

# 9 The poetics of climate change and politics of pain

## Sámi social media activist critique of the Swedish state

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Sámi advocacy for environmental justice and human rights stretches back for centuries (Cocq and Dubois, 2020; Ramnarine, 2009; Svendsen, 2021). More recently, social media technologies have given Indigenous peoples and communities new “opportunities to powerfully resist, refute, and reject” settler colonial oppression (Carlson and Frazer, 2020, p. 1). One principal role of digital activism and social media communication is to shape connections between Indigenous protest movements and their joint resistances to powerful global leaders on the unfolding global ecological crisis. This is illustrated by the well-known Standing Rock protests (aka #NoDAPL).<sup>1</sup> The #NoDAPL protest took place in North Dakota, United States, between April 2016 and February 2017, and is recognised as the largest North American Indigenous protest of recent decades, where media usage contributed significantly to forging global connections, support, and outreach. The #NoDAPL protests emerged against a planned pipeline that would transport oil just north of Standing Rock Sioux Tribe reservations’ boundaries and below the Missouri River (Johnson and Kraft, 2018). Circulation of filmed videos and pictures from the protests on social media reached a wide audience and Indigenous community support. Interestingly, images of the welcoming ceremony for three Sámi women later appeared in the news in Sápmi, on their Facebook pages, as well as in a TV series about Sofia Jannok that was televised in Sweden and Norway. Moreover, numerous Indigenous groups created online communities to show solidarity by uploading videos on YouTube – “We – people X – Stand with Standing Rock”. Another widely cited event took place in October 2016, when approximately one million Facebook users checked into the Standing Rock camps to mislead the police, who were rumoured to be tracking protestors on social media (Johnson and Kraft, 2018). These events exemplify how social and digital media play a significant role in forging connections, demonstrating solidarity, and enacting Indigenous agency and activism.

A longstanding issue in Sápmi territory, and hence topic for Sámi activism, is state-owned and multinational companies’ persistent efforts to establish mines or drill for iron ore in landscapes vital to Sámi livelihoods. The Swedish state has generally supported the investment of

mining companies by implementing “pro-mining policies, low mineral taxation, and investments in mining-related infrastructure”, therefore Sámi activists expose the destruction of the land and the disavowal of the Sámi rights (Ojala and Nordin, 2015). However, by the time of writing, Sweden has not yet signed the ILO convention on Indigenous and Tribal people, hence the Sámi lack full legal ownership over their land (Rosamond, 2020).

During the Gállok protests in Sápmi in 2013, that broke out as a response to British company Beowulf Mining initiating exploratory drillings for iron ore near the UNESCO world heritage site of Laponia and adjacent Sámi villages, social media platforms Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook were used extensively to communicate about the events on site (Lindgren and Cocq, 2017; Rosamond, 2020). The Sámi are Europe’s only recognised Indigenous population, whose traditional land traverses Arctic regions of present-day Norway, Sweden, Finland, and the Russia Kola Peninsula (Hilder, 2012). Gállok is one of the most high-profile conflicts and it has gained a strong symbolic meaning for the struggle of Sámi self-determination in Sweden, compared with the Altá conflict in Norway in the late 1970s and early 1980s (Ojala and Nordin, 2015). Locals and activists set up a camp in July 2013 and occupied it until the end of September 2013. Occupations, art installations, and demonstrations took place on site, and several times the police were ordered to evict the protestors. However, the national media did not cover the events until August, and when they did, Indigenous perspectives were largely marginalised. Hence, during the protests and their aftermath, social media were prominent channels to enable the Indigenous voices being heard and develop connections and further collaborations with other activist and Indigenous movements (Lindgren and Cocq, 2017).

It is clear that the usage of diverse media in Sámi contexts has contributed to addressing linguistic and cultural erasure, articulating the rights of self-determination and engaging in larger debates about Sámi culture (Bladow, 2019; Carlson and Frazer, 2020; Cocq and Dubois, 2020). The first periodicals and newspapers in Sámi languages appeared already in the late 1800s and early 1900s. In their works, authors such as Johan Turi and Elsa Laula Renberg addressed minority-majority relationships and the injustices that affected the Sámi people (Cocq and Dubois, 2020). In Sweden, the presence of the Sámi, who were traditionally known by the derogatory Lapp category, was significant in defining Sweden’s racial identity (Mattson, 2014). Swedish scientists defined Sweden as modern and European by making a distinction between Swedes and Sámi. Starting in 1913, the Swedish state introduced the policies that forbade Sámi people to settle, required that they work in reindeer herding, and intermarriage with Swedes was prohibited (Mattson, 2014). Throughout the 1930s and the beginning of the 1940s, Sweden practised racialised eugenics, for instance by measuring Sámi facial features and heads to scientifically prove their genetic inferiority (Rosamond, 2020).

