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STUDIES ON THE ANTHROPOCENE AND ECOCRITICISM

Editors

João Ribeiro Mendes, Cláudia Toriz Ramos, Orfeu Bertolami, Maria do Carmo Mendes

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METAMORPHOSIS BEYOND RESILIENCE: AN INDIGENOUS WAY TO ECOLOGICAL ADAPTATION

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Abstract
This article develops a critique of adaptation as the dominant paradigm in contemporary climate politics, focusing on its articulation through the concept of resilience. While adaptation has gained prominence as a pragmatic response to unavoidable ecological disruption, I argue that resilience reproduces conservative, technocratic, and depoliticizing assumptions that constrain the possibilities of a truly transformative adaptation. Drawing on critical climate theory and political ecology, the paper highlights how resilience discourse shifts responsibility onto individuals while leaving intact the structural drivers of ecological crisis. As an alternative, the article engages with Amazonian Indigenous Knowledge, emphasizing cosmologies centered on metamorphosis and multispecies relationality. These perspectives articulate a non-anthropocentric model of socio-ecological life grounded in reciprocity, transformation, and more-than-human diplomacy. By contrasting resilience with metamorphic ontologies, the paper advances a rethinking of adaptation as a transformative, relational, and decolonial practice, capable of reconfiguring the epistemic and political foundations of ecological thought and action.

Keywords: Adaptation; Resilience; Metamorphosis; Amazonia.

Resumo
Este artigo desenvolve uma crítica da adaptação enquanto paradigma dominante na política climática contemporânea, centrando-se na sua articulação através do conceito de resiliência. Embora a adaptação tenha ganho proeminência enquanto resposta pragmática a uma perturbação ecológica inevitável, argumento que a resiliência reproduz pressupostos conservadores, tecnocráticos e despolitizantes que constrangem as possibilidades de uma adaptação verdadeiramente transformadora. Recorrendo à teoria crítica do clima e à ecologia política, o artigo evidencia como o discurso da resiliência transfere a responsabilidade para os indivíduos, deixando intactos os fatores estruturais que impulsionam a crise ecológica. Como alternativa, o artigo dialoga com os

Saberes Indígenas Amazónicos, enfatizando cosmologias centradas na metamorfose e na relacionalidade multiespécie. Estas perspetivas articulam um modelo não-antropocêntrico de vida socioecológica, alicerçado na reciprocidade, na transformação e na diplomacia mais-que-humana. Ao contrapor a resiliência às ontologias metamórficas, o artigo avança no sentido de repensar a adaptação como uma prática transformadora, relacional e descolonial, capaz de reconfigurar os fundamentos epistémicos e políticos do pensamento e da ação ecológicos.

Palavras-chave: Adaptação; Resiliência; Metamorfose; Amazónia.

Introduction

In this paper, I develop a critique of the concept of adaptation and examine how it shapes contemporary responses to the ecological crisis. International debates on adaptation politics have largely been framed through the language of resilience. I argue, however, that the interpretive framework of resilience reproduces epistemic-ontological and political-economic assumptions that constrain the innovative and transformative potential of adaptation politics. Rather than remaining within this framework, adaptation can be reinterpreted through non-Western and Indigenous conceptions of socio-ecological life. In particular, I show how the Amazonian Indigenous conception of metamorphosis articulates a vision of multispecies cohabitation and of political and epistemic responses to the global ecological crisis capable of moving beyond the limits of resilience discourse.

The paper is structured as follows. In Section 1, I introduce the general features of the idea of adaptation and subsequently critique its mainstream

interpretation through the lens of resilience. In Section 2, I contextualize and analyze the so-called Amazonian Indigenous ecological Knowledge, grounding it in a cosmological conception of living reality that, centered on a fundamental idea of universal metamorphism, establishes the phenomenological and socio-ecological foundations for a symmetrical and non-anthropocentric relationship between human communities and more-than-human systems. Finally, I draw conclusions regarding the epistemic-ontological and ethical-political relationship between the concepts of adaptation, resilience, and metamorphosis.

