

SPECIAL ISSUE ARTICLE

# Interspecies cosmopolitanism: Non-human power and the grounds of world order in the Anthropocene

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## Abstract

Cosmopolitanism claims to be the most just and inclusive of mainstream approaches to the ethics and practice of world order, given its commitment to human interconnection, peace, equality, diversity, and rights, and its concern with the many globalised pathologies that entrench injustice and vulnerability across borders. Yet it has largely remained oblivious to the agency, power, and value of non-human life on a turbulent and active Earth. Without rejecting its commitments to justice for human beings, the article challenges its humanism as both morally and politically inadequate to the situation of the Anthropocene, exemplified by the simultaneous crises of climate change, mass extinction, and the COVID-19 pandemic. In answer, the article develops new grounds and principles for an *interspecies* cosmopolitanism, exploring how we can reimagine its ontological foundations by creating new grounding images of subjectivity, existential unity, institutional organisation, and ordering purpose. These, in turn, can support political and institutional projects to secure the rights of ecosystems and people to flourish and persist through an increasingly chaotic epoch of human dominance and multispecies vulnerability across the Anthropocene Earth.

**Keywords:** Cosmopolitanism; Power; Earth System; Planetary; Non-human; Ethics

## Introduction

As I write, almost two years since the World Health Organisation (WHO) declared a global pandemic, the COVID-19 disease has killed at least 5.6 million and afflicted 356 million people across the Earth – figures one would expect of a major war. Over 833,000 have died in the United States and over 620,000 in Brazil, where a dangerous new P.1 strain has emerged and the hospital system is in collapse.<sup>1</sup> Mortality and illness are worst in those countries – among them Russia, India, Brazil, the US, and the United Kingdom – where a bizarre confluence of neoliberal ideology and populist neofascism have underfunded health and welfare systems and driven corruption, conspiracy theory, denialism, and hostility to crucial public health measures such as lockdowns, curfews, vaccination, and masks.<sup>2</sup> The pandemic has exacerbated racial, economic, and gender inequalities within countries and, notwithstanding the emergence of an ‘inclusive and dispersed

<sup>1</sup>WHO Coronavirus (COVID-19) dashboard, available at: <https://covid19.who.int> accessed 27 January 2022. This is a conservative estimate; *The Economist*, taking into account unreported deaths and unrecorded COVID-19 infections, along with non-Covid deaths related to an inability to access treatment, estimates that the true total of pandemic-associated mortality is closer to 17 million. ‘The pandemic’s true death toll’, *The Economist* (31 October 2021), available at: <https://www.economist.com/graphic-detail/coronavirus-excess-deaths-estimates>.

<sup>2</sup>Arundhati Roy, ‘“We are witnessing a crime against humanity”: Arundhati Roy on India’s Covid catastrophe’, *The Guardian* (28 April 2021); Milja Kurki, ‘Coronavirus, democracy, and the challenges of engaging a planetary order’, *Democratic Theory*, 7:2 (2020); Manuela Andreoni, Ernesto Londoño, and Leticia Casado, ‘Brazil’s covid crisis is a warning to the whole world, scientists say’, *The New York Times* (3 March 2021).

form of global health security' during the pandemic, triggered novel geopolitical tensions and global patterns of inequality, exclusion, and biopolitical abandonment.<sup>3</sup>

At the outset of the pandemic, countries schemed and outbid each other to access supplies of personal protective equipment (PPE) and masks; as the year wore on, tensions between China and the European Union, the United States, and Australia over blame about the virus's origins escalated into trade war and deepening military competition; and in 2021, as vaccinations began, entire regions were blocking vaccine exports and northern states blocking the suspension of patents on vaccines that would enable their production across the Global South.<sup>4</sup> Indian and Chinese vaccine diplomacy spread their geopolitical competition into a new arena, filling out an emerging vaccine world map that resembles – at least in form – the strategic trade blocs of the 1930s.<sup>5</sup> The crisis has highlighted the failures of both national health and security policy, and failures of global governance – failures of awareness, warning, preparedness, cooperation, fairness, and equality.<sup>6</sup> In short, the COVID-19 crisis exemplifies and deepens many of the pathologies of world politics for which cosmopolitanism has been put forward as an answer, with one exception – *its source is non-human*.<sup>7</sup>

This recognition calls for a fundamental shift in moral and political orientation that would acknowledge the agency and intrinsic value of other-than-human worlds and life, in a way that is both entangled with *and* apart from human interests, societies, and lives. Such a shift must go beyond human security from non-human threats, which still privileges and foregrounds the human; rather, we need to acknowledge the SARS-CoV-2 virus as a powerful *actant* in a complex and dynamic symbiosis with human bodies, institutions, and processes, and consider the failures of both International Relations and liberal political philosophy to integrate their global picture with a vital and living Earth that is simultaneously a source of profound security, threat, wonder, perturbation, and cascading change. As one contribution to such a project, this article sets out the contours of an *interspecies cosmopolitanism* that can acknowledge the existence, scale, agency, and value of other-than-human lives, matter, and planetary processes. It does so on two registers: a philosophical one that reimagines the foundational ontological underpinnings and principles of cosmopolitanism, and a politico-institutional one that considers the potentials and risks of cosmopolitanism as a project of global justice and order. It does so not to argue that cosmopolitanism is the only or the most preferable political philosophy to solve contemporary crises of the Anthropocene, collective survival, or world order – even if it elicits my strong sympathies. While it could be advanced as one of the most progressive meta-normative orientations to world politics, in its current form it is incomplete and inadequate to our times.

Cosmopolitanism claims to be the most just and inclusive of mainstream approaches to the ethics and practice of world order, based as it is on the inalienable rights to dignity, justice,

<sup>3</sup>Quote from Sophie Harman, 'COVID-19, the UN, and dispersed global health security', *Ethics & International Affairs*, 34:3 (2020), pp. 373–8; Umut Ozguc, 'Three lines of pandemic borders: From necropolitics to hope as a method of living', *Critical Studies on Security*, 9:1 (2021), pp. 63–6, available at: {DOI: 10.1080/21624887.2021.1904361}; Achille Mbembe, 'The Universal Right to Breathe', In the Moment: Critical Inquiry (13 April 2020).

<sup>4</sup>Jakob Hanke Vela and Ryan Heath, 'Brussels blocks vaccine exports in all but name', *Politico* (7 April 2021).

<sup>5</sup>Michael Safi, 'Vaccine tensions loom in Asia as China and India trade free shots for influence', *The Guardian* (21 March 2021); Oliver Holmes, 'Brazil, Saudi Arabia and Morocco "told of delay in Covid jabs from India"', *The Guardian* (21 March 2021).

<sup>6</sup>Chengxin Pan, 'Racialised politics of (in)security and the COVID-19 Westfailure', *Critical Studies on Security*, 9:1 (2021), pp. 40–5, available at: {DOI: 10.1080/21624887.2021.1904195}.

<sup>7</sup>The term *non-human* is used in this article to refer to Earthly life, organisms, and physical processes that are not of the species *Homo sapiens* in form or cause. It is not used to imply, as Joseph Pugliese fears in his *Biopolitics of the More-Than-Human* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2020), p. 3, 'a series of tacit or explicit deficits'. While here I use the term 'non-human' to contrast the human with such *other-than-human* or *more-than-human* life, matter, and process, it should always be understood as interchangeable with them. While the latter terminology is normatively preferable, there is a long tradition in ecocentric thought (such as in the works of Val Plumwood, Robyn Eckersley, Timothy Morton, and Donna Haraway) that uses the 'non-human' as an affirmative term for animal, plant, and ecosystemic life.

and equality of all human beings regardless of birth, gender, race, or nationality; on the interconnection of the diverse family of humankind, and the prior rights of Indigenous peoples; and the hopes of an end to war, rape, inequality, and international violence.<sup>8</sup> Yet while its thinkers often admit concerns about climatic and environmental change, cosmopolitanism remains stubbornly anthropocentric, preoccupied with injustice, inequality, and violence between humans. This situation provokes important questions. On what planet do such beings exist and what other beings do they share it with? How can cosmopolitanism evolve as a philosophy and programme of world order that would link injustice done to humans to injustice done to the Earth – a programme that would nest human vulnerability and risk in its earthly location and its debt to the biosphere, the sum of ecosystems and a vast interrelatedness of energy, matter, and life? How can cosmopolitanism become something else: a cosmopolitics for an Anthropocene biosphere?

While this is an argument that urges a recognition of biodiverse, planetary-scale realities, it also implies a profound reorientation of values. Why is it necessary to imagine and enact such an *interspecies* cosmopolitanism that includes and valorises the non-human with – and prior to – the human? Firstly, mutual survival. As the climate, COVID-19, and extinction crises attest, international society is increasingly called upon to solve global and planetary-scale problems that threaten the security, health, dignity, flourishing, and survival of all human and more-than-human communities. In all these crises, and more, there is no functional separation between human beings, social institutions, and the Earth – they are irretrievably and ever more dangerously entangled. Given the capitalist and interstate powerplay inherent in the system, international society addresses planetary crisis imperfectly and unjustly, and often in ways that increase our common peril. If survival is something we value, we have no choice but to engage this imperfect system and advance improvements in its legal, institutional, cooperative, and normative architectures.

Secondly, planetary reality. The Earth is the fundamental source and envelope for all human life: we draw our evolutionary inheritance from it, breathe its gases, and consume its minerals and matter, all while it is undergoing rapid and alarming change. Ontologies of human existence that fail to honour this fundamental reality – ontologies of ‘hyper-separation’<sup>9</sup> that treat non-human life with utilitarian disdain and permeate our economic and social institutions and subjectivities – embed patterns of cruelty and abandonment and dysfunction that put our common survival at risk.

Thirdly, interspecies care. This entangled, perilous, Anthropocene situation demands an ethics that values, restores, and cares for other-than-human lives, ecosystems, and the biosphere, while also respecting their fragility, dynamism, and power. This ethics is based on a respect for the intrinsic value of ecosystems and other-than-human lives – their rights to flourish and survive within natural (rather than industrial) relationships of predation and risk – a viewpoint that has been argued by multiple philosophers drawing on a variety of ethical traditions.<sup>10</sup> My own approach, developed with Stefanie Fishel, draws on these positions developed in analytical environmental ethics, animal rights, and green critical theory, but argues in a materialist way for human humility in the face of the wondrous diversity of nature and its 350-million-year

<sup>8</sup>Kwame Anthony Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers* (New York, NY: W. W. Norton, 2006).

<sup>9</sup>This term comes from Plumwood, who describes hyper-separation as a system in which ‘our own species appears as “outside nature”, as essentially intellectual beings, “rational choosers” calculating maximum satisfaction and not essentially reliant on the earth, beings whose basic ecological demands have no more legitimacy than any other desire, however trivial. Other species appear, when they appear at all, through a reductive and human-centred framework.’ Val Plumwood, *Environmental Culture: The Ecological Crisis of Reason* (London, UK and New York, NY: Routledge, 2002), p. 27.

