



NTGENT

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## Unmasking the green myth

27 October 2023 | Gent, Belgium

### WORKSHOP CONTENT

***On Friday the 27th the core team (Mary Ann Manahan, Anneleen Kenis & Lara Staal) used their time to discuss the frameworks and conditions of this research group again and circled around the topic of the green myth. The conversation went from plant-based diets that became trendy but ignore the larger picture, to the importance to deconstruct our contemporary food (as an exercise: imagine what it means to produce a croissant).***

*We spoke about the death of nature and how things shifted radically when cities began to grow. Anneleen gave the example of premodern and precapitalist society and how peasants had a certain autonomy and tried to keep a balance with nature. There was this fantastic example of how people from the city would exchange their feces to peasants for food. The intriguing idea that feces back then (based on what people ate) were still nourishing for the soil, whereas now our feces are damaging nature. Anneleen mentioned an artist that has been collecting poop to plant seeds in it.*

## DISCUSSION SUMMARY

*When it comes to the green myth and the idea of a technofix, electric cars are a very good and disturbing example of how we think we're on the right track (or how this idea is being sold to us) but in reality we're still outsourcing our pollution. Electric cars need batteries that come from territories in the global south, often inhabited by indigenous communities. We basically offset our pollution, by which we mean that we pay for things that will reduce carbon dioxide to reduce the damage caused by carbon dioxide that we've produced. We export our ways of living, which form new ways of colonialism.*

*We observe a lack of criticality towards the degrowth movement. How can we organize our society without being dependent on import and export? Mary Ann brought in that the feminist approach within the degrowth movement around social reproduction is interesting because it's centering life enhancing activity. Reproductive labor and nature's 'labor' is being attacked. We believe the market will never solve the climate crisis.*

*We're interested in the idea of 'rewilding the body'. To approach our body as an ecosystem. We're not individuals anymore if you consider all the bacteria living in our own bodies. Taking care of your own body then, becomes taking care of a whole community of living creatures.*

*Mary Ann brought in the example of the Marshall Islands and how the people have suffered from nuclear experiments that were happening without any democratic process or even warning. Anneleen spoke about the need for anger and looking at the past instead of positive imaginaries without any friction. The term 'militant hope' was brought to the table. An interest in refusal, the right to say no. And not seeing this as passivity but as agency. A refusal to buy into it.*

*Mary Ann brought in how the empire is very loud and a lot of the revolutionary spirit comes in with the quiet and stays under the radar. How this is sometimes also a necessary strategy and a way to protect. (Being loud can only happen by those who can afford it.)*

*A lot of what we discuss departs from the entanglement between colonialism, patriarchy, and the ecological crisis and how this is deeply rooted and at the basis of the western project.*

*The north created and still creates a huge depth within the global south, which makes an equal relation of exchange impossible. This brings up the question of reparation.*

*We shared a fascination in the profile of people advocating for techno-fixes and noted that 99% of them is male and white. In the afternoon Lara started to research online to look for videos and materials that symbolizes the whiteness of people advocating for green energies or address something like 'eco-anxiety'.*

## **BIOGRAPHY OF THE ARTIST:**

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### **LARA STAAL**

Lara Staal, born 1984 in Zwolle, The Netherlands, is a researcher, writer and curator. She studied theatre pedagogy at ArtEZ in Arnhem and theatre science and dramaturgy at the University of Amsterdam. Between 2013 and 2016, she worked as a programmer at Frascati where she developed various sociopolitical programmes in which alliances were created between art and other fields on the basis of shared urgencies. She takes interest in developing innovative forms within which dialogue and reflection can take place.

## **BIOGRAPHY OF THE SCIENTISTS:**

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### **MARY-ANN MANAHAN**

Mary-Ann Manahan is a Ghent-based feminist activist researcher. Her doctoral research delves into the intersections of indigenous peoples' struggle for self-determination, forest conservation, and development. Preceding her academic pursuits, she has 17 years of professional practice collaborating with an activist think tank, advocacy NGO grant-making organization, and social movements. Her advocacy spanned areas such as redistribution, ecological, gender, and social justice, along with exploring alternatives to development. Mary Ann earned her undergraduate degree in sociology from the University of the Philippines-Diliman and her master's degree in Globalization and Development from the Institute of Development Policy and Management at the University of Antwerp, Belgium. She perceives her doctoral and teaching journey as a strategy of self-care, enabling her to sustain her commitment to political work and activism.

### **ANNELEEN KENIS**

Anneleen Kenis is a senior post-doctoral research fellow affiliated with the Research Foundation Flanders (FWO), and she is associated with both the Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences at KU Leuven and the Centre of Sustainable Development (CDO) at UGent. She holds a Ph.D. in Bio-Engineering Sciences with a focus on Political Ecology, along with master's degrees in Psychology and Sustainable Development and Human Ecology. Her previous research has delved into various topics, including the marketization and commodification of climate change in Green Economy discourses, grassroots climate movements, transition management, localization, and the intersection of genetic engineering and democracy. Her research interests encompass (urban) political ecology, feminist and queer ecologies, gender studies, scholar activism, social movement studies, and critical political theoretical approaches to climate change, air pollution, and genetic engineering (e.g., technocracy).



**UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS) LINKED TO THE WORKSHOP**

<b>3</b> GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING 	<b>5</b> GENDER EQUALITY 	<b>9</b> INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE 	<b>11</b> SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES 	<b>12</b> RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION 	<b>16</b> PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS 
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