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Arrival of Normative Power in Planetary Politics

IAN MANNERS
Department of Political Science, Lund University, Lund, Sweden

Abstract

This lead article in a *JCMS* symposium marking 20 years of normative power provides a prospective intervention into thinking through the rest of the century by taking the language of *Arrival*, the 2016 speculative fiction film based on Ted Chiang's 1998 short 'Story of Your Life' and applying it to normative power by double-decolonising the anthropocentrism of capitalist culture and Eurocentrism in order to arrive at planetary politics. The article will first reflect on the 20-year development of the normative power approach to arrive at a language of comprehension. The subsequent sections will then set out a mode of simultaneous awareness, a medium of sharing relationships and a means for action in concert found in the normative power approach before concluding on how planetary symbiosis is the story of our lives.

Keywords: normative power; planetary politics; European Union; regional organisations; planetary symbiosis

Introduction: Arrival

In the three decades since the end of the Cold War and the two decades since the 2002 *JCMS* normative power article, the world has changed, so our approach must also. The world has changed with the rise of multipolarity, global economic crisis, COVID-19 pandemic and invasion of Ukraine. But the greatest change is found in the IPCC's 2022 Sixth Assessment Report setting out how climate change is a threat to human well-being and planetary health, with the delay in concerted global action closing the window of opportunity to secure a liveable and sustainable future for all. International politics has not changed much, with the language of 19th century ethnocentrism and imperialism returning to the great powers of the United States, Russia, China and India, as the Russian invasion of Ukraine illustrates. Although the normative power article was prized as the best article of the year, voted one of the five most important academic EU works of the 2000s, and remains the most cited article published in *JCMS*, few have thought seriously about how co-joining normative and power can be anything other than a contradiction in terms. Writing at the same time, Gayatri Spivak (2003, p. 81) and Paul Gilroy (2004, pp. xi-xii) argued the need to imagine a 'planetarity', an agonistic planetary humanism, capable of addressing 'planetary politics' (Karen Litfin 2003). But how to arrive at such a moral imagination in time to address planetary politics?

The answer is simple: the article will take the language of *Arrival*, the 2016 speculative fiction film based on Ted Chiang's 1998 short 'Story of Your Life' and apply it to normative power by double-decolonising the anthropocentrism of capitalist culture and Eurocentrism of IR in order to arrive at planetary politics. The 'Story of Your Life' and the film *Arrival* are about linguistics professor Louise Banks and how she makes a breakthrough in communicating with aliens that have landed in 12 locations around the world.

The story and film revolve around genre-breaking questions about alien arrival: (i) the linguists assembled at the locations are unable to communicate adequately because the aliens have a non-linear way of writing; (ii) it emerges that the aliens have a simultaneous mode of awareness – they are able to think about past and future in the same moment; (iii) it is unknown whether the aliens pose a threat or not to the planet Earth – do the aliens present an adversarial or cooperative relationship to humans? And can humans engage with the aliens without cooperating amongst themselves? (iv) whether communicated or not, both the aliens and the humans need each other's help in the future – in other words their free will, actions and futures are bound together; (v) both the futures of the aliens and humans are bound together, but the story itself is non-linear revolving around the story of Louise's daughter Hannah's life.

This is the lead article in a JCMS symposium marking 20 years of normative power. It provides a prospective intervention into thinking through the rest of the century. The forum consists of three responses to this intervention written by scholars who *have* thought seriously about co-joining normative and power over the past decades. Kalypso Nicolaïdis (2023) starts by arguing that the advent of planetary politics changes the conditions of possibility for the kind of democratic practices that can best deliver on our planetary-human eco-system found in the third democratic transformation from European to planetary politics through the normative power approach. This is followed by Michelle Pace's (2023) study of the construction of EU normative power and the Middle East 'conflict' 16 years on, arguing that Israel and Palestine are 'co-dependent' representing a microcosmic image of planetary politics as the space we need to think differently. Finally, David et al. (2023) argue for envisioning a nakedly normative feminist (re) imagination of planetary politics in the context of the normative power approach.

The article will first reflect on the 20-year development of the normative power approach in order to arrive at a language of comprehension. The subsequent sections will then set out a mode of simultaneous awareness, a medium of sharing relationships and a means for action in concert found in the normative power approach before concluding on how planetary symbiosis *is* the story of our lives. The consequences of this arrival for the understanding of European integration, the EU, and for the normative power approach have been developed over the past two decades. First, the language of Europe must decolonise both the past and the future by anthropocentric and Eurocentric ideological common sense. This means that the EU cannot be built around the neoliberal language of the single market and free trade – they destroy both our ecological future and the possibility of human equality. Second, a critical social theory of agonistic cosmopolitics, rather than antagonistic theories of international relations, must decentre both anthropocentric and Eurocentric understandings of the past and future. This means the EU must understand that it sits in a colonial past and can only have a planetary future – all actions it takes and policies it makes must take account of these simultaneous realities. Third, advocating the subjective sharing of relations in order to desilence both non-human perspectives and non-western voices is crucial for trying to work around the impasse of contemporary international relations. This means that the way in which the EU, its member states and its transnational actors interact on planet Earth must move towards sharing, non-adversarial, but necessarily agonistic relationships and away from selfish, adversarial and unnecessarily antagonistic international relations. Fourth, building on these arguments, an understanding of normative power as empowering actions in concert that reshape

conceptions of normal for the planetary good is necessary to create a future. This means that the EU, its member states and its transnational actors must rethink for whom are their policies for – for Europeans? For humanity? Or for the planet as a whole? Finally, the story of our lives is that an inclusive, contextual and holistic normative power approach is necessary in order to take seriously the planetary symbiosis of ecological homeostasis and human equality – whether EU scholars, policy-makers or activists this has massive implications.

I. Language of Arrival: Normative Power in Planetary Politics

> More interesting was the fact that [the alien writing system] was changing the way I thought … With [the alien writing system], I was experiencing something just as foreign: my thoughts were becoming graphically coded … There was no direction inherent in the way propositions were connected, no 'train of thought' moving along a particular route; all the components in an act of reasoning were equally powerful, all having identical precedence. (Chiang 2002, pp. 126–127)

The 'Story of Your Life' and subsequent *Arrival* have the idea of linguistic relativity, the idea that language use can change the way people think, at the centre of their plot and is used as a thought device here. There is nothing new in the idea that 'a constellation of postulates, a series of propositions that slowly and subtly … work their way into one's mind and shape one's view of the world of the group to which one belongs' (Fanon 1986, p. 152) and become ideological 'common sense' (Hall 1986, p. 27). Thus, the language of arrival of normative power in planetary politics must acknowledge and avoid the colonisation of both the past and the future by anthropocentric and Eurocentric ideological common sense.

The normative power approach (NPA) began its published life in the *Journal of Common Market Studies* two decades ago (Manners 2002). Since then, the idea of normative power has been subject to considerable representation and interpretation, including application to China (Chen and Song 2012), India (Kumari 2014), Russia (Pavlova and Romanova 2017), Japan (Heng 2014), United States (Hamilton 2008), Turkey (Parlar Dal 2013) and ASEAN (He 2016), and normative power comparisons of China, India, Russia and Japan (e.g., Kavalski 2012). Three questions arose over the past 20 years: What is the work of theory in the NPA? Where is agency in the NPA? And what form does the enaction of normative power take? As the next three sections make clear, the NPA works within Critical Social Theory (CST) questioning notions of normativity and power; the agents of normative power include international, regional and transnational actors; and normative power is empowering actions in concert that reshape conceptions of normal for the planetary good.

This article takes three further steps in using CST to provide a NPA as part of a prospective of critique and imagination in planetary politics. First, the article develops the concept of planetary politics as the setting for the arrival of normative power, drawing on the work of Gilroy, Spivak and Litfin. Second, the article applies the critique of postcolonialism to IR's notions of normative and power, drawing on the work of postcolonial scholars of the EU, Gurminder Bhambra, Catarina Kinnvall and Olivia Rutazibwa. Thirdly, the article uses the post-imperial perspective of Gustavo Lins Ribeiro, Hamed

Hosseini and Barry Gills to bring a radical imagination, or in Molly Cochran's terms, moral imagination, to the language of arrival as Ted Chiang did.

The arrival of the first act of imagination, planetary politics, involves decolonising the anthropocentrism of capitalist culture in order to develop a language for the whole planet as if all and every life was, is and will be equally important. Gilroy (2004, pp. xi-xii) draws on the postcolonial scholarship of Frantz Fanon and Achille Mbembe to argue for a critique of consumer imperialism through the idea of 'planetarity' to suggest contingency and movement, rather than 'the triumphalism and complacency of ever-expanding imperial universals' of the 'global'. Similarly, Spivak (2003, pp. 72–73) invokes 'planetarity': 'planetary rather than continental, global, or worldly …. If we imagine ourselves as planetary subjects rather than global agents, planetary creatures rather than global entities, alterity remains underived from us'. Litfin (2003, p. 481) argues that 'planetary politics … are characterised by truly planetary relations of causality that can only be understood and addressed holistically'. More specifically, she means that 'planetary politics entails a distinctive set of dynamics' including North–South dilemmas, local–global linkages, intergenerational time horizons, a precautionary approach and holistic understanding (Litfin 2003, p. 470). Planetary politics means that economic, social, ecological, conflictual and political relations and crises cannot be considered independently – they are symbiotic. Planetary politics means that anthropocentric, Eurocentric and ethnocentric understandings of the planet must be rejected – they are symptomatic of the problem.

The arrival of the second act of imagination, postcolonial critique, involves decolonising the Eurocentrism of contemporary IR's notions of 'normative' and 'power'. Using Rutazibwa's (2014) typology of three decolonising strategies – demythologise, desilence and decolonise – the article applies them to the following three sections in order to advance a language of arrival that is less Eurocentric. The article demythologises the 'western-centric bias in mainstream knowledge production about the world' (Rutazibwa 2014, p. 296) by drawing on postcolonial scholarship, in particular that of Bhambra (2016) and John Narayan (2017), to raise the 'simultaneous awareness' of normative international theory. The article desilences 'non-western and marginalised experiences as subjects of knowledge production and theory formation' (Rutazibwa 2014, p. 296) by using Kinnvall's (2016) postcolonial work on space, temporality and subjectivity in 'sharing relationships' through relational explanatory theory. The article decolonises through 'going beyond mere post-colonial denunciation of western-centric myths and silencing practices by actively putting postcolonial insights at the service of knowledge production that does not reinforce or perpetuate the societal status quo of oppression and inequality but allows for the imagination of alternatives' (Rutazibwa 2014). This involves using the decolonial solidarity work of Rutazibwa (2014) and Robbie Shilliam (2015) to advance and imagine a precolonial public philosophy of *dignity*, an alternative solidarity of ethical *retreat*, and decolonial science to *repair* colonial wounds that inform 'action in concert'.

The arrival of the third act of imagination, post-imperial radical imagination, involves dedicating 'more time to a post-imperialist imagination, critique and programme; to dedicate, in sum, more time to utopian struggles than to ideological ones. Post-imperialism would thus be a cosmopolitics capable of pointing to new moments of the world system and its unfoldings' (Ribeiro 2011, p. 295). Ribero advances post-imperialism as the Latin American equivalent to post-colonialism, but a post-imperialism that is also

cosmopolitical in advancing counter-hegemonic discourses and actions anchored in particular situations (Ribeiro 2011, pp. 287–288). Hosseini and Gills (2020, pp. 6, 9) argue the need for radical imagination in the face of impending global catastrophe by adopting a post-imperialist cosmopolitics, or 'transversalism'; a 'translation of problem-solving experiences and utopian imagineering in each side of the global divide … to the other side for the sake of reciprocal learning rather than imitating or imposing'. Arguments advancing post-imperial imagination are crucial for a progressive reimagining of planetary politics beyond immanent critique because 'moral imagination' can project 'the possibilities for radical change that may be only available through an engagement with that which is other or different, outside of our immediate resources of value' (Cochran 1999, p. 276).

The rest of the article uses these three acts of imagination (planetary politics, postcolonial critique and post-imperial imagination) to provide a prospective of normative power in planetary politics for the rest of the 21st century. The next section will advance a simultaneous mode of awareness through CST and agonistic cosmopolitics. The third section will consider non-adversarial relationships through the subjective sharing of relations and communion in agents of normative power. The fourth section will examine free will and futures through action in concert as normative power. Finally, the conclusion will reflect on the story of our lives as one of planetary symbiosis.

II. Simultaneous Mode of Awareness: Agonistic Cosmopolitics

> When the ancestors of humans and [the aliens] first acquired the spark of consciousness, they both perceived the same physical world, but they parsed their perceptions differently; the world-views that ultimately arose were the end result of that divergence. Humans had developed a sequential mode of awareness, while [the aliens] had developed a simultaneous mode of awareness. We experienced events in an order, and perceived their relationship as cause and effect. They experienced all events at once, and perceived a purpose underlying them all. (Chiang 2002, p. 134)

In addition to linguistic relativity and ideological common sense, the 'Story of Your Life' and *Arrival* juxtapose human sequential mode of awareness with an alternate simultaneous mode of awareness. The thought device here is to ask whether and how it is possible to be aware of other, ecocentric and non-western, worldviews? Related to this is the question of how anthropocentric and western capitalocentric modes of awareness blind us to past histories and future certainties. Thus, the language of arrival of normative power in planetary politics must find ways of theorising that are aware of colonial and postcolonial experiences, at the same time as capturing future consequences of capitalist consumption.

What is the work of theory in the NPA? Which theory is historically-grounded, provides immanent critique of the existing order, yet is capable of imagining an emancipatory future? Critical social theory provides the answer as an 'interpenetrating body of work which demands and produces critique … [that] depends on some manner of historical understanding and analysis' (Calhoun 1995, p. 35). Over the past two decades, CST has provided the theoretical basis for the NPA (Manners 2007, 2020; Manners and Whitman 2003, 2016), where a broad understanding of CST includes historical materialism, Frankfurt School theory, cultural theory, critical race theory, poststructural theory, feminist theory and postcolonial theory (Manners 2018a, pp. 322–323). In this symposium, Nicolaïdis's and Pace's use of postcolonial theory and David, Guerrina and

Wright's use of critical feminist theory illustrate the value of CST. The NPA develops a radical agonistic cosmopolitical theory linking local politics with global ethics in order to provide a normative basis for critique in planetary politics (Manners 2006a, 2008). The approach is *radical* in seeing democratic contestation as emerging from the bottom up (Ingram 2013); *agonistic* in its productive paradox of politics that both supports and critiques 'world building' institutions (Mouffe 2013); and *cosmopolitical* in seeking to combine cosmopolitan ethics with communitarian politics (Honig 2006). Nicolaïdis' use of radical normative theory in the discussion of democratic transformation illustrates the value of CST in this symposium.

Planetary politics demands a simultaneous mode of awareness that is conscious of the imperial and colonial history of North–South dilemmas and local–global linkages at the same time as being aware of intergenerational time horizons and precautionary principles of the rest of this century. All of these events, from ecological imperialism and neo-extractivism to intergenerational justice and intentional negligence, must be omnipresent in any conscious awareness of the events of planetary politics and the purpose of the planetary good. Hence, a planetary political approach requires being conscious of the deep interrelations between ecological imperialism in the biological expansion of Europe (Crosby 2004), the origins of environmentalism in green imperialism and colonial expansion (Grove 1996), and neo-extractivism found under conditions of neo-imperialism (Gudynas 2009). Simultaneously, planetary politics demands an awareness of future generations and the precaution this requires found, for example, in the critical importance of women's empowerment as part of greater planetary equality and sustainability (Vollset et al. 2020).

Demythologising IR knowledge production involves acknowledging that since 'Europe is literally the creation of the third world' (Fanon 1963, p. 102, in Manners 2000, p. 200), then the rectification of western-centric and Eurocentric bias is essential in IR scholarship. A simultaneous mode of awareness starts from the understanding that the wealth and overdevelopment that smothers Europe not just steals from underdeveloped peoples, but steals from alternate futures. A common starting point for this awareness is Fanon's 1961 call to 'change our ways' by reconsidering, decentring and rehumanising the world set out in the five-page conclusion to *The Wretched of the Earth* (Fanon 1963, pp. 311–316). In the subsequent decades, postcolonial scholars answered Fanon's call by studying the role of cultural identity (Hall 1990), black Europeanness and postcolonial melancholia (Gilroy 1993, 2004), culminating in Cornel West's demand for 'decentering Europe' by 'decolonizing the third world [through] the exercise of the agency and the new kind of subjectivities and identities put forwards by those persons who had been degraded, devalued, hunted and harassed, exploited and oppressed by the European maritime empires' (West 1991, p. 3).

The challenge of bringing a simultaneous mode of awareness through theory to the study of normative power in, for example, international relations, EU external actions or transnational actors, is difficult because capitalist culture, Eurocentrism and the return of imperial geopolitics are short-term, sequential worldviews. This is most clearly stated in Bhambra's argument that 'a properly cosmopolitan Europe … would be one which understood that its historical constitution in colonialism cannot be rendered to the past by denial of that past' (Bhambra 2016, p. 187, in Debusscher and Manners 2020, p. 549). The work of postcolonial scholars of the EU (Bhambra and Narayan 2017) and of

international relations (Rutazibwa and Shilliam 2018) set out paths through which simultaneous awareness of the postcolonial may be possible in planetary politics. Gilroy (2004, p. 84) makes clear that this must involve a 'planetary consciousness of the tragedy, fragility, and brevity of indivisible human existence that is all the more valuable as a result of its openness to the damage done by racisms'. The first step of demythologising is to acknowledge that the 'Eurocentric strategies of narrativising history' (Spivak in Manners 2006b, p. 184) are closely tied to racist 'civilisational Europe' (Manners 2003, pp. 69–71).

Demythologising anthropocentric and Eurocentric worldviews means embracing pre- and post-imperial imaginations, such as those of non-western normative international theory. Such alternate, non-western modes of awareness include the Chinese concept of Guanxi as relational and interactional (Kavalski 2017); the Indian notion of Swaraj as local self-rule (Shrivastava 2019); the southern African concept of Ubuntu as sharing humanity (Le Grange 2019); the South American idea of Buen Vivir as living well (Chuji et al. 2019); and the Rwandan concept of Agacio as dignity and self-worth (Ndushabandi and Rutazibwa 2019). These non-western simultaneous modes of awareness are both local and translocal in transcending human and non-human settings. As Gilroy (2004, p. 80) makes clear, 'the translocal impact of political ideologies, social relations, and technological changes have fostered a novel sense of interdependence, simultaneity, and mutuality in which the strategic and economic choices made by one group on our planet may be connected in a complex manner with the lives, hopes and choices of other who may be far away …. [This] has lent emotional and ethical energy to translocal movements against racism and inequality around health, disease, and the environment.'

The work of theory within the NPA is in CST questioning notions of normativity and power through agonistic cosmopolitics. This theoretical approach advocates unconventional and non-western ideas of normativity by looking neither to communitarian social groups nor cosmopolitan liberal elites alone, but instead emphasising the cosmopolitical; the translocal solidarity found in the search for the planetary good. For international organisations and states, this approach means thinking differently about the hegemony historically imposed by bipolar 'superpowers' the United States and the USSR, and today by the multipolar 'great powers' of the United States, Russia, China and India, for example. For regional organisations such as the African Union, ASEAN, EU or Mercosur, this approach means reconsidering both the regional social norms of the organisation and the relational enactions of power between organisations. For transnational actors such as NGOs and social movements, this approach means ensuring that transnational solidarity is focussed on sharing and supporting actions to eliminate oppression or reduce suffering. In sum, adopting a simultaneous mode of awareness through an agonistic cosmopolitical theoretical approach to the arrival of normative power in planetary politics must decentre both anthropocentrism and Eurocentrism. As the next section makes clear, this involves understanding political actors through their communion, their subjective sharing of relations and their non-adversarial relations as agents of normative power.

III. Non-Adversarial Relationships: Subjective Sharing of Relations

> I should emphasize that our relationship with the [aliens] need not be adversarial. This is not a situation where every gain on their part is a loss on ours, or vice versa. If we handle

> ourselves correctly, both we and the [aliens] can come out winners….
> You mean it's a non-zero-sum game? (Chiang 2002, p. 128)

Beyond imagining an alternate simultaneous mode of awareness, the 'Story of Your Life' and *Arrival* emphasise deep, non-adversarial relationships between planetary political actors as a medium for sharing relations in the past, present and future. The thought device here is to ask whether and how is it possible to imagine the subjective sharing of relations characterised by non-adversarial relationships, as opposed to the zero-sum game of the egocentric western world? Similar to the previous section, the question arises of what it would be like to imagine deep relations where our past and our future are always shared with everyone and everything on this planet and how that changes the way we think about 'we'? Thus, the language of arrival of normative power in planetary politics must find ways of thinking about actors and agency that are aware of colonial, postcolonial and post-imperial relations, but that seeks to empower and give voice to non-western and marginalised subjects as well as planetary lives that cannot speak for themselves.