1. Resilience and its discontents

In international climate politics, debate has long centered on two themes: “mitigating” ecological harm and “adapting” to inevitable disruptions. With the 2015 Paris Agreement, however, “Climate Change Adaptation” moved to the forefront of the global agenda, signaling a broad recognition of climate catastrophe as unavoidable. According to the IPCC AR6 report (2023), Adaptation is “the process of adjustment to actual or expected climate and its effects in human systems, aiming to moderate harm or exploit beneficial opportunities”. Under the category of “adaptation” fall all those measures aimed at reducing the vulnerability of communities, ecosystems, and infrastructures to the impacts of Climate Change that are now widely perceived as unavoidable (e.g. securing coastal areas, early warning systems, drought-resistant crops, sustainable urban planning).

In international climate politics, adaptation has therefore been characterized by an aura of "pragmatism" in the face of a condition of risk and danger that is now scientifically established and politically acknowledged.[1] Long-termism, the appeal to a necessarily global commitment, and the political and scientific optimism associated with mitigation projects (e.g. renewable energy, reforestation, low-emission industrial technologies, global standards and regulations on emissions) often make these appear more like charismatic ideals than concrete electoral or operational programs (Jamieson, 2014). At the same time, proposals such as "Degrowth" and "Half-Earth Socialism" situate both adaptation and mitigation within a framework of "concrete utopia", in which the local-pragmatic dimension and the ideal-normative one are integrated as far as possible within a program of revolutionary economic-ecological planning (Hickel, 2020; Vettese & Pendergrass, 2022). Therefore, we have to confront the risk that the post-2015 adaptation renaissance – a recognition by global politics of the

[1] The extent to which the recent resurgence of climate denialism under the second Trump administration in the United States has influenced the adaptive pragmatist consensus remains to be fully determined (Fiorino, 2026). This consensus had previously underpinned progressive, as well as centrist-moderate, support in the Western world for initiatives such as the Green New Deal and the European Green Deal (Graziano 2023). The Covid-19 pandemic and the more recent explosive proliferation of international war scenarios appear to have shifted the focus of national and international political debates, often far from ecological concerns (Harrison & McIntosh Sundstrom, 2025). This shift seems also to have undermined the sense of "priority" and "urgency" that environmental issues had acquired during the 2010s.

scientific evidence of a critical and now unstoppable ecological transformation – translates into a preference for short-term convenience, business as usual, and the governmental and capitalist interests of nation-states and powerful private individuals over the epochal prospect of global planning and the subordination of profit motives and sovereign state introversion.

However, this connotation of adaptation politics can only be fully understood by examining the idea that, more than any other, has been central to its rise: resilience. At the heart of the 2015 shift lies "resilience thinking": a scientific, political, and technological framework for understanding adaptation within a complex socio-ecological world. From a resilience perspective, socio-ecological systems are conceived as "complex adaptive systems" (CAS), that is: *interdependent* networks of human and non-human beings, shaped by *uncertainty*, *evolutionary* dynamics, and *feedback loops* across scales (Holling, 1973). Examples of CASs can be forest ecosystems, coral reefs, food webs, microbial systems, neural networks, but also car traffic, financial markets, social networks' "memes", AI systems, and big corporations. A CAS is characterized by structural plasticity and emergent properties: it adapts and "learns" over time, as qualitatively new global (macroscopic) behaviors arise from its local (microscopic) interactions. The system's behavior cannot be fully understood by analyzing its components in isolation; rather, it is the network of interactions among them that generates nonlinear processes shaping the system's global dynamics. Under certain conditions, such systems may undergo

critical transitions in which small perturbations can significantly alter their trajectories, potentially leading to chaotic or highly unpredictable dynamical regimes (Ruelle, 1991).

Resilience, then, refers to the adaptive capacity of complex living systems in the face of risk and disaster. It can mean three things: the ability of a CAS to *bounce back* after shocks; its capacity to *adjust* to changing conditions and uncertainties; and, when required, the *transformative reorganization* of its very structures of equilibrium (Brown, 2016; Gunderson & Holling, 2002). After a fire, dormant seeds in the soil of temperate forests germinate and vegetation reestablishes itself within a few years, returning the forest to a configuration similar to that which preceded the disturbance. In this case, resilience appears as the capacity to *bounce back*. By contrast, when sea levels rise, mangrove forests may slowly migrate inland, modifying the structure of the ecosystem while maintaining its overall ecological functionality. Here the system does not return to its previous state, but instead *adjusts* to new conditions. Finally, in some cases resilience involves a deeper *transformation* of the system, leading to the emergence of a new ecological regime (*regime shift*). A well-known example is the transition of many eutrophic lakes from a clear-water state dominated by aquatic plants to a turbid state dominated by algae.