<sup>10</sup>Key thinkers here from the analytical tradition include Martha Nussbaum, *Frontiers of Justice: Disability, Nationality, Species Membership* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006); J. Baird Callicott, *Thinking Like a Planet* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2014); Sue Donaldson and Will Kymlicka, *Zoopolis: A Political Theory of Animal Rights* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2011); and Alisdair Cochrane, *Animal Rights Without Liberation* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2012). From the critical theoretical wing, Robyn Eckersley, *Environmentalism and Political Theory* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1992/London, UK: Routledge, 2003) and John S. Dryzek, ‘Political and ecological communication’, *Environmental Politics*, 4:4 (1995), pp. 13–30.

pre-existence to *Homo sapiens* as a species.<sup>11</sup> This would not deny that humans cannot be threatened by non-human entities like viruses or mosquitoes and seek to control them in ecologically responsible ways, or that we can entirely avoid tragic biopolitical dilemmas when managing introduced species, for example. However, it does mean that we should acknowledge our own animality, dramatically reduce the exploitation of and cruelty to non-human animals, place ecosystem integrity and restoration at the heart of world order, and negotiate the complex relation between human and other-than-human claims for justice. In short, we need a system of international relations that works across species for the Earth's most vulnerable communities and life forms.

From here, this article proceeds through three phases. First, it discusses the anthropocentrism of world politics, which manifests across its ontologies, ethics, and institutions. Second, it analyses the anthropocentrism of cosmopolitanism as a political philosophy. And third, it builds the foundations for a non-anthropocentric, *interspecies* cosmopolitanism and points to new paradigms in environmental governance and law where it is already visible.

### Anthropocentric world politics

Scientists cannot agree on whether the SARS-CoV-2 virus is indeed life, but it is now one of the world's most powerful and dangerous 'actants'<sup>12</sup> with the ability – when put into dynamic combination and assemblage with human social, economic, health, psychological, and political systems – to undo the world we think exists.<sup>13</sup> As of 2021, it is arguably the world's most serious immediate threat to human health and security, has triggered the deepest economic contraction since the Great Depression, and is exhibiting a canny agency as it mutates into new variants and strains that make it more transmissible and infectious and (in its Delta and Omicron variants) able to bypass immunity acquired by recovered patients and infect them again.<sup>14</sup> The pandemic exemplifies the way that major non-human processes and events – such as the 2004 Indian Ocean and 2011 Japanese Tsunamis – have caused enormous mortality and complex humanitarian crises, as have events like 2013's Typhoon Haiyan and 2017's Hurricane Maria and the droughts that preceded wars in Eritrea, the Sudan, and Syria. Unlike these events, however, COVID-19 has emerged as a genuinely global threat to human security and world order. It is equally true, given the accelerating climate and biodiversity crises, that the other-than-human is as vulnerable as it is threatening, a vulnerability that plays out on a planetary scale. With a large part of the Amazon now serving as a net carbon source, which brings disastrous global climate tipping points closer, such vulnerability also represents a chaotic planetary force and power that no state or organisation can control.<sup>15</sup> For the study and practice of international relations, this poses an urgent and

<sup>11</sup>This ethics is developed at length in Anthony Burke, 'Blue screen biosphere: The absent presence of biodiversity in international law', *International Political Sociology*, 13:3 (2019), pp. 333–51, and Anthony Burke and Stefanie Fishel, 'Across species and borders: Political representation, ecological democracy and the nonhuman', in Joana Castro Pereira and André Saramago (eds), *Nonhuman Nature in World Politics: Theory and Practice* (Cham, Switzerland: Springer Nature, 2020), pp. 33–50.

<sup>12</sup>The term 'actant' comes from Actor-Network Theory (ANT). Bruno Latour explains its value via its ability to 'not limit itself to human individual actors, but [to] extend the word actor – or actant – to *nonhuman, non-individual* entities'. Such actants (which could be a bacterium or a virus, an electricity grid, an ocean wave, a uranium atom, an animal, a person, or a social institution) are defined as 'any entity that modifies another entity'. Such understandings extend the world of actors and agents beyond human beings and institutions to non-human organisms, ecosystems, and processes as they are manifest in networks and assemblages of other matter, beings, and relations. Importantly, an actant does not require a mind, a complex intelligence, or an ability to reason or strategise. Bruno Latour, 'On Actor-Network Theory: A few clarifications', *Soziale Welt*, 47:4 (1996), p. 369; Bruno Latour, *Politics of Nature: How to Bring the Sciences into Democracy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), p. 237.

<sup>13</sup>Stefanie Fishel, *The Microbial State: Global Thriving and the Body Politic* (Minneapolis, MN and London, UK: The University of Minnesota Press, 2017).

<sup>14</sup>Ewen Callaway, 'Could new COVID variants undermine vaccines? Labs scramble to find out', *Nature* (7 January 2021).

<sup>15</sup>Luciana V. Gatti et al., 'Amazonia as a carbon source linked to deforestation and climate change', *Nature*, 595 (2021), pp. 388–93; Joana Castro Pereira and Eduardo Viola, *Climate Change and Biodiversity Governance in the Amazon: At the Edge of Ecological Collapse?* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2021).

challenging question. Is the other-than-human – whether it takes the form of the smallest microbe, or ocean and atmospheric changes at the scale of the Earth system – understood as a significant actor in world politics?<sup>16</sup> Is the other-than-human understood as having an independent power and effect that should modify our theories and practice of political and international power? Is it seen as morally or normatively significant?

It is by now well established (if still poorly recognised) that world politics, as both a disciplinary field and set of institutional practices, is deeply anthropocentric and Earth-blind.<sup>17</sup> This is true even of active areas of climate and environmental governance.<sup>18</sup> Organised as it is around a managed anarchy of nation-states whose prime goals are capitalist development and national security, against a backdrop of an inert nature pliable and available for human purposes, world politics cannot see the biosphere and its myriad beings as a fragile and agentic reality or respect the power of planetary life and Earth processes.<sup>19</sup> The Earth, a complex and vital interactivity between the cosmos and its gases, rocks, liquids, chemicals, and life, is seen in degraded and instrumental terms as a source of resources and a terrestrial, air and maritime terrain for trade, warfare, and strategic manoeuvre. These problematic lacunae are the spur to calls for new Earth-centric paradigms of research, politics, and democracy: ‘Ecological Democracy’, ‘Earth System Governance’, ‘Planet Politics’, ‘New Earth Politics’, ‘Interspecies Politics’, a ‘Politics of the Anthropocene’, a ‘Quantum Anthropocene’, a ‘relational/cosmological IR’, and more.<sup>20</sup> The entry of the Earth into the Anthropocene is a key event here, albeit one whose periodisation, naming, and description has provoked widespread debate. This article reflects a particular interpretation of the Anthropocene situation: one that has seen humankind emerge as a planetary force at least since the Industrial Revolution and especially during the period of the ‘Great Acceleration’,<sup>21</sup> raising complex questions of causality, justice, responsibility, and governance, but also one that profoundly challenges anthropocentrism and humanism because we are finally forced to acknowledge – via the devastating planetary perturbations of pollution, terraforming, anthropogenic climate change, and biodiversity loss – the violence, agency, and

<sup>16</sup>Early efforts to make these connections include, *inter alia*, Stefanie Fishel, *The Microbial State: Global Thriving and the Body Politic* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2015); the two volumes of Mark Salter (ed.), *Making Things International* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2016); Gitte du Plessis, ‘When pathogens determine the territory: Toward a concept of non-human borders’, *European Journal of International Relations*, 24:2 (2018), pp. 391–413; Olaf Corry, ‘Nature and the international: Towards a materialist understanding of societal multiplicity’, *Globalizations*, 17:3 (2020), pp. 419–35; Anna Leander, ‘Locating (new) materialist characters and processes in global governance’, *International Theory*, 13:1 (2021), 157–68; Kandida Purnell, *Rethinking the Body in Global Politics* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2021); and the June 2013 issue of *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 41:3.

<sup>17</sup>Cameron Harrington, ‘The ends of the world: International relations and the Anthropocene’, *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 44:3 (2016), pp. 478–98; Joana Castro Pereira, ‘The limitations of IR theory regarding the environment: Lessons from the Anthropocene’, *Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional*, 60:1 (2017); Joana Castro Pereira and Eduardo Viola, ‘Catastrophic climate change and forest tipping points: Blind spots in international politics and policy’, *Global Policy*, 9:4 (2018), pp. 313–524.

<sup>18</sup>Hayley Stevenson, ‘Reforming global climate governance in an age of bullshit’, *Globalizations*, 18:1 (2021), pp. 86–102.

<sup>19</sup>Anthony Burke, Stefanie Fishel, Audra Mitchell, Simon Dalby, and Daniel Levine, ‘Planet politics: A manifesto from the end of IR’, *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 44:3 (2016), pp. 499–523.

<sup>20</sup>Rafi Youatt, *Interspecies Politics: Nature, Borders, States* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2020); John S. Dryzek and Jonathan Pickering, *Politics in the Anthropocene* (Oxford, UK and New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2019); Frank Biermann, *Earth System Governance: World Politics in the Anthropocene* (Cambridge, MA and London, UK: The MIT Press, 2014); Delf Rothe, ‘Governing the end times? Planet politics and the secular eschatology of the Anthropocene’, *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 48:2 (2020), pp. 143–64; Simon Nicholson and Sikina Jinnah (eds), *New Earth Politics* (Cambridge, MA and London, UK: The MIT Press, 2016); Cameron Harrington, ‘A quantum Anthropocene: International relations between rupture and entanglement’, in Pereira and Saramago (eds), *Nonhuman Nature in World Politics*, pp. 53–72; Milja Kurki, *International Relations in a Relational Universe* (Oxford, UK and New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2020).

<sup>21</sup>Will Steffen, Wendy Broadgate, Lisa Deutsch, Owen Gaffney, and Cornelia Ludwig, ‘The trajectory of the Anthropocene: The Great Acceleration’, *The Anthropocene Review*, 2:1 (2015), pp. 81–98.

vitality of the Earth and its life.<sup>22</sup> While diverse, such Anthropocenic political perspectives all lead towards a reconfiguration of the world political in terms of what Stefanie Fishel, in her distinctive microbial rethinking of the Body Politic, describes as a ‘nested set of permeable bodies rather than hard-shelled nation-states competing in anarchical conditions ruled by fear and exclusion’.<sup>23</sup> The implications of such calls for a planetary or interspecies world politics are myriad and complex, generating a diverse new research paradigm of which this Special Issue is just one example.