Where is agency in the NPA? Which theory of actors and agency, relations and relationships, is capable of explaining both adversarial, zero-sum and non-adversarial, non-zero sum thinking, as well as imagining deep relations that are shared? Communion theory of sharing provides an answer by suggesting the possibility of a social relationship that is neither community nor society, together with a consideration of others than is neither selfish nor selfless (Manners 2013a, p. 476). Communion theory works at the interface of sociology, psychology and politics where it is manifests itself in the sense of being at one with others, in non-contractual obligation, in relatedness and sharing. The concept of communion is defined as the 'subjective sharing of relationships', understood as the extent to which individuals or groups believe themselves to be sharing relations (or not), and the consequences of these beliefs for planetary politics (Manners 2013a, p. 474). Over the past decade, communion theory has provided a means of explaining political actors as communions sharing different communitarian, cosmopolitan and cosmopolitical relationships in ways that provide an understanding of actors in planetary politics (e.g., the comparison of EU, Israeli and Palestinian relations in Manners 2018a). This means, for example, that international and regional organisations cannot be simply explained as either a constellation of member state communities cooperating in foreign policy, or as cosmopolitan spaces integrating their external actions, but it opens the possibility of cosmopolitical co-existence both within and without the organisation/region.

Planetary politics further demands thinking holistically about a situation where every loss is a loss for all, and every gain is gain for all – thinking about planetary relations of causality that are based on non-adversarial relations. Such relations cannot even be imagined without taking into account non-western and marginalised voices, as well as species and ecosystems that are voiceless in planetary relations. Drawing on the work of James Lovelock and Lynn Margulis, Litfin (2009, p. 198) argues that planetary politics involves 'characterizing the Earth holistically as a self-regulating system … a creative synthesis that simultaneously builds upon and transcends reductionist science … It highlights some implications of three essential characteristics of living systems – holism, autopoiesis [self-making], and symbiotic networks'. Hence, a planetary political approach requires a non-adversarial awareness of non-western subjectivities and relationships that western reductionist science, with its emphasis on atomism rather than holism, instability

rather than autopoiesis, and competition rather than symbiosis, ignores (Manners 2003, pp. 78–79).

Desilencing IR knowledge production involves ensuring that non-western and marginalised experiences are part, indeed central, to understanding planetary ecocentric politics. In this respect, it is absolutely essential to be aware that 'from the perspective of most of the world's population, Europe's role in their lives has appeared to involve exploitation, through colonies, empires, Cold War conflict and now through multinational companies and debt burdens in the form of neo-colonialism' (Manners 2000, p. 190). Kinnvall's (2016, p. 160) postcolonial work focuses explicitly on the colonial and postcolonial subjectivity of the silenced, differentiating between the shaping, hybridity and nation-state in subjectivities. Kinnvall draws attention to the exploration of the 'shaping of colonial and postcolonial subjectivity, particularly in its indigenous and psychological form' in the work of Fanon, Ashish Nandy and Gilroy. Secondly, Kinnvall emphasises the hybridity of the colonised, particularly in terms of power, culture and identity, in the work of Homi Bhabha, Spivak and Hall. Hall's theory of representation is particularly important to postcolonial desilencing in the NPA, because 'systems of representation … consist, not of individual concepts, but of different ways of organising, clustering, arranging and classifying concepts, and of establishing complex relations between them' which means it is crucial to be 'critical of the notion of an integral, originary and unified identity' in colonial and postcolonial subjectivity (Hall 1997, p. 17; Hall 1996, p. 1 in Manners and Whitman 2003, pp. 390, 396). Finally, Kinnvall focuses on 'the idea of the nation-state in the colonial encounter, and the nation as a subject' through the work of Edward Said and Partha Chatterjee.

The challenge of bringing non-adversarial relationships through explanatory theory to the study of normative power between, for example, international organisations, regional organisations or transnational organisations, is difficult because neoliberal economics, international relations and Eurocentric histories see such relations in terms of predator vs. prey, eminence vs. marginality, and object vs. subject. Kinnvall's (2016) work helps the understanding of how 'space' is defined within the logics of European imperialism, how European 'temporality' narrates away alternative temporalities, and how postcolonial 'subjectivity' is racialised, gendered and securitised both within and without Europe. Desilencing non-western and marginalised experiences of space, temporality and subjectivity as a medium for emancipating the subjective sharing of relations that are non-adversarial starts with shifting to the outside-in/bottom-up approach of the NPA (Manners 2011, p. 247, Manners 2015, p. 229, Manners 2021). This approach is inclusive in terms of working 'outside-in' and 'bottom-up' both methodologically and politically to capture wider, non-western, marginalised and more pluralistic interpretations of normative power and planetary politics. Working 'outside-in' means to begin from outside the core of analysis, then to move in towards the analytical core. Working 'bottom-up' implies beginning at the local level of planetary encounters and then moving upwards towards the higher levels of political organisation. Desilencing marginalised subjectivities in this way also involves recognising the 'abject-foreigner' other is always part of the self, part of our conscious and unconscious selves (Kristeva 1982, p. 4 in Manners 2006a, pp. 127–128), and recognising the pluralisms of self and other encountered through dialogical engagements with the postcolonial within and beyond Europe (Todorov 2005, pp. 2–3 in Debusscher and Manners 2020, p. 549).

Desilencing ecocentric and non-western voices means empowering synergistic, non-adversarial relationships that are at the heart of the subjective sharing of relations. Such alternate, non-western IR understandings are found in Robbie Shilliam's (2015, p. 13), 'decolonial science of 'deep relation'': 'the depth that I am retrieving can be found in a relationality that exists underneath the wounds of coloniality, a cutting logic that seeks to – but on the whole never quite manages to – segregate peoples from their lands, their pasts, their ancestors and spirits. Decolonial science seeks to repair colonial wounds, binding back together peoples, lands, pasts, ancestors and spirits.' Realising this deep relation within planetary politics invokes Carol Gilligan's (1982) feminist ethics of *caring* and Carol Gould's (2007) transnational solidarities of *sharing*, by applying Shilliam's decolonial science to Litfin's (2019, p. 367) search for 'devising a viable way of inhabiting the planetary, which requires extending our circles of caring and sharing not only to distant peoples but the Earth system itself'. As David, Guerrina and Wright argue in their contribution to the symposium, an ethic of care is focussed on what is required for people and the planet to thrive. The necessity of caring and sharing decoloniality and planetarity is to realise non-adversarial deep relationships and to address the wounds of coloniality found deep in the 'postcolonial melancholia' and 'pathology of greatness' of the former European metropoles (Gilroy 2004, pp. 57, 97 in Manners 2018b, pp. 1222–1225).

The work of explanatory theory of agency in the NPA is in using CST to question assumptions about adversarial relations, the possibility of communion-sharing and repairing deep relations. This theoretical approach uses feminist theories of caring and sharing, postcolonial theory of decoloniality and ecological theory of planetarity to advocate repairing colonial wounds to bind back together pasts, peoples and planetary politics. For international organisations and states, this approach means thinking differently about binary juxtapositions of selves and others, invoking the reality of alternate voices beyond the power core of humanity. For regional organisations, particularly western and European organisations, this approach means listening to postcolonial voices from the outside-in and from the bottom-up. For transnational actors, this approach means desilencing non-western and marginalised voices of the planet. In sum, adopting non-adversarial relationships through the subjective sharing of relations of the arrival of normative power in planetary politics must desilence both non-human perspectives and non-western voices. As the next section sets out, this involves understanding normative power as empowering actions in concert to create a future.

IV. Free Will, Actions and Futures: Action in Concert

> What if the experience of knowing the future changed a person? What if it evoked a sense of urgency, a sense of obligation to act precisely as she knew she would? The [aliens] are neither free nor bound as we understand those concepts; they do not act according to their will, nor are they helpless automatons. What distinguishes the [aliens'] mode of awareness is not just that their actions coincide with history's events; it is also that their motives coincide with history's purposes. They act to create the future, to enact chronology. (Chiang 2002, pp. 132 &137)

Are the language of arrival, simultaneous mode of awareness and non-adversarial relationships enough to create the future, to enact chronology? Chiang's 'Story of Your

Life' and *Arrival* suggest a further act of imagination is needed to understand normative power as empowering actions in concert to create a future. The thought device here is to ask what actions are needed to de-anthropocise and de-colonise planetary politics? The importance of using ecocentric and non-western worldviews to repair non-adversarial deep relationships must involve going beyond ecological and postcolonial denounciation in order to imagine alternative futures now.

What form does the enaction of normative power take? Which theory of normativity and power overcomes binary communitarian self vs. cosmopolitan self-less distinctions, yet can imagine consensual enactions of concerted power? Over the past 20 years, the question of how co-joining normative and power can be anything other than a contradiction in terms has been at the centre of the NPA. However, following Hannah Arendt (1969, p. 44), 'power corresponds to the human ability not just to act but to act in concert' where '*power to* is prior to *power over*' (Barnes 1993, p. 208 in Manners 2011, p. 230). Hence, power is understood, drawing on feminist theory, as a verb – 'to empower' – rather than a possession or act of coercion (Beard 2018, p. 87) taking account of the need to shift from empowerment to emancipation (David et al. 2023). This consensual perspective on power draws on work that argue for *power to* or *with* in non-adversarial shared relationships, with power as emancipation or concerted power (Haugaard 2015). The definition of normative power as empowering actions in concert that reshape conceptions of normal for the planetary good must be understood within this context of emancipatory power and planetary politics. Thus, concerted power must be *power with* others that empowers them, while the planetary good must be for the benefit of the planet and humanity.

The use of an Arendtian conception of 'power to' or 'power with' has guided the development of the NPA over the past decade. While traditional concepts of 'power over' such as hard power/physical force or soft power/material incentive retain their magnetism in IR, it is clear that ideas of 'power to/with' through action in concert are vital to a more normative understanding of power in the 21st century. This is not to argue that responses to the sheer weight of the planetary organic crisis of economic inequality, social injustice, ecological unsustainability, ontological insecurity and political irresilience will not involve attempts at 'power over', but the necessity of achieving planetary good implicates and constitutes normative power as 'power with' (Manners 2023). Actions in concert will inevitably be contingent and agonistic, but this is not the same as being hegemonic and antagonistic/adversarial. In this respect they do not presume subjective sharing of relations beyond the actions in concert and translocal solidarities. Similarly, as Arendt made clear, 'power to/with' actions in concert are not implicitly 'good' but are part of steps towards arriving at new realities:

> Power is actualized only where word and deed have not parted company, where words are not empty and deeds not brutal, where words are not used to veil intentions but to disclose realities, and deeds are not used to violate and destroy but to establish relations and create new realities. (Arendt 1958, p. 200)

As Nicolaïdis sets out in her contribution to this symposium, 'non-domination which connects the democratic core with planetary politics means recasting political power as action in concert as per Arendt'. Similarly, Pace argues that actions in concert can create 'pathways of empowering political transformations in the renewed articulation of [the] right to have rights'. Reinforcing these arguments, David, Guerrina and Wright explain

how 'adopting a feminist imagination thus requires us to bypass traditional understandings of power rooted in domination, subjugation and hierarchy, instead interpreting the feminine as a *power to* define futurities and *power with* those traditionally defined as subaltern'.

Planetary politics demand empowering actions in concert for the planetary good understood as the ecocentric advocacy of homeostasis (maintaining stable ecological conditions) of the planetary system measured in terms of chemical (im)balance of pollutants, biological (im)balance of extinction and physical (im)balance of global heating. The Lancet Commission on pollution and health makes clear that 'diseases caused by pollution were responsible for an estimated 9 million premature deaths in 2015—16% of all deaths worldwide— three times more deaths than from AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria combined and 15 times more than from all wars and other forms of violence' (Landrigan et al. 2018, p. 19). This Commission report estimates that current trends will produce more than a 50% increase in mortality related to ambient air pollution by 2050, with the greatest increases in the cities of China, south and east Asia (Landrigan et al. 2018, p. 12). During the 2010s, biological science increasing demonstrated 'an exceptionally rapid loss of biodiversity over the last few centuries, indicating that a sixth mass extinction is already under way' (Ceballos et al. 2015, p. 1). The causes of the sixth mass extinction include expanding human biomass, pollution, co-opting resources, fragmenting habitats, overfishing and overhunting, invasive species and pathogens, and changing global climate (Barnosky et al. 2011, pp. 52, 57). Recent revisions to the World Climate Research Programme's Coupled Model Intercomparison Project inform the IPCC's 2022 Sixth Assessment Report, demonstrating that greater supercomputing power, better modelling of cloud and weather systems, natural and human particle behaviour have significantly changed understandings of the Equilibrium Climate Sensitivity that informed the 2014 Fifth Assessment Report and Paris Climate Agreement. As the project leaders summarise (Tebaldi et al. 2021), under all modelling scenarios 1.5°C of warming will be reached in the second half of the 2020s, 2°C of warming will be reached as early as the 2030s (SSP5-8.5 model) or as late as the 2050s (SSP1-2.6 model), and the highest level of warming considered (5°C) is only reached under the SSP5–8.5 model in the mid-2090s. In these terms the loss of homeostasis is already known, with human population projected to peak in 2064 at 9.7 billion (Vollset et al. 2020, p. 1), the question is one of estimating the expected number of people to be displaced from the human temperature niche – estimated at 1.20 billion ±0.34 billion by 2070 – mostly from Africa and Asia (Xu et al. 2020).

The planetary good must also be located within decolonial science if it is to be for the benefit of the planet and humanity. This means the advocacy of human equality within and between societies, measured in terms of socio-economic and political justice. Decolonialising IR knowledge production begins through postcolonial insights into the precolonial public philosophy of dignity, for example, in Rutazibwa's work on Agaciro centred on 'the ideals of self-determination, dignity and self-reliance' (Rutazibwa 2014, pp. 291, 296–297). The work of Gilroy and Narayan using Fanon's new (planetary) humanism promises a decolonised dignity built on anti-capitalist economics; decentralised government; reappraised relationship between the rural (peasant) and urban (worker); female equality; limited power of capital cities; and necessity of international consciousness (Narayan 2017, p. 157). Secondly, Rutazibwa (2014, p. 300) argues for an alternative

solidarity of ethical retreat, 'a form of retreat that is not to be equated to disinterest or disengagement, but a creating of space for the people concerned at the local level, while at the same time, as externals, recommit to the first do no harm principles when devising domestic and international policies'. Rutazibwa (2010, p. 222) suggests that the NPA's use of Balibar's concept of the 'vanishing mediator' would represent ethical retreat; 'if the EU were to be consistent and serious about its normative ambitions, it would mean that it would be successful in empowering the other to build its own good life.' But she raises the critique that 'even the idea of the vanishing mediator presupposes the idea that the self lessens its presence and power only after the event of the other becoming more like the self' (Rutazibwa 2010, p. 223), which is why the NPA emphasis on empowering actions in concert with the other through 'local ownership is crucial in ensuring that relationships are 'other empowering', in contrast to the self-empowering actions of much foreign, development and humanitarian policy' (Manners 2008, p. 59). Decolonial retreat draws on pre-colonial philosophies of autonomy and relationship to their lands, for example, Māori mana motuhake (Shilliam 2015, p. 11) or Indian Swaraj. Thirdly, Shilliam (2015) argues for decolonial repair of the deep wounds and relations rendered by colonialism, in particular through reparation and restitution. Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2017, pp. 181–182) suggests that decolonial repair could be learnt by taking seriously the experiences of South Africa and South American countries' truth and reconciliation commissions in order to heal the wounds of the past through non-economic reparation and reconciliation.

The challenge of bringing normative power as empowering actions in concert to the study of planetary politics is difficult because international relations and neoliberal economics can only imagine normative self-interest and power as 'A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do'. A sense of urgency, a sense of obligation to know, change and create a future involves bringing together the planetary good of homeostasis and equality. As Chuji et al. (2019, p. 113) set out, buen vivir provides plural positions that 'question modernity while opening up others ways of thinking, feeling, and being – other ontologies – rooted in specific histories, territories, cultures, and ecologies … [including] the acknowledgement of extended communities stemming from relational worldviews, and an ethics that accepts the intrinsic value in non-humans'. Santos (2017, p. 180) argues that buen vivir provides a non-western indigenous cosmovision where the rights of nature are legally and constitutionally embedded. Such a transformative approach is crucial because industrial western countries have not had sustainable ecological footprints for over 110 years (Toth and Szigeti 2016). At the same time, as Le Grange (2019, p. 325) has set out, 'ubuntu's transformative potential lies in providing alternative readings of some of the key challenges faced by humanity in the twenty-first century: growing inequality among humans [and] impending ecological disaster …. Addressing inequality in the world suggests a concern about humans only – it is human-centred – whereas addressing the ecological crisis extends the interest to the more-than-human world – it is eco-centric'.

Double-decolonising the anthropocentrism of capitalist culture and Eurocentrism of IR means imagining alternatives such as the planetary good of homeostasis and equality based on non-western cosmovisions found in Fanon and Gilroy's new (planetary) humanism; Rutazibwa's ethical retreat; Shilliam's mana motuhake; Santos's truth and reconciliation; Chuji *et al*'s buen vivir; Le Grange's Ubuntu; and Kavalski's guanxi. Double-decolonising existing structures, traditions, cultures and practices inevitably

depends on 'critical reflexivity' and its importance in the context of Eurocentrism, as demanded by CST (Manners 2003, pp. 75, 80; Manners and Whitman 2003, pp. 380, 400). Realising such critical reflexivity when imagining alternatives invokes Shilliam's (2015, pp. 24–25) decolonial science that cultivates (grow) knowledge, rather than (re)producing knowledge – in this sense decolonial knowledge cultivation beyond capitalist and Eurocentric culture is a 'creative endeavour'. Three steps in the enaction of normative power involve the recognition of the other as a first step, empowering actions in concert with the other as a second step, both as a part of the third step of achieving reconciliation with the other over the past and the future (Manners 2018a, p. 331; Manners 2020, pp. 142–149; Manners 2021, pp. 64–65).

The work of practical theory in the NPA is in CST questioning taken-for-granted assumptions about the enaction of power in order to imagine empowering actions in concert for the planetary good. For international organisations and states, this approach means thinking differently about recognising, empowering and achieving reconciliation with other states and IOs as equal in the struggle for the planetary good of homeostasis and equality. For regional organisations, this approach means ensuring that interregional cooperation recognises, empowers and reconciles other ROs as equal in the struggle. For transnational actors, this approach means translocal actions in concert that recognise, empower and reconcile the plurality of local actors in their struggle for planetary homeostasis and human equality. In sum, adopting empowering actions in concert to create a future through a practical theoretical approach to the arrival of normative power in planetary politics must double-decolonise the anthropocentrism of capitalist culture and Eurocentrism of IR. As the concluding section summarises, this involves realising how planetary symbiosis *is* the story of our lives.

V. Story of Our Lives: Planetary Symbiosis

> We are at a critical moment, right here and now. We've outgrown our own planet, and we need to … give humanity a legitimate future. The decision we make in this room decides [our] fate … We are either at the end of our story, or we're at the very beginning. (Dr Louise Banks in Heisserer 2012, pp. 111–112)

Ted Chiang's 'Story of Your Life' and *Arrival* asks a central question – is humanity at the end of its story, or at the very beginning? In the 2012 screenplay by Eric Heisserer, the motivation for the arrival of the aliens is to help humans escape their dying planet – to give humanity a legitimate future. The story of *our* lives is in realising that we are either at the end of our story, or at the very beginning. Aliens are not coming to save planet Earth. We must save ourselves. The prime thought device of the 'Story of Your Life' and *Arrival* is that through the plot/thought devices of linguistic relativity, simultaneous mode of awareness, non-adversarial relationships, and empowering actions in concert to create a future, the aliens teach humans to cooperate internationally in order to save themselves. For the purpose of this article, in the absence of alien arrival, the more important thought device is the story of the rest of our lives must involve learning the language of arrival, of planetary symbiosis, if we are to have any story worth telling.

In the previous four sections the article has woven the 'Story of Your Life' together with the arrival of the knowledge that a 3–5 degree Celsius rise in temperature by 2100 leaves humanity with little space for a legitimate future. First, it was argued that the

language of arrival provides a way of decolonising both the past and future by anthropocentric and Eurocentric ideological common sense. Second, critical social theory of agonistic cosmopolitics was used to advance a simultaneous mode of awareness that decentres anthropocentric and Eurocentric understandings of the past and future. Third, non-adversarial deep relationships were imagined through the subjective sharing of relations in order to desilence both non-human perspectives and non-western voices. Fourth, an understanding of normative power as empowering actions in concert that reshape conceptions of normal for the planetary good going beyond ecological and decolonial denouncements to create a future.

The climax of *Arrival* occurs when Dr. Louise Banks confronts US national security representatives with her interpretation of the alien's message: 'What they're telling us, right here, is that ours is one of twelve. We're part of a larger whole. If I've learned anything from the study of their language and their way of thinking, it's that the whole is far greater than the sum of its parts' (Heisserer 2012, pp. 94–95). Answering the central question of *Arrival* demands an approach to planetary politics that is holistic, contextual and inclusive (Manners 2003, pp. 7–8; Manners 2021, pp. 62–63). The NPA is *inclusive* in working outside-in and bottom-up to ensure that both non-human perspectives and non-western voices are central. The NPA is *contextual* in working within the background of modernity, industrialisation, imperialism and conflict, while at the same time working within ecological interdependencies. The NPA is *holistic* in understanding international organisations and states, regional organisations and transnational actors in their planetary context. It is only by realising the planetary symbiosis of social (in)justice, economic (in)equality, ecological (un)sustainability, conflict (in)security and political (ir)resilience in terms of an inclusive, contextual and holistic approach that we can begin to create the future.