The controversial nature of the resilience framework stems from its rhetorical and political deployment – in other words, from the way it is used as a *dispositif* of climate governamentality (Duit et al.,

2010). In recent years, many scholars across the social and climate sciences have criticized the concept of adaptation for being defeatist, depoliticizing, and absolving responsibility (Taylor, 2015). Others argue that adaptation itself is not the problem – after all, it is now widely recognized as inevitable. The real issue, they suggest, lies in the language of resilience as the dominant interpretation of the adaptation paradigm (Mikulewicz, 2019). Authors highlight the inherently conservative, technocratic, and neoliberal character of mainstream resilience discourse:

> [T]he form of subjectivity inculcated through neoliberal discourses of risk, security, and governance today, presented as essential to bear the institutionalization of markets, private property rights, and free trade, is not the rational, sovereign subject of mythic representations of the liberal tradition, but a resilient, humble, and disempowered being that lives a life of permanent ignorance and insecurity. The account of the world envisaged and constituted by neoliberalism is one that presupposes the unknowability of the world, and likewise one which interpellates a subject that is permanently called upon to live in accordance with this unknowability; a subject for whom the bearing of risk and its responsibilization is a required practice without which he or she cannot grow and prosper in the world (Chandler & Reid, 2016, p. 3).

Employing the jargon of resilience, according to Chandler and Reid, development agencies elaborate a

worldview that is based on the assumption that the world is disastrous. Then, this view calls forth a subject permanently tasked with bearing that disaster. Endurance becomes the very condition of growth, the price of belonging to the world. In this framing, resilience is not about changing the world, it's about bending oneself to fit it. The resilient subject accepts disaster as normal, adapts to suffering rather than questioning its causes, and takes on the endless demand to remake itself. To be resilient here is not to resist or transform. It is, in fact, to give up the power of resistance and transformation.

Resilience thinking seems indeed to embrace the famous motto: "it is easier to imagine the end of the world than to imagine the end of capitalism". Resilience's way to follow this dictum would be by "imagining everything that could go wrong", thus fostering a "culture of [constant] preparedness" (Neocleus, 2013). The world must be accepted in its disastrous state, with an apologetic stance toward the extractive capitalist system that has produced and continues to produce the crisis, while yielding to a sense of inevitability about what is to come. Within this framing, even in the face of the end of the world, all that remains is to "be resilient": to cultivate skills for "bouncing back", but never to seek revolutionary alternatives beyond the very ecocidal system that caused the catastrophe.

Let's take one example. Mikulewicz (2019) analyzes a United Nations project in São Tomé and Príncipe. Here, project staff tried to build an "adaptive consensus" by framing the county's agriculture's

problems as technical: lack of training and of technologies for floods and droughts, weak safety nets, even the absence of solar freezers. What this framing ignored however were the real *roots* of crisis: exploitative labor, deep inequalities, the subordination of women, a violent history of colonialism, and present-day extractivism and petro-dollar corruption. From the UN's view, problems would persist unless smallholders reinvented themselves as entrepreneurs and embraced "resilience". Mikulewicz, in turn, delivers a sharp critique: resilience often works as a form of *nihilism*, depoliticizing development and stripping people of political subjectivity. The "nihilistic" character of the resilience imaginary lies in the limits it places on our transformative capacity. Everything can be made adaptive, every condition renegotiated, except the political-economic foundations of the neoliberal status quo, with its market-centered solutionism and post-political managerialism. Individuals are stripped of critical and political agency, overloaded with responsibility for flexible adaptation, and reassured by a friendly capitalistic cosmology (Capozziello, 2023).

Yet, ecological catastrophes never occur in a socio-political vacuum. The devastation of Hurricane Katrina in 2005, which disproportionately affected poor African American communities in segregated New Orleans, is a classic example of how disasters mirror social inequalities (Brown, 2016). Years later, posters in New Orleans read: "Stop calling me resilient. I'm not resilient. Because every time you say, 'Oh, they're resilient', you can do something else to me". As claimed by Chandler & Reid (2016, p. 2): "In place of resilience

[…] we need to revalorize an idea of the human subject as capable of acting on and transforming the world rather than being cast in a permanent condition of enslavement to it".