After World War II, a strong Sámi resistance movement emerged as a response to the mentioned political and cultural suppression. The Sámi began imagining the transnational Sápmi community via the territories that traversed the Arctic regions of Norway, Sweden, Finland, and the Russian Kola Peninsula (Hilder, 2012). Along with literature and visual art, Sámi musical performance has been vital to the revival of Sámi culture. Joik has emerged as a Sámi national song in the late 1960s, and it has become a tool to communicate and articulate the Sámi indigeneity. Music festivals and performances have been significant for Sámi cultural and political revival and sovereignty (Hilder, 2012). More recently, the intensification of publications go hand in hand with access to technologies, and development of Sámi media. Radio broadcasts, television shows, and the use of the internet and digital networks as tools for activism provide opportunities to express Indigenous concerns and resist state politics.

Sámi activism is marked by an increased attention towards the recognition of Indigenous rights, and which exists alongside a continued or even intensified industrial push to exploit the resources on Indigenous lands due to globalisation and neoliberal economic agreements (Cocq and Dubois, 2020). The reality of climate change is more present than ever and due to the rapidly changing weather patterns and shrinking access to lands, resource-based practices are difficult to maintain. Moreover, many Indigenous people live in poorer socio-economic conditions as a result of colonial histories (Whyte, 2016). The Sámi are strongly affected by the disturbing changes in weather patterns and state-supported policies that render grazing land useless, such as the exploitation of hydropower, forest roads, logging operations, and tourist resorts (Furberg et al., 2011). Many of Sweden's mineral-rich areas are geographically located in Sámi territory and there are a lot of disputes about the extraction of natural resources in the North of the country. The mining industry plays a significant role in Sweden's economic development, leading to new jobs, tax revenues, and the revival of unpopulated areas.

Despite the opposition of environmentalists and local Sámi populations, Sweden continues to support mining projects. In March 2022, the Swedish government awarded a licence to a British company Beowulf Mining to proceed with an iron ore mine in Gállok (Johnson, 2022). Since the protests in 2013, the Sámi opposed the plans for the mine as the open pit mine will endanger the ecosystem and reindeer migration. Prior to the decision making, the UN Human Rights advisors urged Sweden to stop the mine project, arguing that large amounts of dust with heavy metals will be produced in an open pit mine, and the water sources will be impacted by the deposit of the toxic waste (Ahlander, 2022). However, the Swedish government approved a mining project, claiming that the company would have to meet a set of environmental conditions.

Due to growing access to digital products and networks, Indigenous activists make use of the internet to draw attention to Indigenous issues

and mount protests. The trend can be seen among the Indigenous activists in Sápmi, Greenland, the United States, Mexico, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, and elsewhere in the world (Cocq and Dubois, 2020). In the Nordic context, there has been a growing body of work analysing Nordic colonial complicity (Jensen and Loftsdóttir 2012; Keskinen et al., 2009). Compared to other colonial contexts, “colonial processes were typically more insidious, gradual and less *physically* violent in Scandinavia” (Kuokkanen, 2019, p. 8). For example, in Sweden, the erasure and assimilation of Sámi histories goes hand in hand with the refusal to regard Swedish history as imperial (Tlostanova et al., 2019). However, what lies at the centre of this discourse is the historical and on-going dispossession of Sámi people of their land in the name of (settler) nation-building and industrial development (Tlostanova et al., 2019). Scandinavian settler colonialism aimed at weakening the self-determination of the Sámi and interfered with their lifestyle by imposing taxes, closing borders, and implementing assimilation policies. Furthermore, in contemporary Nordic governments’ climate mitigation policies, promoting renewable energy and increase of technology continue the colonial dispossession of Sámi lands and threaten traditional Sámi livelihoods (see Liboiron, 2021; Normann, 2020). For example, industrial scale wind turbines have a disastrous effect on reindeer herding, due to the infrastructure required to build and maintain the turbines. Hence, what is framed as an environmentally friendly solution against climate change endangers sustainable ways of Sámi livelihoods. The recent Sámi parliament’s President Aili Keskitalo referred to these paradoxes as “green colonialism”, where the Sámi practices and needs are compromised to promote greener policies and ideologies (Arctic Circle, 2020).

Increasingly, and much because of historically lacking direct means of meaningful political participation, Indigenous activists and artists raise issues of environmental destruction and human rights violations through the means of digital technology (Carlson and Frazer, 2021; Duarte, 2017). Social media platforms offer possibilities to oppose and refuse colonial violence and racist, white supremacist ideology, to forge transnational bonds of solidarity and resource-sharing amongst Indigenous communities, and thereby work towards collective imagining and realising a future otherwise (Carlson and Frazer, 2020). This chapter builds on these insights, and specifically considers some such moments and movements by prolific Sámi artist Sofia Jannok (b. 1982, in Sápmi, Sweden). Jannok has released five albums, is twice nominated for the Swedish Grammy Award, and received the World Music Award (Sweden) in 2014 (Rosamond, 2020). Jannok played a part in the TV series *Midnight Sun* (aired in 2016), and she featured in the documentary series *The World’s Sofia Jannok* broadcast on Swedish state television *SVT*. She sings in Sámi, Swedish, and English, and combines jazz, popular music, and joik. Since her initial debut in the early 2000s, she has adopted a more direct and openly activist stance in her music performances (Cocq and Dubois, 2020). Jannok was active and performed during the 2013