The consequences of this realisation for former European maritime empires (Portugal, Spain, Netherlands, France, Britain, Denmark, Sweden, Belgium, Italy and Germany), European international organisations (NATO, OCSE and OECD) and European regional organisations (EU and CoE) is particularly acute. For example, there must be a recognition that European integration requires historical context – that the EU does not begin with a 'year zero' moment on 9 May 1950. This historicisation must include the origins of European integration in the processes of imperialism and colonialisation; nationalism and xenophobia; international trade and interwar depression; and the wars of empire (Manners and Rosamond, 2018, p. 34). European and western colonial and postcolonial legacy, international predominance, and continued exploitation of the planet over the past 500 years are the starting point for this realisation (Manners 2000, pp. 182, 185–188; Manners 2013b, p. 215). As discussed here, colonial independence has led to postcolonial hegemony characterised by domination of knowledge production, neo-colonial exploitation, and the injustices of neoliberalism (Manners 2000, p. 190; Manners 2013b, pp. 220–221, 225).

In the following symposium Kalypso Nicolaïdis (2023) explores how the insights of applying the NPA transcending disciplinary boundaries (including IR and European studies) that are inherently restrictive and exclusionary, in order to argue the importance of transnational democracy in the third democratic transformation. Michelle Pace (2023) uses the arrival of normative power in planetary politics to shed light on how the EU's southern neighbourhood and its social and political fragility becomes amplified by the

'force multiplier' of climate mitigation and therefore draws attention to the urgent need of thinking on the co-constitution of all life on earth, particularly in a climate-conflict scenario such as that of Israel and Palestine. David et al. (2023) apply a critical feminist lens to argue that the potential of a NPA in realising a planetary politics can only be fulfilled if European (and other) political and societal actors embrace four 'Es': ethics of care, empathy, emancipation and equity.

The symposium's argument about the arrival of normative power in planetary politics are developed throughout the four contributions but imagine much more in the context of the planetary organic crisis. For example, as Pace argues, the Russian invasion of Ukraine raises awareness of the unsustainability of energy use and heavy pollution but also detracts from seeing the bigger planetary challenges. David, Guerrina and Wright take this further in setting out how empathy and caring for others in the conflict are important for addressing both the causes and symptoms of the invasion, but also that a reflexive process over time is crucial. This reflexive process would emphasise some of the world's highest levels of wealth inequality and social injustice driven by kleptocratic oligarchy in Russia; the near-catastrophic demographic decline as Russian and Ukrainian populations halve this century; and the inevitability of a Russian methane emissions pulse in Siberia leading to socio-economic implosion. As the 2023 Asian heat wave demonstrated, increasingly prolonged periods of temperatures over 40°C are well above the human wet-bulb temperature for healthy activity. Thus, a NPA to planetary politics would emphasise the driving forces of the shrinking human climate niche's impact on tropical and sub-tropical regions and countries (such as Brazil, India, China and South Africa), associated climate-related migration and conflict, and the necessity of arriving at a different way of imagining power, politics and stories of our shared planet.

At the end of *Arrival* the lead character, Dr. Louise Banks, asks her co-scientist: 'Ian, if you could see your whole life from start to finish, would you change things?' This article is, after two decades of normative power, my answer to that question. For this to be the beginning of the story of the rest of our lives, we need to take seriously the planetary symbiosis of ecological homeostasis and human equality. The arrival of normative power in planetary politics is just the beginning of that story.

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Correspondence:
Professor Ian Manners, Department of Political Science, Lund University, Lund, Sweden.
email: ian.manners@svet.lu.se

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The Third Democratic Transformation: From European to Planetary Politics

KALYPSO NICOLAIDIS[1,2]
[1]Florence School of Transnational Governance, EUI, Florence [2]Oxford University, Oxford

Abstract

This contribution to the symposium explores one aspect of the arrival of planetary politics under the broad label of the third democratic transformation, a transformation unfolding now at all levels of governance, from the local to the global through the regional, in spite of the anti-democratic forces at play around the world. This article starts by exploring the new frontier of normative power Europe in a post-colonial key, arguing that the European Union can serve as a laboratory for such a democratic transformation, around four interrogations related to claims of decentring, doubting, experimenting and decolonising. It then offers a descriptive-normative typology of the core attributes of the third democratic transformation observable in numerous signs and practices both in Europe and around the world through a sixfold evolution, namely, trans-temporal, transnational, trans-modal, trans-local, trans-scalar and, across all these, translational. It concludes on the conditions of possibility for this transformation.

Keywords: normative power; planetary politics; post-colonial; transnational democracy

Introduction

The Anthropocene, we know, is not about today's Anthropos, us, but about the fate of our others – others from our past who have brought us here, other species and kinds of lives and other future humans – all other worlds that today's humans have relentlessly colonised. 'Planetary politics' denotes the arrival of all these others onto a worldwide political stage where the whole earth no longer features as a passive *décor* but has become the main character of the play, a character whose fate depends on and determines that of all these others. As Gardels (2023) aptly puts it, 'the central problem of contemporary planetary politics is the internalization of the world'.

Today, scholars are increasingly aware of how the Anthropocene presents new and parallel challenges to the natural and social sciences by claiming that humanity is 'entangled' with a myriad of scales, spaces, being(s) and temporalities, which emanate most fundamentally from the need to secure ourselves from ourselves, humanity from humanity (Hamilton, 2017). And so we ask in earnest: how reflexive are we, humans, about the transformation of the story we tell about our collective agency? Are we capable of taking in *together* the planetary reality in its multiplicity, in its animate and inanimate forms (Mbembe, 2022)? Or do we remain locked in our atavistic urge to slice it, fight over its bits and pieces and ignore the wounds we inflict on its crust?

An international relations (IR) agenda that seeks to grapple with these questions and scan the new theoretical and prescriptive horizons opened up by planetary politics has emerged (Burke et al., 2016; Dryzek and Pickering, 2018). Accordingly, the current transformation of politics beyond the state is brought about not only by intersecting and

mutually reinforcing global challenges but also by our evolving inter-subjective constructs to deal with them.

Applying the insights of the 'normative power' approach to planetary politics, as we do in this symposium, expands this IR agenda to the interdisciplinary and post-colonial critique of European powerhood, putting into question the Eurocentrism of contemporary IR notions of 'normativity', 'power' or 'borders', as well as the units to which they may apply, for example, 'nation', 'regions' or 'empires', and the languages used to analyse them (Manners, 2002, 2023).

In my contribution to the symposium, I reflect on one aspect of this agenda, namely, the place of democracy in planetary politics. I will not rehearse here the many faces of democratic erosion, grievance populism and societal trust collapse affecting the immune systems of democracies – however weak they may have been in the first place. Echoing Mbembe's (2022) conviction that democracy will have to be reinvented in the age of planetary crises, I take the paradoxical stance that precisely in this epochal moment of ascendancy of ruthless authoritarian regimes and of shrinking civil space everywhere [as documented most recently by the office of the United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur on the rights of freedom of peaceful assembly and of association and the World Movement for Democracy], we are witnessing a fascinating countervailing phenomenon: the advent of a 'third democratic transformation'.

Of what do we speak? In *Democracy and Its Critics* (1989), Robert A. Dahl, one of the foremost analysts of democracy after World War II, traces the genealogy of democracy's previous 'arrivals' born from radical acts of imagination through two great historical transformations in human history, each stretching human possibilities to their limits and perhaps beyond. Yet,

> because the democratic vision is so daring in its promise, it forever invites us to look beyond, and to break through, the existing limits of structures and consciousness. The first democratic transformation broke through the previous limits of traditional government by the few, whether in the form of monarchy, aristocracy, oligarchy or tyranny, and created new structures and beliefs that supported government by the many in democratic or republican city-states. Two millennia later the second democratic transformation broke through the limits of all previous structures and beliefs by deliberately applying the idea of democracy to the large domain of the national state.

There have been many problematisations with this schema, both because of its Eurocentric character and because of the characterisation it offers of these two past transformations (see, inter alia, the work of Archibugi et al., 2011). For our purpose here, however, I concentrate on the ensuing question: is a third transformation of 'democratic limits and possibilities' now on the horizon? Dahl's (2005) answer was equivocal at best. For him, whilst the history of democratic development offers us encouragement, it also posts a warning, one with which it would be hard to disagree:

> For the story of democracy is as much a record of failures as of successes: of failures to transcend existing limits, of momentary breakthroughs followed by massive defeats, and sometimes of utopian ambitions followed by disillusionment and despair (…) feasible solutions often prove elusive, and those who so easily construct an ideal democracy in their imaginations soon discover that it is far harder, or even impossible, to construct that ideal in the real world.

On what grounds are we to decree that democracy today is 'transcending existing limits' and that the discrepancy between ideal and reality is narrowing? How do we know in particular that democracy both within and beyond the state is capable of accommodating the various exigencies of our new planetary politics, including a deep engagement with shared existential threats [nuclear, climate and artificial intelligence (AI)] in a post-colonial key?

In tackling these questions, the third democratic transformation transcends the mainstream agenda to 'democratise global governance' in at least three ways.

First, planetary democracy changes our gaze on the global. For if there is no physical outside to the globalisation story, the planetary story is its metaphysical alternative. Whilst with global governance as a diplomatic exercise, democratising emerges as an afterthought, planetary politics *is* a politics, a cosmopolitics of ubiquitous *local* demand for *global* agency in the face of existential threats to all, including crucially non-humans. The idea of transformation implies that planetary and democratic questions are co-constitutive.

Second, old ideological conflicts are becoming secondary if not obsolete. Liberalism, socialism, patriotism or conservatism no longer constitutes the primary prisms through which especially the younger generations argue over alternative solutions to given problems. The inverse obtains. The 'planetary' itself, alongside notions such as 'deep ecology', stands as the primary prism through which one may gauge the helpfulness of alternative ideologies to orient our gaze towards all these others whose fate the Anthropocene has made our shared problem. As such, the planetary gaze helps recast the potential of IR as a discipline able to identify and interpret 'the international of everything' in a world best characterised by its 'societal multiplicity' (Kurki and Rosenberg, 2020).

Third, planetary politics is anchored in everyday practices and augments our focus from economic to democratic interdependence, for example, the reciprocal vulnerabilities between public spheres at all levels of governance, from the local to the global through the regional – the horizontal that we find nested in the so-called multilevel governance. In this sense, the 2020–2022 COVID pandemic may one day be remembered as the moment that opened up our collective democratic imagination to a world of overlapping circles of autonomy and mutuality (Nicolaidis, 2020a).

The term *transformation* is particularly important here not only because it draws on Dahl's typology but also because it helps us navigate the space between, on the one hand, 'revolution' or radical abrupt change and, on the other hand, the mainstream concept of 'transition', which seems to elude the conflictual and deep fractures that underpin the current crisis facing the democratic ideal, as apparent in citizens' disenchantment with mainstream electoral democracy.

I argue here that we stand indeed at the dawn of a third democratic transformation, but a much more complex and multifaceted transformation than that dismissed by Dahl when he last contemplated it at the end of his life – an ideationally, sociologically and technology-driven transformation. Although patchy and with fits and starts, such third democratic transformation is observable in numerous signs and practices around the world. Thus I define the third democratic transformation as "an incipient sixfold evolution of planetary politics, namely, towards a trans-temporal, transnational, trans-modal, trans-local, trans-scalar and, across all these, translational transformation".

I further argue, supplementing the reflections offered by Ian Manners, Michelle Pace, Maxine David, Roberta Guerrina and Katharine Wright, that the European Union (EU) is well placed to ask how the arrival of more democratic planetary politics may be enacted. Through new acts of imagination translated into language (Cochran, 1999) and by adequately resourcing the myriad concrete ideas and practices that already exist, it can scale up and institutionalise a theory of change combining bottom-up and top-down developments. To speak of a 'third democratic transformation' brings the European experiment back to the fore as a very approximative laboratory for planetary politics and democracy, whereby, as with any laboratory, reflexivity is served by repeated trials and errors, half successes and failures, which themselves become relevant to the rest of the world. As a post-colonial scholar interrogating such an idea, I continue to recast a critical light on the normative power agenda, wary of the irony of calling for European 'humility' whilst implying that an example here there may be.

As a disclaimer, although grounded in empirical observations, this contribution does not offer empirical generalisations. As a horizon-scanning exercise, it offers instead a critical description on the actual democracy dimension of evolving planetary politics, whilst mostly overlooking for now the vast relevant philosophical scholarship on the topic. Under the remit of critical social theory (CST), I continue to embrace immanent critique, looking to the seeds of progress in the here and now without necessarily engaging into a conversation as to how realistic their projection in the future might be. Immanence is about our power to imagine what we already see. The forecaster's notion of 'weak signals' hardly does justice to this phenomenon. Think ubiquitous even if tiny democratic disturbances. When observing immanent trends, it is useful to compare the fears, desires and biases of the younger generation with the realities of power politics, which in turn calls for bringing into our sight the long arch of history and imaginary alternatives that connect long-term futures with a palimpsest of past struggles that have traced humanity's democratic journey. Importantly, I do not claim that trends highlighted here are irreversible or strong enough to overcome the counter-currents of democratic erosion that are today amongst us. One may even imagine ways in which citizens could use their newfound 'cockiness' or daring experimentalism against established hierarchies, to reverse the trends described here, owing to the fragility of democracy and the constant element of becoming in it (Connolly, 2002).

In the first part, I revisit the broader agenda that occupies us here, namely, the new planetary frontier of normative power Europe in a post-colonial key. In the second part, and against this decolonising backdrop, I offer a sixfold typology of the core attributes of the third democratic transformation. To conclude, I raise questions associated with the conditions of possibility for this transformation.

I. A Post-colonial Europe as a Laboratory for Planetary Politics

There has long been a story of Europe as a vanguard Kantian cosmopolitan project, the first appropriation of Kant's mantle by an existing political construct, even whilst his thinking evolved over his lifetime towards an increasingly loose *foedus pacificum* against the danger of a despotic universal monarchy (Nicolaidis, 2020b). At least until the crisis years, our ideal EU sought to translate the Kantian commitment to the horizontal sharing of sovereignty into a 21st-century democratic vernacular with the hope that this vision

would prove globally contagious. Indeed, planetary politics suggests that the more grassroot democratic practices ground global co-operation, the more they may moderate the conflictual nature of 'multiplicity as anarchy'.

If normative power was simply such a narrative of projection, feeding on a self-aggrandising EU exceptionalism aspiring to the universal, it would have been bound to fail. But we must contend with the story's self-reflexive nature. Twenty years ago, I noted that what was projected as the EU relevance to the global was not the EU as is, not the EU as the norm, but an EUtopia, that which the EU was aspiring to become in the eyes of others, which precisely in truth it was not (Nicolaïdis and Howse, 2002). But what if in the intervening years, it had come to better approximate the role of a laboratory for world politics?

As with the other contributions to this symposium, I try to reconcile two takes on this question. The first is that although only a minority of EU member states were once colonial powers, the EU remains incapable of slaughtering its demons of self-congratulatory civilising mission. It has not become the pluralist utopia that would inspire democratic transformation in the rest of the world. The second is that the EU is emerging from its many years of crisis as a laboratory for a third democratic transformation.

Between the two, we can acknowledge the schizophrenic character of a post-imperial EU, which both *reproduces* and desperately seeks to *transcend* the old trope of standards of civilisation (Fisher-Onar and Nicolaïdis, 2015). Whether seeds of change from one to the other are actualised remains a test for the plausibility of the laboratory narrative, around four interrogations related to claims of decentring, doubting, experimenting and decolonising.

Decentring? Europe's Narcissistic Wounds and Epistemological Transformations

Freud once described three great narcissistic wounds that forced humans to question their central place in the universe and give up the soothing fantasy of human exceptionalism. The Copernican wound decentred man's home world from the centre of the cosmos. The Darwinian wound did away with the notion of a progressive creation of life forms culminating in man. And the third, the Freudian wound, meant that he was not even the master of his own individual conduct. Humanity would have to give up its narcissistic illusions.

Arguably, Europe is today the victim of narcissistic wounds inflicted by the great eruptions of our time, each deep and existential (De France, 2021) – but also each holding a promise of giving up on narcissistic illusions. (1) Brexit put into question the inevitability of the EU as the incarnation of the European project – but at the same time it demonstrated that the EU was a construct that could be freely left and therefore embraced by choice (Nicolaidis, 2019). (2) The continent went through its long decade of intertwined polycrisis, financial meltdown, border closings and populist anger in the face of elite capture – but arguably emerging from this moment with the beginning of a plan around the Green Deal and the NextGenerationEU fund embedded in an admittedly stuttering global agenda. (3) The long inter-regnum of this early millennium culminating in the war in Ukraine and the ensuing assertion of both the Global South and the Global East has dethroned the West as the centre of gravity of geopolitics – but the EU has engaged in reinventing its geopolitical relevance as a result.

As the EU bandages its narcissistic wounds in the wake of such humbling experiences, can we detect a 'decentring turn'?

The task of scholarship is vast in providing decision-makers and the public at large with ammunition to decentre eurocentrism. It starts with critically engaging with non-Western viewpoints and analytical mindsets, contesting the prevailing 'liberal script' and recasting the relationship between the social sciences and area studies (Acharya, 2014; Chakrabarty, 2008; Fawcett et al., 2020; Fisher Onar and Nicolaïdis, 2013; Fisher-Onar and Nicolaïdis, 2015; Nicolaidis and Youngs, 2023; Spivak, 2002; Young, 2012). As argued by de Sousa Santos in *The End of the Cognitive Empire* (2018), this requires engaging with 'epistemologies of the south' in order to counter the Global North's 'hegemonic way of representing the world as one's own and of transforming it according to one's own needs and aspirations'.

In many parts of the world, however, the emancipatory rhetoric of modernity escapes the simple binary of coloniality versus post-coloniality. As Ballestrin (2014) argues, the coexistence of coloniality and democracy in post-colonial societies 'gives rise to a set of "missing" issues at the heart of the geopolitics of knowledge production', which informs the task of decentring.

One such missing issue has to do with how mainstream thinkers on global or 'cosmopolitan' democracy often sidestep broader structural realities. As Bhambra and Narayan (2017) argue, political subjects do not become citizens in neutral political contexts nor simply as a consequence of their own agency. Rather, we must recognise the ways political and economic space comes to be configured to enable citizenship claims to be made in the first place and the huge gaps in what such citizenship 'buys you' on the local and global stages.

In this vein, academic activists from the Global South, like Spivak, de Sousa Santos, Roy or Rey, argue that the way transnational power centres continue to exercise their dominance matters, not just for the formerly colonised but in different ways for varieties of subalterns *across worlds*, women in various patriarchal contexts, those in lower social classes or those otherwise located in subordinate positions (as highlighted by the critique of the formal egalitarian nature of deliberative processes). If all aspects of modernity have been formed simultaneously with coloniality, locating the 'margins of the modern world' is an imperative for *all* our worlds (Mignolo and Escobar, 2013).

A connected missing issue has to do with engaging with the many appropriation strategies of the word democracy: children in Africa or Latin America continue to learn that democracy was 'born' under the shadow of the Parthenon, the Bastille or Westminster, Dahl's first two transformations. Of course, it was 're-born' there too, but we need to unlearn these unilateral universalisms that took place in specific places, times and sets of material circumstances that encouraged the emergence of a Eurocentric epistemic order, privileging European interpretations of democracy as absolute and therefore 'universal' (Chakrabarty, 2008). By provincialising Europe, we can embrace alternative histories and epistemological traditions and the practices they give rise to.

As both practitioners and scholars, should we fail to look beyond the horizon of such pervasive Eurocentric 'universalisms' manifest in 'EUniversalism' (Nicolaïdis, 2015), we risk reaffirming what de Sousa Santos terms the 'abyssal line'. More pernicious even than the conscious choice to ignore alternative epistemic traditions, this line separates our biased a priori assumptions from pure *unknowns* that are never even considered because

they were never deemed worthy of learning in the first place, the 'unsaids of those unsaid' (de Sousa Santos, 2018). Planetary politics then starts with connecting rather than globalising local histories through productive mutual engagement.

Doubting? EUtopia's Reflexivity

It would be disingenuous to remark without irony that Europeans like to claim for themselves what is probably the most precious legacy of the enlightenment: the virtue of doubt – a virtue all too often conspicuous by its absence in Europe as elsewhere, but nevertheless, one inherent in a certain take on the EUtopia referred to above.

We should not shy away from embracing utopia, Ricoeur argued, once we take in the distinction between that which is claimed as an inspiration for a better life by powerless groups and that which is denounced by the privileged few who feel threatened by it and prefer to defend the status quo. In this spirit, we could allow ourselves to invoke an EUtopia if the EU could prove to be the vessel that allows democrats to push back against state capture by powerful narrow interests, admittedly the most universal marker of ademocratic erosion (Bagg, 2024).

Whilst it is not clear that the existence of the EU actually strengthens those who resist state capture, a fortiori those who seek to do so from an under-privileged position, the EU is arguably more prone than most polities to doubt and self-reflexivity, which in turn has made this utopian role more likely. This is due in no small part to the practice of 'institutional and legal empathy', whereby lawmakers engage in a continuous dialogue across borders about whether the differences between their systems are legitimate or need to be bridged. By embedding such practices of reflexivity within the state, the EU opens up a space for democratic contestation about the value choices made in the construction of its regional order. If deeper democracy of the deliberative and agonistic kind is inseparable from the idea that politics involves some kind of justification to all those affected, this EU practice creates democratic spaces for systematically doubting the reasons offered by the powers that be.