But we have to add another layer to this critique of resilience thinking, a more properly *ontological* one. The reactive and managerial approach of resilience thinking reveals a deeper structural problem in contemporary adaptation politics, which portrays ecological catastrophes as *external* threats. This framework is problematic because it fuels once again the modern paradigm of nature domination: a biopolitical drive to make the living world a governable *external* object.

However, engaging with the ecological crisis is not about adapting to an external, changing environment. Rather, in the words of Marcus Taylor (2015, pp. 18-19), "it is about challenging how we produce ourselves. Instead of a politics of adaptation, we need a politics of producing ourselves differently", both beyond the post-political framework of the neoliberal market economy, *and* beyond the more general Modern imaginary of rationalist domination of nature. There can be no adaptation within this onto-political "business-as-usual".

We must therefore ask ourselves how to imagine new political-economic and ontological models of adaptation to ecological transformations, models capable not only of renegotiating the extractive-capitalist system, but also of questioning the very ontological foundation that sustains it: that is, the Western dualism between culture and nature, human

and nonhuman (Latour, 2004). Philippe Descola (2013) refers to the ontology of modernity as "naturalism". Naturalism conceives "an unchanging mute and impersonal nature", that can therefore become the object of relentless domination and indiscriminate extraction (p. XVI). If true adaptation to the ecological crisis requires that we learn to "produce ourselves differently", then any genuinely transformative model of adaptation must be grounded in a radical rethinking of this Western human-nonhuman relation.

2. Amazonian metamorphism

I propose that we look for *an alternative imaginative model of socio-ecological adaptation* in a specific place: the Amazon forest. The choice is appropriate for several reasons. First, because it is one of the most famous sites of anthropogenic ecocide. Second, because it is among the planet's most crucial ecological regions. And third, because it is home to Indigenous peoples who, despite centuries of genocide and colonization, have preserved millenary traditions of sustainable coexistence with their environment – traditions whose sophistication powerfully puts our own technical-managerial systems to shame.

The Amazon rainforest is the most biodiverse region on Earth, home to about 10% of all vertebrate and plant species (Antonelli et al., 2018). It stores 57 billion tons of carbon (Finer et al., 2024), plays a crucial role in the global hydrological cycle (Baker et al., 2021), and more broadly regulates the chemical composition of the global atmosphere (Gu et al., 2017). Yet this should not lead us to imagine the Amazon as a pristine,

untouched wilderness, as the popular myth suggests. Bio-archaeological research has shown that much of the region is composed of what scholars call “cultural forests”: landscapes shaped for at least ten thousand years by Indigenous practices of landscape domestication (Balée, 2013). Pre-Columbian Amazonia was indeed a place of immense biocultural richness. Many areas once thought “virgin” have turned out to be enriched anthropogenic soils, ancient agricultural fields, and terrains dense with useful tree species – evidence of Indigenous communities’ sustainable, stabilizing domestication of their environment over millennia. As environmental anthropologist Nicholas Kawa (2016 p. 18) puts it: “More than simply adapting to the environment, it seems, Indigenous societies actively shaped the Amazonian landscape in countless ways”.

In this nexus of adaptation and shaping, we see something radically different from Western practices of environmental exploitation. What emerges are relations of reciprocal assimilation between humans and their environment. These relations benefit both sides: they make an otherwise infertile territory livable for humans, while sustaining the reproduction of the species that uphold the forest’s complex ecosystems. Here, the living is assimilated within a single web of socio-ecological relations, so that one does not adapt *to*, but adapts *with*, *alongside* the environment.

The relationship Western modernity has forged with the Amazon is of a wholly different kind. Rampant deforestation is eroding biodiversity and accelerating climate change. Fires and drought strip soils, while

felled trees release carbon and destroy habitats for countless species (Lapola et al. 2023). Indigenous peoples, too, face existential threats: historically subjected to colonial and neocolonial massacres, they are still being dispossessed of the lands they have inhabited for millennia (Colón, 2024). The impunity of private actors, enabled by corrupt governments, makes the Amazon today a symbol of global ecocide (Rapozo, 2021; Valqui et al., 2014). It is precisely in this clash – between the millennial biocultural ties of Indigenous peoples to the forest and the socio-ecological devastation of capitalist and state power – that we see why the Amazon is such a crucial site for rethinking adaptation beyond the Western paradigm of resilience.