Gállók protests, and was among the Sámi supporters of The Standing Rock protests in the United States. Jannok has emphasised in her public advocacy that in being an artist speaking out on Sámi and Indigenous issues, she is continuing the legacies of her familial and local traditions: her great uncle was an influential Sámi poet Paulus Utsi, and the area where she grew up, Luokta-Mávas Sámeby, has produced important contemporary Sámi leaders, such as Israel Roung and Lars Anders Baer (Cocq and Dubois, 2020).

### **Considerations of methodology, materials, and ethics**

Three well-known and oft-shared online videos with Sofia Jannok have been selected as data material, to illustrate the connections between Indigenous activism, the politics of pain, and settler state injuries. The analysis presented here is derived from Akvilė Buitvydaitė's Master dissertation (Buitvydaite, 2020), which utilised Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA) (Machin and Mayr, 2012), a method that combines Critical Discourse Analysis and visual semiotics, analysing texts and visual materials together. This approach combines central tools in critical discourse analysis with semiotics (Hall, 1997). It emphasises the analysis of linguistic choices to reveal assumptions and taken-for-granted ideologies in diverse types of texts, such as images, graphics, and spoken and written words. This approach to the selected videos allows for a close reading and analysis in context of the different data displayed in the videos, political contexts, and relevant scholarship. The analysis is built on the premise that social media offer possibilities to have influence over information, representation, and knowledge, and have more potential than traditional media to question and challenge structural power relations (Bruns 2008; Fuchs 2010; Morozov 2011 as cited in Cocq and Dubois, 2020; Rainie et al., 2012).

As two non-Indigenous, Nordic-based settler researchers, we acknowledge that our positionalities pose ethical concerns. As we do not draw on personally lived experiences of the injustices we discuss here, it is necessary to reflect openly on our reasoning. The decision to include this chapter is based on our view that a Sámi perspective will add pertinent nuance to this anthology's critical analyses of Nordic exceptionalism, given that Sápmi colonisation is a central premise and effect of it, in the past, in the present, and in hegemonic imaginaries about Nordic futurities. We have learned greatly from colleagues in the three project workshops, especially the two keynotes in the second workshop on Nordic exceptionalism: Palestinian artist Rana Bishara who spoke on de/colonising territorial land occupation and tactics of resistance, and scholar Paola Bacchetta, on decolonial Indigenous and feminist and queer of colour theory (see Bacchetta et al., 2015; Bishara, 2011). In addition, we have been in dialogue about the ethics of authorship with workshop participant Kris Clarke, who has long-term experience co-researching and -writing with an Indigenous colleague (Clarke and Yellowbird, 2020). Overall, and as elaborated on in greater context in the Introduction chapter

of this book, we all felt strongly about the importance of including Sámi perspectives in this anthology and therefore elaborating the workshop presentation and the discussions that accompanied it, into this chapter.

Finally, we note that in this chapter, ‘Sámi’ is appropriated as a general term, a collective marker of Indigenous identity, experience, and community set in contrast to Sweden as a colonising nation-state. This approximation does of course not account for the multiplicity within the Sámi population – there are at least ten different Sámi languages and dialects, and the Sápmi region stretches across Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia. Consequently, the political, linguistic, and historical contexts of various Sámi groups differ (Ojala and Nordin, 2015).

### **“It hit me like an arrow”: the politics of pain and the urgency of climate change**

In the TEDx Talk *Our Rights to Earth and Freedom* (Jannok, 2012), Jannok speaks against the environmental destruction of Sámi territory that Swedish mining companies are responsible for and raises awareness on Sámi issues more broadly for a mainstream audience (the talk took place in Mumbai, India). On stage, she is dressed in traditional Sámi clothing, performs joik in the beginning and at the end of the talk, and displays photographs on a large screen in the background to illustrate her arguments. Jannok begins her talk by asking the audience about the blockbuster movie *Avatar* (2009):

Have you seen the movie *Avatar*? That big Hollywood production with spectacular 3D effects and blue people ... I saw it last year and it hit me like an arrow towards my chest ... It is about the human race in the future where they have destroyed mother earth, emptied her of all resources, and started to find other planets to invade. A big mining company finds valuable resources on a paradise planet full of life, so now they want to invade it. The problem is that on this planet, there are already living other inhabitants. Blue skinned people are living there in perfect harmony with animals and nature but the company shows no mercy. The natives have to be moved or destroyed. When I saw this movie, I cried throughout the whole story because it was so familiar. To me it was like a painful documentary of a present life, my life. This is how it is for my people, if not so say all Indigenous people all over the world.