But not all such spaces offer the same kind of democratic respect to all. The commendable efforts to offer public goods as part of a future-oriented, inclusive and fair recovery from COVID were not the result of an inclusive democratic debate (Nicolaïdis, 2023). If societies become sustainable by transforming potential threats into economic opportunities, the democratic question remains 'who decides' on who is afforded such opportunity.

Experimenting? A 'Laboratory' Is Not a 'Model'

Western critical scholars must surely set foot on the road to post-colonial decentring with great humility and vigilance. For much too long has the EU assumed that Europe's own democratic recipes were aspirational models for the rest of the world to emulate (Youngs, 2021). Instead, a reinterpretation of normative power through the lenses of post-colonial powerhood calls for a systematic critique of Europe as a model (Lenz and Nicolaïdis, 2019). We must eschew no doubt the idea that an EU model could be replicated through mimicry whilst changing scale or context – as implied by terms like 'prototype', 'template', 'blueprint' or 'copy' – or the whiggish connotation that the EU sets an advanced standards for history – as implied by words like 'beacon', 'vanguard', 'pioneer' or 'trailblazer'. In contrast, we might take something from the painter's 'model' as an

object of inspiration that is meant to be reinterpreted through her gaze, thus transforming and subverting the original features Picasso like. Here, the EU, like any other regional organisation, is simply an 'exemplar', a 'quarry', a 'toolbox', a 'menu' or a set of practices available for local choice, appropriation and reinterpretation, selective borrowing and tinkering.

The idea of a 'laboratory' emerges from this semantic brouhaha with all its glorious ambiguity, starting with how war-torn Europeans experimented on themselves and the world, conjuring utter barbarity from – and I quote from a non-European – 'the most sublime ideal that Europe, for all the dark side of her imperial aggression, had gifted to humanity – the idea of a civilised modern collective existence based on the exercise of reason in the public sphere' (Chakrabarty, 2018). You may find this formulation over the top. But as a laboratory, the EU can be thought of as atonement for Europe's past sins, a collaboratory, as my friend Istvan suggests, evoking the sense that this is an experiment, evolving through trials and mega "errors", whereby others can learn more from its failures than from its successes.

The 'EU as laboratory' also stems from the acknowledgement that the EU stands as a microcosmos, a micro-planet, with its north–south and east–west cleavages, its centre and periphery, its vast wealth differentials and its cultural, ethnic, linguistic and sociological diversity – a microcosmos also, for the extensive presence of migrants, especially from former colonies, in its midst.

It is worth pausing on the inversion implied by the idea of laboratory, lest we forget that in the past it is always the colony that serves as a 'laboratory' for European modernity, experiments imposed on colonial bodies, lands and behaviour (from fingerprinting in Calcutta to cadastral mapping in French Africa). It may be fitting, therefore, for Europe to offer itself as a laboratory for a post-imperial order, entangled as it is with the rest of the world.

But of course, the EU cannot and should not hold a monopoly on laboratory status. There is no 'controlled conditions' in this metaphorical story. Many more political laboratories exist and will be built around the world that will reflect different understandings of democratic best practices. All need to be embraced, with equi-distance.

Decolonising? Reversing the Democratic Gaze Through Localised Universals

Such sharing in turn leads many to ask most directly: what will it take for Europeans genuinely to decolonise, or as my students say decolonise 2.0? One pathway is for the EU to 'reverse the democratic gaze' (Nicolaidis and Youngs, 2023).

Reversing the gaze is not only about the willingness to learn from the myriad of other democratic practices but also about expecting, or better yet, asking others to pass judgement on the EU. It starts with drawing lessons from how countries have negotiated and adapted their social contracts through constitution-writing and other power-sharing arrangements. Lessons can also be drawn from participatory practices around the world and methods of protest movements, including how young people and civil society use tools like social media for engagement. And there are lessons in how other regional organisations, themselves facing legitimation challenges, deal with the democratic pathologies of their member states, leveraging their increased authority to do so.

When reversing the gaze, we also recognise that much work remains on the home front, which others might help us critically examine. Beyond the very real challenge of democratic regression in Europe, a critical approach calls for unpacking the very roots of Europe's democratic vulnerability around notions of conflict, diversity, pluralism and liberalism, including in stressing the historical links between hubristic notions of human freedom and Western conceptions of human domination over nature (Connolly, 2002, 2017). In the post-colonial vein, scholars like Bahar Rumelili (2004) argue that the European notion of liberal toleration at the heart of its democratic identity stands in tension with effective pluralism, for it is based on a presupposition of superiority of one epistemology, a base orthodoxy that is preferable to whatever is being tolerated, thus creating an inherently unequal structure. This is in contrast with genuine pluralism in the international plane, seen through the prism of the 'multiplicity school' and Williams' (2015) ethical pluralism, concerned with a diversity of ethical codes, rules, goals and ends, reflecting the conviction that there are many different (often incommensurable) goods required for human flourishing (Reus Smit, 2018).

Were we to fall short of genuine pluralism by unreflexively anointing and promoting contested democratic practices, we too would be accountable for the harm caused by simplistically contrasting '…European humanism, committed to the protection of rights, namely those of gender equality and sexual freedom, and a hostile, intolerant, foreign culture' (El-Tayeb, 2011). It would be a normative horizon of planetary politics therefore that rather than fearing that an 'other' will dislodge a group from its position in the world order, a world of differentiated polities but free of differentiated status must be created – a world beyond abstract universalism, made up of localised universals embodied in particular communities. No one is so different that their very difference makes them unknowable.

II. The Third Democratic Transformation in a Planetary Key

How then can we characterise the emergent third democratic transformation whilst still owing up to a Eurocentric bias, concerned as we are with the possibility of a post-colonial articulation of Europe's normative power?

In the brief overview below, I lay out what I consider to be the six main attributes of this transformation as observable from rapidly evolving democratic practices both in Europe and in the rest of the world – including in response to democratic regression. To be sure, these are fluid and interconnected. But some main common threads emerge: (i) scale: transformation is the product of citizens' rapidly growing expectations about democratic inclusion and new ways of expanding the franchise that has characterised democratic progress to this day, being instantiated in a different guise by the staging of absentees in space and time; (ii) structures: old and new socio-economic cleavages characterise each attribute; and (iii) practices: each attribute is affected differently by increasingly sophisticated technologies.

In each of these dimensions, I connect the attributes of democratic transformation with the features of planetary politics offered in the introduction by Ian Manners (e.g., 'simultaneous modes of awareness'). The transformation is captured through the synergy between changes in scale, structures and practices (Table 1).

Table 1: The Third Democratic Transformation.

	(1) Trans-temporal	*(2) Transnational*	*(3) Trans-modal*	*(4) Trans-local*	*(5) Trans-scalar*
Scale: radical expansion of the franchise	To future beings and generations	To non-nationals and nomads	To collectives across modes of participation	To each other	To different circles of autonomy
Structures: cleavages and conflicts	Winners versus losers of transitions	Self-centric versus other-regarding	Plato's guardians versus change makers	Sovereignists versus connectors	Unicentric versus polycentric
Practices: new democratic techne	Democratised strategic foresight	Inclusive citizenship and new tech	Deliberative, direct, radical innovations	Network tech for cities and regions	AI-enhanced aggregators across scales
(6) Translational	Between timescales	Between socio-linguistic contexts	Between access keys, including non-humans	Between local vernaculars	Between scales and spheres

Trans-temporal ('Simultaneous Mode of Awareness')

Probably the most fundamental expression of the third democratic transformation has to do with the timescale of democracy. It is a cliché to point to democratic myopia. Tocqueville, in his time, was already bemoaning the popular obsession with the present. He saw how the longue durée stood as a luxury, a pastime for those who do not have to worry about basic needs. Traditional politics, with electoral rhythms and opinion polls in between, remains a relentlessly short-term affair. Whilst professional politicians and market mechanisms reinforce their respective propensity for short-termism, the advent of planetary politics has been characterised by a progressive but notable lengthening of democratic time beyond today's distributional conflicts, what we may call 'democracy with foresight' (Azmanova and Nicolaidis, 2023). We start therefore with the first, *trans-temporal* shift, the redrawing of the temporal boundaries of democracy.

The third democratic transformation implies that the motives and calculations of citizens across generations better match the needs we are facing in the era of the Anthropocene. Citizens' fears are not – or not only – that their state politicians or corporations will act against their present but rather that they are losing control over their own future(s) and colonising the next generation's future unwittingly.

This symposium's idea of 'simultaneous modes of awareness' turns arguments over short-termism on their head. We are starting to do so through many different paths.

Aspiring to be 'good ancestors', we are inventing mechanisms to involve the next generations in the process of democratic decision-making, starting with lowering the voting age and beyond, turning various institutions into 'guardians of the long-term', as pioneered by Wales' Future Generations Commissioner.

We are starting to democratise future imagining and scenario planning as well as the science–politics interface, to use discount avatars acting as probes for citizens to engage in making trade-offs over time, and to engage in interactive storytelling about alternative futures. Future literacy also means experimenting with backward engineering as to what this may mean for remedies in the present.

As simulations and predictions point to a chaotic or at least highly unsettling future, nature is filled with examples of resilience that should help inspire us and our capacity to conjoin 'urgency' with 'agency', to either avoid the tipping points of no return in despoiling our only liveable biosphere, or figure out how to survive after the fact (Hanson, 2021). Democratic transformation means that people are starting to debate the trade-offs between mitigation and adaptation. The existential character of planetary politics as staging multifaceted extinctions conjures up the importance of deep time history, à la Hutton, and within our own slice of time, the potentialities of 'slow governance', whilst today's global governance tends to pertain to the instantaneous, the here and now, crises and reactions. The point here is not to choose between the speed of action and the slow pace of deliberation but to narrow the gap between the slowest and fastest subjects in our societies (Connolly, 2002).

All timescales are relevant in planetary politics as collective behaviours continue to deeply embed destructive behaviour in the global economy. But it is clear that the complex social and political implications of the transition, with its gross inequities in cause and consequence, will not adequately be tackled top-down. Sometimes in concert and sometimes in tension, democracy and technocracy will need to reign in short-term forces.

The EU is currently engaged in a pivot from the politics of space – a space made single by markets, regulators and judges, a space where free movement reigns supreme, and a space from which we can choose who and how to exclude – to the politics of time.

On the one hand, European citizens may not be the most suited population on the planet to navigate this shift. They have witnessed the rise of emergency politics as the new normal, with states desperately trying to match the pace of markets. On the other hand, the idea of a laboratory offers a sense that, for its relative prosperity and stability, the EU can afford to experiment where other parts cannot. In particular, the EU is particularly well disposed to act as a guardian for the long term, especially given Europeans' acute historical responsibility in mortgaging humanity's future. After all, because the EU as a transnational construct cannot be a classic majoritarian democracy where you can throw the rascals out, it is not, as a whole, a classic democracy driven by short-term political concern for re-election. This 'unresponsiveness' in turn offers a silver lining to the EU's so-called democratic deficit, a path towards what is called 'sustainable integration' (Nicolaïdis, 2010).

As the slow-burning crisis that is the climate crisis erupts as a hot crisis through energy dependency or water shortages, slow governance means transforming *now* how we consume and not just where we produce; how we redistribute work, value and risk; and how we reward the burden of sacrifice. None of these choices, however, can be imposed top-down. They must be owned by societies where difficult trade-offs are debated democratically, all the more to enforce them effectively. This is why radical democratic innovation in the EU is a geopolitical necessity, not only an anti-populist strategy. If mistrust in the people was part of the EU's original DNA, the long term can be its democratic redemption. An EU that is democratically challenged for short-term accountability can be democratically enhanced for long-term responsibility. That can be its contribution to planetary politics.

But, of course, other realms and cultures have been there for a long time, including, as we somehow keep on rediscovering, indigenous ontologies. As EU politicians argue over calendars with a one- or two-decade horizon, they would be helped by learning from

those who exchange whispers with seven future generations. The third democratic transformation starts with indigenous people across the globe, whose voices are increasingly being heard across time.

Transnational ('Non-adversarial Relationships')

The idea of transformation implies that different expressions of change are deployed simultaneously, even if according to different trajectories. Hence, change in timescale is not deployed in a vacuum but in a world where the core historic definition of democratic progress – the widening of representation towards increased inclusiveness within a state – may have reached its limits and where we have long interrogated the character of democracy beyond national borders. Capturing this change under the label 'transnational' may still reflect methodological nationalism, which is fair enough as democracy *beyond* the state does not mean *without* the state. But planetary politics invites us to radically enrich our understanding of 'transnationalism' itself.

For one, the idea of transnationality modifies the understanding prevalent in most international organisations, including the EU, that some sort of right balance between supranational and intergovernmental authority can buy us democratic legitimacy. To be sure, the third democratic transformation is having a bearing on what happens *at the centre*, be it in the UN, Mercosur or the EU, where the democratic legitimacy of states' governments and of citizens are combined, represented respectively in the Council and in the European Parliament in the case of the EU (notwithstanding the fact that a commitment to some degree of democratic legitimacy is only an assumption here). Transnational lenses invite us to add to, rather than supersede, these two sources of legitimacy by stressing that the direction of travel for planetary politics is clearly towards a more holistic ecosystem, where we consider as equally important the horizontal relationships between democracies at the national and subnational levels, as well as the management of the political externalities they produce on each other (Nicolaïdis, 2021b).

The transnational includes but is not reducible to acts of vertical delegation. Instead, it arises as immanent to networks of relations, commitment and solidarities, a realm fraught with conflict and contestation, but where increasingly, even states and non-state actors embroiled in geopolitical rivalries carve out spaces for 'non-adversarial relationships' as per Manners' introduction. Here, non-domination, which connects the democratic core with planetary politics, means recasting political power as action in concert *as per* Arendt's sense of the political, away from centre–periphery schemas and towards universal differentiation best understood through a relational lens inspired by the Chinese idea of Guanxi (Kavalski, 2017; Nicolaïdis, 2021b). Such a non-hierarchical differentiated system of concerted action includes not only the post-colonial standpoint *stricto sensu* but also that of people not of the West who were not colonised, such as Japan or Thailand, who have long been seen to be peripheral to the 'modern world' and are becoming nodes in their own right (Fisher-Onar, 2022).

In this sense of 'in concert', the modus operandi of 'scaling up' that drove the second democratic transformation no longer applies, which would simply consider transnational democracy as heralding ever larger aggregations. There is no denying the hold of traditional ideas of democracy, which connect directly a group of voters, their representatives and decisions that translate majoritarian preferences into policies. But even this

empoverished view of democracy cannot be obtained beyond the state unless majorities of smaller states' populations become permanent minorities in larger political constructs.

This is where we may consider the import of the EU experiment as a laboratory. As a demoicratic experiment, this is a polity ruled by a plurality of peoples – peoples who govern together but not as one, a demoicracy in the making (see Cheneval and Nicolaidis, 2017; Nicolaïdis and Liebert, 2023). Such an immanent essence of the EU, already there and yet constantly betrayed, has implied from the beginning granting disproportional influence to smaller, peripheral and weaker states, a move utterly relevant to planetary politics (Bunse et al., 2005). When untainted by its teleological and messianic demons of 'oneness', the EU posits, or shall we say intuits, radical pluralism as its condition of possibility as a laboratory. In a decolonial key, it is not enough to say that diversity per se matters - we need to agree on how we disagree about our differences.

With the arrival of planetary politics, we raise the question of whether this understanding of transnationalism translates from the regional to the global. If the ideal of demoicracy is to be applied to planetary politics, we start from the Janus-faced meaning of 'peoples' both as part of states (for most) and as citizens more or less identified with or alienated from these states. We then ask whether the popular authorship of laws or self-government that defines democracy can be imagined in transnational regions or unions of peoples around the world, which may eventually interact to create functional, or even general-purpose, global associations, the democratic version of today's international institutions. In short, 'transnationalism', as opposed to nationalism and supranationalism, elevates 'horizontality' from a descriptive concept, describing the nature of international or European co-operation, to a normative status, shifting the spotlight from the vertical focus on domestic accountability of liberal theories to horizontal accountability amongst demoi through the mutual opening up of democracies and transnational networks at all levels (Slaughter, 2017), thus bringing the transnational *all the way down* and democratising the exercise of differentiated responsibilities.

In this view, the transformation we are witnessing is a turn away from the late-20th-century attempt to transform closed and self-centred democracies exclusively through vertical restructuring above the state. Instead, horizontal ways are explored for outsiders' influence, including through the role of transnational diasporas, migrants' and third-country residents' political rights, and foreign regulators and civil society actors who can be considered proxies of others in each other's sites – Kant's cosmopolitanism amongst peoples, not only states.

Trans-modal ('Collective Intelligence')

These two macro shifts, however, will not be navigated without a third underlying change currently unfolding worldwide, namely, the multiplication and diversification of modes of participation by citizens and civil society, with many variations across political and social contexts, integrating a vast range of elements from new ways of voting, to deliberative and participatory experiments, to protest movements across borders and technology-enhanced democratic innovations (Berggruen and Gardels, 2019).

The common denominator between these modes is that they concern the adjective, not the noun, *democratic* practices, instruments or 'innovations' rather than grand designs for *democracy* per se, practices that explore the space beyond mere voting and other

traditional rights associated with citizenship. Here, planetary politics pushes back against the majoritarian logic of mainstream electoral representation combined with technocratic monopoly of power (Plato's guardians) along at least two lines: first, as a counter to the *behavioural* pathologies associated with the oligopolistic power structures it has come to legitimise (sociological homogeneity, risks of capture of the state, privatisation of public goods, etc.). And second, as a counter to its contemporary *structural* pathology, namely, a neoliberal drift towards irreversibility. In contrast, *reversibility* is at the very heart of the planetary politics of 'transition'.

Accordingly, the third democratic transformation scans the limits of mediated democracy, heralding instead the capacity for citizens to translate their collective intelligence into collective action.

At the global level, these practices can be found in the multiple modes of civil society incursions into a space reserved for diplomats and civil servants as stakeholders in the dynamics of 'catalytic cooperation' (Hale, 2020). But given the many challenges involved in 'scaling up', these would not be plausible without a grounding in (trans)national ecosystems of practices – ranging from participatory budgeting to citizen audits, wealth-building communities or commons–public partnerships involved in housing, food, energy or other organised communities, working in partnership with relevant public bodies, to gain ownership and control over the assets and resources (buildings, enterprises and farms) that impact their lives.

Crucially, what the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has termed the 'deliberative wave' of the last two decades has seen the rebirth of the power of assembly in the digital age to what Hardt and Negri (2017) call 'cooperation in social production'. In particular, democracy is being transformed by the growing movement for 'citizens' assemblies', grounded on democracy through sortition (Batalla et al., 2023; Landemore, 2020; Sintomer, 2023; Van Reybrouck, 2018), where ordinary people decide what is best for the community. Notably, such deliberative settings allow us to tap into people's deep ambivalence about the issues of our time and thus push back against polarised politics (Nicolaidis, 2020b). Indeed, we are increasingly noting the *affinités électives* between climate issues and citizens' assemblies as the latter better engage with the long term than traditional politics (MacKenzie, 2021).

All these modes of engagement and others escape the election of delegates coupled with state action which has been synonymous with democracy for the last two centuries. Whilst they often unfold to express democratic disaffection, they can be used by the state to counter it, thus belonging both to the toolbox of governments and to the grassroots outside extant political institutions. They can serve to mediate political contestation in different political and social fields or for civil society autonomously to supply new forms of public goods away from the exclusive prior focus on struggles for rights (Youngs et al., 2022). Either way, they help multiply what John Dewey saw as the constitution of multiple overlapping publics, or what Nancy Frazer saw as 'counterpublics', in the spirit of Spinoza's version of the multitude, structured by political institutions rather than seeking to supersede them à la Negri.

In all cases, democratic innovations in the 21st century are often intimately connected with new technologies, which can both enhance and threaten them. We are witnessing the emergence of many kinds of virtual spaces that might evolve over time into virtual communities (Orgad, 2018). New powerful computational tools, ultimately powered by

quantum technology could make it possible to create social platforms from the bottom up, through the mere connection of mobile phones. Above all, AI will help transform the landscape in this realm in many ways, be it through personal avatars, preference aggregators, storytellers, democratic landscapers, monitoring tools and much more. AI has the potential to radically change the way we see, situate and aggregate our interests and positions, as demonstrated, for instance, in vTaiwan's venture into digital democracy powered by Polis, emulated by the EU through the 'have your say' digital platform.

To be sure, the relationship between electoral democracy and democratic innovations is a complex one at the heart of the third transformation. Democratic innovations can counter the widespread loss of support for elections, not only by providing alternatives but also by strengthening electoral legitimacy (e.g., deliberation to inform parliamentarians and abrogative referenda). Either way, the third democratic transformation can be thought of as a corrective to the second democratic transformation. As Annelien De Dijn (2020) reminds us, it is in fact the twin liberal revolutions of the late 18th century in Europe and America where the idea of political freedom and 'democracy' was attached to the mediation of voting combined with securing private rights, in contrast with the participatory practices developed by 'the ancients'. It is no wonder that Europeans have been laggards in rediscovering modes of citizen empowerment explored for the last two decades in the rest of the world, making the imperative of 'reversing the gaze' all the more relevant.