Today, more and more scholars are turning to so-called "Indigenous Knowledge" to inform models and projects of environmental adaptation (Berkes et al., 2000; Miranda et al., 2023). They draw on bio-archaeological evidence such as the *terra preta do índio* (Kawa, 2016), ethical models like the Kichwa people's *Kawsak Sacha* or *Selva Viviente* (Santi & Ghirotto Santos, 2019), traditional agroforestry systems such as the *chakra* in Ecuador and Peru (Coq-Huelva et al., 2017), and rotational fishing practices of peoples such as the Ticuna and the Shipibo-Conibo (Oyuela-Caicedo, 1999). Yet in practice, this often translates into fitting Indigenous Knowledge into frameworks that remain rooted in Western languages and sensibilities (Figueroa Helland, 2022; Gazing Wolf et al., 2024; Cassino et al., 2025). Indigenous practices and concepts are translated and subordinated into schemes built on analytical abstraction and economy-

centered worldviews – an operation that several Indigenous authors argue has also been made possible by the conceptual appropriation carried out by those non-indigenous anthropologists who fail to give voice to Indigenous Knowledge on its own terms and through its own voices (Todd, 2016). As Indigenous scholars and activists note, initiatives such as those led by the United Nations often rhetorically embrace Indigenous Knowledge while at the same time excluding Indigenous representatives from actual decisions about forests and resources. Hernando Castro, of the Nɨpodɨmakɨ (Uitoto) people of Colombia, argues that this colonization of Indigenous lands and languages reproduces the same patterns of discrimination, marginalization, and theft of territories and resources that marked colonial history, in other words, a form of symbolic and material "green grabbing" (Andoke Andoke et al., 2023).

At the root of Indigenous environmental knowledge and management lie complex mythological and cosmological systems: expressions of a thought-*praxis* that must be understood and studied in its diverse modes of expression – verbal, visual, sonic, etc. (Severi, 2017) – and outside the self-referential and "universalist" languages and frameworks of "Modern" knowledge systems (Danner et al., 2022). Indigenous thought imagines more-than-human networks of analogy and resonance, forming the conceptual language of their highly sophisticated ecological understanding and practice. Indigenous Knowledge is inseparable from the language of its ritual and narrative practices (Jecupé, 2001; Albert & Kopenawa, 2013).

Without an education and initiation to them, one misses the subtle nuances and holistic balances perceived only through millennia of cohabitation with the forest. Something a technocratic gaze – framed by deterritorialized notions like "ecosystem services", "natural capital", and "sustainable development" – is not able to grasp.

Amazonian cosmologies are notoriously centered on the idea of *metamorphosis* (Monod-Becquelin, 1982). The metamorphic ecological imagination establishes a more-than-human form of adaptation *with* the environment as something intimate, rather than adaptation *to* the environment as something external. According to Peter Rivière (1994, p. 256), "the native peoples of Amazonia live in a highly transformational world". Much of Amazonian mythology and ritual is in fact characterized by metamorphic narratives (Lévi-Strauss, 1969). These transformations represent, simultaneously, either risks to be guarded against – which one mitigates by observing certain traditions or performing specific rituals – or opportunities to be seized, for example through metamorphic visions derived from dreams or attempts to embody the power of another being, like an animal or spirit.

The metaphysical insight underlying this representation of universal transformativity is an open, extended, and interactive conception of the body, which then allows for metamorphic relationships between the bodies of different species (Descola, 2013; Viveiros de Castro, 2012). For example, behaving like another animal enables one to take the "perspective"

of that animal, thereby exposing oneself to the risk or the opportunity of a transformation into it. This becomes particularly clear when we consider examples such as food prescriptions and prohibitions (Fausto, 2007). Among the Wari' people, prey that is not correctly killed, inspected and ingested may provoke certain types of sickness, in which "the sick person gradually transforms into the animal" that is being eaten (Vilaça, 2002, p. 357).