(Jannok, 2012, 2:30)

Here, Jannok recounts the painful experience of watching the movie using affective personal language: she “cried throughout the whole story” because the plot line was painfully, intimately familiar to her. Watching the destruction of mother earth and emptying of her resources by the mining company in *Avatar* reminds Jannok of a very similar situation in Sápmi, where

economic policies facilitated by the Swedish nation-state harm the land, interfere with traditional Sámi practices, and compromise the possibility for Sámi sustainable livelihoods. Twelve of Sweden's 15 active mineral mines and a vast majority of the value of mineral extraction are located within the traditional Sámi territory. Given that the Swedish government aims to strengthen its position as a leading mining state within the EU, it recently launched actions to facilitate iron ore extraction by making the process of granting mining permissions faster and smoother (Raitio et al., 2020).

In this section, we show the connections between intimately felt pain, collective politics of pain, and global ecological crisis from the distinct perspective of Sámi experiences. Drawing on feminist writer and independent scholar Sara Ahmed's analysis of the cultural politics of emotion (Ahmed, 2004), we argue that emotional events such as the one described by Jannok here must be contextualised in relation to a collective cultural politics of world-making. The power dynamics involved in this event has the potential to shape surfaces of individual bodies and collective imaginary and concrete worlds, and importantly: it also marks and retains boundaries. Argues Ahmed:

So emotions are not simply something 'I' or 'we' have. Rather, it is through emotions, or how we respond to objects and others, that surfaces or boundaries are made: the 'I' and the 'we' are shaped by, and even take the shape of, contact with others.

(Ahmed, 2004, p. 10)

Through her talk, we learn that the painful sensation in Jannok's body arises as a response to the plot of a fictional story that resembles her own reality: A big mining company removing and destroying natives for the sake of extracting natural resources reminds Jannok of Sweden's mining policies in Sápmi, which come into conflict with Sámi reindeer herders that depend on having access to various open pastures and ecosystems. Reindeer herding is a traditional, nomadic, collective livelihood and cultural intergenerational practice of the Sámi people and in Sweden is currently organised into 51 reindeer herding communities (*sameby* in Swedish) (Raitio et al., 2020). However, reindeer herding is disrupted due to shrinking lands, damages done due to dams, power lines, noise, and dust from the blasting from the mining industries together with increasing wind energy, infrastructure development, forestry, etc.; a fact that strengthens the "green colonialism" critique (Normann, 2020; Raitio et al., 2020).

To meaningfully communicate the ways in which the coloniser states through mining companies appropriate Sápmi land and inflict pain on Indigenous communities through the accompanied environmental destruction, Jannok applies emotive linguistic and visual effects. References to the plot of blockbuster movie *Avatar* to underscore Sápmi realities for a mainstream, global audience result in recognition and perhaps also affect – 'the

company shows no mercy and the natives have to be moved or destroyed'. The familiarity between the fictional world of Pandora depicted in *Avatar* and Sápmi realities brought Jannok to tears, she tells the audience: Argues Ahmed, "In the sense that the process of *recognition* (of this feeling, or that feeling) is bound up with what we *already know*" (Ahmed, 2004, p. 25, italics in the original). The violent extraction of natural resources in Northern Sweden is an already-known reality that Jannok recognises and articulates through words and images in her talk by way of a more commonly known mainstream cultural product, the *Avatar* movie: "People have come,... they dug wounds in the mountains.... Some big companies, driven by people whose goal is money, invade our home, force us to move or simply get rid of us" (Jannok, 2012, 3:50). Histories of violence are embedded in Jannok's tears, her "*pain is the bodily life of that history*" (Ahmed, 2004, p. 34 italics in the original). Prior to watching *Avatar*, Jannok had already experienced and witnessed the pervasive Swedish colonial destruction of the Sápmi landscape, through mining and logging industries, water management, and through political, educational, and cultural exclusions. Concludes Jannok: "Whether you eliminate people by actually killing them or by killing the conditions for life in freedom, it pretty much makes the same harm" (Jannok, 2012, 4:04).

In her talk, Jannok makes a clear distinction between 'we' (the Sámi) and 'they' – the mining companies and the Swedish nation-state. This polarised division is used to convey certain ideas and create the collective other (Machin and Mayr, 2012, p. 84). Placing 'them' in a group makes them more 'homogenised', as if they are meant to look/act like one another, creating an impression that has a negative connotation (Machin and Mayr, 2012, pp. 100–101). Jannok also refers to 'some big companies, driven by people whose goal is money', 'a mining company', 'they will dig' as a collective body, using such words as 'invade', 'forces to move', 'gets rid of us', 'killing', 'harm', 'stole the mountains', 'destroy'.

The photographs accompanying her talk further support her argument that mining companies destroy the landscape, disrupting the livelihoods of Sámi reindeer herders. The visual effect is considerable: one photograph shows an aerial view of the mining area, with large pits in the landscape clearly visible. The 'wounds in the mountains' that Jannok refers to in her talk seem to confirm the visual communication, indicating that the mountains are injured and feeling pain. Another photograph shows of a dead reindeer, lying on the snow. Showing the death of a reindeer is meant to demonstrate the connection between the injured landscape and its effects on the reindeer herding practice, a most vital economy for the Sámi, and a unique way of life that is now at the frontier of the climate crisis (Ojala et al., 2021).