Nonetheless, democratic life in the EU has increasingly been enhanced by formal and informal mechanisms that allow citizens to borrow more effectively from one another and interconnect their different parliamentary, party political and electoral systems. Most recently, the European Parliament has required member states to publish the first 100 biggest recipients of NextGenerationEU funds, betting that such a 'democratic panopticon' will check the drift to corruption, centralisation and nepotism prevalent in a number of member states by leveraging the counter-surveillance potential of the internet (Berggruen and Gardels, 2019; Nicolaïdis, 2021a, 2023).

Moreover, throughout the continent, deliberative panels, juries and assemblies made up of randomly selected citizens have been set up with increased frequency at the local and national levels in various configurations and on various topics. In the past 5 years, 10 national assemblies and around 70 local assemblies have taken place in Europe on the topic of climate change alone. The EU itself has sought to deepen its democratic appeal, in particular through the innovative experiments of the Conference on the Future of Europe (CoFoE) and its follow-up panels, which integrate transnational, multilingual, sortition-based deliberation into the policy-making process, opening a window of opportunity for reflection on new kinds of political agency and interaction between citizens, political elites and bureaucracies to bring the deliberative wave to the next level as a crucial way of managing democratic interdependence. In her 2022 State of the Union address, Commission President von der Leyen referred to the panels as destined to be a regular feature of the EU's democratic life – but they remain for now part of a technocratic toolbox. If joined up with the legitimacy of intermediary bodies such as trade unions, parties and civil society organisations, they have the potential to empower citizens through a mix of deliberative, monitoring and mobilising functions. Indeed, whilst still in the experimental stage in the EU context, we are starting to see a partial convergence between a top-down technocratic approach to democratisation and bottom-up initiatives, taking

transnationalism all the way down to the citizens to make good on the Treaty of Lisbon's provision on participatory democracy (Article 11 TEU).[1] It remains to be seen whether EU institutions are sociologically ready to embrace such a right to participate and deliberate as an exercise in joint sovereignty across borders (Cheneval and Nicolaidis, 2017).

Ultimately, these new ways of linking representation and participatory processes interrogate the meaning of democratic 'representation' itself. They allow us to explore the frontiers of inclusiveness, from 'residents' instead of 'nationals' to all silent actors, whom anthropologist Maria de la Cadena calls the 'antropo-not-seen' and Rosanvallon the 'parliament of the invisibles'. The growing nexus between organised civil action and the courts through a litigation route that increasingly expands the franchise to some form of rights for nature can also be seen as part of the changing expression of 'representation', making the judge an arbiter between citizens, the state, official texts signed by governments and those who cannot speak our democratic language.

None of these unfolding developments are preordained. The third democratic transformation is ultimately about the unpredictable and fluid nature of democracy. Witness the vast repertoire of contentious action on display in the last decade in the form of leaderless spontaneous mass protests or small-group activist disruption. In short, whatever the rise of democratic innovations, they have not stemmed the resurgence of civil disobedience as more desperate democratic expressions, especially as part of climate movements. The move to occupy roads and high art spaces, and not only squares and graffiti walls, has used the oldest canvass of humanhood, namely, our own bodies – bodies put in harm's way, simply standing, or exposed virtually. Practitioners of grassroots democracy find that the 'word' is losing its pedestal as the master tool of electoral and deliberative practices alike, and that different spaces need to be reinvested between debate and violence. Organising transnational planetary politics and solidarity is a craft in itself, increasingly invested by new forms of art, music and culture of the more or less disruptive kind. How they will affect our core elective and state institutions, and thus mainstream politics, remains to be seen.

Trans-local ('Co-constitution of Local Struggles')

In addition to these three macro-trends, I suggest three others to characterise the third democratic transformation. Trans-localism starts with the increasingly widespread emergence of local deliberative communities of citizens reacting against the fate of the place where they live, thus becoming the engine for the reconstruction of democracy from the bottom up (Taylor, Nanz, Taylor., 2020). As the phenomenon spreads and as experiments become contagious, trans-localism magnifies the pre-conditions for its own expansion.

The idea of trans-localism, widely used in sociology, politics, urbanism or environmental science, and IR, refers descriptively to the interconnectedness between particular initiatives, movements or networks centred in specific places. It suggests that transnational governance can be reinvested from below as it were through inter-societal interactions stressed by the multiplicity school.

[1]As an experiment putting into practice this theory of change, see 'The Democratic Odyssey Project' at EUI (https://democraticodyssey.eui.eu/home).

Taking a cue from 'quantum consciousness' (Der Derian and Wendt, 2022), it can also refer to entanglements at a distance between centres, margins and in-betweens. It also admittedly touches on the utopian character of planetary politics, often resting with the presumption that horizontal ties can help compensate for the relocation of authority upwards. Subsidiarity and polycentricity are key here, an insight central to the EU to refrain from centralising what can be done at lower levels (Van Zeben and Bobić, 2019). Indeed, networks of cities have proliferated in the last few years and have become the locus of planetary politics.

In this story, Manners' 'historical awareness' defines how the peoples imagine themselves: democracy is the sum of all the struggles that have come before us, more often than not local struggles. The political geography of planetary politics therefore involves the connections, interactions or mutual influence between points in time and space rather than a particular *territorial scale* at which politics happens. If contributive democracy models connect the dots between the issues people care about and democracy, such connections themselves and the solidarity webs that they create become part of what people care about.

Importantly, trans-localism brings the margins of planetary politics back in, as localities are most attuned to the material implications of justice concerns across locales of everyday life. In many repressive regimes, democratic seeds can be planted in local spaces that escape central control. And albeit non-local 'nomads', people on the move, be they migrants, refugees, cross-border workers or even tourists – as well as diasporas and expats – are a core engine of such trans-localism. They are the connectors and translators between worlds for whom the tenets of democracy that are the mutual granting of dignity and respect can become a matter of survival.

But such trans-localism would not easily be instantiated without the last two attributes discussed below.

Trans-scalar ('Material Polycentricity')

Combining geographical attributes (transnational and trans-local) with functional attributes (trans-temporal and trans-modal), we start to question the paralizing belief that upgrading democratic participation to ever greater scale is a fundamental obstacle to planetary democracy, as Robert Dahl and his contemporaries feared. Planetary politics is polycentric, not only as we imagine nodes in horizontal planes à la Ostrom (2005), but as unfolding across different scales, yet exhibiting similar variations around trans-modality on each of these scales – think fractal theory of democracy.

This fifth shift therefore concerns our increased capacity to mix and match various modes of democratic representation, participation and reinvention in different spaces and sizes of polity, ranging from municipal or corporate to regional or transnational, across the various 'circles of autonomy' that define our lives. Indeed, people can argue about planetary politics anywhere from the local pub to the school or village hall, the city square or their place of work, as well as in national parliaments, the UN assembly or summits. And they will increasingly do so in cloud communities (Orgad, 2018).

Translational ('Normative Polycentricity')

Last but not least, and across all other attributes, the third democratic transformation is in part about the mutual engagement between different types of normativity or ways to think

about politics, power and participation across space and time. This attribute ought to play a key role in the 'multiplicity school' of IR, as it is concerned not only with the coexistence and interaction of multiple social formations evolving in different ways but also with how they interact with each other in real time (Kurki and Rosenberg, 2020). If planetary democracy is about giving voice to others, others not in our midst or not yet present, it requires vastly ambitious technologies of translation to encompass the whole gamut of expression that can turn the world into a shared stage, as it was all too fleetingly during the COVID pandemic (Nicolaidis, 2020a).

A translational democracy rests in turn on a sociological imagination that can take in the relationships between the many decentred trajectories that constitute our modernity (Bhambra, 2007; Fisher-Onar, 2022). If paradigm change is anchored in social learning, an incipient pluralist planetary politics will accommodate a diverse range of social imaginaries that can only follow from democratic praxis within and amongst societies (Přibáň, 2021), contrary to the calls for a global people.

A democratic ethics of translation also relates to linguistic and ethnic relativity – the idea that language use can change the way people think (Manners, 2023). This is a message familiar to feminist decolonial theory that foregrounds the importance of the relationship between knowers rather than what is known, and of the conditions for tackling 'epistemic injustice' (Allen, 2015). And this in turn chimes with highlighting the risks of truncated recognition of indigenous people, the indigenous regard for the mystery of translation between different modes of being, even whilst the very logic of indigeneity eschews universalisation (Anzaldúa, 2021; Lugones, 2011).

As we probe the advent of planetary democracy, we ask: what is the ethical or normative glue that connects these democratic times, scales and centres? A possible next frontier of our democratic transformation leads us to envisage the co-constitution of conversations in a universal often non-Western vernacular, as stressed by Manners, spanning the Indian notion of Swaraj as local self-rule, the southern African concept of Ubuntu as sharing humanity, the South American idea of Buen Vivir (Gudynas, 2011), the Rwandan concept of Agacio as self-worth (Rutazibwa and Ndushabandi, 2019) and, the Chinese idea of tianxia (Zhao, 2021): a trans-local and trans-scale language linking individual and collective transformation, models of social relations and development.

Ultimately, if planetary politics rests on claims of universal inclusion, we also ask: inclusion of whom, by whom, how and across what kind of boundaries?

We need wholly new kinds of translation amongst the world of all living creatures to overcome our anthropocentric, narcissistic wound. The third democratic transformation is starting to magnify citizens' capacity to translate their experiences across domains whilst imagining how other beings might be imagining them. For instance, Ireland's recent citizens' assembly on biodiversity loss has called for granting nature rights comparable to people, echoing New Zealand's granting of rights to Mount Taranaki and the Whanganui River in 2017. Such adaptation of legal systems can be seen as exercises in translation that might empower challenges to governments and businesses but also change our gaze on the subject or 'we' of the polity, therefore the frontier of our democratic imagination and what Latour (2018) used to call 'the geopolitics of nature'.

One day, we may even imagine direct 'negotiations' with various other species – octopus, mice and rhinos – without mediation through a human 'representation' in court. At stake here is the displacement of narrow anthropocentrism that currently guides

democratic theory and practice and its repositioning into 'the nonhuman condition' (Asenbaum et al., 2023). In doing so, Europeans and northern capitalist states will realise that the ontological underpinnings of the third democratic transformation, or what Connolly calls 'entangled humanism', have been present for centuries in non-Western traditions of ecological thought in India, Indonesia, the Amazon or West Africa that reject a world divided into human subjects and non-human objects (Connolly, 2017).

Conclusion: Conditions of Possibility

The starting point of this inquiry has been to note the widespread diagnosis that the goals and methods of democracy are changing, changes wrongly read as signs of its demise, whilst if there is demise, it is only of democracy as we know it. With the advent of planetary politics, democracy is undergoing its third transformation in fits and starts in many different variants instantiated differently in many parts of the world. And it is doing so whilst all the counter-currents are themselves gathering pace: increasing parochialism, the dominance of nimbyism in many local settings, the turn to nationalism and the protection of borders, the preference for short-term interest maximisation rather than long-term designs and the ominous rise of authoritarian attraction. In this universe, migrants are no longer welcome, wind turbines are not built and the yearning for self-sovereignty withers away in a whimper.

I have not offered here an assessment of which side will win, so to say, or a rigorous causal story. Instead, I have argued that the EU has a role to play in this epic story as a laboratory for planetary politics, in spite of the many flaws and blind spots in its incipient democratic transformation. The ideal of a 'Citizen Power Europe' (Alemanno and Nicolaidis, 2022) ought to be, and can be, at the heart of the EU's geopolitical identity and, dare we say, strength. The EU can support resilient democracies elsewhere only by leading (or following) by example, thanks to its own democratic resilience at all levels of governance. Democratic collective intelligence means better managing the tensions between representative, deliberative and direct democracy, turning the EU into a place of experimentation in democracy by lottery which blends the insights of the ancients with the technologies of the moderns, and conceiving it as a space to negotiate the hard trade-offs involved in providing the public goods underpinning our transitions.

This argument opens up a vast agenda for future investigation into the core conditions of possibility for the practical emergence of planetary politics to be grounded on anything akin to a third democratic transformation. I suggest three categories. First, the *Tocquevillian-Mohanty question* has to do with the character of civil society and state–society relations, or what we could think of today as the global infrastructure of freedom necessary to underpin democratic progress, from material conditions of equality to social imaginaries. Second, the *Weberian-Strange question*, has to do with structural realities that determine the power configurations within which Dahl's 'limits of democracy' can be pushed back: the question of the future of the state given the great unfolding antagonism between public and private power in the 21st century, the nexus of new technologies and global citizenship and the climate impact of extractive capitalism. Last but not least, the *Schmittean-Ostrom question* relates to the fate of democratic politics in a neo-imperial geopolitics of systems competition, or what I call democratic geopolitics.

If planetary politics refers to cosmopolitan regard for the welfare and autonomy of interdependent others, the democratic challenge is to turn our public spaces into time vessels anchored nevertheless in the human foibles of the here and now. Only because it is fragile is our universe creative. The Anthropocene will last (at least for a while) only if we recover our humility in a world formed and reformed gloriously in our absence by comets and bacteria. How will this happen on a planet of predatory super-states and supermen? Can we still affect today the mind-boggling technologies and man-made life forms that may one day erase this very particular stardust aggregate that is humans? How trivial it will seem hundreds of years from now to have focused so passionately on our human entanglements, still blind to the deeper life-world entanglements that were to determine our survival. The stakes of a new planetary politics could not be higher. Tackling them with passion and creativity is a challenge that can be addressed only by fully embracing the third democratic transformation.

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Correspondence:
Kalypso Nicolaidis, 12 Via Dei Ferruzzi, Florence 50014, Italy.
email: kalypso.nicolaidis@eui.eu

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The Construction of EU Normative Power and the Middle East 'Conflict' … 16 Years on

MICHELLE PACE
Department of Social Sciences and Business (ISE), Roskilde University, Roskilde

Abstract

In this article, I revisit my 2007 piece on The Construction of EU Normative Power (NP) and the Middle East 'conflict' and bring in Manners' Arrival of NP in Planetary Politics' (NPA) frame to shed light on how the EU's southern neighbourhood and its social and political fragility becomes amplified by the 'force multiplier' of climate mitigation. For example, in 2018, Gaza sewage led to the closure of Israeli beaches and the shutdown of the desalination plant in Ashkelon, which supplies Israel with 15% of its drinking water. This is but one example of how Israel and Palestine are not only inter-dependent but, perhaps more importantly, co-dependent. This article therefore draws attention to the urgent need of thinking on the co-constitution of all life on earth, particularly in a climate-conflict scenario such as that of Israel and Palestine. Water scarcity, rising temperatures and electricity interruptions contribute to the region's instability. If policy-makers from the region and beyond are to co-ordinate policy interventions around water and food insecurity for instance, they cannot ignore intractable conflicts such as the Israeli–Palestinian issue and their ensuing implications for planetary politics. Such enduring 'conflicts' represent a microcosmic image of the planet as a whole. Along with the other contributions in this symposium, this piece invokes planetary politics as the space where we need – out of necessity – to think differently: Otherwise, others will be writing the script for us.

Keywords: climate-mitigation; Israel–Palestine; practical theory; planetary politics; European Union

In a 2007 *Journal of Common Market Studies* (*JCMS*) article entitled 'The Construction of EU Normative Power', I sought to engage with the meaning and substance of 'normative' and 'power' in Ian Manners' concept of Normative Power Europe (NPE) (Manners 2002; Pace 2007). For an entity like the EU to be referred to as 'normative' necessitates leaving us with the impression that the EU, as a global actor, behaves in ways that relate to its core norms/foundational standards. Normative Power European Union (NPEU) more specifically is, in this vein, loaded with an understanding of the EU (and its primary agents) as upholding the rule of law, good governance, democracy, human rights, order and justice (see Manners 2006). Thus, the label 'normative' carries strong positive connotations: We expect the EU to behave in a good way, where, by 'good', we refer to principled behaviour.

I attempted to apply this concept and to analyse it critically in the context of the EU's involvement in one of the most enduring, and apparently intractable, global 'conflicts' in modern international politics: the Israeli–Palestinian question. I started by asking whether NPE serves as an analytical concept or whether it is a political concept that serves the purpose of creating/constructing a positive image and attitudes towards the EU and its role in global affairs: in other words, whether it is a (positive) branding exercise for the EU. (On this, see also Sjursen 2006.) Analytically, I concluded that NPE is a weak concept because

it is 'a semantically empty notion'. I argued that: 'the quest for a just and lasting solution (to the Israel Palestine issue) has long been one of the EU's top foreign policy priorities' (Pace 2007, p. 1060 and 1042). This is no longer the case today, writing at a time when the Palestine–Israel file is no longer a priority on the EU's in-tray. After 4 years of the Trump administration, the Middle East (ME) 'peace process' was deemed as no longer viable, and the US's credibility, as a fair and effective broker, was once and for all thrown into the dust of history. With the Palestinian issue no longer a priority for Trump's America, nor the Arab world more generally, the EU followed suit. Having enough on its plate with Brexit, the Covid-19 pandemic and more pressing priorities (such as the EU's resolve to oppose Russia's invasion of the Ukraine since February 2022), the EU has put the Palestinian folder on the back burner. The current US President Joe Biden has also other priorities on his domestic and foreign policy agendas.

Arab states too (like the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain) have re-evaluated their own priorities in light of what they perceive as a diminishing American commitment to the ME region. This anxiety led these countries to sign the Abraham Accords (or so-called Israeli 'normalization' agreements with Gulf countries). Looking towards the EU's southern neighbourhood, the social and political fragility of the ME becomes amplified by the 'force multiplier' of climate mitigation. Water scarcity, rising temperatures and electricity interruptions contribute to the region's instability. If policy-makers from the region and beyond are to co-ordinate policy interventions around water and food insecurity, as well as help modernize farming practices in the ME through more efficient water use, they cannot ignore intractable conflicts such as the Israeli–Palestinian issue and their ensuing implications for planetary politics.

Therefore, although this article focuses on one particular case, the case of the EU and the Israel–Palestine question, it speaks to the bigger issue addressed in this symposium, namely, that the world needs 'a tectonic shift' if we are to revere our planet and its well-being. As the ongoing conflict in Ukraine reveals, many countries have woken up to their heavy dependency on pollutants and the increasing urge to use renewables to achieve energy security (International Crisis Group 2022).

This is precisely why a new language is needed in this context and why a revisiting of my 2007 *JCMS* article on the constructed nature of the EU's normative power in the ME conflict is called for. Thus, in this article, I (re-)engage with Manners' own developments in regard to his original 2002 piece (and ensuing reiterations) and bring in his 'Arrival of NP in Planetary Politics' (NPA) frame. Manners' works are also triangulated with those of Hass (2021) and Mamdani (2020). By doing so, this article attempts to draw attention to the urgent need of thinking on the co-constitution of all life on earth, particularly in a climate-conflict scenario.

This revitalizing of Manners' NPA in the ME context brings us to his 'practical theory' and how action in concert can bring us to an *Arrival* by giving some nuanced reflections on how – if we had to look at the whole array of past diplomatic efforts in the ME conflict – we could possibly start to relive a new reality, one that is based on the right to have rights (Arendt 1951) for all concerned. Here is where Manners' Arrival holism/holistic and symbiosis/symbiotic approaches provide a timely and useful analytical framework: Questions of (in)equality, (in)justice, (un)sustainability, (in)security, and (ir)resilience in the ME 'conflict' are intimately linked; they are symbiotic.

Thus, the holistic planetary political approach set out in Arrival provides a good start for a realization of this in the case of the ME and its relationships to and impacts on the rest of the world. Using Arrival in the context of the ME conflict helps us rethink possibilities of moving beyond (often) destructive binary oppositions of seeing the every-day lived realities of Israelis and Palestinians alike. The conclusion suggests that the language of Arrival offers a feasible way forward to reviving an analytically useful NPEU concept and to decolonizing the political in the ME conflict.

In light of the above, this article is structured as follows: The first section briefly captures what is referred to as a simultaneous mode of awareness. Building on academic debates within environmental security (Abrahams 2020; Beaumont and Coning 2022), it elaborates on the argument that climate change leads to an intensification of conflict. This in turn requires an analytical reflection on the Israeli state's colonial context, its occupation of Palestine and current/ongoing Israeli settler colonial practices.[1] As a result of (what Pace and Yacobi 2021 call) this 'slow violence', the impact this has on current and future environmental destruction is presented. Through this approach, the aim here is to highlight the importance of prioritizing the protection of rights and human security of Palestinians and Israelis over maintaining a 'peace process' that has failed miserably. In a separate second section, the article then moves on to conceptualize how it is possible to conceive of non-adversarial relations using Mamdani and Hass to explore *a form of the state other than that of the nation-state*. This section asks the following question: *Is it possible to realize a non-two state solution – to imagine a non-adversarial relationship?* Thus, it explores the possibility of the subjective sharing of relations through a form of state other than a nation-state. This is done through a de-silencing of non-mainstream voices on the ME 'conflict' in order to realize what such 'deep relations' will entail. This exercise will give us some potential ideas on what a democratic and inclusive order could look like – a way out of the cycle of civil wars. This builds on Manners' subjective sharing of relations and corresponds to his development of explanatory theory (Manners 2018). In a final, third section, the article captures how we can move beyond this cycle of civil wars through democratic and inclusive action in concert. This section brings together the principles of 'mutual respect and recognition of the other' as proposed by Manners (2023, this symposium), which, in turn, relate to the 'Goals or desired outcome of NPEU construction' as presented in my *JCMS* 2007 article and Manners' (2023, this symposium) 'ethic of cooperative empowering actions in concert' and his 'impact of a communion of equals through reconciliation'.