At the foundation of this universal transformativity lies a framework of intimate ecological relationships between living beings. For example, the Desana people of the Colombian Amazon live in a great energy circuit called the *bogá*, set in motion by the Sun (Reichel-Dolmatoff, 1971). In this view, life unfolds as a multispecies and metamorphic cycle of mutual fertilization, and human morality is measured by how well we preserve these cycles of ecological energy. Differently, the neighboring Makuna people center their cosmovision on a concept of universal predation: the world as a "cosmic food-web" (Århem, 1996). Predation is conceived as a form of procreation: human, animal, and divine reciprocal hunting sustains both their own communities and the overall ecological balance. All mortal beings – humans, animals, and plants – are called *masa*, "person", sharing a common spiritual essence. Species distinctions thus exist only to enable reciprocal predation, while the shared spiritual principle allows metamorphosis between species, reflecting the ontological equality of all living beings.

Among many of these Indigenous communities, "the shaman's task is to regulate [the] vital flow, and to

ensure the ordered reproduction of the distinct classes of beings populating the […] cosmos" (Århem, 1996, p. 188). This is true for several Amazonian traditions, where the *pajé*[2] – master of rituals and narrator of myths – plays a mediating role within the complex eco-cosmology of the forest, and their ability to undergo intentional metamorphosis is their primary tool for fulfilling this role (Praet, 2009). For example, a master-spirit of game animals may retaliate against a hunting community that has overexploited its prey. In such cases, the *pajé* undertakes a mystical journey into the ontological plane of that spirit in order to negotiate, thus becoming, in effect, a spirit themself. In another example, a hunter in need of assistance may require the *pajé* to take the form of a jaguar. Or, in the case of a person afflicted by a pathogenic spirit, the *pajé* enters the patient's body through chants and rituals, embodies the spirit, and drives it out.

At stake here is an epistemological model fundamentally opposed to the Western one, in which the metamorphic adoption of another "subjectivity" replaces the mere instantiation of "objectivity." Whereas the Western scientist or philosopher seeks to "*put* the other into perspective *as an object*," shamanic knowledge instead involves "*adopting* the perspective of the other *as a subject*" (Capozziello, 2024). For example, in order to attain cosmic knowledge, Yanesha

[2] In the Amazonian context, the terms *pajé* and *pajelança* – derived from the Tupi language and with analogous translations in many Indigenous languages – are preferable to *shaman* and *shamanism*, which originally derive from the Mongol-Siberian context (Yamã, 2019).

pajés of eastern Peru try to persuade animals, spirits and meteorological phenomena to share with them magical chants and songs (Santos-Granero, 2006). By learning the songs of "familiar spirits" such as those of opossums, jaguars, anacondas, air and fog, the *pajé* takes on a new identity, which enables them to adopt at will the perspective of these animals or atmospheric phenomena. Rather than *adapting* nature to human will, this knowledge model aims to *adopt* the non-human perspective in order to negotiate mutual survival, wellbeing, and happiness (Yamã, 2019).

Conclusions

Millennia-old Amazonian Indigenous Knowledge can only be understood starting from the forms of thought and imagination – often grouped under the term "cosmovisions" – that develop within ritual, therapeutic, narrative, and various everyday contexts. Far from representing a single, homogeneous body of "doctrines" or "ontologies," Amazonian Indigenous cosmovisions constitute a plural and profound "spiritual habitat," made up of a vast array of diverse practices and ideas, generally united by an inseparable connection to living complexity and to the more-than-human collective (Yamã, 2019). It is through the political framing of a cosmos integrated within a more-than-human spiritual continuity that one can understand phenomena like the *pajelança*, which are not simply "religious," but are certainly sacred, spiritual, ethical, diplomatic, and both individually and collectively therapeutic.

Both Indigenous spiritual leaders and anthropologists converge in recognizing a characteristic shared by the hundreds of Indigenous cosmovisions: a metamorphic conception of the flow of more-than-human life. Therefore, let us ask how metamorphosis can offer a model of adaptation that goes beyond the ontological and political-economic limits of resilience.

At the heart of Amazonian cosmologies lies the idea of a symmetrical dialogue between the human and the non-human worlds. This involves a form of diplomatic *anthropomorphization* of the environment, but one that is *not anthropocentric*. Rather, it rests on a fundamental spiritual commonality among all living beings. What distinguishes species is not an unbridgeable essence, but simply different modes of being, perspectives, and roles within the forest – roles that always remain open to metamorphic crossing. Every living being can speak, persuade, negotiate, and communicate with others, based on the assumption that becoming or assimilating the other is an everyday possibility. This generates a complex system of ties and diplomacies: no action in the forest – be it hunting an animal or cutting down a tree – can be imagined without negotiation with the master-spirits of plants and animals, and more broadly with all non-human peers implicated in the act. Within this framework, Indigenous environmental Knowledge takes shape. Indigenous highly effective systems of sustainable forest management, rotational agriculture and fishing, bioprospecting, and environmental regeneration rest on the cosmological intuition of metamorphic continuity

among beings (Barton 1994; Posey 2002; Virtanen 2019). Adaptation to therefore is not a purely technological or utilitarian adjustment, but a more-than-human enterprise, grounded in actual, everyday *symmetric dialogue and affective encounter* with the living world.