A recognition of the planetary effect of non-human entities and processes like the SARS-CoV-2 virus must affect our fundamental concept of political and international power. Political power can no longer be viewed as solely possessed by human beings and states and exercised in a strategic way for the purposes of domination, coercion, or influence.<sup>24</sup> Rather, power is shared and experienced across ‘thing-systems’, across complex assemblages of human and other-than-human actants, institutions, systems, and processes, and frustrates the strategic and instrumental intent of even the most apparently dominant actors.<sup>25</sup> This, in turn, reveals complex and entangled global responsibilities which fall on every person but much more heavily on those powers, institutions, and structures most capable, culpable, and in need of change. Not only does it provoke us to consider the ways non-human processes are becoming caught up and affected by geopolitical competition, it should provoke us to rethink the foundations of geopolitics, in which the *geo-* is no longer manipulable terrain but the living, unpredictable, and violent totality of the Earth itself in its complex interaction with the Anthropocene situation.<sup>26</sup> This recognition can be at least partially accommodated by realist and liberal conceptions of geopolitics, as emerging scholarship on COVID-19 and world order is doing.<sup>27</sup> However, it comes with more profound ethical and ontological implications: that the biosphere constitutes a deeper and more fundamental global reality than the world of states, that non-human systems and lives are of great value and vulnerability and deserve autonomy and protection, and that they have a separate, independent existence and agency that precedes *Homo sapiens* by hundreds of millions of years. The meta-physical legal-political consensus assuming human supremacy and priority over nature is no longer tenable.

This problematic convergence of power, states, and biosphere is the entry point for this article’s consideration of cosmopolitanism, which was already concerned to redirect power in ways that were more peaceful, equitable, dialogic, and just. If cosmopolitan models of community, ethics, and institutional change are considered potential solutions to the inadequacies and injustices of world order, can they meet the challenges of the Anthropocene and the accelerating crisis in the Earth system? If not, how does its philosophical and institutional architecture need to evolve so that it transforms into something else? How can and should it acknowledge the other-than-human?

This starting point, however, requires an assumption: that cosmopolitanism is *prima facie* a promising solution to many of the current pathologies of world order, at least as they affect

<sup>22</sup>For more detail on my interpretation of the Anthropocene, see Burke, ‘Blue Screen biosphere’, p. 334, fn. 1. Two fine windows into the justice debates emerging from the (proposed) new epoch are Kathryn Yusoff, *A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2019) and Jason W. Moore (ed.), *Anthropocene or Capitalocene? Nature, History and the Crisis of Capitalism* (Oakland, CA: Kairos/PM Press, 2016).

<sup>23</sup>Fishel, *The Microbial State*, p. 113.

<sup>24</sup>Janice Bially Mattern, ‘The concept of power and the (un)discipline of International Relations’, in Christian Reus-Smit and Duncan Snidal (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2008).

<sup>25</sup>The full argument for rethinking political power in this way is contained in Anthony Burke and Stefanie Fishel, ‘Power, world politics and thing-systems in the Anthropocene’, in Frank Biermann and Eva Löwbrand (eds), *Anthropocene Encounters: New Directions in Green Political Thinking* (Cambridge, UK and New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2019), pp. 87–107.

<sup>26</sup>Simon Dalby, *Anthropocene Geopolitics: Globalization, Security, Sustainability* (Ottawa, Can.: University of Ottawa Press, 2020); Simon Dalby, ‘Firepower: Geopolitical cultures in the Anthropocene’, *Geopolitics*, 23:3 (2018), pp. 718–42.

<sup>27</sup>Hal Brands and Francis J. Gavin (eds), *COVID-19 and World Order: The Future of Conflict, Competition, and Cooperation* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2020).

humankind. Its universalistic appreciation of human equality regardless of skin colour, nationality, gender, displacement, or class; of the increasingly globalised nature of contemporary harms, insecurities, and injustices; of common humanity and planetary interconnection at the same time as it values human diversity, differences, and rights; and its hostility to imperialism and international hierarchy, violence, and coercion; all these qualities make cosmopolitanism a promising ethical underpinning to attempts to make global order work for all human beings and peoples.<sup>28</sup> However, cosmopolitanism is not simply or unproblematically so: firstly, because of both its limited and inadequate development in philosophy and its more contentious deployments as an enabling rhetoric for experiments in global governance or international intervention; and secondly, because it remains contested by more dominant normative theories of world order which come under the broad rubrics of realism, liberalism, and English School pluralism.<sup>29</sup> These debates remain rightly unfinished, but they will be bracketed here.

A note too about my own approach to cosmopolitanism. Rather than being a (more or less) *completed* philosophical tradition, ethics, political theory, or approach to foreign policy and world order, I view cosmopolitanism as flawed, weakly institutionalised, and unfinished – always, in Jacques Derrida's sense, 'to come'.<sup>30</sup> This orientation helps to dismiss some significant misapprehensions that have sadly taken on philosophical and academic respectability. Cosmopolitanism is not the same as liberal internationalism (or its more alarming cousin, liberal imperialism)<sup>31</sup> but should be a critique and improvement of it; Immanuel Kant's political thought was not very cosmopolitan (to the extent that he offered an international political theory, it was liberal internationalist and prefigured something like the UN system); cosmopolitanism is not (or should not be) Eurocentric, but seeks to defend and preserve cultural, gender, and Indigenous (rather than national) differences and take an interest in postcolonial justice. In this regard it can draw on a variety of non-Western traditions.<sup>32</sup> Nor can cosmopolitanism be reconciled with war, either in terms of humanitarian intervention or the just war tradition, even if its ethical tenets can humanise war's conduct.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism*; on cosmopolitanism and difference, see Ulrich Beck, *The Cosmopolitan Vision* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2006), ch. 2.

<sup>29</sup> See Richard Beardsworth, *Cosmopolitanism and International Relations Theory* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2011); Andrew Hurrell, *On Global Order: Power Values in the Constitution of International Society* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2007); Toni Erskine, *Embedded Cosmopolitanism: Duties to Strangers and Enemies and a World of 'Dislocated Communities* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2008); Vivienne Jabri, *War and the Transformation of Global Politics* (London, UK and New York, UK: Palgrave 2010); Richard Shapcott, *International Ethics: A Critical Introduction* (Cambridge, UK: Polity 2013).

<sup>30</sup> Jacques Derrida, *The Other Heading: Reflections on Today's Europe*, trans. P. A. Brault and M. Naas (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1992), p. 78; Carol A. Breckenridge, Sheldon Pollock, Homi K. Bhabha, and Dipesh Chakrabarty (eds), *Cosmopolitanism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), p. 1.

<sup>31</sup> Robert Cooper, 'The new liberal imperialism', *The Observer/Guardian* (7 April 2002). Nuanced treatment of this dilemma can be found in the work of Vivienne Jabri, *inter alia*, *War and the Transformation of Global Politics* (London, UK and New York, NY: Palgrave, 2010); *The Postcolonial Subject: Claiming Politics/Governing Others in Late Modernity* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge 2012); and 'Cosmopolitan politics, security, political subjectivity', *European Journal of International Relations*, 18:4 (2012), pp. 625–44.

<sup>32</sup> See Chengxin Pan, 'Enfolding wholes in parts: Quantum holography and International Relations', *European Journal of International Relations*, 26:S1 (2020), pp. 14–38 (pp. 30–1); Paul Gilroy, *Against Race: Imagining Political Culture Beyond the Color Line* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000); Siba Grovogui, 'Practices and metaphysics of knowledge: Notes on nationalism, internationalism, and cosmopolitanism', *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 37:2 (2017); Stephen F. Schneck (ed.), *Letting Be: Fred Dallmayr's Cosmopolitical Vision* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006); Luis Cabrera, *The Humble Cosmopolitan: Rights, Diversity, and Trans-state Democracy* (Oxford, UK and New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2020).

<sup>33</sup> Compare the treatment of cosmopolitanism's relationship to war in Cécile Fabre, *Cosmopolitan War* (Oxford, UK and New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2012) and Anthony Burke, Katrina Lee-Koo, and Matt McDonald, *Ethics and Global Security: A Cosmopolitan Approach* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2014).

In stating this, I am drawing on criticisms of figures such as Kant and Arendt by Jacques Derrida<sup>34</sup> and Seyla Benhabib<sup>35</sup> and asserting cosmopolitanism as a (provisionally) universalistic and anti-racist standard of human equality, diversity, and dignity anchored in a commitment to the abolition of war and political injustice. Such an expanding, unfinished cosmopolitanism cannot be liberalism with an enhanced ethical mandate, carrying a certificate from the moral philosophers; it must take account of the critiques of racism and Eurocentrism in proto-cosmopolitan thought and grapple with the problematic manipulations of life inherent in the state project of liberal biopolitics.<sup>36</sup> Nor would it be a universalism with a project – in the Anthropocene there can be no progress of History and no hubris about Enlightenment – or a universalism that would not at key points melt away in the face of unities and differences that are simultaneously smaller and vaster.<sup>37</sup> If it is to have universal claims, many of which can and should be defended, it is a universalism of intermediate truths, strategic essentialisms, and coeval differences that is ontologically incomplete and ethically contestable.<sup>38</sup> Consider the universal ground-figure of cosmopolitanism: humanity. Humanity as a *moral figure* of global family and equality works to valorise inalienable rights to dignity, health, security, and flourishing at the same time as it seeks to honour cultural, sexual, and Indigenous diversity. However, this does not challenge its underlying humanism, which has deeply problematic foundations. As a modern *species figure* that flickers between *Homo sapiens* (an evolutionary product of the biosphere) and *Homo faber* (the fabricator<sup>39</sup> of the world of things, ‘destroyer of nature’, and ‘lord and master of the whole earth’), humanity must be simultaneously affirmed and decentred, placed within the myriad other species with whom it shares the Earth. In the Anthropocene, the human family that created itself through a (meta)physical separation from nature, and thence to command, exploit, despoil, and degrade it, must be dismantled and abolished. Our true family is Mammalia and the biosphere.<sup>40</sup>

### Anthropocentric cosmopolitanism

Everywhere that a major source and structure of insecurity, harm, injustice, and wrong overflows national borders and boundaries something like the cosmopolitan is called forth. It calls forth new modes of regional and global governance, institutionalisation, ethics, and law, along with a transformation of the internal ethos, community, and purposes of states so that such systems are more just, diverse, tolerant, and inclusive and work to eliminate grave injustices. While it does not discount (and in some cases starts from) national, local, and familial loyalties, it emphasises a common membership in the human community and ineluctable duties to close and distant strangers. While local, place-based community ties are immanent to our reality and worth

<sup>34</sup>Jacques Derrida, *Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2001), p. 20.

<sup>35</sup>Seyla Benhabib, *The Rights of Others: Aliens, Residents and Citizens* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 66.

<sup>36</sup>Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze (ed.), *Race and the Enlightenment: A Reader* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1997); Patricia Owens, ‘Racism in the theory canon: Hannah Arendt and “the one great crime in which America was never involved”’, *Millennium*, 45:3 (2017), pp. 403–24.

<sup>37</sup>Veronique Pin-Fat, ‘Cosmopolitanism and the end of humanity: A grammatical reading of posthumanism’, *International Political Sociology*, 7 (2013), pp. 241–57, and ‘Seeing humanity anew: A grammatical reading of liberal cosmopolitanism’, in Tamara Craus and Elena Paris (eds), *Re-Grounding Cosmopolitanism: Towards a Post-Foundational Cosmopolitanism* (London, UK: Routledge, 2016).