In conclusion, it is argued that Israel and Palestine are not only *inter*-dependent but, perhaps more importantly, *co*-dependent. They therefore represent a microcosmic image of the planet as a whole. Along the other contributions in this symposium, this piece invokes planetary politics as the space where we need – out of necessity – to think differently: Otherwise, others will be writing the script for us.

[1]The academic literature on settler colonialism is a long standing and vast one. Starting with Wolfe's seminal book (Wolfe 1999), Veracini's (Veracini 2010) work, up to Mamdani's (Mamdani 2020) book, there is a solid body of academic literature that shows how settler colonialism, as a conscious and planned enterprise, develops a complex set of narratives and practices that erase indigenous people's humanity. Moreover, this extensive academic debate details how the settler colonial imaginary of empty land becomes a social construct: an imagined space that supports and legitimizes the violent and invasive settler colonial agenda by constructing indigenous peoples as threatening others/erasing indigenous presence on existing land: see also Pace and Yacobi (2021).

I. Simultaneous Mode of Awareness: Where We Stand Today in Terms of the EU's Engagement in the Middle East Issue

When it takes a look at its balance sheet, there is not much that the EU can credit itself for when it comes to bringing the Palestinians and Israelis closer to any political solution to their 'conflict'. As a prominent Israeli journalist and critic, Amira Hass (2021) has put it: 'The sloth of the European Union has once again been revealed in all its shame. The EU is good at giving the Palestinians charity and preaching about the rule of law. It fails politically when it comes to stopping Israel's plans to concentrate the Palestinians into reservations in the West Bank and clear most of the land for Jews'.

In fact, the EU is the largest humanitarian donor in the occupied Palestinian Territories (oPt), legitimizing its position by stipulating that it 'responds to the most pressing needs of the population' (European Commission n.d.). The reality for more than 1.5 million Palestinians (out of 5.2 million in the oPt) is that they rely on humanitarian assistance because they have experienced an Israeli and Egyptian blockade since 2007, three devastating Israeli wars in the last 13 years, compounded by internal divisions and a crippled local economy, making over 80% of the population aid-dependent (Asharq Al-Awsat 2018; European Commission n.d.).

Hass also highlights how the EU has, for a long time, pressured the Palestinian Authority (PA) (under Israeli occupation) to hold legislative and presidential elections. As I had highlighted in my 2007 *JCMS* article, when free, fair and transparent elections were held in the oPt in 2005 and 2006, the EU made a huge blunder when it refused to recognize the election result that brought *Hamas* to power. Seventeen years since the last Palestinian elections, the EU finds itself in an urgent situation to reassess its engagement in the Israel–Palestine file. But the EU's request to send an observation mission for the scheduled 2021 parliamentary elections in Palestine (which were later postponed) was met by a non-responsive Israel (Nielsen 2021).

In rethinking the EU's encounters in the ME, it is worth examining Manners' (2023, this symposium) conceptualization of normative power in planetary politics. Here, Manners traces the EU's colonial past and its postcolonial legacies not least in continued exploitation of natural resources in its former colonies (see also Pace and Roccu 2020). It is now openly acknowledged that the ME region specifically faces a number of multi-dimensional impacts from climate change in the 2020s: From the shape of the energy transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy to the social and humanitarian impacts of environmental stress in the ME and the market dynamics to anticipate around these issues, there is much space for reflection on how the global community, not least the EU as one of the purported leaders in climate change mitigation (Schreurs and Tiberghien 2007), can better support allies in the region in abating drastic climate change. As aptly noted by Balsari, Dresser and Leaning (2020, p. 406, my own emphasis): 'The 2013 IPCC (*Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*) report forecasts that, by the late twenty-first century, intense heat and dryness will affect countries extending across North Africa into Egypt and Sudan and northeast to Saudi Arabia, the Levant including Syria, Iraq, and Iran … Intense regional heat may render some areas *uninhabitable* … A 2019 model suggests that *business-as-usual approaches to climate mitigation and population growth* may expose one in three humans in this belt to high temperatures currently found only on 0.8% of the earth's surface'. So, while the anthropocene designates the age

in which humankind has become the driving force of the state of the Earth system and its advent is intimately bound up with the emergence and growth of the global political economy, global policy-making processes relating to acute threats to the flourishing of ecosystems cannot omit the crucial importance of the 'political' in a truly integrated mitigation system. Academic debates within environmental security have also highlighted how climate change leads to an intensification of conflicts, particularly in the ME region. Abrahams (2020), for instance, underscores how policy organizations have been tasked with incorporating climate-conflict into policy and programming. He exemplifies by shedding light on how climate-conflict discourses inform development policy and, in turn, how the structures of development enable or constrain institutions' ability to address climate-conflict priorities. Similarly, Beaumont and Coning (2022) emphasize how, over the last two decades, climate security has become an increasingly salient policy agenda in international fora. Their work urges scholars and practitioners to recognize and embrace diversity and uncertainty in climate-conflict scenarios and to practice humility and dialogue across difference (see also, amongst others, Bremberg et al. 2019; Conca 2019; von Uexkull and Buhaug 2021).

For this reason, Hass's point about how the EU fails 'politically' in the face of the Israel–Palestine climate-conflict context requires elaboration. On 18 December 2019, a group of Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) questioned the Commission in regard to which steps it would be taking in response to Israel's continuous demolishing and confiscation of key public structures built using EU and Member States' aid in the West Bank and East Jerusalem (see EEAS, 2020; see also Galindo 2020). The reality in the oPt (as numerous European Parliament reports show) is that there are huge economic disparities between Israelis and Palestinians, a lack of substantial and sufficient infrastructure and of effective water resources management in the oPt, which is compounded by pollution and climate change and which together have led to disproportionate allocations of water and to substantial depletion and contamination of water resources. Water consumption specifically highlights the stark inequalities between Israelis and Palestinians. As a result of the Oslo II accords (in connection with allocations of trans-boundary water resources), Israel controls approximately 80% of water reserves in the West Bank. Military conflict in Gaza in the summer of 2014 left over a million residents without access to water. As Omar Jabary Salamanca (2011) poignantly shows in his work, the destruction by Israel of Gaza's only power plant and the subsequent sanctions on electricity and fuel have had severe consequences on Gazans' daily lives, particularly in terms of their health. For Jabary Salamanca, this infrastructural violence had led to Gaza's humanitarian collapse. As the Peace Treaty between Israel and Jordan has shown, the management of shared water resources has worked well so far even if every now and then these relationships also experience uncertainty. Brooks et al. (2020) shed light on the search for permanent freshwater agreements between Israel, Palestine, and the western portions of Jordan, while emphasizing the benefits of shared water management among these countries/territories. The authors imagine efforts to share transboundary water in ways that are simultaneously physically feasible, ecologically sustainable and socially equitable. The current arrangements for Israel and Palestine remain challenging though and are inadequate and, in some cases, counterproductive. The possibility of imagining a comprehensive trilateral agreement on water before seeking to resolve the full range of issues that remain uncertain in a Final Status Agreement between Israel and Palestine highlights the

precarious story not only of the lived lives of Palestinians under Israeli settler colonialism but also of the lived reality of Israelis.

As a case in point, Israel's 'slow violence' tactics in Gaza have an increasing impact on Israel itself. The water crisis in Gaza today essentially began in 1948 with the creation of Israel when hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were driven from their towns and villages and the population of Gaza quadrupled in a matter of weeks. Today, three-quarters of Gaza's two million people are refugees, and their descendants put enormous pressure on Gaza's aquifer, drawing it down so far that seawater is flowing in. Israel's bombing of water delivery infrastructure – including wells, water towers and pipelines and sewage plants – in the 2014 war made matters much worse. And as Gidon Bromberg, director of Tel Aviv based-Ecopeace Middle East (see below) highlighted in 2018, Gaza sewage led to the closure of Israeli beaches and the shutdown – at one point – of the desalination plant in Ashkelon, which supplies Israel with 15% of its drinking water. Bromberg called this reality 'a ticking time bomb' and warned of an outbreak of pandemic disease – a direct consequence of Gaza's contaminated water. He also urged Israel to recognize the humanitarian disaster in Gaza and its ensuing implications on Israelis themselves. These risks flow beyond Gaza and Israel. As articulately put by Gregor von Medeazza, a UNICEF water and sanitation expert working in Gaza: 'Under the circumstances, isn't investing hundreds of millions in donor funds too big a risk' and therefore '… what is the way forward?' (Tolan 2018). EcoPeace Middle East is a unique organization working for such a way forward and for peace through concerted, environmental co-operation: It brings together Jordanian, Palestinian and Israeli environmentalists who work together to protect water in the ME and for a sustainable future for this region and beyond. As Julie Trottier puts it: 'The essence of the EcoPeace Proposal is to recognise water as a flow and then to use continuous monitoring and ongoing mediation as the main management tools to achieve equity, efficiency and sustainability. These tools provide the basis for decisions to adjust withdrawals from each well or reservoir, or to modify use of water from a spring. They also encourage interaction between state and non-state actors. Ongoing mediation means that rulings or regulations can be appealed by any actor involved, whether scientist, officer of a non-governmental organization, or member of an agency that manages water. Social and economic developments over time can be accommodated and integrated within geologic, hydraulic, and engineering constraints' (in Brooks et al. 2020). She continues to argue that: 'As mutually interdependent riparian states, Israel, Jordan and Palestine must have the right to access and use water from shared supplies. They must also accept the parallel responsibility to maintain the quality and quantity of flow in all shared natural water sources, within the limits set (and sometimes changed) by natural conditions' (Brooks et al. 2020). The example of EcoPeace highlights what the EU could actually do to overcome obstacles towards broader societal change in the Israeli–Palestinian climate-conflict scenario, namely, that planetary politics require a continuous negotiation of relationships within Israeli–Palestinian living spaces in order to survive and thrive together.

A compelling report launched by Human Rights Watch on 27 April 2021 calls on the International Criminal Court to investigate 'systematic discrimination' against Palestinians. The report examines Israel's treatment of Palestinians and presents the present-day reality of a single authority, the Israeli government, ruling primarily over the area between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea, populated by two groups

of roughly equal size, and methodologically privileging Jewish Israelis while repressing Palestinians, most severely in the occupied territory: It calls on the 'Israeli authorities (to) dismantle all forms of repression and discrimination that privilege Jewish Israelis at the expense of Palestinians, including with regards to freedom of movement, allocation of land and resources, access to water, electricity, and other services, and the granting of building permits'. Similarly, one of the themes addressed in Amnesty International's (2022) own report is the expropriation of land and resources. The report explains that 'the definition of Israel as the state of the Jewish people and the commitment to Jewish settlement of the land has precluded any possibility of Palestinians enjoying equality in access to land, property and resources, with disastrous consequences for their enjoyment of social and economic rights.' Noura Erakat and John Reynolds (2021) also reflect on Israel's settler-colonialism and its 'spectacular and structural violence'. Like HRW and Amnesty International as well as B'tselem (2021), they also support the charge of Israel's discriminatory practices against Palestinians. Palestinian activists, including scholars, have long been arguing that the oppressive Israeli regime that Palestinians in the oPt face stems from a sophisticated form of apartheid,[2] which began a century ago in Palestine in the shape of the Zionist settler colonial project. Although these reports and publications are crucial in that they shed important light on the everyday lived reality of Palestinians under settler colonialism, they do not go far enough in calling for, in the words of Al-Shabaka's senior analyst, Yara Hawari (2022), 'seismic shifts (that) are still needed in the higher echelons of global political establishments'.

Manners' NPA in Planetary Politics pushes us to strive for a perspective that requires Europe to turn its gaze towards efforts by Palestinians to create pathways of empowering political transformations in the renewed articulation of their right to have rights. An example in point stems from UNESCO: In December 2021, the United Nations' cultural agency (UNESCO) acted upon a radical imagination move by adding the art of Palestinian embroidery, '*tatreez*', to its Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. 'The craft, which dates back more than 3,000 years, is a traditional form of cross-stitch embroidery originally made and worn in rural areas, known for its coloured threads and unique patterns. The colours used symbolise different stages of life, and different shades of the same colour denote regional differences. Over time, the art has also taken on a meaning of resistance as it continues to play a key role in Palestinian cultural and even economic life'. For Palestinians, resisting Israel's settler colonialism is an action in concert, that is, an embedded, national and political consciousness known as '*sumud*' or 'steadfastness'. This example tells a very important story about what the EU chooses to see and what it does not see by way of action in concert in the oPt and highlights possibilities that would change the language from one about the ME 'conflict' to one about a simultaneous mode of awareness. The planetary politics/earthly ethos proposed here results from a pathos that goes beyond rationality or recognition because it is based in Israeli–Palestinian embodied relationality, which binds both people to each other as living

[2]Apartheid in international law refers to a system of prolonged and cruel discriminatory treatment by one racial group of members of another with the intention to control the second racial group. Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and B'tselem all draw on this legal definition in their reports on Apartheid in the oPt. The Apartheid Convention declares that apartheid is a crime against humanity and that 'inhuman acts resulting from the policies and practices of apartheid and similar policies and practices of racial segregation and discrimination' are international crimes (art. 1). See United Nations Treaties Collection (n.d.) and the definition of the crime in the Rome Statute (1998).

beings not only through the shared places and histories but also through the larger biosphere and ecosystems that sustain the two communities, and ultimately through their singular bond to the earth. Such an ethical planetary politics stance is one in which ethics supercedes political contingencies and forces Israelis and Palestinians to continually and vigilantly reassess and reinterpret their responsibility-sharing towards each other, even if – perhaps especially if – those others are threatening.

Mamdani (2020) also reflects on the violence inherent in state-mandated adversarial relations and engages with a number of cases including the Israel/Palestine question. He eloquently offers an in-depth political history and genealogy to elucidate the entangled Zionist logic of colonial statecraft and nation-building. He argues that the work of Zionism has resulted in the violent manufacture of a permanent majority and a permanent minority in Israel and the oPt of today. This crucial analysis offers important lessons about the complicity of the EU in this everyday 'slow violence' (Pace and Yacobi 2021).

Bringing in Ian Manners' Arrival article (this symposium) into the manner in which we can reconceptualize the Israeli–Palestinian climate-conflict scenario allows us to retheorize more distinctly 'the state' and possibly its disaggregation in order to imagine the United States and Europe supporting Palestinian efforts at 'internationalizing' this issue and engaging with the Palestinians' mode of awareness – namely, '*sumud*', as a core Palestinian cultural value of perseverance in the face of continued Israeli settler colonial adversity. Given that international law, including international human rights law, is made by states for themselves and their peers, and given the violence of the non-entre/contact free control policies of a number of states that defy international human rights law, this renewed Arrival NPA/articulation produces a *savoir orphelin* (an orphan knowledge) 'which cannot be tamed as a form of Europe-centred desire and development' (Dimitrovova and Kramsch 2017, p. 799).

This requires a further recognition on the part of the United States and Europe that this is not a 'conflict' between equal partners but a long-standing climate-conflict issue with a massive power asymmetry between the two main sides: Furthermore, an acknowledgement on the part of external actors that Palestinian resistance is a national, political consciousness that goes hand in hand with their sense of '*karamah*' or dignity. Starting with a recognition that the natural environment is a shared one and a good place to start for peace through environmental action in concert, Brooks et al. (2020) argue: 'Much of the Israeli increase in water use since 1967 comes from occupied Palestinian land. This water cannot be considered as "prior use" in the usual sense. Further, the availability of large volumes of "desal" allows the Israelis to give up previously used water voluntarily … Israel has been able to reduce its withdrawal from the aquifers significantly because a high and growing percentage of its household water now comes from desalination. More generally, if the Israelis do have to give up sizeable quantities of water, they can expect in return to have a better quality of water flowing back to them than was formerly the case'.

II. Non-adversarial Relations: Exploring a Form of the State Other than that of the Nation-State

The end of 2022 deepened the gloom over prospects for the EU's much touted 'negotiations' pathway and the 'two-state solution' for the Israel–Palestine conflict. Benjamin Netanyahu, Israel's longest serving prime minister, once again took the helm of Israel's

government – just 18 months after losing power in the wake of a series of stalemated elections. Netanyahu's hard-line approach to Israel's occupation of the Palestinians, together with his governing coalition (now dependent on the support and partnership of once-fringe extremist parties and politicians), already proved to hold the potential for conflict-driving disruption (OHCHR 2023).

In 2018, Israeli law declared Israel as 'the nation-state of the Jewish people', that is, as a Jewish state rather than a Jewish and democratic state. Thus, under the watch of the world's global powers, including the United States and the EU (scrutinized here as a NPE), Israel declared a South African style apartheid state. Of course, unlike South Africa, as Mamdani reminds us, 'most of the national minority was expelled from Palestine' (Mamdani 2020, p. 352). As highlighted in HRW's report (2021), a rights-based approach to conflict settings[3] necessitates that the EU conduct a holistic assessment of the implications for EU and member states' relations with Israel arising from HRW's findings of Israel's crimes of apartheid and persecution. Amnesty International's report (2022) backs this recommendation stipulating that: 'Without taking any meaningful action to hold Israel to account for its systematic and widespread violations and crimes under international law against the Palestinian population, the international community has *contributed* to undermining the international legal order and has emboldened Israel to continue perpetrating crimes with impunity'.

This call for a radical imagination relates to this symposium's discussion on the de-silencing of non-mainstream voices and agonistic cosmopolitical knowledge production. Starting at the EU, in particular, European states need to identify the legal consequences and obligations under EU and international law that apply to EU institutions, member states and EU-based private businesses, and the steps that should be taken accordingly, and make such an assessment public. Returning the gaze inside Europe is what is called for here. An example of this was made concrete in February 2004, when, following the Euro-Med Human Rights Network (EMHRN)'s 6th General Assembly, the EMHRN Working Group on Palestine commissioned its first review of the EU's human rights obligations and commitments in relation to Israel. The review constituted an important development in EMHRN's work of promoting the implementation of human rights commitments in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) and in bilateral association agreements. Thus, the review set out to examine actual EU and significant Member State positions and responses to Israeli violations of international human rights and humanitarian law in the oPt and in Israel. It clearly concluded that: 'Israel implements its agreements with the EU in violation of general international law, and in violation of the agreements themselves. The EU has repeatedly chosen not to prevent this'.

'In addition, a review of several key elements of the EU's *operative* diplomacy, including its contractual relations with Israel, reveals a striking lack of coherence with the EU's (own) legally correct *declarative* diplomacy … (Thus) … *The EU may have actually facilitated Israel's violations of international human rights and humanitarian law* by deferring to them in its own dealings with Israel. The review presents several instances where Israel's implementation of its agreements with the EU has been based on its rejection of

[3]Tania Harry (Hary 2019) – Gisha's Executive Director – and Daniel Seidemann (Israeli expert on Jerusalem) have both been working tirelessly on a rights-based approach that would benefit both Israelis and Palestinians. See also Statement by Jamie Eldridge (2021).

its key international obligations as an occupying power, and as *a state of all its citizens*. (Citizenship is here understood as a right (not a privilege)).[4] *The EU can not knowingly allow its contractual relations with any third country to operate in this manner without itself violating European Community law and international law*'. (EMHRN 2004, my own emphasis).

The starting point for a reset in the EU's gaze is this lived reality of Palestinians and Israelis on a daily basis. A normative policy cannot continue to encourage the 'conflict' parties to return to 'negotiations' or to pursue any other 'peace' plan. Instead, the Arrival climate-conflict rights approach points to a trend that has become increasingly evident amongst Palestinians themselves: the need to prioritize the protection of people's right to their rights, for Palestinians and Israelis equally. The rights of Israelis in this specific context refers to the right to live in security and safety, which can only be sustainably accomplished by simultaneously ensuring full rights for Palestinians. The point of this article about the co-dependence of Palestinians and Israelis means that ensuring Palestinians their rights would render any advocacy of armed resistance needless and hollow if not frowned upon. This is reflected in, for instance, when Israel granted Gaza's population some limited easing of the blockade and right to work (allowing 12,000–20,000 Gazans to work in Israel, Boxerman 2022): it created a strong deterrence against violence from Gaza to the extent that Gaza's population would perceive any violent actions negatively as ruining the improvements they have realized. Hence, imagine the deterrence to violence that granting Palestinians their full rights would create in comparison with Israel's tactics of control, repression and humiliation against Palestinians in the name of maintaining 'security', which only creates bitterness, rage, despair and fuel more violence in return (Kershner 2008). Hence, it is in the interest of the Israeli public that Palestinians realize a dignified and decent life.[5]

Torczyner (2021), Arya et al. (2010) and Hassan and Munayyer (2021), amongst others, have written extensively about what a rights-based struggle entails. Their focus is on subaltern stakes that question Israel's lack of accountability for its 'strategic lying' tactics through which, for example, it deems all Gazans as terrorists. As Ivor Gaber (2021) has shown, this has been a very dangerous game because lying/untruths – even if rebutted – can create public awareness and heighten the dominant Israeli discourse (especially when Israel legitimizes its 'slow violence' on Palestinians in the name of 'security') as the most important issue in Israel–Palestine. The EU – perhaps unaware of its actions – may have unintentionally amplified Israel's dominant discourse and inadvertently legitimized it since its involvement in the so-called peace process. This has also left a huge

[4]Citizenship – like human freedom and human rights – is a right not a privilege. Slave traders believed freedom to be a privilege and not a right of *all* human beings.