The linguistic and visual choices attributed to the Swedish nation-state and the mining industry are in contrast with the individualised portrayal of the Sámi, where Jannok tells stories about her grandfather, mother, and



father, and uses lexical choices of ‘our home’, ‘my friend’s reindeer society’. A black and white photograph of her grandfather appears in the background when Jannok talks about the Sámi population and shares personal stories about her family. In the photograph, her grandfather stands in the centre, with a calm, satisfied facial expression, and holds two reindeer by lassos by his side. There is a mountain in the background, and the reindeer with horns are as tall as him. Jannok also draws on the intergenerational knowledge, passed from her grandfather to her mother, and from her parents to her: “we borrow our home from earth, we can’t own it, we don’t possess it ... Because when we go, our children will need a home, and their children yet to come will need a home” (Jannok, 2012, 6:58). Hence, the depiction of the Sámi is in stark contrast with the portrayal of the agents behind the mining industry. Such contrast between collectivised ‘they’ and individualised ‘we’ creates an impression of the individualised Sámi group as being more humanised (Machin and Mayr, 2012, p. 80), hence somebody in the audience is likely to feel more empathy with. It has been noted how, in colonial discourse, it was the colonised subject that was portrayed as the – implicitly inferior – ‘other’ in relation to that of the coloniser (Ashcroft et al., 2000, p. 169). However, Jannok here poignantly reverses this violent dynamic by humanising the Sámi (through personalisation) and in using visual and lexical choices to convey the connection between her personal, painful reaction to *Avatar* specifically, and a response concerned with a collective, existential context of environmental and livelihoods destruction faced by all Sámi.

As mentioned, in her TEDx Talk, Jannok articulates the many ways in which watching *Avatar* feels like a painful documentary of the lives of Indigenous people worldwide. For many of them, climate change is experienced as a déjà vu caused by the ongoing institutional dismissal of Indigenous sovereignty and facilitation of carbon-intensive economic activities (Whyte, 2016). Indigenous people and communities are among the most vulnerable populations who are affected by the destruction of their land and by the severe changes in weather patterns, making resource-based livelihoods difficult to maintain (Furberg et al., 2011). Moreover, many Indigenous people live in poorer socio-economic conditions as a result of colonial histories, hence making them less resilient to impacts of climate change (Whyte, 2016).

In *The Cultural Politics of Pain*, Ahmed advocates for a reading of pain in politics as different forms of injury that may have happened due to an uneven and antagonistic history (Carl Gutiérrez-Jones, 2001, as cited in Ahmed, 2004, p. 33). Understanding the ‘uneven and antagonistic’ historical context of Jannok’s painful reaction, by closely reading what she says, shows, and their contexts on stage as well in history, demonstrates how – for the Sámi – the past is existentially embedded in the present and how climate change is violently connected to Swedish colonial history and Sámi injury: “The colonization started about 400 years ago and what is worse, it still has not stopped” (Jannok, 2012, 5:04). The wounds caused by the mining

industries are a continuation of the injuries that have been caused to the Sámi community during past Swedish colonialism. Jannok's reference to the colonial past and its ongoing legacies demonstrate how climate change as it is unfolding today needs to be examined in a broader historical and political context of continued colonial dispossession and its relevance for mitigating climate change (Liboiron, 2021).

Past Swedish discriminatory policies regarding Sápmi have been lumped under the term 'integration' or 'internal colonisation' but historians have been reluctant to use the term 'colonialism' (Lindmark, 2013, as cited in Ojala and Nordin, 2015, p. 10). However, since the 16th century, the Swedish Crown increased its domination over the region by implementing economic, cultural, and political policies aiming at undermining Sámi communities (Mattson, 2014; Ojala and Nordin, 2015; Rosamond, 2020). Therefore, Jannok's description of the current situation in Sápmi as a colonisation that has not stopped argues that present-day conflicts over land and cultural rights date back to the Swedish discrimination policies and domination over the region. Sweden's current interests in promoting industrial development through extraction of natural resources come in conflict with reindeer herding practices. But it is not new. The contemporary dispute over land rights is an extension of historic Swedish colonising of Sápmi territory and must be understood as a continuous renunciation of Indigenous rights. This argument is supported by the fact that the Swedish Sámi Parliament, established in 1992, has no law-making function (Raitio et al., 2020). Hence, the reading of Jannok's painful reaction to *Avatar* demonstrates that climate change is intrinsically linked with the history of colonialism and the emergence of capitalism. The destruction of the landscape by the mining companies is intrinsically connected to the settler state's historical dismissal of Sámi's rights and world views, and ongoing dispossession of Indigenous lands.