<sup>38</sup>See Judith Butler, ‘Universality in culture’, in Martha C. Nussbaum et al., *For Love of Country?* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2002), p. 46; Mario Blaser and Marisol de la Cadena, ‘Pluriverse: Proposals for a world of many worlds’, in Marisol de la Cadena and Mario Blaser (eds), *A World of Many Worlds* (Kindle end, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018), loc. 76; Breckenridge et al. (eds), *Cosmopolitanism*, pp. 7–9.

<sup>39</sup>Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1958), p. 139.

<sup>40</sup>It should be clear here that I am referring to ‘family’ in a normative, affective sense (as kin) and am not referring to the Linnaean biological classification, in which humans are Hominidae.



supporting, cosmopolitans are suspicious of the nation and its patriotic affects because of its close associations with racism, imperialism, and settler-colonialism, and the inexorable fascist tendencies of its line of flight. While many communitarian thinkers also seek to create multicultural spaces of diversity and inclusion within the nation (which in Sue Donaldson and Will Kymlicka's work extends to the non-human), in late modernity and the Anthropocene the national perspective fails to acknowledge that all humans must seek to survive and exist in a globalised and planetary array of systems that are, in both their actuality and their history, more-than-human.<sup>41</sup>

For some thinkers, cosmopolitan duties are matters of personal or state morality, for others they reflect an expanded global sphere of belonging, and for critical theorists such as Ulrich Beck and Ken Booth they begin from an acknowledgement that planetary reality itself has shifted into a collective space of shared risks and calamities that creates a 'distorted' and dysfunctional 'cosmopolitanisation of reality'.<sup>42</sup> Booth terms this 'the great reckoning', with a revealing anthropocentric qualifier: 'the growing threat of world-historical turmoil' is 'humanity's Great Reckoning'.<sup>43</sup> While Beck cites many symptoms of such a 'risk cosmopolitanism' – 'capital flows, global risks, terror attacks, migration flows, anti-globalization movements, ecological and economic crises' – the COVID-19 pandemic could be considered a paradigm case. Beck acknowledges the situation is complex; he hopes it will provoke emancipatory movements and structures of cooperation to solve global challenges, but, in perverse forms of persistence and paranoia, could also strengthen neoliberal interventions, right-wing nationalisms, and Islamist forms of transnational solidarity and violence.<sup>44</sup> This is undoubtedly true of the dangerous alliance between the fossil fuel industry and the political far right over the last few decades.<sup>45</sup> While Beck acknowledges that moral and political forms of cosmopolitanism (with their uncertain and contestable potentials for institutionalisation) are important, his book *Cosmopolitan Vision* privileges an analysis of the empirical symptoms of cosmopolitanisation – an entangled world of shared risks and harms. This can sharpen our sense of the stakes involved in building moral and political models of cosmopolitanism, but this vision remains an Anthropocentric one: the 'ecological interdependency crisis ... must be conceived as culturally manufactured actions, effects, and insecurities'.<sup>46</sup> While this strong insight presages much commentary on the Anthropocene, it is one-sided and uncritically humanist; its concern is for the welfare of humans, and neither the active agency of the Earth nor its value and vulnerability are given their due. The sheer scale, urgency, and seriousness of Earth system change and a concomitant revolution in worldview is missing.

This is not the flaw of any one author; it is paradigmatic. Both fundamental philosophical descriptions of cosmopolitanism, and myriad applications of it in the study of war, global governance, and international relations, remain humanist and anthropocentric. Martha Nussbaum frames her cosmopolitanism with Seneca's argument that it 'is truly great and truly common in which we look neither to this corner nor to that but measure the boundaries of our nation by the sun', and lauds the broader Stoic view that we should 'give our first allegiance to know mere form of government, no temporal power, but to the moral community made up by the

<sup>41</sup>Sue Donaldson and Will Kymlicka, *Zoopolis: A Political Theory of Animal Rights* (Oxford, UK and New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2011); John S. Dryzek and Jonathan Pickering, *Politics in the Anthropocene* (Oxford, UK and New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2019); Robert Boardman, *Governance of Earth Systems: Science and Its Uses* (London, UK: Palgrave, 2010).

<sup>42</sup>Beck, *The Cosmopolitan Vision*, p. 34.

<sup>43</sup>Ken Booth, *Theory of World Security* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 2, 17.

<sup>44</sup>Beck, *The Cosmopolitan Vision*, pp. 34–44.

<sup>45</sup>Cara Daggett, 'Petro-masculinity: Fossil fuels and authoritarian desire', *Millennium*, 47:1 (2018), pp. 25–44; Cara New Daggett, *The Birth of Energy: Fossil Fuels, Thermodynamics and the Politics of Work* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019).

<sup>46</sup>Beck, *The Cosmopolitan Vision*, p. 23.

humanity of all human beings'.<sup>47</sup> For the philosopher of war Cécile Fabre, cosmopolitanism is based on 'the view that human beings are the fundamental and primary loci for moral concern and respect'.<sup>48</sup> Kwame Anthony Appiah's *Cosmopolitanism* opens by stating that 'our ancestors have been human for a long time' when, evolutionarily speaking, human ancestors have been primates and numerous other prior species.<sup>49</sup> A fine critical collection informed by post-Marxism and postcolonialism asserts that its 'questions are important to the fate of human collectivities'.<sup>50</sup> And we may also wonder about Kant's moral philosophy – which forms the underpinning to his cosmopolitan liberalism – where the empirical element of Ethics is also termed 'practical anthropology'.<sup>51</sup>

Introducing a major reader on cosmopolitanism, Garrett Wallace Brown and David Held state that the globalisation of harms and risk provoke foundational questions about 'what normative principles should be adopted to guide future cohabitation on our planet'.<sup>52</sup> Yet despite the potential opening to an interspecies vision of planetary politics that might be glimpsed here, they proceed to interpret this challenge entirely anthropocentrically, explaining that 'cosmopolitanism maintains that there are moral obligations owed to all human beings based solely on our humanity alone.' They advance a cosmopolitan ethics underpinned by three fundamental 'moral and normative commitments': 'the *primary units of moral concern* are individual human beings'; cosmopolitan commitments and duties should be applied to *human beings* equally and impartially, regardless of one's nationality, colour, or birth; and the universal moral standing of individuals *applies to all human beings* everywhere.<sup>53</sup> The book includes one chapter out of twenty-six on the environment, which is included as an 'issue' rather than a framing and foundational situation. Another important recent work – Richard Beardsworth, Garrett Wallace Brown, and Richard Shapcott's *The State and Cosmopolitan Responsibilities*, which investigates the role that states 'might play in promoting a cosmopolitan condition' – is also strongly anthropocentric.<sup>54</sup> The book makes no mention of the global biodiversity crisis or the Anthropocene, and includes one chapter on climate change (again as a 'global issue').<sup>55</sup> Its editors frame the problematic of the book by noting the contradiction between resurgent right-wing nationalism and globalised existence, which activates, in Andrew Linklater's words, 'the tension between our understandings of our duties as citizens and our duties as members of humanity'.<sup>56</sup>

In his important cosmopolitan work, *The Transformation of Political Community*, Linklater himself looks forward to 'post-Westphalian forms of cooperation ... in which dialogue and consent replace domination and force. In this way it is possible to approximate the normative ideal of a universal communication community and to assure that global arrangements have the consent of the greater proportion of the human race'.<sup>57</sup> The anthropocentrism of the frame is palpable

<sup>47</sup>Nussbaum, *Frontiers of Justice*, p. 7.

<sup>48</sup>Fabre, *Cosmopolitan War*, p. 16.

<sup>49</sup>Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism*, p. xi.

<sup>50</sup>Breckenridge et al. (eds), *Cosmopolitanism* p. 13.

<sup>51</sup>Kant excludes non-human animals from the 'Kingdom' (or Commonwealth) of Ends and thus from political community, arguing that while they should never be treated cruelly, they can, unlike human beings, be treated as means. See Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 2; Heather M. Kendrick, 'Animals in the Kingdom of Ends', *Between the Species*, 13:10 (2011), article 2.

<sup>52</sup>Garrett Wallace Brown and David Held (eds), *The Cosmopolitanism Reader* (Cambridge: Polity, 2010), p. 1.

<sup>53</sup>Brown and Held (eds), *The Cosmopolitanism Reader*, pp. 1–2, emphasis added.

<sup>54</sup>Richard Beardsworth, Garrett Wallace Brown, and Richard Shapcott (eds), *The State and Cosmopolitan Responsibilities* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2019).

<sup>55</sup>Helga Haflidadottir and Anthony F. Lang Jr, 'Climate change and cosmopolitan responsibilities', in Beardsworth, Richard Brown, and Shapcott (eds), *The State and Cosmopolitan Responsibilities*, ch. 9.

<sup>56</sup>Richard Beardsworth, Garrett Wallace Brown, and Richard Shapcott, 'Introduction', in Beardsworth, Wallace Brown, and Richard Shapcott (eds), *The State and Cosmopolitan Responsibilities*, p. 2.

<sup>57</sup>Andrew Linklater, *The Transformation of Political Community: Ethical Foundations of the Post-Westphalian Era* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1998).

here – yet, as Matthew Leep notes, in a later 2007 essay, Linklater considers an alternative way of grounding the cosmopolitan that opens out beyond the human.<sup>58</sup> Pushing beyond his earlier investment in Habermasian dialogue (which excludes non-humans), Linklater considers a more materialist foundation drawing on ancient perspectives about the ‘universal vulnerabilities of the body’: ‘mutual recognition of shared mental and physical vulnerability provides the most readily available means of projecting forms of solidarity across the boundaries of established communities – and across the boundaries that are deemed to exist between human and nonhuman forms of life.’ He goes on to envision the possibility of ‘an embodied cosmopolitanism, that is the potentiality for extending rights of moral consideration to all other human beings, and indeed to all creatures that are sentient.’<sup>59</sup> While this opens the door to a non-anthropocentric cosmopolitanism, its architecture and possibilities are left unexplored. His limitation of moral community to ‘sentient’ beings (a view shared with Martha Nussbaum and Alasdair Cochrane) is also problematic and is discussed further below. Linklater’s subsequent sideways shift into the theorisation of harm in world politics from a cosmopolitan viewpoint is again primarily concerned with human wrongs; while aware of the global ecological crisis and the risk ‘to the biosphere on which all complex life depends’, it seems more concerned that the *human* ‘species ultimately depends on the biosphere for its survival’.<sup>60</sup> With an awareness of these limitations, Lorraine Elliott has extended Linklater’s harm theory in important ways that includes the full range of transnational environmental harms characteristic of the Anthropocene and shows how they should be central to human concerns with insecurity, injustice and governance.<sup>61</sup> This work is a major corrective to the ecology-blindness of cosmopolitanism, but as N. A. J. Taylor notes drawing on the environmental philosopher Richard Routley, her approach remains ‘subconsciously anthropocentric’ because it confines its concerns to ‘destruction and damage to the environment only in so far as it impacts upon humans’.<sup>62</sup>

### Interspecies cosmopolitanism

Can cosmopolitanism evolve beyond humanism? If it does so, will it still be recognisably cosmopolitan, and can it do justice to both the human and more-than-human? I do not know the answer to this question – the intellectual and practical evolution of this paradigm is beyond any one person – but my view is that if cosmopolitanism is to remain relevant, it must.<sup>63</sup> As Rosi Braidotti argues, ‘given the multiple, complex and contradictory notions and practises of planetary interrelation today, cosmopolitanism can only remain relevant by undergoing a radical mutation.’<sup>64</sup>

Braidotti is one of the few thinkers to have pressed cosmopolitanism to shift its grounds to accommodate the other-than-human. She pushes classical cosmopolitanism to ‘become-world’ by ‘developing a radical relational model of interaction’ and to ‘acknowledge a structural interconnection among subjects that are complex and material singularities in process’. To do this, cosmopolitanism must relinquish ‘the idea of liberal individualism as a unitary vision of the subject, which entails self-correcting rationality and a propensity for moral and cognitive

<sup>58</sup>Matthew Leep, ‘Stray dogs, post-humanism and cosmopolitan belongingness: Interspecies hospitality in times of war’, *Millennium*, 47:1 (2018), pp. 45–66.