[5]There is also another aspect to Israel's continued occupation of the Palestinians. That is when young Israelis are sent to enforce the occupation in the West Bank and carry out violent assaults on Gaza: there is much harm done to them – mentally and physically. Many Israeli parents have expressed their sense of fear and anxiety with this author when their children serve in the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) in the West Bank: They have openly declared that not only are they worried about the physical safety of their children, but more so about how their IDF service will change them for the worse when they have to constantly act with violence towards Palestinians. See Greenbaum and Elizur (2012) and Webb (2020). Another example consists of testimonies Breaking the Silence gathers from Israeli soldiers. See McGreal (2022) for one example where an IDF soldier admits that they used to be 'calm and relaxed', but enforcing the occupation in the West Bank turned them 'more and more violent'. These voices from Israeli society led the former Israeli president Rivlin to declare that Israel is a sick society that needs urgent treatment (see Cashman 2014). A rights-based approach that gives Palestinians their rights will end the need for sending IDF soldiers to the West Bank to violently enforce the occupation.

mark on Israeli society at large. As Gaber argues: 'once a statement – or lie for that matter – has found a sympathetic ear (think about Israel's labelling of any criticism as anti-semitism) then no amount of rebuttal will convince people that it is not true … (not all Gazans are terrorists but many in Israel's society believe this to be the truth). … This is because the lie fits their worldview and to believe anything else would create a sense of cognitive dissonance (the legacy of the Holocaust, etc) something we all seek to avoid'. Thus, 'there is a need for a radical paradigm shift in EU foreign policy, one that would problematize and deconstruct normative assumptions and well-established preconceptions, regarding a range of so-called European values, values on the basis of which entire societies located on Europe's margins are judged and around which preferential relations with the EU are established' (Dimitrovova and Kramsch 2017, p. 800). As Roy (2007), quoting George Orwell, eloquently puts it: 'uncritical and unthinking accommodation to the status quo … has the effect of giving "an appearance of solidity to pure wind"'. Roy cautions against becoming 'indifferent to consequences and unable to engage in a range of imaginative sympathy'.

This leads us to important subaltern/translocal thinking on exploring a form of (Palestinian) state other than that of the nation-state. *Arrival* and agonistic cosmopolitics support the Palestinians' push for the right to have rights and the move beyond the one- versus two-state solution debate and for international organizations and actors to pursue the more just approach – the rights-based struggle coupled with a clear-cut political vision that can be realized within the framework of a unitary state with guaranteed equality for all its citizens regardless of religion, ethnicity or gender. As Honig aptly puts it: 'agonistic cosmopolitics' is 'located squarely in the paradox of politics – that irresolvable and productive paradox in which a future is claimed on behalf of peoples and rights that are not yet and may never be' (Honig 2006, p. 118).

Arrival and agonistic cosmopolitics thus shed light on regionally specific, postcolonial traditions and practices that offer Palestinians and Israelis a more grounded perspective than that offered by the increasingly disconnected abstractions of the EU's postcolonial canon.

III. Action in Concert: Moving Beyond the Cycle of Wars Through Democratic and Inclusive Action

It is here where Hass's and Mamdani's reflections can shed light on the possibilities for moving beyond the cycle of wars and violence through democratic and inclusive action. The question remains: How can those segments of Israel's society (but also global society) which are convinced about Israel's untruths be reached and brought into an open dialogue and action in concert? What is needed is a deliberate set of actions that can change the political calculations of Palestinians and Israelis and that can create opportunities for a *sustainable* political solution that revitalizes the NPA in the ME context. This much needed approach is urgent in order to change the negative trajectory the Palestinians and Israelis are on. From the EU's side, it must continue to bolster its support to Biden's presidency for a restoration of multilateralism and respect for a norms-based international order. The protection and preservation of the equal rights of Palestinians and Israelis have to be prioritized by a revitalized NPEU. As planetary politics show us, Israelis and Palestinians co-habit one space of 'circulation, passage, not from one culture or country

to another, but from one margin to another, from border to border, edge to edge: never "in," but always "in between"' (Bensmaia and Curtiss Gage 1993, p. 69).

So far, the EU has invested way too much time, effort and public funds on encouraging negotiations (as a goal in themselves) between Israelis and Palestinians. Palestinians' expectations for a better life with equal rights as their Israeli counterparts have been dashed. And what we are left with in Israel today is an emboldened hardline government. The dire conditions in which Palestinians live in the oPt, the environmental destruction, and Israel's as well as the EU's own violations of international norms give us plenty of reason to rethink the Arrival of NP in the ME's planetary politics by productively centring our analysis on the transformed and rapidly transforming conditions for postcolonial sustainable agencies in Israel and Palestine, by thinking through their entanglements.

As with Hass, Mamdani concludes that only by winning over those Israelis who are disillusioned with the way that the Israeli government is going ever more to the extreme right (see also Goren 2023) can help to tip the balance in favour of a political solution to Palestinians' struggle for self-determination. Could this be a pathway for a renewed Arrival of NPEU in the specific context of the ME? NPE is not politically innocent, but the Arrival of planetary politics into a rethought NPE can not only illuminate the neo-colonizing logic of EU interventions in Israel and Palestine: It has the potential to erupt into the open what is one of the most 'silent questions' of our times (Khatibi 1983, p. 18), a sustainable future for all human kind. Thus, the Arrival helps to decolonize our perspective: one which from the borders of Europe produces an orphan knowledge that cannot be re-domesticated as a form of Europe-centred (normative) power (Khatibi 1977).

As Ian Manners points out in the framing article to this symposium, the 'story of our life' and subsequent Arrival include the idea of linguistic relativity, the idea that language use can change the way people think. This speaks directly to the empty rhetoric and focus on negotiations in the ME conflict. As with the arts that convey the messily actual and not just the ideal (Knausgaard 2021), our political/radical/moral imagination requires that and must convey the messiness of reality out there and not just the ideal of planetary politics. A renewed focus on democratic and inclusive action in the ME issue requires building on the efforts of those on the ground: Israelis and Palestinians alike who seek to radically imagine that another life/reality/world is indeed possible.

The example of EcoPeace Middle East mentioned earlier as well as the case of participants in a West Bank immersive language project is another case in point: Rather than allow state mandated violent practices to divide Israelis and Palestinians, Maya Mark and Nnur Zahor, two Israeli Arabic speakers, created an immersive language-learning course for like-minded young Israeli activists, taught by eight local Palestinian women in the south Hebron hills. The local community has become an open space for non-violent Palestinian activism, often working together with the anti-occupation movement in Israel. In the absence of any meaningful top-down and externally driven 'peace process', Palestinians and Israelis involved in this project are part of a new generation of activists who are quietly taking action in concert and thus moving beyond the cycle of violence, wars and hatred through dialogic, democratic and inclusive action: This is indeed an extraordinary step that shifts state mandated adversarial relations into a non-adversarial community within a space that is not that of the state. Over a number of months, this initiative has, in the words of its initiators, forged strong bonds between

students and people across several villages in the southern Hebron hills. Importantly, the presence of Israelis helps counter the rising tide of settler violence. This empowering example of action in concert shows how every margin is a centre – and a powerful one at focusing efforts on democratic and inclusive action (McKernan and Kierszenbaum 2021). Such practices require a form of 'desert thinking' whose intimate contours are the task of future generations of Israelis and Palestinians to jointly explore, decipher and make their own sustainable futures.

IV. Conclusion: Decolonizing the Political Through the Language of Arrival

In rethinking and reimagining EU engagement in the ME issue in the context of planetary politics, this article has revisited my original *JCMS* (2007) article on the construction of EU normative power. In doing so, and in the context of the arrival on normative power in planetary politics, it has shown how a decolonization of the political in this case requires a simultaneous mode of awareness that necessitates an understanding that the wealth and overdevelopment in Israel not only steals from Palestinians but also steals from alternative futures for both Israelis and Palestinians alike.

It has also shown how non-adversarial relations and agonistic cosmopolitics can help in the creation of new forms of the state through a radical, moral and political imagination, namely, a focus on the end of Israel's settler colonization and occupation, the right of Palestinians in Israel and the oPt, as well as those in exile to have rights.

Thirdly, this imagination requires action in concert by way of a shift from a focus on negotiations towards a focus on democratic and inclusive actions and practices. The examples of EcoPeace Middle East and an immersive language project in the south Hebron hills were given to elucidate the potential of lived, collaborative actions in concert.

Could this be a way forward of reviving an analytically useful NPEU concept? This will require a critical assessment of the role of the EU and its prescriptions – how far have these been and continue to be aimed at securing EU MS interests but which have cynically been presented as securing self-determination for Palestinians? The false sense of a (Palestinian) state to come (Pace and Sen 2019) has been constructed by the international community since the Oslo Accords. The Palestinians have made a number of attempts at declaring independence from external forces. Lester Murad has long made the case that aid-funded development in Palestine has not worked, as millions continue to suffer despite billions of dollars (and euros) being spent. Her calls for Palestinians to assert themselves, boycott international aid and take control of their own development (Lester Mourad 2012) have been heeded. As alternatives to dependency on aid, she called upon the Palestinians in diaspora and supporters worldwide to help Palestinians develop new models of sustainability that do not require them to mortgage their future to international actors whose 'vision' for Palestine will not lead Palestinians to be treated as equal citizens.

The EU's incentive structure for Israelis and Palestinians thus far has been heavily distorted (see also USMEP, 2021). As Manners' useful thought device in this symposium reminds us – based on the 'Story of Your Life' and *Arrival* – it would be good for the revitalization of NPEU to recall the idea that 'language use can change the way people think'. Similarly, Mamdani calls for a decolonization of the political. For him, such a political process cannot be brought about through armed conflict since violence defines who

is a member and who is not and where the boundaries of the community lie. For Israel to be a truly democratic state, there needs to be a decoupling of the nation from the state. For Mamdani: 'At a minimum, we can think of politics as a negotiation over the boundaries of membership in a communal formation' (Mamdani 2020, pp. 329–331).

As concluded by Manners in this symposium, what an analytically useful NPEU concept in the case of the ME conflict requires is for the EU, as a first step, to recognize the discriminatory policies of Israel in the oPt: that is, a 'planetary consciousness of the tragedy, fragility, and brevity of indivisible human existence that is all the more valuable as a result of its openness to the damage done by racisms'. Secondly, an EU recognition of the praxis/reality as lived by Palestinians that, by definition, demands an engagement with Palestinians' settler colonial conditions in an effort to introduce transformative (planetary politics) change. The very act of an imagined EU engagement with Palestinians' colonial contexts opens up the possibility of perpetuating through practice (and recognizing) the colonial structures that one rejects in principle. Thirdly, such a renewed NPEU concept necessitates an EU engagement with Palestinians' mode of awareness – that is, their resistance to settler colonialism and *sumud* as well as with the existing examples of action in concert in the shape of EcoPeace and the south Hebron hills immersive language project.

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Correspondence:
Michelle Pace, Department of Social Sciences and Business (ISE), Roskilde University, Universitetsvej 1, 25.1, DK-4000 Roskilde, Denmark.
email: mpace@ruc.dk

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Nakedly Normative: A Feminist (Re-)Imagination of Planetary Politics

MAXINE DAVID,[1] ROBERTA GUERRINA[2] and KATHARINE A. M. WRIGHT[3]
[1]Leiden University, Leiden, The Netherlands [2]University of Bristol, Bristol, UK [3]Newcastle University, Newcastle upon Tyne, UK

Abstract

This article makes the case for a feminist (re-)imagination of planetary politics in the context of the normative power approach and Manners' opening article in this special section. Arguing for an urgent turn to a politics that embraces the whole of the planet, we ask: How can we build processes and political structures that equip us with what is needed to manage those tests now faced by the planet? We apply a critical feminist lens to argue that the potential of a normative power approach in realising a planetary politics, so challenging anthropocentrism, can only be fulfilled if political and societal actors embrace four 'Es': ethic of care, empathy, emancipation and equity. The cosmopolity envisioned is premised on our ability to 'see', 'hear', question – perhaps even break with – the disciplining and bounding effects of the disciplines that feed into European studies.

Keywords: (trans)disciplinarity; anthropocentrism; critical feminism; normative power approach; planetary politics

Introduction

This article interrogates the opportunities offered by applying a critical feminist lens to the understanding of the European Union (EU) as it seeks to engage with the future challenges that transcend boundaries, national or otherwise. Reflecting on Manners' (2023) vision for a normative power approach (NPA) as a tool to realise planetary politics (as defined in Manners, 2023), the question is how to construct processes and political characteristics that embody the elements necessary to deal with the increasingly complex tests – crises – faced by the planet. Climate change constitutes a crisis of its own but one exacerbated by the longer term failure to question the effects of existing hierarchies and ordering structures on human relations, to say nothing in respect of the planet as a whole. The anthropocentrism characterising international politics and constituting a barrier to planetary politics is familiar to feminists whose work has long uncovered the dominance and hegemony of masculinised and solipsistic concerns. The patriarchal hierarchies that subjugate the voices and interests of minoritised groups are also responsible for prioritising (their own) economic growth and exploitation over planetary care.

Feminist theory offers a different set of lenses for understanding the intersectional and temporal nature of the planetary challenges we face. It is further grounded in the knowledge that the personal is both political and international. From this perspective, planetary politics has to start by acknowledging the mythology that sees the internal separated from the external in policy formulation and implementation. This in turn requires us to acknowledge that processes grounded in this arbitrary distinction are inevitably reproducing hierarchies of power rooted in Europe's colonial legacy, an acknowledgment all too absent in Normative Power Europe (NPE) but addressed in Manners' turn to NPA. It is

worth noting here that when we refer to the EU, we speak of the Brussels machinery as it projects what has been agreed at the member state and EU institutional level. At the same time, we recognise that, as with any actor in international politics, some dissent from the consensus projected remains, whether in Brussels or in the member states' capitals. Focused on the EU as it is, we dismiss any idea that the EU and Europe are synonymous, though we equally acknowledge that other actors speak as if they perceive Europe as the EU.

In this article, we consider the ways in which a critical feminist approach is reconcilable with an NPA and, in so doing, we seek to address some of the limitations of this as a tool for planetary politics. Many critical feminist approaches advocate rejecting disciplinary confines, favouring conceptualising international relations (IR) and related institutions from a myriad of perspectives; it is about 'breaking rather than building fences' (Väyrynen et al., 2021, p. 2). One might go further to say that critical feminists have sought to reveal how to 'act to create the future, to enact chronology' (Chiang, 2002, p. 137). In much sympathy with Manners, we ask about 'conceptions of normal' (Manners, 2018, p. 322). Building on this, we argue it is time for IR to yield to different ways of knowing rooted in the four 'Es' that inform critical feminist politics and ethics: the ethic of care, empathy, emancipation and equity. Seen from a transdisciplinary perspective, these values are not new (Shilliam, 2020).

Transdisciplinarity recognises complexities, calls for imaginative solutions that may borrow from existing disciplines but may also move beyond them. In turn, transdisciplinary research takes the researcher far beyond their disciplinary 'home' and the disciplining that occurs there. It requires movement beyond the comfortable, the known, away from ideas of simplification and undemanding connections, with a view to recognising new, complex connections and roads, producing knowledge and practices that are rooted in the social realities facing us. As such, it necessitates that researchers work on an equitable basis with those communities more often marginalised than included, moving us beyond cross-disciplinarity (Manners, 2003). Planetary politics offers a space for the integration of diverse traditions by transcending disciplinary boundaries that are inherently – intentionally so – restrictive and exclusionary. The disciplining nature of IR, and by extension European studies, excludes the four 'Es' that are required to achieve the inclusive, multi-sited knowledge needed to foreground planetary politics. This requires rethinking the boundaries of knowledge production in global politics. The aim of the article is therefore to set out the ethical obligation and imperatives to imagine a different future because to fail to do so is to reproduce the power dynamics that we have exposed here. It is also about challenging existing structures, which in turn are an obstacle to planetarity.

I. Opening the Disciplinary Box to the Feminist Pluriverse

In working towards a feminist pluriverse, we seek to expose 'intersecting oppressions or systems of oppression' (Crenshaw, 1991) moving beyond understanding multiple differences and their impact upon the individual to expose the 'privileges, benefits, and power gains maintained and crystallized' through power and the patriarchy (Henry, 2017, p. 195). A critical feminist approach offers some scope for achieving this, but an expansion of their preoccupations is required. Fundamental to this is a normative commitment to the repoliticisation of intersectionality. This is a two-step process. First, this entails

setting it apart from mere calls to 'add women and stir' or from related calls to 'liberate' or 'empower' women in distant lands (Cooke, 2002) without a commitment to transform the structures of global politics. Second, this entails moving beyond the anthropocene itself, such that intersectionality takes on new dimensions beyond that of the human.

Even before this, however, it is necessary to question pre-existing assumptions of *how* we can know, along with *what* we can know. This opens a space for challenging single-site analysis of institutions and structures of power, demanding instead 'multi-site' (see Van Milders and Toros, 2020) and multi-agency analysis. It is a process that brings to the fore the multiple voices and contradictions in the way different voices and forms of knowledge are integrated into (Western-centred) disciplinary boundaries (Van Milders and Toros, 2020, p. 120). A feminist pluriverse (Escobar, 2021) is reflexive, co-producing and transdisciplinary.

The mythologisation and disciplining of IR has served to sideline critical engagement with race, something integral to the 19th-century foundations of the study of IR (Shilliam, 2020, p. 153). This means that as the discipline has developed, mainstream IR has become less diverse in its field of knowledge. However, this is not the case for much of feminist IR, which has embraced knowledge drawn across disciplinary silos. From its position at the margins of the discipline, feminist IR has been able to provide a 'panoramic view and offer a strategic location with which to reach a number of different disciplines and sites of thought' (D'Costa and Lee-Koo, 2013, p. 3). Nevertheless, critical and feminist approaches are not immune from replicating colonial logics that explicitly reinforce the centrality of Western knowledge and experience (Parashar, 2013). The process of reclaiming the foundational story of the discipline is therefore integral to the emergence of planetary politics.

Transdisciplinarity has the potential to be a gateway to new and inclusive ways of thinking entirely consistent with planetarity, opening a space for mainstreaming the themes of sustainability and global environmental crises (Bernstein, 2015, p. 5). In a similar vein, Robbie Shilliam (2020, p. 153) proposes moving away from traditional disciplinary conceptions of a canon, to embrace the idea of 'inheritances':

> If all collective projects are able to proffer an inheritance, then instead of a singular canon, students and scholars might benefit from a democratized and expansive constellation of knowledge. A critical appraisal of the present could therefore become more incisive, edifying, efficacious.

In European studies, we can discern a tendency to think of the field as a discipline. This is despite simultaneously speaking of it as multi-disciplinary, albeit with some disciplines better represented than others, and also interdisciplinary. The grounds for conceiving of European studies as a discipline reside first and foremost in ideas about the space it represents. Structural constraints, especially related to funding, serve to narrow the space. Examining textbook collections at European Commission-funded Jean Monnet Centres, Guerrina and Slootmaeckers (2023) argue that a clear canon – and therefore the discipline – is discernible. The disciplining effects are further felt in journal identities and gatekeeping more generally (Haastrup et al., 2022).

Achieving transdisciplinarity will mean that in addition to looking backwards, as Manners (2023) provokes us to do, and remembering the geography and location from where we approach the EU, we also need to think sideways in terms of seeking to

transcend the disciplinary silos or inheritances into which our work is confined in order to better conceptualise a planetary politics approach to NPA. This requires a willingness to ask critical questions about the very gaze of European studies. We need to consider who is on the margins of or marginalised from the canon, for example, feminist and post-colonial/decolonial approaches (Guerrina et al., 2018). This matters because it has wider implications beyond scholarship because as Guerrina et al. (2018, p. 253) argue:

> EU studies and the EU itself are co-constitutive – that is, that the way academe approaches the study of the 'beast' shapes the way we understand it and determines which elements take centre stage. How we study the EU helps to reify institutional hierarchies and normalises disciplinary blind spots. The nature of the discipline of EU studies – […] – creates biases that ultimately reproduce wider social hierarchies because it mainly concentrates on a narrow set of interests particularly at critical junctures ….

In applying a critical feminist approach to planetary politics and seeking to transcend disciplinary boundaries, we therefore need to be conscious of the politics of knowledge production. In 'Story of Your Life' (Chiang, 2002), Louise Banks says:

> but the only way to learn an unknown language is to interact with a native speaker, and by that I mean asking questions, holding a conversation, that sort of thing. Without that, it's simply not possible.

Chiang's foundations are not unfamiliar to scholars of IR, where studies like that of Cohn (1987) told us much about the importance of language and how learning that of others shapes our own ways of thinking. This was apparent in Cohn's detailing of the ways in which she experienced a normalisation of language at which she was at first 'aghast' (1987, p. 688) but gradually came to understand. Engaging with a pluralist body of scholars and literature is the pathway to learn new ways of knowing. This requires curiosity and humility about the spaces from which knowledge emerges. In arguing for the need to take seriously insights from disenfranchised groups, we are not saying that these groups have a 'monopoly on insight'; rather, through plurality (and transdisciplinarity), we seek to operationalise the 'borderland method to rescript knowledge' (Sylvester, 1994, p. 317).