### **“This is my land”: anger, injury, and structural injustice**

Following on from the analysis in the previous section, this part of the chapter considers two more videos by Jannok: *We Are still Here* (2016c) and *This Is My Land* (2016a), both available on YouTube. We aim to show how spoken word, song, and visual content in these videos can be understood as a response to the state's discourse that tries to undermine Sámi rights and deny historical colonial policies.

Both videos begin with the audio excerpts from the state attorney's intervention during the hearing of the course case between the small Sámi reindeer herding community, Girjas, and the Swedish state. To contextualise, in 2009, Girjas filed a legal action against the Swedish state, where they demanded exclusive hunting and fishing rights and the community's complete authority over these rights (Allard and Brännström, 2021). In January 2020, Girjas won a historical victory, affirming the community's demands, and mapping a unique case in Nordic history in the battle for Indigenous

rights. However, during the court case, the state representatives explored all possible arguments against the Sámi demands and persisted in using the offensive old term “Laps” instead of the preferred “Sámi” (Allard and Brännström, 2021). A voice recording of attorney Hans Forsell was made during a May 2015 court case, and excerpts from this recording appear in both videos. Another Sámi musician and joik performer Jörgen Stenberg in cooperation with activist Tor Tourda then uploaded a revised video of the song “Vuortjis” on August 28, 2015, where they used footages of Stenberg’s live performances, footage of Gállok protests, and excerpts from Forsell’s court statements. On his Facebook wall, posted the same day, Stenberg writes: “Gállok och Alta. Rasforskning och småviltsjakt. Oavsett hur överheten talar sitt maktspråk är kulturen mitt vapen, jojken mitt spjut” (Gállok and Alta. Race biology and small game hunting. Regardless of the language of power employed by the government, my weapon is culture, and joik my spear) (Stenberg, 2015b as cited in Cocq and Dubois, 2020, p. 161). As noted, Indigenous communities and activists now use platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter to connect with each other through using various hashtags. Jannok, alongside other Sámi musicians such as a rapper SlinCraze (Nils Rune Utsi) and Maxida Mäarak, uses Indigenous targeted hashtags in their posts, to reach like-minded audiences (Fuller, 2020). Moreover, the usage of hashtags links art pieces to other contexts, contextualising them in specific ways and allowing the work to be part of a bigger movement (Berg and Lundgren, 2021). The videos *We Are still Here* and *This Is My Land* continue the tradition of digital Sámi activism by exposing the unwillingness of the state to acknowledge Sweden’s colonial history and recognise Sámi sovereignty.

In both videos, Jannok also uses the audio excerpts of the attorney’s speech to illustrate the court’s insistence on undermining Sámi demands and deny historical discrimination policies. The audio excerpts of Forsell’s court statements feature in the beginning of both videos. The recordings are in Swedish; however, Jannok provides a written English translation in the description of the videos on YouTube to make it accessible to her global audiences. In *We Are still Here*, the audio recording of Forsell begins thus:

From the onset on, it is of most importance to state that: the Sámi have not been subjected to the discrimination by the State. The state consistently disputes the claim that the Sámi have been present in the area on a large-scale basis ... before the 17th century.

(Jannok, 2016c, 0:04)

In *This Is My Land*, the attorney elaborates:

The state is of the opinion that the claim put forward by the Sámi reindeer herding community with regards to their long tradition of being

engaged in reindeer husbandry, hunting and fishing in the area is of irrelevance to the case. In order to be eligible to claim immemorial prescription, said claim has to be based on ninety years use of an area. Any additional use for a longer period of time is of irrelevance to the legality of the claim. Because of the claim that it is of importance that the Sámi have been using this area, the state is of the opinion that it is of utmost importance to define what is meant by the term Sámi, and how specific such a definition really is. This is what the following material is meant to do.

(Jannok, 2016b, 0:11)

*We Are still Here* is a collaboration between Sofia Jannok and Anders Suna, a Sámi artist whose several works explicitly address Swedish colonialism and abuse of the Sámi people (Heith, 2015). Although Suna also works with more traditional forms of art, he is mostly known for his street art, where he addresses the topics of colonialism, racism, and exploitation of natural resources, among the few. He is known for his art aesthetics that connect with the notions of protest. For example, in some of his works, the Sámi characters are presented as rebellious with allusions to Pussy Riot hats, other times a stencilled image of a Sámi person is portrayed with a bomb in his raised left hand (Berg and Lundgren, 2021). On social media, Suna frequently uses hashtags such as #sápmistreetart (collecting photos of Sámi related street art), #indigenousart (tagging photos of Indigenous produced art worldwide), and #contemporaryart (collecting photos of broader art pieces) to situate his works as part of large movements (Berg and Lundgren, 2021).

