget the contribution of erupting volcanoes in the interior that caused massive flooding they weren't cfc's or hfc's but their contribution did not go unnoticed

eructations abounded across the ices with narry an environmentalist to measure any of it

but 10 thousand years later there they are with their ice boring machines and rock boring machines measuring it all whew!

we were all environmentalists as well as environments back then
we were on all sides of the equations
though we were blessedly without science to analyze and proclaim

loss of environmental sustainability was the talk of the ice shelf
what'll we do when the ice sheets melt
there'll be no more lichen or moss of an edible variety
it will be the end of life as we know it
everything will be wetland desert rainforest and grassland
eventually we'll have to migrate north invade the territory of other creatures

the mountain goats didn't seem to mind the ice migrating northwards skywards
they could live at a number of altitudes in a number of ecozones

they were isobaric isothermic and seemed to thrive no matter
what the weather and climate were up to

remember the flashfloods the flashfreezes and now the same glaciers
are very much on the wane or gone

the west is blaming india and china and the third world for wanting what they have
they say 'lower your birthrate' while the east says lower your deathrate okay
we'll compromise and go into a recession and see how that works for a bit

maybe if the domestic cattle farted something not ecocidic it wouldn't be so bad
what if they farted oxygen or aromatic amino acids then people could farm the air
aghhhh but the increased oxygen would affect the plants that need the CO₂

then maybe some tough decisions need to be made
well you know how the westerners are interested in carbon trading maybe
for every tonne of carbon dioxide and other ozone kiboshers there could be a
corresponding removal of a tonne of human being kilo for a kilo for a kilo

you can't punish people and livestock for their bodily processes that would be
unfairly targeting the poor people who are trying to catch up economically and in
terms of health and wellness after all it is the west that is wanting to colonize
evangelize the world with capitalism and since the west is so interested in formulas
and equations and corporate responsibility then it can participate in giving of their
flesh

just so long as it doesn't give an unfair advantage to the personhood of people over
the personhood of corporations which would mean going against world free trade
rules and regulations *hail to the thief!*

this is starting to sound like a jonathan swift solution

but if bad came to badder or bat to batter the politicians and ceo's and users of machines and instruments would just employ euphemism and doubletalk to eliminate the conversation about global warming thereby bypassing it completely and utterly

their words too would be taxed spoken words have weight they use up good air to make bad a dollar charged per phony phoneme double for vowels and liquids with a discount for retroflex r's and glottal stops

but the people would just continue to use language to justify retaining and maintaining their rude habitudes

where would you start?

wake up with the sun and go to bed with it which would do away with the need for a lot of unnecessary lighting and mega or gigawattage as well as candles kerosene and oil lamps

but people in the west need excess it's their right look at their constitutions and laws and practises though I guess ecuador's new constitution stands above many others

eat locally produce from local materials only no more long distance transportation of consumer items

including food? people would rebel against whom? themselves?

that's taking the 100 kilometre diet that extra mile

produce food differently and everywhere even in the north

there's very little growing of crops in the north because of the short growing season and greenhouse culture hasn't become popular because of the expense

voice over: oh god we're out of cigarettes no more booze no coffee no tea no diet soft drinks we're out of chips and chocolate call in the troops

people need their needs perhaps they look like luxuries to others but they are necessities if they're needed

if people are going to consume in such a way that they overtax the healthcare system through bad habits like smoking drugs alcohol poor diet no exercise and by lack of good habits then they will have to change their consumption habits get cardiovascular exercise every day work on prevention rather than technological and

pharmaceutical fixes is the way to go otherwise you're just cleaning up after unnecessary emergencies

this sounds drastic you sound like t colin campbell and the china study stop eating all animal products including milk in all of its forms and throw away the animal protein myth embrace vegetables and fruits and whole cereals

the shape that many people are in mentally physically emotionally spiritually might already be seen by some to be a tragedy requiring drastic measures being healthy and fit takes more effort than being unhealthy and unfit

but people are free to choose what to put into their bodies what not to as adults we have to take responsibility for who we are how we are in the world

but what are we to do when these freedoms that people have won through 'democratic means' destroy the freedoms of other human beings and other parts of creation

that's an exaggeration

to unthinkingly go through life without concern for how the conveniences we take for granted cause pain misery and death throughout the world?
if we don't care who will?

we're not 19th century irish clothing factories with 10 year olds emptying the ashes for the stoves that run the irons and presses

we're worse child labour and coercive labour practices still produce much of what we consume this is supposed to be part of the conversation of environmental education

some would call it a sideline issue though certainly very important

what of the unchallenged freedom within a society to hold captive and then kill tens of billions of domestic animals in slaughter houses every year for their own culinary and gustatory pleasure and lifestyle sustainment
is this the kind of sustainability we are mobilizing for?
to sustain the status quo! to sustain our power over animals' lives and well-being?

the freedom to pretend that their consumer habits are not producing the wasting diseases that are killing their sisters and brothers the freedom to promote greed as a weapon against the poor and the powerless the freedom to promote and practise and reward unrestrained consumerism and its repercussions