<sup>59</sup>Andrew Linklater, ‘Towards a sociology of global morals with an “emancipatory intent”’, *Review of International Studies*, 33 (2007), pp. 135–50.

<sup>60</sup>Andrew Linklater, *The Problem of Harm in World Politics: Theoretical Investigations* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 2, 65.

<sup>61</sup>Lorraine Elliott, ‘Cosmopolitan environmental harm conventions’, *Global Society*, 20:3 (2006), pp. 345–63.

<sup>62</sup>N. A. J. Taylor, ‘The problem of nuclear harm for Andrew Linklater, Lorraine Elliott and other contemporary cosmopolitans’, *Global Society*, 32:1 (2018), pp. 111–26 (p. 121).

<sup>63</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 123.

<sup>64</sup>Rosi Braidotti, ‘Becoming world’, in Rosi Braidotti, Patrick Hanafin, and Bolette Blaagard (eds), *After Cosmopolitanism* (Kindle edn, Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2013), loc. 298.

universalism'.<sup>65</sup> There are strong affinities here with Milja Kurki's caution about creating a picture of the world divided up into 'things' relating across a space of separation and autonomy: 'since we are of the relations ... we should pay attention to the ways in which all "things" are in relations and produced through relationalities not "self-ness"'.<sup>66</sup> An interspecies dimension is also visible in Chengxin Pan's quantum holographical version of relationalism, which emphasises that all parts are 'enfolding wholes' and opens onto an ethics of responsibility of the whole for the whole that includes 'the smallest "components" such as corals and insects'.<sup>67</sup> From a particular concern with the manifold intercommunal and multispecies harms caused by the nuclear weapons complex, Taylor argues for an 'anthropocosmic' politics that addresses 'catastrophic ecosystem decline' and nests humanity in the biosphere.<sup>68</sup> And in his work on the biopolitical life and death of dogs during the Iraq war, Leep seeks to extend cosmopolitan belonging to non-humans via a Derridean emphasis on both the alterity of non-human animals and 'an interspecies belongingness of difference, a being-with differences that can never be that can never be disregarded or reduced to sameness'.<sup>69</sup> For her part, Claire Colebrook is pessimistic about cosmopolitanism, which she thinks of as so stubbornly humanist and bound to liberal models of the polity that 'any form of cosmopolitanism that wanted to redeem globalism by reaching a greater or more open humanity ... would only be an extension by degree, not a difference in kind'.<sup>70</sup> Instead, she reaches for a 'cosmic' perspective that would

open up to forces that are not our own, to consider the elemental and inhuman, so that it might be possible to think what life may be worthy of living on. Such an approach would require a thought of the cosmos – of life and its durations – that would be destructive of the polity, which not return all elements and forces into what they mean for 'us'.<sup>71</sup>

Braidotti, Colebrook, and Leep focus their transformed vision of a non-humanist (post-)cosmopolitanism on the transformation of its underlying models of inclusion and being, and on more local political practices, rather than engage cosmopolitanism as a project of world order. However Braidotti does remark that 'the main implication for the practice of a new cosmopolitical sense of planetary interconnection is that the political, scientific and juridical laws need to be retuned according to a view of the subject as a complex singularity, affective assemblage and relational vitalist entity'.<sup>72</sup> How such a 'retuning' should take place is a fraught and complex issue – the focus of the Earth System Governance and many other scholarly projects – but world order is my starting point, if only for the fact that our visions of world order shape its power play, possibilities, and architecture, and local practices of human injustice and ecological despoliation are anchored there.

If cosmopolitanism claims to be an ethical foundation for a just, democratic, and equitable world order, one capable of equitably providing for security and flourishing and undergirding collective solutions to transborder harms and dangers, it must expand its moral and ontological universe to the more-than-human, the Earth, and the cosmos. This is to expand our understanding of whom and what world order is *for* – beyond both the thin interstate structure (found in

<sup>65</sup>Ibid.

<sup>66</sup>Kurki, *International Relations in a Relational Universe*, p. 121.

<sup>67</sup>Pan, 'Enfolding wholes in parts', p. 31.

<sup>68</sup>Taylor, 'The problem of nuclear harm', p. 124.

<sup>69</sup>Matthew Leep, 'Stray dogs, post-humanism and cosmopolitan belongingness: Interspecies hospitality in times of war', *Millennium*, 47:1 (2018), pp. 45–66 (p. 51). See also Matthew Leep, *Cosmopolitan Belongingness and War: Animals, Loss, and Spectral-Poetic Moments* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2021).

<sup>70</sup>Claire Colebrook, 'Destroying cosmopolitanism, for the sake of the cosmos', in Braidotti, Hanafin, and Blagard (eds), *After Cosmopolitanism*, loc. 4731.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid., loc. 4837.

<sup>72</sup>Braidotti, 'Becoming world', loc. 482.

classical realism, liberal institutionalism, and English School pluralism) managed for the benefit of states and global elites, and the liberal cosmopolitan vision (visible in the Sustainable Development Goals and the 1972 Stockholm Declaration) concerned to support a deeper vision of peace and justice that emancipates the colonised and global poor and safeguards the ‘natural resources’ of a ‘human environment’ for the ‘benefit of present and future generations’.<sup>73</sup> Notwithstanding their (often laudable) normative intent, the Stockholm declaration and the SDGs are strongly anthropocentric formations, which perpetuate unjust and extractivist systems of national and global governance that are deeply implicated in the climate and extinction crises, and are inadequate to the rapidly changing landscape of the Anthropocene.

As Colebrook warns, such an expansion of cosmopolitical practice to respond to the other-than-human cannot be an extension ‘in kind’; it must challenge and transform the diverse humanisms that underpin contemporary modernity and world order. Against this background, cosmopolitanism’s evolution beyond humanism might begin – but not end with – a weakly anthropocentric perspective that acknowledges the dependence of human beings on other forms and structures of life but foregrounds the human, politically and morally. From there, it must work towards a radically ecocentric perspective that acknowledges *Homo sapiens*’ fundamental existential debt to non-human life and matter and honours the intrinsic value and rights to flourishing of all the Earth’s beings, prior to and alongside the human. This means pushing beyond the humanist ontological limits of cosmopolitanism, but I do so to foreground the *ontic* reality of an increasingly chaotic, degraded, and exploitative human entanglement with an Anthropocene earth shared with some 8.7 million other species, too many of whom are clinging to existence.<sup>74</sup>

The former, weakly anthropocentric cosmopolitanism might be what Leep calls a ‘posthuman cosmopolitanism’, one concerned to understand ‘how our [human] being on earth is also a “being-with” animal others’, and alone it would be a significant step forward.<sup>75</sup> Intuitively, it extends cosmopolitanism’s affirmation of human equality to equality between humans and non-humans.<sup>76</sup> Ethically, such an extension of formal equality to the other-than-human has affinities to post-humanist philosophy’s interest in the ‘socio-natures’ that have emerged during the Anthropocene, with their ‘translations’ across natural and social fields, ‘hybrids of nature and culture’ and ‘assemblages’ of human and non-human systems, lives, flows, and institutions.<sup>77</sup> From this flows an ethics of relation, entanglement, and intra-action that, writes Karen Barad, entails an ‘always already responsibil[ity] to the others with whom or which we are entangled, not through conscious intent but through the various ontological entanglements that materiality entails’.<sup>78</sup> However ethically appealing this seems, it implies a level of trust and partnership across the species boundary that, while worth striving for, does not yet exist. *Homo sapiens* possesses a physical and legal power far beyond that of all other species, whether individually or in their totality: the power to kill, influence, terraform, dominate, degrade, and depopulate the Earth at a planetary scale. This occurs with both malice and intent when pursued by corporations and policymakers, and with thoughtlessness via large-scale anonymous structures like food and transport systems that distance consumers from extraction, dispossession, and cruelty. As the problems with the

<sup>73</sup>Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, Stockholm, Principle 25; Fabian Schuppert, ‘Beyond the national resource privilege: Towards an International Court of the Environment’, *International Theory*, 6:1 (2014), pp. 68–97.

<sup>74</sup>CBD Secretariat, *Global Biodiversity Outlook 5* (Montreal: Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, 2020).

<sup>75</sup>Leep, ‘Stray dogs, post-humanism and cosmopolitan belongingness’, pp. 45–66. See also Matthew Leep, ‘Cosmopolitanism in a carnivorous world’, *Politics and Animals*, 3 (2017), pp. 16–30.

<sup>76</sup>This is a core premise of Alasdair Cochrane, *Sentientist Politics: A Theory of Global Interspecies Justice* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2018).

<sup>77</sup>Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, trans. Catherine Porter (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), pp. 10–11; Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Kindle edn, Durham, NC and London, UK: Duke University Press, 2010), loc. 466–73.

<sup>78</sup>Karen Barad, ‘Toward an ethics of mattering’, in Karen Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning* (Kindle edn, Durham, NC and London, UK: Duke University Press, 2007), loc. 7772.

global biodiversity regime show, we cannot assume an equal power relationship between humans and non-humans when non-humans have little presence and rights in law, and when the international customary law principle of Permanent Sovereignty Over Natural Resources is structured around enabling the exploitation of animals and the unsustainable extraction of more-than-human ecosystems.

