



***Subjects of Intergenerational Justice: Indigenous Philosophy, the Environment and Relationships* by Christine J. Winter. Abingdon: Routledge, 2022**

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“Subjects of Intergenerational Justice: Indigenous Philosophy, the Environment and Relationships” is a timely response to global environmental challenges and their future-oriented outlook, deeply rooted in the cosmovisions of those traditionally left out, indigenous peoples. It is principally argued that predominant Western worldviews and their underlying assumptions(!) fail to appreciate the scale of threats to environmental sustainability, including climate change, resource extraction and environmental degradation, broadly seen as the outcomes of industrialisation. As a response, Christine J. Winter provides a critical account of Intergenerational Environmental Justice Theory (IEJ), laying at the core of this endeavour, in the sense that IEJ remains, as she argues, permeated by a Western, universalising, neo-colonial framing, somewhat alienated from Māori, Aboriginal and First Nations’ (environmental) philosophies and collective duties. Accordingly, the book further juxtaposes what could be broadly understood as knowledge systems and worldviews, their very epistemological and ontological foundations, being inherently dichotomous while allowing IEJ to predominate given its hegemonic stance.

She also manages, successfully, to disentangle the sophisticated economic rationale underlying Western thought, by critically engaging with property or other material bases, hence shifting the focus from the supposedly economic value of the nonhuman to human wants and needs. Another related core claim she makes relates to individual property and its interference with intergenerational rights: liberal materialism, it is argued, manifestly builds on the ownership of nonhuman assets while sustaining an economic growth rationale. Similar arguments are made in relation to the environment which she subsumes under the idea of domination, humanity’s domination of nature that is, and the economic exploitation of nature. On the other side of the spectrum, we find ourselves exploring complex rights-and-responsibility relations: inspired

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by environmental equity theory, the author portrays such perspective as building an intergenerational nexus that considers future generations as rights holders who have interests that are “sufficiently weighty to impose obligations on others” (190) (current generations), following Simon Caney’s work. As a corollary, Winter poses the question “what proportion of benefits may the living take, and how much of the burden must future generations shoulder?” (10).

By way of conceptualising this further, a distinction is drawn between a Liberal/Rationalist Worldview and an Indigenous/Grounded Worldview which meet in what she calls a ‘mismatched discourses’ whereby indigenous cosmovisions prove to be of special importance throughout the book, building, quintessentially, on relationality, being place-based, collective, cosmological and distinguishing itself by a continuous temporality. Indigenous worldviews may indeed be understood as providing an alternative theoretical framework for Intergenerational Justice (IJ) in responding to anthropogenic environmental degradation, globally speaking, and practically, rearticulating the relationship between policy, nature and indigenous peoples.

Winter also does so empirically, by drawing on two case studies on Australian Aboriginal and Aotearoa Māori peoples. This may concern, classically, indigenous resistance towards resource exploitation, standing in opposition to the *Iwi* approach, or the *Kanyini* philosophy, as directly opposed to individualistic approaches to IJ, or more broadly, as an extension of the exclusive human frame to enrich human rights approaches, also in view of decolonising IEJ. What remains to be explored concerns its larger implications for indigenous (collective) rights which the book does only in a peripheral manner by referring to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, possibly owing to the limited ambition in making a legal theoretical contribution. Indeed, Winter’s analysis bears considerable potential for spelling out obligations, rights holdership and duty bearing, but also procedurally, examining more closely how her ideas could be invoked by victims and how justice could be accessed in practice. For good reasons, the author seeks interdisciplinary dialogue with other neighbouring fields which she spells out, that is, environmental and intergenerational philosophy, political theory, indigenous studies and decolonial studies and environmental humanities.

The book predominantly strives to make a theoretical contribution, notably by distancing itself from the conventional understanding of time (as a forward moving concept), and instead, it refers to the past, present and future form IEJ may take, hence relating current conduct to past and future duties. A related consideration concerns the author’s emphasis on inter-human and human-non-human relations, giving rise to a novel manifestation of IEJ. Such alternative IEJ paradigm, it is argued, has successfully absorbed what is described as an “entanglement of transcendental, human and nonhuman, past, present and future intrinsic to Māori and Aboriginal ontologies”, (173) what Western practice has been treating in an isolated, reductionist and dividing way, with its sole focus on human interactions.

Winter’s main critique concerns indeed the continuing oppression of indigenous peoples in Western justice theory and its claims for universality despite its manifest ignorance of indigenous duties articulated by their proper legal and governmental orders and philosophies. In other words, she states “in making a claim to universalism theory perpetuates injustice” (192). This, it is argued, finds its root in the colonial project itself which spurs so-called epistemic ignorance, referring to the often violent

repression of knowledge in society and academia, of indigenous lived experiences as well as their ontologies, judicial orders and politics. Rather than demonising justice theories per se however, it is referred to the key assumptions – material consumption, anthropocentrism or mechanical time – that exert limiting effects on the very parameters defining theorists' scope of work. Indeed, Winter herself redefines, in the course of the book, her research objective: from engaging with the relationships establishing conditions of injustice to decolonising IEJ altogether. The book does not miss out on taking a multiplicity of theoretical avenues, yet what remains to be explored is the very inner life of IEJ, that is, the way predominant and indigenous worldviews interact following, for instance, Sousa Santos' inter-legality or other (legal) pluralistic paradigms; the further spelling out of what self-determination and autonomies or collective rights would mean in the IEJ context; or the way indigenous peoples (and their rights) would find recognition in daily policy-practice as it relates to intergenerational concerns.

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