The Jannok/Suna video illustrates how digital spaces are used for articulation for Indigenous activism. In addition to the video hashtags – #girjasmotstaten (in English: #girjasagainstthestate) and #wearestillhere, the video has been viewed more than 130,000 times on YouTube at the time of writing. In the video itself, Suna is shown to make his artwork on a transparent film wrapped around the trees in the forest. In the beginning of the video, while the voice of the attorney claims that the Sámi have not been discriminated against by the state, the viewer sees Jannok and Suna wrapping a transparent film around the trees in the woods covered by snow. Several reindeer are running around further in the background. Throughout the video, Suna is working on the artwork on the transparent film between the trees. Elsewhere, Berg and Lundgren (2021) discuss how protest street art is usually associated with urban environments; however, the context of a forest with trees, animals, and snow becomes a part of both motif and message of the video. Moreover, the filming of the artwork itself, to have it available on YouTube, allows the larger audience of viewers to have access to it. Without the availability on YouTube, the forest space itself will unlikely attract many viewers, therefore sharing on digital media may be specifically necessary for protests happening in peripheries.

There is a poignant moment in *We Are still Here* when we are listening to the state attorney saying: “The state consistently disputes the claim that the Sámi have been present in the area on a large-scale basis ... before the 17th century”. Simultaneously, we are watching Sunna writing on a transparent film in bright-red, capital letters: ‘YOU HAVE NOT BEEN IN THE AREA!’ (Jannok, 2016c, 1:00). In this way, Sunna exposes and protests the state denial of historical discrimination policies by imitating the arguments from the court case. The song lyrics are also a direct reminder of the violence inflicted onto the Sámi and other Indigenous people throughout the history of colonialism, thus demonstrating that arguments from the court case are false. ‘Kill the bison’, ‘dig out the reindeer’s land’, ‘blood on greedy hands’, ‘burn the tipi down’, ‘100 years back in the USA killed my sisters, cut their breasts away’, ‘In Peru my brothers always stayed shot down at home’, ‘steal our mother’. A lexical analysis of the lyrics produces a straightforward narrative of violence inflicted onto the Sámi community through the history of colonialism. Impersonalised referential strategies, visible in lexical choices, define no explicit agent behind the injuries, resulting in portraying these events inevitable, as facts that do not need to be questioned (Machin and Mayr, 2012, p. 85).

In a similar vein, the lyrics of *This Is My Land* also allude to injury and are constructed around the dichotomy of ‘my land’, ‘my country’, ‘I’d be’, ‘I’d take’, ‘my pride, my freedom’, ‘my home’, and the constant use of ‘you’. The subject of injury, the injurer so to speak, is attached to the pronoun ‘you’, which can be understood as indicating the Swedish nation-state, and the industries that destroy the landscape in Sápmi: ‘if you want to ruin it all with big wounds in the mountains’, ‘if you open up your eyes you’ll find someone is lying’ (Jannok, 2016b). From a critical discourse point of view, lyrics of both songs are promoting ideological squaring, which is meant to structure opposing views around the participants (Van Dijk 1998, cited in Machin and Mayr, 2012, p. 40). This means that the participants are not necessarily labelled as ‘good’ or ‘bad’ explicitly, but such a moral-political distinction is very much implied through applying structuring concepts such as here.

Textual choices in both songs contrasted to the audio recordings where the attorney claims that the Sámi have not been discriminated against by the state and questions their historical presence in the area. Ahmed (2004) urges to attend to injury as something that happened in time and place, and to account for asymmetrical power relations. Reading pain and injury in politics uncovers the relationship between the structures that cause injury and the bodies that are injured. The lyrics of the songs evoke suffering and pain, the mountains are ‘wounded’; however, references to the history of colonialism and other Indigenous people (‘100 years back in the USA’; in Peru) demonstrate that the current state policies that facilitate climate change are a continuation of violence and that the Sámi are among other Indigenous people who are affected by the legacies of colonialism. Later in the video of *We Are still Here*, Sunna writes the word ‘LAPP’ ten

times on the transparent film, which could be understood as a reference to the Swedish policy of ‘a Lapp shall remain a Lapp’ (Jannok, 2016c, 4:34). Such policy intended to create a homogenous Swedish nation and the Sámi were perceived as a threat to national purity. The Swedish state practised eugenics to convince that the Sámi were of the inferior race (Mattson, 2014). Hence, the state’s insistence in Girjas court case in denying discriminatory practices against the Sámi but using the derogatory term ‘Lapp’ shows the conflictual nature of the court’s argument, and Sunna is exposing that in the artwork of the video. Similarly, the final verses of *This Is My Land* – ‘someone is lying’ – could be interpreted as a direct reference to the court case proceedings, and a demand for recognition – ‘I’ve always been here welcome to my hoods’ (Jannok, 2016b, 4:58).