Such an inequality and abuse of power suggests that we need more than an ethics that emphasises interconnection alone, because we cannot trust that translations across systems and worlds will not carry an enormous burden of damage, violence, and exploitation until those systems undergo radical change. The human must be dethroned and decentred, and the biosphere empowered rather than remaining a perpetual hostage to human charity and interests. This can happen ethically, by foregrounding more-than-human dignity and flourishing; legally, by recognising animal sovereignties and rights of nature in law; economically, by dismantling extractive and unsustainable modes of production and consumption; and politically, by making other-than-human representation central to democracy.<sup>79</sup> An interspecies cosmopolitanism, then, should endeavour to see the world and its crises from the point of view of the other-than-human, seeking justice for humans and non-humans together.<sup>80</sup> The new (cosmopolitical) purpose of world order then should be to protect and preserve the Earth from the ecological destruction wreaked by human institutions, corporations, and polities and to institute new (or restore the old) ways of living in harmony with nature – to achieve nothing less than an ecological transformation of world order.<sup>81</sup>

What follows, in this text, is an expansion and continuation of existing conversations exploring the potential for a cosmopolitics that acknowledges and is inclusive of the other-than-human, rather than a final, definitive statement. Nor is it an argument that cosmopolitanism should discard its humanist commitments where they do valuable political and ethical work and do not come at a cost to the Earth. Here, I propose to explore the potential of an interspecies cosmopolitanism by considering the way in which it would modify the foundational ontological underpinnings, and politico-normative commitments, of cosmopolitanism. These foundational elements can be divided up as follows:

1. The ground ethical subject (which anchors a global ontology);
2. The fundamental mode of ethical relation (which gives the global ontology dynamism and structure);
3. The imagined existential unity (which is also a structure of solidarity);
4. The mode of institutional organisation (which has a structural and socio-legal character); and
5. The ordering project (which is simultaneously a project of global justice).

### **Ground ethical subject and relation**

The ground ethical subject of liberal cosmopolitanism is the autonomous liberal individual – albeit one that has been pluralised beyond the property-owning white male of classical liberalism to recognise multiple kinds of cultural, sexual, geographic, cognitive, and historical difference.<sup>82</sup>

<sup>79</sup>Christine J. Winter, 'A seat at the table', *Borderlands: Culture, Politics, Law and Earth*, 20:1 (2021), pp. 116–39; Rafi Youatt, 'Personhood and the rights of nature: The new subjects of contemporary Earth politics', *International Political Sociology*, 11:1 (2017), pp. 39–54; Rosemary-Claire Collard, Jessica Dempsey, and Juanita Sundberg, 'A manifesto for abundant futures', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 105:2 (2015), pp. 322–30.

<sup>80</sup>Danielle Celermajer, David Schlosberg, Lauren Rickards, Makere Stewart-Harawira, Mathias Thaler, Petra Tschakert, Blanche Verlie, and Christine Winter, 'Multispecies justice: Theories, challenges, and a research agenda for environmental politics', *Environmental Politics*, 30 (2012), pp. 119–40 (pp. 1–2).

<sup>81</sup>United Nations 'Harmony with Nature' programme, available at: {<http://www.harmonywithnatureun.org>}.

<sup>82</sup>Brown and Held, 'Editor's introduction', in Brown and Held (eds), *The Cosmopolitanism Reader*, p. 1.

David Held argues that the 'first principle' of cosmopolitanism is that 'the ultimate units of moral concern are individual human beings, not states or other particular forms of human association.' This position reflects that of Nussbaum and Held indeed includes her argument that 'we must treat with equal respect the dignity of reason and moral choice in every human being.' These formulations are part of the philosophical underpinnings of human rights and are as such morally defensible, but their anthropocentrism becomes clear when Held goes on to say that 'to think of people as having equal moral value is to make a general claim about the basic units of the world comprising persons as free and equal beings'.<sup>83</sup>

The global perspective of cosmopolitanism suggests that these (ideal) individuals are not isolated utilitarian constructs but are bound into profound associations of mutual effects and solidarity that reach across political, religious, and cultural borders. Whether or not these models go beyond liberal internationalism and its essentially statist commitments remain a salient concern, but what Held here calls 'egalitarian individualism' embodies the second core foundational commitment: a specific mode of ethical relation. Here, liberal cosmopolitanism posits a linked structure comprising formal equality between individuals, 'duties' held by individuals and national communities to others (especially distant others), and, in those cosmopolitanisms informed by Habermasian critical theory, the creation of dialogic and richly deliberative forms of (transnational) democracy that in Andrew Linklater's words 'engage the excluded in dialogue about the ways in which social practises and policies harm their interests'.<sup>84</sup>

If one considers solely human wrongs, the autonomous liberal individual is a crucial value, enabling us to posit a principle that can highlight multiple kinds of harm and rights. No individual is strictly autonomous, because we all rely on webs of support, matter, life, care, and exchange that keep us alive and flourishing, but the principle of autonomy is crucial to defend individuals against all kinds of violations that breach crucial psychic and physical boundaries: rape, torture, emotional abuse, violence, detention, overwork, and exploitation.<sup>85</sup> In this way, this principle can and has been extended to non-human species and individuals especially those considered sentient. Yet as formulated by Held, this principle is strongly anthropocentric and exclusionary of non-human animals and systems because they are not considered 'basic units of the world'. When put this way, the ontological foundation of cosmopolitanism is planet-blind and ontically absurd, given that humans are one species among 8.7 million. We share our bodies with bacteria, minerals and water, eat other living beings that have drawn sustenance from the sun and the atmosphere, oceans, rocks, rivers and soils, and breathe oxygen produced by non-human life forms that is in fact present in such vast quantities only because of the evolution of cyanobacteria and multicellular life more than 2 billion years ago. In turn, attributing morally significant qualities to humans such as reason and moral choice is exclusionary of both many kinds of humans (such as children, the intellectually disabled, and the neurodiverse) and non-humans who have been traditionally denied reason, language, and moral agency. This is a significant lacuna in the work both of Habermas and (to a much lesser extent) Nussbaum.<sup>86</sup> Whereas Nussbaum moderates her mindcentric humanism with the capabilities approach (which values senses and emotions) and includes sentient non-human animals as equals in the moral world of the polity, Habermas excludes animals from the 'universe of members who address intersubjectively accepted rules and orders to one another'.<sup>87</sup>

Expanding moral and political considerability to non-human animals on the basis of sentience and individual rights to dignity and flourishing (as Alasdair Cochrane and Nussbaum do), only

<sup>83</sup>David Held, *Cosmopolitanism: Ideal and Realities* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2010), p. 68, emphasis added.

<sup>84</sup>Linklater, *The Transformation of Political Community*, p. 7.

<sup>85</sup>Nussbaum, *Frontiers of Justice*, p. 76.

<sup>86</sup>Burke and Fishel, 'Across species and borders'.

<sup>87</sup>Cochrane, *Sentientist Politics*, p. 4; Nussbaum, *Frontiers of Justice*, pp. 76, 351; Jürgen Habermas, *The Future of Human Nature* (Kindle edn, Cambridge, UK and Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2003), loc. 677. See also David Schlosberg, 'Climate justice and capabilities: A framework for adaptation policy', *Ethics & International Affairs*, 26:4 (2012), pp. 445–61.

partially corrects this exclusion. It remains individualist; it obscures the real and complex forms of relationality and enmeshment that underpin ecological communities and the Earth system. By expanding the quality of ‘mind’ to animal species beyond the human it is reluctant to break fully from the Cartesian hierarchy between human as mind and nature as body – what Val Plumwood termed ‘hyperseparation’ – that has been so implicated in ecological destruction and environmental racism.<sup>88</sup> Mind is still ethically privileged, denied to alternative (chemical and rhizomatic) structures of communication, solidarity, and symbiosis found in ecosystems such as forests, and large parts of nature are thus at risk of remaining unvalued and unrepresented.<sup>89</sup> A non-anthropocentric individualism represents important ethical progress and is a crucial underpinning for animal rights, but is unsatisfactory as an ontology of ethical relation for an interspecies cosmopolitics that must work at a planetary scale. The biosphere as an entity is invisible or brushed aside. Nussbaum’s view on extinction is exemplary here: she argues that ‘continuity of species’ only has ‘moral weight as a consideration of justice’ if ‘damage to species occurs through damage to individuals ... biodiversity as such may be a good, but what kind of good it is, and what its relation may be to political justice, seem to be questions left for another inquiry.’<sup>90</sup> Sentience is also problematic because it seems only to apply to vertebrates, excluding plants and insects and complex symbiotic communities such as soils, forests, rivers, mangroves, kelp beds, coral reefs, sea floors, and alpine tundra.

In this light, an interspecies or planetary cosmopolitanism should acknowledge the moral value of individual human and other-than-human organisms. However, its ground subject would not be an ontologically distinct individual but a materially entangled being in a relationship of coexistence, symbiosis, responsibility, and becoming with ecosystems and worlds.<sup>91</sup> Borders between states and species, or between individuals and systems, have no moral valence. Social-ecological totality and interrelation are ultimately what matters: value inheres in the individual and the whole simultaneously. This recognition has relevance both for individual human and animal rights, but also for larger structures of culture, economics, law, and governance within and beyond the state. It should inspire collective and systemic forms of responsibility for the protection of all beings from (directed and anonymous) harms and risks to life, flourishing, and justice. This balance between the equal moral value of individual organisms and living systems might also help manage biopolitical tensions that arise in managing invasive species populations humanely or defending the rights of animals against harmful uses in farming, entertainment, and science.

### **Existential unity**

An overdue acknowledgement of moral value in the biosphere should then flow into the imagined existential unity of cosmopolitanism. In liberal cosmopolitanism this unity is a *humanity* made up of autonomous human individuals that both transcends and preserves our many differences. These remain important but should not be utilised to hierarchise, harm, or divide. So why then assert humanity as a differentiated universal in a way that honours neither the actual universality of the biosphere, which takes in all Earth’s beings, nor honours the Earth’s rich global structure of

<sup>88</sup>Val Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* (London, UK and New York, NY: Routledge, 1993), ch. 4.

<sup>89</sup>See Peter Godfrey-Smith, *Metazoa: Animal Minds and the Birth of Consciousness* (London, UK: William Collins, 2020); Ferris Jabr, ‘The social life of forests’, *New York Times Magazine* (6 December 2020); Suzanne Simard, *Finding the Mother Tree: Uncovering the Wisdom and Intelligence of the Forest* (London, UK: Allen Lane, 2021); David George Haskell, ‘Listening to the thoughts of the forest’, *Undark* (5 July 2017), available at: {<https://undark.org/article/listening-to-the-thoughts-of-the-forest/>}.

<sup>90</sup>Nussbaum, *Frontiers of Justice*, p. 357.

<sup>91</sup>Danielle Celermajer, Sria Chatterjee, Alasdair Cochrane, Stefanie Fishel, Astrida Neimanis, Anne O’Brien, Susan Reid, Krithika Srinivasan, David Schlosberg, and Anik Waldow, ‘Critical exchange: Justice through a multispecies lens’, *Contemporary Political Theory*, 19:3 (2020), pp. 475–512 (p. 479); Audra Mitchell, ‘Only human? A worldly approach to security’, *Security Dialogue*, 45:1 (2014), pp. 5–21.



ecological difference, the biological diversity of species and ecologies? Yet Brown and Held offer an opening when they suggest cosmopolitanism should provide answers to ‘what normative principles should be adopted to guide future co-habitation on our planet’ – if *co-habitation* is understood to include all species who find their home on a planet owned by none.<sup>92</sup> In an earlier article I had rethought the figure of humanity away from liberal individualism and its ideational models of human capacities – reason and moral sense – to a common material experience of ‘mutually dependent and vulnerable embodiment: dependence upon and vulnerability to the parent, to the community, to the economy, to the rhythms and shocks of earth and climate’. In this vision, ‘common social and earthly vulnerability must be expressed in a global system of relation and responsibility ... [one] that must go beyond an inter-human system of relations ... to a system of relations with animals, ecosystems, and physical/cosmic environments which occasions profound collective responsibilities.’<sup>93</sup> This argument was reaching towards an ecocentric viewpoint that acknowledges the independent force and vitality of the Earth but remained weakly anthropocentric, displacing the human ontologically, but not morally or politically.