The problem I wish to highlight does not lie in specific solutions. Nor does it lie with resilience itself, which in principle can be understood as a *transformative* willingness to situate oneself within the metamorphic complexity of living chains, thus coinciding with a form of *resistance* to destructive systems of oppression and exploitation. To be problematic is the imaginary behind *mainstream* resilience discourse, which is conservative, dualistic and anthropocentric. The call by governments and international institutions for "resilience" in the face of ecological catastrophe seems aimed at imposing a constraint on the political imagination of individuals. Integrating human society into the living logics of the planet – embedding the individual and collective forms of the *Anthropos* within the morphogenetic continuity of a more-than-human biosphere – necessarily entails a revolutionary realization: the awareness of the need to overcome the mortifying rationalization of life produced by political, economic, technological, and intellectual Modernity. In the face of the perceptions and visions opened by such an ecological imagination, the call for resilience – understood as an apologetic, depoliticized, individualized, conservative, and fearful form of adaptation – resembles a refusal to confront the structural causes of this epochal crisis.

The ecological crisis is a "crisis of imagination", as claimed by Amitav Ghosh (2016). If we cling to the imaginary that created the crisis – seeing nature as separate, something to manage – we won't find real solutions. We must reimagine ourselves, our institutions, our economies as part of the living complexity of the world. In this age of polycrisis, we too must cultivate an ecological imagination that allows us, as Bruno Latour (2017) suggests, to inhabit the "metamorphic zone" of the living world. Life's complexity has a personal, affective dimension. The ecological crisis pushes us to rethink science and politics in light of these irreducibly qualitative, aesthetic, and affective dimensions. Adaptation politics must therefore be accompanied by the creation of new ecological rituals, eco-narratives, and cosmological imaginaries. Our ability to find solutions is bound – perhaps more than our devotion to rationality may let us admit – to our poetic and ritual capacity to imagine new forms of sensuous community with the non-human.

This inevitably entails not only a deconstruction but even a ridiculing of the Promethean *hybris* to which Western knowledge repeatedly proves susceptible. Through the magical solutionism of geoengineering projects and through the presumption that solutions to the ecological crisis can be found within the very technical, economic, and intellectual categories (or rigidities) that have exposed humanity and other species to an unprecedented existential risk, Western thought fails to listen – or turns a deaf ear – to millennia-old forms of knowledge grounded in the peaceful

coexistence with one's territory and with life in its most diverse and encompassing forms.

The claim that the planet as we know it can be saved by a form of green capitalism driven by the very few economic actors who have deliberately appropriated the Earth, from its depths to its atmosphere; by a global technological interventionism ignorant of local contingencies and of the non-linear, glocal systems of relation that structure socio-ecological life; or by a unilateral and imperial climate politics unwilling to acknowledge and compensate for its responsibility in producing systems of socio-ecological vulnerability, amounts to a profound *illusion*. To maintain such an illusion, while refusing to abandon the epistemological framework of profit at all costs, the universalistic centrality of the Global North, and the devitalizing commodification of all that is non-human, is perhaps the clearest manifestation of that "imaginative crisis" which, if perpetuated, will prevent us from saving the planet.

Therefore, for a start, there can be no ecological imagination or thought without a decolonization of our representation of the world. There can be no ecological vision from within techno-solutionist fallacies, from politics incapable – or unwilling – of recognizing the structural connections between global inequalities, international extractive-colonial regimes, and the climate crisis, or from a science and philosophy unable to engage humbly and symmetrically with forms of thought that have for millennia known and acted fruitfully within their socio-ecological environments. Just as, in the words of Chico Mendes,

"environmentalism without class struggle is just gardening," so environmental knowledge without a cosmopolitical intimacy with the non-human amounts to mere quixotism.

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