I thought that you thought that freedom was a good and necessary thing

'freedom' as the word is used today by world leaders including business leaders is often little more than a euphemism for 'do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law' aleister crowley's tongue in cheek motto

but people believe in freedom

and they will fight to be free to act in unthinking if not downright stupid ways
they will fight to destroy others in the name of democracy
the freedom of the majority [in our case minority] to elect stupid governments
corrupt leaders without a critical mass of caring and action and knowledge
and understanding and courage the dollar will always win

narrator: so coyote and raven as narrative characters as imaginative devices are looking at human beings and their foibles from a place removed from human being

ahem I'm not sure who invited you to join our cast or crew but we are not characters nor are we devices nor are we literary tropes we are not products of the imagination nor are we fictional and the only one foibling around here is you with your trans-structural ideas about literature what do you know about orature? the human being as storyteller

we are sublimations from a 'where' where words and other devices of representation do not operate or penetrate in our oral storying the words are simply gesturing toward what cannot in fact be said

there is no way of symbolically linking here with there because there is no 'there' it is simply a literary foil a presumed locative transformation

narrator: so does that mean that those who are contributing on a mega-scale to global warming can use the same argument about why they continue to consume at voracious and irresponsible rates

much of the responses to global warming are about evasion so that people can just get on with 'business as usual' this very misdirection is why such serious changes have to be made not just talked about

lots of people don't really believe there is a global warming problem or they pay lip service to it maybe why environmental education isn't taken up seriously in education

they're the same people who will naysay even the most rigorously researched evidence demonstrating human causes for climate change

narrator: people aren't going to change they are addicted to entitlement as their right so we might as well live with it and do the best we can

while carrying on the same old same old? when will collective action be taken by the democratic electors? for the most part human beings in groups learn at notoriously slow rates and they don't want to change

and what if they are too stupid or ignorant or lazy to vote for change politicians are not going to go against their electors

narrator: so there you have it folks people are not going to change they will make trivial or token changes but that's about it the weather is next

coyote what if we could take them into the future say 25 years 50 years?

wouldn't make any difference people don't want to lose their conveniences at least most of them don't they have appetites and are ruled by them

so you don't think that legislation will work? penalties won't work?

who is going to enforce the regulations the laws what kind of punishments would be meted out by judges and who will enforce the enforcers or judge the judges legislate the legislators we're dreaming if we expect any significant change

people do like their suv's their cruises their toys their active lifestyles they think that they deserve them I worked hard for this and I will *have* this!!

what about democracy (pause) will it work? will people obey the laws will they even encourage politicians to pass laws that they don't want and don't think they need

there is no hope unless you can replace what people feel they are entitled to with something acceptable

so are we to dispense bandaids until doomsday?

drastic measures need to be taken or no-one will take this seriously we need a time machine we need to take people back reprogram them get rid of what is missing

isn't this a kind of retroactive or retrofitting eugenics that's how science got into the mess it's in knowing what's best having access to the real truth? sounds a bit like fascism

part of the problem with democracy as it now operates is that voters are uninformed and/or apathetic and/or stupid and/or acting in bad faith and those whom they elect aren't any better and their positions of power might make them less able to be effective when the presence of an event horizon twists matter or light it doesn't

corrupt the light the light simply follows the path that is written into the forces that have created the black hole as well as the perceptions and presumptions of the observers

so who is it who has the right answers besides you and me?

it's not the polls and it's certainly not the intellectuals the blue collar workers so?

children children who have not been raised to feel entitled to everything that they 'deserve'

so should they be the legislators how about scientists who will interpret and determine the veracity their findings—more children? even having fiduciary power to act as trustees for children is bound to create or sustain corruption we all know what the federal government in canada has done to the first peoples here with respect to their fiduciary responsibilities and what western education has done to our children it's a disaster look at what has been done to all manner of people whom the government and 'the people' deemed to not be fit to look after themselves

we can only have the knowledge and willingness to act on a systemic and megascale that societies are ready for! people seem most able or willing to follow their appetites rather than their instincts how can education be forced on a people? who knows what the repercussions of x or y is?

what value is good intention if it is nearsighted and blindered?

I think that we need more story sharing like townhall meetings or comings together of neighbourhoods I'm looking at the intentions of the obama campaign to bring together people in hope but at the other end the administration is still bombing civilians what do we do with the decisions people make? what do we do with their words publish them? put them on the internet? drop them as leaflets?

it's tough knowing what works when we spend so much time determining what doesn't work I remember that cartoon of a bunch of environmentalists in australia all arguing about which preposition to use to describe the relationship between the word 'environment' and 'education' they are standing around the last living tree in australia which is dying of thirst meanwhile they argue

perhaps people getting together hashing things out is what is needed the willing will come together

well I remember not that many years ago the talk by george w bush about the "coalition of the willing" we know all about how that ended up

we can forecast but we can't foretell we have to keep up the fight and know that
people of all ages are doing the same including those in the spirit world
coyote I think we should start dinner

looks good raven I'll start a fire for tea

kukwstum

nia:wen

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Notes on Contributors

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