An interspecies cosmopolitanism can start here – with a relational image of humanity embedded and entangled with non-humans – but must end with the biosphere. Humanity would be understood materially as having evolved from and with myriad other life forms, and as an integral part of the biosphere, while also in its Anthropocene form (the ‘Anthroposphere’) constituting an exploitative and threatening relation to the biosphere. Humanity thus faces the need to create a profound structure of responsibility for the Earth and obligations for its repair, further bound to obligations to promote Indigenous sovereignty and dismantle racialised environmental injustices. Contra the weak anthropocentrism of environmental ethics and posthumanism, these responsibilities arise not out of human self-concern but out of a respect, fear, and reverence for the rich and vital structure of planetary entanglement that is the biosphere and the Earth system. The Earth system has value in and of itself – prior to any philosophical or legal effort to ascribe value to it – while also being the material source and envelope for human life. The human has value by virtue of what it shares with the biosphere not what is perceived to separate us from it, whether intelligence, reason, moral agency, or a sense of justice. Separated from the very things that sustain and give rise to us – the Earth and the evolutionary richness of planetary life – these values seem increasingly free floating and empty. In short, the existential unity of an interspecies cosmopolitanism is the enmeshed vitality of *all life* through deep time.

### ***Institutional organisation and ordering project***

Cosmopolitanism’s mode of institutional organisation, and its ordering project of justice, are closely intertwined. From the perspective of world politics, cosmopolitanism must be more than an ethic; it is a project of (just) world order and substantive transformation. However, what shape and fundamental purpose this project should assume is necessarily complex and controversial; debate over whether it would involve the creation of a world government, a radical transformation of the design and purposes of the Westphalian system, the gradual cosmopolitanisation of the existing state system, or the internal cosmopolitan transformation of states, continues. Returning to these questions with a planetary and ecocentric perspective complicates matters further, with one ringing bell of clarity: the liberal world order is failing the planetary ecology. My first core intuitions are twofold: first, that this must be a multilayered transformation that is achieved and driven at multiple levels, from local to national, regional, and global, and thus empowers communities while improving global governance and steering mechanisms; and secondly, that the agency and flourishing of more-than-human lives and processes must be central.

<sup>92</sup>Brown and Held (eds), *The Cosmopolitanism Reader*, p. 1.

<sup>93</sup>Anthony Burke, ‘Humanity after biopolitics: On the global politics of human being’, *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities*, 16:4 (2011), pp. 101–14.

The challenge is that cosmopolitanism in practice has not been able to move strongly and effectively enough beyond the liberal international order, which has embedded cosmopolitan norms across the international human rights regime and the law of armed conflict, as well as within parts of international environmental law, but has failed to embed and achieve cosmopolitan (and ecological) ends. The failures of the liberal order are especially acute in the international political economy, which has evolved according to the logic of (post)colonial capture and neoliberal globalisation and has produced enormous levels of inequality and corruption within (and between) both North and South. This is not only a grave human injustice but is implicated in the climate and biodiversity crises. As noted by James L. Richardson many years ago, the intense economic inequality generated by neoliberal globalisation ‘provide[s] a setting as conducive to the realisation of liberal values as that of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Europe, when liberal ideals were first formulated’.<sup>94</sup> Similarly, international security governance is replete with failure.<sup>95</sup> The liberal (environmental) international order – based as it is on the UN Charter and the 1972 Stockholm declaration – is essentially statist and provides national governments and their capitalist partners with a veto on normative progress.

This is exemplified by the double-sided quality of major environmental conventions. While the 2015 Paris agreement – the key treaty under the 1992 UN Framework Convention on Climate Change – creates a voluntary structure of national commitments to emissions reduction, it also embeds an ongoing state and corporate freedom to pollute and contains no effective oversight or sanctions.<sup>96</sup> At the time of writing, national Paris commitments – if they are met – would lead to a catastrophic 2.4°C of global heating over pre-industrial levels.<sup>97</sup> The 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) contains important (if weakly phrased) injunctions to protect and preserve biodiversity but has failed to prevent the sixth extinction and an alarming decline in wild animal and plant populations.<sup>98</sup> This is in part because, like Paris, the CBD has no effective enforcement mechanisms; and, even more blatantly than Paris, it embeds a state and corporate freedom to destroy habitat and extract resources unsustainably via its Article 3 principle, drawn from the Stockholm Declaration, that states have ‘the sovereign right to exploit their own resources pursuant to their own environmental policies’ – a principle now considered international customary law.<sup>99</sup> As early as five years after its signing, scholars were questioning the CBD’s fundamental design flaws.<sup>100</sup> The liberal international order has no legal principles or prohibitions against ecocide; could it even be called liberal if it contained no prohibitions against war crimes and genocide?<sup>101</sup> Flowing from this is another question: could a future cosmopolitan order that does not identify ecocide as a concern, and criminalise its practice, be justifiable?<sup>102</sup>

<sup>94</sup>James L. Richardson, ‘Critical Liberalism in International Relations’, Working Paper (2002/7) (Canberra: Department of International Relations, ANU), p. 11.

<sup>95</sup>Anthony Burke and Rita Parker (eds), *Global Insecurity: Futures of Global Chaos and Governance* (London, UK and New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

<sup>96</sup>Hayley Stevenson, *Institutionalizing Unsustainability: The Paradox of Global Climate Governance* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2012); Jen Iris Allan, ‘Dangerous incrementalism of the Paris agreement’, *Global Environmental Politics*, 19:1 (2019), pp. 4–11.

<sup>97</sup>Ehsan Masood and Jeff Tollefson, ‘“COP26 hasn’t solved the problem”: Scientists react to UN climate deal’, *Nature*, 599 (14 November 2021), pp. 355–6.

<sup>98</sup>Burke, ‘Blue screen biosphere’, p. 342; Michelle Lim, ‘Repeating mistakes: Why the plan to protect the world’s wildlife falls short’, *The Conversation* (16 July 2021).

<sup>99</sup>United Nations, Convention on Biological Diversity, 1992, Preamble and Article 3.

<sup>100</sup>Lakshman D. Guruswamy, ‘The Convention on Biological Diversity: Exposing the flawed foundations’, *Environmental Conservation*, 26:2 (1999), pp. 79–82.

<sup>101</sup>Tara Smith, ‘Creating a framework for the prosecution of environmental crimes in international humanitarian law’, in William A. Schabas, Yvonne McDermott, and Niamh Hayes (eds), *The Ashgate Companion to International Criminal Law* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2013), pp. 52–7.

<sup>102</sup>See the Special Issue of the *Journal of Genocide Research*, 23:1 (2021), edited by Martin Crook and Damien Short.

In developing principles for the institutionalisation of cosmopolitanism at the level of world order, David Held combines four key dimensions: legal, political, economic, and cultural. The cosmopolitanisation of states in the service of similar ends is another key node of transformation. Held argues that the ‘institutional requirements of legal cosmopolitanism’ include the ‘entrenchment of cosmopolitan democratic public law and a related charter of rights and obligations embracing political, social and economic power’; an ‘interconnected global legal system embracing elements of criminal, human rights and environmental law’; and the universal jurisdiction of existing international courts such as the ICJ and ICC and the creation of new courts such as an ‘international human rights court, and an international environment court to address legal issues involving the global Commons’. Political cosmopolitanism requires ‘multi-layered governance and diffused authority; a ‘network of democratic fora from the local to the global’; ‘enhanced political regionalisation’; and ‘the establishment of effective, accountable, international security forces for last resort use of coercive power in defence of cosmopolitan law’. And economic cosmopolitanism requires ‘reframing market mechanisms and leading sites of economic power’; ‘expanding the representative base of international financial institutions to include developing countries and emerging markets’; ‘Global taxation mechanisms’; and the ‘transfer of resources to the most economically vulnerable in order to protect and enhance their agency’.<sup>103</sup>

To his credit Held includes ‘sustainability’ as one of his key moral principles for cosmopolitanism. However, this schema – which is broadly representative of liberal cosmopolitan programmes short of world government – is ecologically wanting (and nor would I endorse something like an international ‘ecological security force’). The global ecological crisis is symptomatic of a malign integration between a grossly unequal international political economy, extractivist ontologies and modes of state organisation, and (neo)liberal systems of global environmental governance, all bound together by the underlying metaphysics of the human possession and domination of nature.<sup>104</sup> Hence, piecemeal reform around one node such as an international environment court will be ineffective unless its underlying substructure – environmental law and the world economy – are not also transformed. Yet as the work of Alasdair Cochrane shows, this kind of cosmopolitan programme holds the potential to extend its concerns to non-human animals and to insist that they become central and equal members of our polities and systems of governance. While his restriction of membership to animals perceived as sentient is limiting, in a striking and important move Cochrane extends this interspecies polity to the planetary level. This takes the form of ‘a ‘sentientist cosmopolitan democracy’ comprised of overlapping local, national, regional, and global [human-animal] communities’ that do not necessarily conform with existing Westphalian borders and would involve an ‘important shift in [states’] jurisdictional rights’.<sup>105</sup> He does so out of an understandable concern that statist models of cosmopolitanism, which bias the cosmopolitan transformation of states hoping that change flows through to the international, are not enough ‘to protect the worth and rights of all sentient creatures’.<sup>106</sup> Cochrane’s aim here is to ensure the creation of systems of governance whereby all of those who are affected by a policy or an exercise of power have a voice and are empowered to guide or block its operation especially if will result in serious harm. This deployment of the ‘all-affected principle’ extends the principles of Habermasian critical theory to the more-than-human world: to, in Robyn Eckersley’s words, create a ‘circle of moral considerability [that] is widened to the maximum to include all potentially affected others’ and forecloses ‘the very possibility of arbitrarily displacing ecological costs onto innocent human and nonhuman others’.<sup>107</sup>

<sup>103</sup>Held, *Cosmopolitanism*, pp. 97–116.

<sup>104</sup>Burke, ‘Blue screen biosphere’.

<sup>105</sup>Cochrane, *Sentientist Politics*, p. 75.

<sup>106</sup>*Ibid.*, ch. 4 cites the work of Lea Ypi, *Global Justice and Avant-Garde Political Agency* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2011), and another notable work is Beardsworth, Wallace Brown, and Richard Shapcott (eds), *The State and Cosmopolitan Responsibilities*.

<sup>107</sup>Robyn Eckersley, *The Green State* (Kindle edn, Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2004), loc. 1465–84.

