



Rehearsals for Living

Robyn Maynard

Leanne Betasamosake Simpson

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An astounding epistolary conversation constructed in six parts, Robyn Maynard and Leanne Betasamosake Simpson's *Rehearsals for Living* records a dialogue between two Canadian intellectuals and activists navigating a pandemic, the Black Lives Matter protests, and global warming.

Awe-inspiring and revelatory, Maynard and Betasamosake Simpson's networked knowledge of colonial history, ecological justice, and white supremacy creates spiderweb cracks in the idea that current events are novel, recent, or unanticipated. Begun shortly before Covid-19 swept North America, and soon subsumed by it and the following waves of social and political upheaval, the book reduces present reality to the windfall of white colonialism's long-standing global endeavor.

Maynard is a Black Canadian, while Betasamosake Simpson is a member of the Nishnaabeg nation. Both of their communities are already "post-apocalyptic experts [who] can best imagine worlds beyond our current realities." After living through cultural and ecological apocalypses for the past 500 years, their reflections on present circumstances aren't ones of shock, but of reclamation of Black and Indigenous futurities and the ongoing work of "building the worlds we want and need."

Throughout their dialogue, relationality is central and manifests at every level. Whether it's in the connections they make between Black and Indigenous communities and the declaration that abolition and decolonization are enmeshed acts of world building, or the links they establish between what's individual and communal, between the past and the future, and between the land and the people, the reciprocity, mutuality, and interconnection of a functional relationship is shown to be fundamental.

In a world where white supremacy is bleeding the earth dry and hope seems to be in short supply, *Rehearsals for Living* shows that Black and Indigenous world-building is a lived practice that relies on something more radical and revolutionary than the fleeting presence of hope.

LETITIA MONTGOMERY-RODGERS (July / August 2022)

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