Similarly, in *We Are still Here*, Sunna draws several images on the canvas made from transparent film, wrapped around the trees. On one of the canvas, Sunna paints the faces of two women – one is Elsa Laura Renberg (1877–1931) – a South Sámi activist, who was one of the initiators of the first transnational Sámi meeting in Trondheim on February 6, 1917, which since 1993 has become a national Sámi People’s day (Heith, 2018). Another face is of a contemporary young North Sámi (Jannok, 2016c, 3:41). The images evoke the historical and contemporary resistance of the Sámi. According to Sunna, these portraits represent a united consensus both across time and space (Eriksson, 2016, as cited in Berg and Lundgren, 2021). To choose women as prominent figures represents the idea of Sámi culture, and also acknowledges often-unrecognised role of women in protest movements (Jenkins and Rondón, 2015; Sjöstedt-Landén and Fotaki, 2018 as cited in Berg and Lundgren, 2021).

Another image on the canvas portrays a reindeer, dressed in traditional Sámi clothing, that holds a lasso to catch a cat, dressed in a suit with a crown on its head. Due to the potent cultural symbols, such as traditional clothing, reindeer, and the crown, we read this image as the Sámi – represented by the reindeer – trying to expose the state’s discrimination policies via an image of the cat (Machin and Mayr, p. 54). As the lyrics of *This Is My Land* refer to the ‘someone is lying’, the reindeer is also trying ‘to catch the Swedish state’, and to reveal the narratives that the state is circulating in the excerpts from the court case.

In both videos, Sámi people are portrayed as active agents, challenging, and resisting the state discourse and showing solidarity with other Indigenous people. In *This Is My Land*, clips from the Indigenous people’s demonstrations during COP21 meeting in Paris in 2015 appear. A group of Indigenous people are seen standing together, with their raised, clenched fists, uttering slogans and carrying banners and posters (Jannok, 2016b, 1:51). The Sámi flags are visible in the back and various posters and banners are held by the protestors. The slogans, including ‘respect Indigenous rights’, ‘leave it in the ground’, ‘for a climate of peace’, and ‘stop colonialism’, are a demand to respect and listen to Indigenous voices, and the body language of the

crowd signifies frustration, anger, and at the same time determination. The raised, clenched fist has become a symbol for marginalised groups to express their solidarity with each other and to address discriminatory behaviour (Duffield, 2020). Such visual choices represent broader values and identities and are meant to show Indigenous people as active and determined (Machin and Mayr, p. 70). With the images and lyrics of *This Is My Land* (2016) on reclaiming land rights, Jannok calls to a global Indigenous movement, centring Indigenous land rights as a theme but evoking it through Sámi specific cases and attributes of Sáminess (Fuller, 2020).

## Conclusion

As shown in this analysis, depicting the Sámi as active subject and using linguistic and visual means to humanise Sámi existence, are consciously set in contrast to state discourse aiming to dismiss the Sámi claims, and by extension erase Sámi existence on their own terms, in past and present. The anger and pain communicated in the videos are reactions to the historical and contemporary injustices that the Sámi, and other Indigenous people, endure daily. “If anger is a form of ‘against-ness’, then it is precisely about the impossibility of moving beyond the history of injuries to a pure or innocent position” (Ahmed, 2004, p. 174). Thus, understanding anger as a response to pain and injury allows us to draw connections between political and economic structures, and their effects on the bodies of the communities. As illustrated with the Girjas case, the Sámi are fighting to institutionalise the Indigenous rights to protect their lands from industries that facilitate climate change. The anger in the clips is ‘a bodily shape of againstness’ (Ahmed, 2004); it embodies the impossibility to accept discriminatory state policies, and to move beyond the history of colonisation, as its legacies are present today.

By January 2022, Sweden had still not ratified UN ILO Convention No. 169, which supports Indigenous self-determination and lays the means for ways of participating in and negotiating in decision-making processes (Raitio et al., 2020). Thus, reading the emotions in the videos from the Indigenous protests demonstrates that anger is articulation of pain but in a different form. Understanding the injuries that are articulated in Jannok’s videos as created in time and space is a reminder that the wounds of the Sámi community remain open as the state continues to inflict pain in different ways, such as denying Swedish colonial history, undermining the Sámi rights, and supporting the policies that facilitate climate change.

Connecting pain, injury, and anger in music performances shows how legacies of colonialism and climate change are an ongoing source of pain for the Sámi people. In her videos, Jannok uses a distinction between ‘us’ and ‘them’ and attributes emotions to create the dichotomy between the Sámi and Sweden as a nation-state. Depicting the Sámi through the traditional markers such as reindeer herding and traditional clothing might

risk homogenising Sámi identity and excluding voices of other Sámi groups. Similarly, choosing Jannok to represent the Sámi might reproduce the hierarchies within their Indigenous population. However, the focus of the chapter was to show how pain carries histories of violence and how Sweden continues to dismiss Indigenous demands for the sake of industrial development. The urgency of climate change is more present than ever, and Jannok's videos provide possibilities to explore the connections between political decisions, economic policies, and environmental destruction.

## Note

- 1 '#NoDAPL' is an acronym for 'No Dakota Access Pipeline' and used with a hashtag on social media. The Dakota Access Pipeline is an underground oil pipeline, stretching from North Dakota to Illinois, through Sioux territory, and is principally controlled by Energy Transfer LP.

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