At its most basic, the all-affected principle requires that other-than-human beings have representation and membership in human political communities and are made far more central to political deliberation and policymaking. This opens onto a space of great complexity and debate, which has been pursued across the fields of ecological democracy and green political theory. Some key thinkers, such as Robin Ekersley, Will Kymlicka, and Sue Donaldson, focus their energies on the ecological transformation of states, and Ekersley in particular is sceptical of strong cosmopolitan ideas at the international level, believing that the Westphalian system should remain largely unchanged and that ‘green’ state transformation can drive more ecologically sensitive global governance based on existing regime modalities.<sup>108</sup> In contrast, Cochrane defends a strong cosmopolitanism in which the ‘boundaries of political communities’ are redrawn so that their ‘borders and membership encompass all those [non-humans] who are affected by their decision making’.<sup>109</sup> John Dryzek – who alone and with Jonathan Pickering has argued powerfully for non-human representation – avoids offering institutional blueprints but argues that ecologically democratic institutions must work at the ‘appropriate scale’ and ‘match the size and scope of problems’ utilising ‘numerous and cross-cutting *loci* of authority’.<sup>110</sup>

In this article, which has been concerned with the principles and ontologies underpinning cosmopolitanism in the Anthropocene, I will sit out of this fine-grained and thoughtful debate about institutional reorganisation and jurisdiction – much of which hinges on questions of design and political feasibility. Scholarly dialogue about how other-than-human rights, interests, and flourishing should be institutionalised is of ongoing value and importance and no single author possesses a monopoly on solutions.<sup>111</sup> My own view, however, is that the global ecological crisis cannot be solved by minor green reforms of the liberal international order and that an interspecies cosmopolitanism should be open to the creation of new kinds of ecologically democratic institutions and distributions of jurisdiction that preserve the rights and flourishing of nature, at the same time as it seeks to empower and defend communities engaged in social and ecological struggles at local and regional levels.<sup>112</sup> However, the confluence of a cosmopolitan and planetary sensibility is already strongly evident in the broad projects of ‘Earth System Governance’ and ‘Environmental Constitutionalism’, both of which engage the cosmopolitan norms advanced in deliberative and ecological democracy. These are large and flourishing global research programmes, which have a common starting point that the liberal international order is failing the challenges of the Anthropocene and needs to reorganise its concerns around the changing Earth system and the mutual vulnerability of human and other-than-human communities.<sup>113</sup>

Much of this work overlaps with the concerns of global environmental politics to critically analyse the impacts and performance of existing forms of environmental governance. Yet the Earth System Governance paradigm centres its concerns on the radical transformations underway in the Anthropocene and argues for a form of scholarly inquiry and policy practice that recognises the interconnectedness of the Earth system with human institutions. This intuitively raises questions about jurisdiction and underlying ontologies. Oran Young opens his work on *Governing Complex Systems* with the dilemma of finding ‘a proper match between the attributes of a governance system and the properties of the natural, social, or socioecological system it seeks

<sup>108</sup>Ibid., loc. 2912.

<sup>109</sup>Cochrane, *Sentientist Politics*, ch. 4.

<sup>110</sup>Dryzek and Pickering, *Politics in the Anthropocene*, p. 48; Dryzek, ‘Political and ecological communication’, pp. 24–6.

<sup>111</sup>See Youatt, *Interspecies Politics*, ch. 6.

<sup>112</sup>Our full argument is laid out in Burke and Fishel, ‘Across species and borders’.

<sup>113</sup>James R. May and Erin Daly, *Global Environmental Constitutionalism* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2015). The two science plans of the network are: Earth System Governance Project, *Earth System Governance: Science and Implementation Plan of the Earth System Governance Project* (Utrecht, 2018); Frank Biermann et al., *Earth System Governance: People, Places and the Planet: Science and Implementation Plan of the Earth System Governance Project*, Earth System Governance Report 1, IHDP Report 20 (Bonn, IHDP: The Earth System Governance Project, 2009).

to steer'.<sup>114</sup> Joyeeta Gupta points out that 'we no longer live in a world where great power understandings of geopolitics make sense. The New [Anthropocene] Earth is marked by a set of emerging ecospace realities that challenge us to reconsider and remake our geopolitical arrangements and define a new social contract.' In particular, she argues that power politics and neoliberal globalisation should yield to 'a global system that promotes global constitutionalism and rule of law'.<sup>115</sup> Frank Biermann's *Earth System Governance* foregrounds cosmopolitan concerns with human inequality, accountability, and democratic deliberation as key values when confronting one of 'the largest governance challenges humankind has ever had to deal with: protecting the entire Earth system, including most of its subsystems, and building stable institutions that guarantee a safe transition process and a coevolution of natural and social systems at planetary scale'. He advocates numerous governance reforms, including upgrading UNEP to a World Environment Organisation, a Global Environmental Assessment Commission, and a UN Sustainable Development Council.<sup>116</sup> Works such as Louis Kotzé's *Global Environmental Constitutionalism in the Anthropocene* have inspired a new paradigm of earth system law, building on other strongly ecocentric works of Earth law.<sup>117</sup> For Kotzé, environmental constitutionalism should form the basis of 'a legal approach that aims to mediate the human environment interface in the Anthropocene'; it would be a way 'through which humans could express their *responsibility to the biosphere* as ecological and as moral agents'.<sup>118</sup> While it has a strongly consistent commitment to ecological integrity and flourishing, much of the Earth System Governance literature remains weakly Anthropocentric in that it tends to focus on environmental justice, equity, and security questions faced by human beings, and has not – with a few exceptions – engaged with the agency of the other-than-human.<sup>119</sup> However, the Earth system frame and its ecological commitments show that it is an important and potentially receptive space in which the practical agendas of an interspecies cosmopolitanism could be explored.

## Conclusion

Plausible scientific speculation about the origins of the SARS-CoV-2 virus centres on the transmission to humans of a non-human animal virus via the illegal trade in wild species and the increasing human encroachment on wild ecosystems and populations.<sup>120</sup> This cunning and powerful non-human actant comes via a capitalist, extractivist, modernist, and humanist vector; as such, the pandemic is a classically Anthropocene calamity. The failures of many national governments and international society to prepare for and respond to the virus in a rapid, effective, and just way is testament to a widespread and fundamental lack of respect for the powers,

<sup>114</sup>Oran R. Young, *Governing Complex Systems: Social Capital for the Anthropocene* (Kindle edn, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2017), loc. 163.

<sup>115</sup>Joyeeta Gupta, 'Toward sharing our ecospace', in Nicholson and Jinnah (eds), *New Earth Politics*, loc. 5187, 6094.

<sup>116</sup>Frank Biermann, *Earth System Governance: World Politics in the Anthropocene* (Kindle edn, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2014), loc. 426.

<sup>117</sup>Cormac Cullinan, *Wild Law: A Manifesto for Earth Justice* (Devon, UK: Green Books, 2011); Christina Voigt (ed.), *Rule of Law for Nature: New Dimensions and Ideas in Environmental Law* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Peter Burdon (ed.), *Exploring Wild Law: The Philosophy of Earth Jurisprudence* (Kent Town: Wakefield Press, 2011); Joshua C. Gellers, 'Earth system law and the legal status of nonhumans in the Anthropocene', *Earth System Governance*, 7 (2021), p. 100083; Louis J. Kotzé, 'Earth system law for the Anthropocene', *Sustainability*, 11:23 (2019), p. 6796.

<sup>118</sup>Louis J. Kotzé, *Global Environmental Constitutionalism in the Anthropocene* (New York, NY: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2016), p. 34.

<sup>119</sup>See Burke and Fishel, 'Power, world politics and thing-systems in the Anthropocene'; Eva Lövbrand, Malin Mobjörk, Rickard Söder, 'The Anthropocene and the geo-political imagination: Re-writing Earth as political space', *Earth System Governance*, 4 (2020), p. 100051; Joshua C. Gellers, 'Earth system law and the legal status of nonhumans in the Anthropocene', *Earth System Governance*, 7 (2021), p. 100083; Marie-Catherine Petersmann, 'Sympoietic thinking and earth system law: The Earth, its subjects and the law', *Earth System Governance*, 9 (2021), p. 100114.

<sup>120</sup>T. Burki, 'The origin of SARS-CoV-2', *The Lancet*, 20:9 (1 September 2020), pp. 1018–19.

dangers, rights, and wonder of the more-than-human world. As Achille Mbembe reminds us: ‘To survive, we must return to all living things – including the biosphere – the space and energy they need. In its dank underbelly, modernity has been an interminable war on life.’<sup>121</sup> Cosmopolitanism may be presented plausibly as a normative and political answer to these failures, but in its dominant humanist form will fail to see and account for the full envelope of this reality – the complex and unpredictable agency of the Earth itself. Likewise, many of the other central concerns of cosmopolitanism – war and conflict, human rights violations, genocide, economic inequality, and nationalism and racism – have such an interspecies, Anthropocene structure to their trauma. Settler-colonial genocides were accompanied by the destruction of colonial ecosystems according to ontologies that relegated Indigenous societies to a nature that was deemed worthless without its transformation by capital.<sup>122</sup> The harassment and murder of hundreds of environmental defenders around the world annually occurs within the framework of an international human rights regime that embeds the state freedom to extract natural resources and destroy ecosystems within its core statutes.<sup>123</sup> Economic inequality within and between North and South has fuelled extractivism and habitat destruction, and any progressive reforms to global economic governance and policy logics cannot be disentangled from the protection of biodiversity and the challenges of environmental change.<sup>124</sup> And when we turn to climate change, the same far-right populists who have managed the pandemic so badly have allied with the fossil fuel industry to spread pseudoscience, denialism, and undermine climate action.

This article has had a relatively limited aim: to reconstruct the core philosophical foundations of cosmopolitanism in the light of the Anthropocene via a (new) materialist recognition of the agency, power, and value of the Earth’s life and physical processes. It has not been concerned either to defend cosmopolitanism against its critics or engage claims that a global ecological politics could be based on alternative normative models of world order such as the English School.<sup>125</sup> The persistent anthropocentrism of contemporary cosmopolitanism does present a significant barrier to the emergence of an interspecies global politics, a situation that should provoke profound reflection by its partisans. However, with some careful and sympathetic modifications to its underlying ontologies and commitments, cosmopolitanism can be reformulated in a way that responds to the complex, endless, and mercurial social-ecological crisis of our time.

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<sup>121</sup>Mbembe, ‘The Universal Right to Breathe’, part 3.

<sup>122</sup>Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*, p. 110; Barbara Arneil, *John Locke and America: The Defence of English Colonialism* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1996).

<sup>123</sup>Burke, ‘Blue screen biosphere’, p. 342.

<sup>124</sup>Gupta, ‘Toward sharing our ecospace’; Ryan Katz-Rosene and Matthew Paterson, *Thinking Ecologically About the Global Political Economy* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2018).

<sup>125</sup>A persuasive engagement with critics can be found in Richard Beardsworth, *Cosmopolitanism and International Relations Theory* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2011); an English School approach is developed in Robert Falkner, *Environmentalism and Global International Society* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2021).