We must pause, however, to ask how, in the context of the fragmented local and global news environment in which we all operate, it is possible to allow for a feminist pluriverse to emerge. This is the challenge for normative power. Chiang's aliens did not come by stealth or with the intention of engaging in battles over information; Louise Banks and her fellow scientists worked in an environment of transparency and collaboration, as did, incidentally, Cohn (1987). But most recently, we have learned too much about fragmented media environments and societal vulnerability to disinformation to assume everyone is capable of shrugging off discourse that plays to their prior histories and fears. The limits to and the consequences of the EU's ability to create a space in which such models of transparency and collaboration could emerge were clear during the Covid-19 pandemic, when we grew to understand hierarchies of privilege, through the global (non-)distribution of life-saving technologies such as vaccines, and dissemination of knowledge about the spread of the virus during the peak of the pandemic.

II. NPE/NPA: A Critical Feminist Critique

In his now field-defining but still contentious article from 2002, Manners began by asking about the EU's actorness, specifically whether the EU can 'displace the state as the centre of concern' (Manners, 2002, p. 236). Fundamental to his pursuit of this was an exploration of the EU as a civilian versus military power. Revisiting his work in 2006, Manners found reason to be sceptical that the promise of the EU's potential for normative power would be met. The EU, with scope to be a very different entity to a state, to think in extended time periods and to centre humans and their needs, to think in terms of conflict prevention versus conflict management or resolution and to be in the vanguard of those pursuing a 'sustainable peace', instead resembled what he termed a 'military-industrial-simplex' (Manners, 2006, p. 193). This captured the sense of a relationship in which the EU worked with the vested interests and time frames familiar from inter-state relations, its transformational potential unfulfilled. In recognition of the dominant narrative about the way in which the EU was sacrificing normativity for power, Manners argued that military capacity per se was not the problem; rather, it was a lack of reflection about where the EU should focus its efforts. This remains pertinent in respect of planetarity, but the route to fulfilment of its potential is still unclear, contingent as it is on the willingness of EU stakeholders to capitalise on the *full* potential of the EU's relationships and in a legitimate fashion.

In later work, Manners argued for an NPA that acknowledged the coloniality of Europe and which was grounded in critical social theory (Manners, 2018). Key to this was the idea that normative power could (should) mean the dispersion of power to enhance the position of others as well as oneself. NPE was marked by Eurocentricity, underplaying the relational aspects that normative power demands. Further, all too often work on normative power emphasised either the normative dimension to the detriment of power or power to the detriment of normativity. In his later work, Manners did more to address such criticisms and applications, including illustrating his position that the normative and the power are inseparable from each other. In this context, NPE was superseded by NPA that acknowledged the shortcomings of Eurocentrism, as well as the tendency to forget that inseparability. The legitimacy of normative power acts thus necessarily come under greater scrutiny, demanding more reflection on how those on the receiving end of normative power acts perceive them.

Some thought therefore needs to be given to the requisite qualities of reflection, which underpins an NPA. The first of those qualities is caring. Caring might be borne of the inherent characteristics of any actor or it might be more pragmatically derived. For example, the EU recognises that success depends upon its ability to understand the full range of possible responses to its actions in order to be able to feel and care about the results of any future action. Crucially, this also requires it to care about who and what feels the impact of its actions. In short, the act of trying to see yourself as others see you requires you first to look in the mirror, to *care* enough to look at yourself and then to confront what you see. That the EU does care is evident in many ways, bearing out Manners' arguments in 2006 that the normative power of the EU can yet be further realised. The perception of multiple crises facing the EU in the period from 2013 to 2015 caused the EU to consult widely on the strengths and weaknesses of the European Neighbourhood Policy. The review that followed, whilst solution focused, also betrayed a good deal of reflection on EU

failures and a willingness to work with partners to address them (European Commission, 2015).

The second quality is empathy, related to caring but more than that. Although empathy has become something of a mainstream buzzword in recent years, it has often assumed a 'normative, progressive dimension', failing to engage with the 'politics of empathy' in terms of acknowledging the 'sociopolitical conditions in which empathy may or may not operate, nor recognising the political character of empathy when it is adopted by actors' (Head, 2016, p. 96). For example, in relation to ties between the EU and the African, Caribbean and Pacific states, a moral economy has been instituted by the EU to present European ethical norms as congruent to solidarity with 'the poor' (Langan, 2012, p. 243). Our intention is to engage with a critical conception of empathy, reflective of a critical feminist approach. The work of Christine Sylvester is indicative here; she defines empathetic cooperation as

> a process of positional slippage that occurs when one listens seriously to the concerns, fears, and agendas of those one is unaccustomed to heeding when building social theory, taking on board rather than dismissing, finding in the concerns of others borderlands of one's own concerns and fears. (Sylvester, 1994, p. 317)

Echoes of this analysis are found in Naomi Head's work that treats empathy as having a 'temporal dimension' (Head, 2012, p. 39).

Head acknowledges 'the important contribution of a normative dimension of empathy and its powerful role in reconciliation processes (among others)' but also 'argues for the need to locate empathy within its sociopolitical context and recognise the asymmetries of power embedded in relationships' (Head, 2016, p. 96). It entails the ability to see and be mindful of how others are feeling, even if we do not precisely understand those feelings (Head, 2016). In respect of the EU, empathy must be applied across all levels of the internal environment, as well as the external. In order to be an empathetic international actor, the EU needs to reckon with its own, that 'own' meaning past histories and actions, the perceptions of others, as well as the levels of trust amongst and within the member states. Fundamental to this are trust and confidence, two concepts that do not feature in Manners' (2023) opening article as part of this special section, though they underpin much of what he says. If, as we argue, the ability to reflect is indeed dependent on an ability to empathise, the requisite reflexivity will only be acquired over time, and language – and communication – are fundamental parts of the process.

The three features Manners sets out in his earlier work are important, of course – economic power, diplomacy and supranationality (2002, pp. 236–237). Where the military/civilian divide remains important is in how it affects external perceptions of the EU, such that its normative credentials are damaged to an extent that means its diplomatic influence is weakened. On the other hand, it is difficult, but not impossible, to see a scenario in which military force can deliver the types of changes that a planetary politics entails. The ongoing war in Ukraine, the provision of military equipment from EU member states to Ukraine, and the empathetic responses of many EU governments and publics to Ukrainian refugees suggest that the ground can be prepared through conflict for empathy and caring of others – though what has been said about a reflexive process over time cannot be forgotten. As Manners has said, civilian Europe arguments are important, but his intention then to consider the EU's 'conceptions of "normal" in international relations' (2002,

p. 239) is central to critiques that European integration would ultimately just create a bigger entity transcending the constituent parts. Under traditional ideas of the state and defined territory, this is easily interpreted negatively. But this is, of course, precisely Manners' point; the EU points the way to how to erase borders, thereby erasing the boundaries between 'us' and 'them'. The paradox at work here, however, must be acknowledged: if plurality is one of the obstacles to achieving the level of consensus needed to build a planetary politics, it follows that anything reducing that plurality is a positive; but the route to planetarity is not through an erasure of difference but an empathetic, caring embrace of it.

Perhaps the most central contribution of an NPA for our purposes is the emphasis Manners and others place on the necessity of applying critical social theory if we are to conceive of and shape a new normal. In her 2006 work, Sjursen asked important questions about, essentially, how an NPA can be operationalised. A key question asked was 'how do we know a "normative" or "civilizing" power when we see it?' (Sjursen, 2006, p. 236), a question that is centred in the analysis that follows. But Sjursen also tackled the question that others have asked of Manners' original work, about the nature of the power wielded by NPE, via which methods or instruments (see also Laïdi, 2008) and, via discussions about multilateralism, universalism, cosmopolitanism and law, what those methods suggest about the extent of the geography in which that power is wielded. Postel-Vinay (2008) pointed to the a-temporal and a-spatial nature of many studies in which NPA was applied. Although Manners' original work sets out very clear dimensions in which NPE was wielded, elucidating too the actor behind those dimensions, often NPAs have sidestepped the matter of agency, referring to the EU or Europe. This is a surprising omission considering the literature (Romanova and David, 2022) that shows the EU is far from the monolithic block that a narrative of the 'EU' or, worse, 'Europe' conveys.

One final note here is also in order, one that functions as a criticism of 20 years of NPE/NPA theorising but is equally one that we do not entirely resolve. In a situation where we are attempting to envision other possible futures, especially more empathetic ones, it is worth considering whether by focusing on the EU where the EU functions, even if only in terms of perceptions, as a proxy for 'Europe', we have actually made the EU more vulnerable to criticisms about normativity than other actors, even those who look to be more normatively founded. Perhaps the larger problem with NPE/NPA, therefore, is that it has resulted in claims being made that do not fit with all the EU is, but which nevertheless serve as standards to which the EU is held. Thus, if an empathetic planetary politics is to be achieved and 'Europe' the lens through which we look at it, we should also consider whether focusing on the EU without looking at the EU within its wider European environment itself sets a trap for ensuring the empathetic policies we envision cannot be achieved. The Council of Europe and Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe are cases in point; the Istanbul Convention is another possible sub-study.

III. Interpreting the Feminist Imagination

Planetary politics inevitably leads us to discuss different possibilities or futurities. There is a vast body of feminist work on utopias and futurities that draws on alternative imaginations. The temporality embedded in such work calls for a re-envisioning of social,

political and economic models in order to foreground equity as the driving principle of a feminist future. Interestingly, much of this work weaves around the notion of progress and assumes that feminist visions are always future facing (McBean, 2014). This approach to temporalities presumes a tidy understanding of feminist history and how it can feed into a progressive future. However, what happens when, as in the case of *Arrival*, the temporal dimension is more complex, or as McBean (2014, p. 39) pointedly asks, what happens when 'time is no longer conceptualised as a singular, cohesive movement forward?'. In Chiang's work, past, present and future intertwine and so shape different possibilities around us.

Feminist fiction has a long tradition of destabilising a linear understanding of temporality. Novels such as Piercy's *Woman on the Edge of Time* encourage the reader to imagine a different reality that encompasses losses, lessons and visions (McBean, 2014). As in *Arrival*, recognition of the circular nature of time focuses on 'the moment' as encompassing futurity or the process of becoming (Grosz, 2005; McLeavy et al., 2021). For Grosz (2005), time remains the force that defines all social and political interactions, especially when it is not acknowledged. Decentring the 'now', Grosz conceives a temporality that is future facing, a future that she argues 'is unknowable in the present' (2005, p. 2). Grosz's understanding of futurity and becoming requires us to surrender ourselves to the process, which we may not fully understand. Time in this context is not unified and therefore not a uniform experience. Time splits and deviates. It is constantly becoming, in a negotiation between perception and memory, the two ways in which we perceive time itself. Time is thus multilinear and multidimensional, which allows us to challenge dominant chronologies and embrace multiple memories and perceptions. As McLeavy et al. (2021, p. 1561) explain, 'Grosz's reworking of time offers an alternative mode of conceptualising feminism's horizon' to include an uncontained future.

This engagement with temporality and futurity creates a space for engaging with a feminist imagination that transcends its own chronology and recognises the way it has contributed to both the planetary crisis and its solution. A feminist imagining of planetary politics is a form of coming to terms with the open-ended, reflexive and non-linear engagement with feminism itself. This process of becoming encroaches on feminist futurities that

> transcend the confinement of feminism to a particular kind of academic engagement directed primarily at overcoming or reversing the limits of a previous 'generation' and instead speaks to the forces that are emergent and open-ended within feminist thought and politics. (McLeavy et al., 2021, p. 1561)

This is a process that requires reflexivity in order to come to terms with the way feminism can help to reproduce the social and economic 'order'. In this context, planetary politics thus require us to let go of feminist colonialities that are intertwined with global capitalism (Mendieta, 2020). Instead, feminist futurities require a commitment to decolonise the feminist imaginary and, in so doing, envision a future in which agency is encoded in different ways of conceptualising power (Mendieta, 2020).

For Manners,

> the language of arrival of normative power in planetary politics must find ways of thinking about actors and agency that are aware of colonial, postcolonial, and post-imperial relations, but that seeks to empower and give voice to non-western and marginalised subjects as well as planetary lives that cannot speak for themselves. (Manners, 2023)

Drawing on the work of Mouffe (2013) and Honig (2006), Manners calls for an understanding of politics that is both historically grounded and temporally flexible, drawing on the tensions and paradoxes implicit in agonistic cosmopolitical theory. This position draws attention to a tension implicit in the way this form of politics can lead to empowerment, whether at the local or planetary level. But a note of caution is warranted. The perils of the empowerment narrative underscore how it might not be separated from imperial logics. In the European context, this is all the more acute given the systemic and ongoing failure to come to terms with historical and systemic racism (Rutazibwa, 2014). There is a danger that gender and feminism become co-opted as an external facing tool, with a focus on the empowerment of distant others, without reflection on patterns of exclusion within (Guerrina and Wright, 2016).

Adopting a feminist imagination thus requires us to bypass traditional understandings of power rooted in domination, subjugation and hierarchies, instead interpreting the feminine as a *power to* define futurities and *power with* those traditionally defined as subaltern. The decolonial feminist imaginary provides a route to envision a future defined by a holistic, non-linear vision of planetary politics that merges belonging and becoming. Such an approach requires the merging of the macrolevel and microlevel and a broad understanding of gender+ dynamics that is simultaneously intersectional, decolonial and inclusive (Debusscher and Manners, 2020). Drawing on the principles of feminist praxis, this form of politics creates a collective space for action and communication (Zaragocin, 2021). In other words, feminist futurities constitute a whole-system approach to envisioning planetary politics.

IV. A Feminist Imagination for Planetary Politics: The Four Es

This whole-system approach requires acknowledgement of and commitment to a core normative project embedded within feminism, and our analysis draws on the insights of feminism's multiple temporalities. Manners' encounter between an NPA and planetary politics requires what Mendieta (2020) defines as a 'moral imagination'. These are the norms that allow for ethical agency and a whole-system approach. This expands Manners' (2003) inclusion of the Gaia hypothesis in the study of the co-constituted Europe approach and Brianson's (2015) vision for an ecofeminist theory of European integration that draws on Mellor's HURRAH approach, calling for humility, uncertainty, responsibility and reciprocity, and holism. From our perspective, the application of a (decolonial, critical) feminist imagination requires planetary politics to include four Es: (1) ethic of care, (2) empathy, (3) emancipation and (4) equity.

Ethic of Care

Care and caring are possibly one of the fundamental human experiences, particularly once we realise that humans cannot survive without someone having cared for them at some point in their life. Care is a shared and therefore binding experience, although not an equal or equitable one (Masselot and Russell, 2020). Feminist theorists have long sought to address the inequalities stemming from care work and care practice. Care and caring are often linked to social reproduction and so are defined in essentialist terms. Caring is thus a paradox, central to the survival of humanity but relegated to the political margins

as associated with the feminine and familial. Care is also a site for meaning making about gender as well as social and political hierarchies.

Feminist theorising on the ethic of care stems from Carol Gilligan's work on moral philosophy. Key to her analysis is the restorative impact of caring. Gilligan's approach that counterposes an 'ethic of care' to 'the logic of justice' has been the source of much debate around the principles of equality and difference in feminist theory (Guerrina, 2005; Okano, 2016). Our approach to the ethic of care transcends this debate, as it is not rooted in maternalist assumptions about caring. Gilligan's understanding of care further stems from a critique of the colonising and exploitative nature of the dominant political and economic model. As Okano (2016, p. 89) explains: 'This has the radical potential to see our society in ways other than the male-oriented tradition of liberalism, which is based on a certain theory of justice, rights, and individualism'.

What we take from discussions about the ethic of care is a focus on what is required for people and the planet to thrive. Specifically, we want to draw attention to the mutual nature of caring and being cared for. Going back to *Arrival*, the conversation between Louise and the aliens about the 'purpose for their visit' exposes the connections about different ways of caring and becoming, in Grosz's terms. In the context of agonistic cosmopolitics politics, care is transcendent. Feminists' vision of care ethics implies an inclusive approach to care grounded in our second 'E', empathy. Head (2012) persuasively argues for empathy and communicative ethics (and trust) to be brought together as 'explicitly relational and dynamic concepts' (p. 33).

Empathy

The second 'E' is an attribute that has steadily been receiving more attention in IR literature. Empathy and emotions are the fundamentals of critical social theory, transferable to increasingly diverse international arenas and to the values of decentring, decolonisation and inclusivity. Here, we treat empathy as equally fundamental to the EU's ability to be the normative power Manners conceives of. If the EU is to overcome the weight of its history, it must first appreciate the intertwining of the past, present and future: 'before-the-beginnings are everywhere' (Zusak, 2019, p. 8), knowing what they are, however, requires an empathetic approach. To build sufficient trust to experience all the advantages empathetic relationships can bring, like the writing of Chiang's aliens, the EU 'has to know where it will ultimately end up before it [can] choose the direction to begin moving in' (Chiang, 2002, p. 125).

In an IR that is still all too given to reductionist conceptualisations of political problem solving, those focusing on empathy – as inextricably tied up in emotions – have revealed the complexity that an empathetic approach to negotiations entails.

> The challenges posed are considerable and include: integrating multiple levels of analysis; the complexity of building trust and empathy between states affected by a range of domestic and external constraints; navigating multiple social identities; and the difficulties of identifying and attributing causal impact to emotions in multiple actors. (Head, 2012, p. 50)

This multiplicity of analytical levels and the relationship between the domestic and the external have been central to critical feminist scholarship that has confronted divides, advocating for an understanding that the personal is political and the national global. Limits

to empathetic qualities were also evident, however, with transnational activism and related scholarship often losing sight of those 'multiple social identities', erasing context and difference, *assuming* commonality instead of *enquiring* about it (Hemment, 2004). At the same time, success was evident in that the framing was persuasive for certain political actors and funding bodies, bringing attention and resources to problems that had hitherto been consigned to the personal and domestic. The attempt to bring down barriers and trespass across borders had consequences that were not understood by all but went on to constitute an obstacle that is very relevant for planetarity.

Other work has attempted to correct this course. In seeming contradiction to the erasure of borders, but in fact in an enriching and necessary complication, feminist ethnographers have raised them, focusing on individuals and state or sub-state localities as units of analysis, transforming our understandings of what can be generalised and how. Hemment's (2004) study of Russian women activists shows the tensions embedded in these processes. On the one hand, feminist activist networks can be hugely successful in bringing activists together across borders; on the other hand, Hemment also revealed the limits of such bringing together. Whereas creative use of policy framing can help to shape decision-making and secure funding from international actors, the envisaged solutions still have to be implemented by local actors in the local context, who and which are economically, socially, historically and culturally defined. Hemment's work not only demonstrates that empathy is a necessary precondition for effective solutions but also says much about what actually constitutes it, that is, a logic of joint ownership.

An under-regarded aspect of empathy is patience. As Crawford says, '[f]ear and other emotions are not only attributes of agents, they are institutionalized in the structures and processes of world politics' (2000, p. 119). Whatever has been done can only be undone over time. This is perhaps something the EU has yet to learn. This has implications, incidentally, for how we conceive of leadership in planetary politics. Empathetic leadership can certainly mean leading from the front in terms of devising policies for which the EU pays the price; it is decidedly *un*empathetic to make that decision for others when *they* pay the price.

Emancipation

Next, we argue for a shift from empowerment to emancipation as a pathway for transformative and inclusive planetary politics. Whereas emancipation inherently contributes to a wider political project (Nunes, 2012), empowerment centres a neoliberal vision of individualised agency. In this context, empowerment becomes depoliticised with a focus on individuals' attainment, interests and self-fulfilment. This form of (white, liberal) feminism reneges on the foundational pillar of the feminist political project, which requires a commitment to social and political transformation (Medina-Vicent, 2018). Emancipation, by contrast, encodes the possibility for transformation and justice into planetary politics.

Feminist IR has long been underpinned by a central commitment to emancipatory praxis and social justice, however much these scholars diverge or disagree on other issues (Wibben, 2011, p. 591). Although critical scholars, such as Booth, have linked security to emancipation (Booth, 1991), a feminist approach has sought to reclaim the very concept of security. Feminist emancipation must be envisaged as context specific, realisable and flexible, as well as contingent on transforming oppressive power structures (Basu, 2013,

p. 2). This is because before security was co-opted to define masculine state-centred aggression, it was (and remains) in common use to describe a 'sense of well-being' (Basu, 2013, p. 2). Emancipation also supports a challenge to the notion that security requires protection from others and that security can be achieved through – and is the preserve of – a regime of power (Constantinou, 2000, p. 303).

It must be recognised that the discourse of emancipation is not immune to 'universalising tendencies', with certain writings primarily based on 'Western Enlightenment ideals' and the 'theory of progress' (Basu, 2011, p. 103). In particular, Booth's focus on the individual as the primary referent point implies separation from others, which is not a universal condition. As Mendieta (2020, p. 239) explains,

> For the 'who' that needs their philosophy of liberation may not recognize herself as the one in need of such a philosophy. A philosophy of liberation that addresses its 'who' is also a philosophy of the recognition of mis-identification, that is, a philosophy of liberation is also from the outset a philosophy of subjectification, and most importantly of agency.

Nevertheless, emancipation has been used in a wide range of struggles for social justice; against colonialism, slavery, the exploitation of women's labour. Basu (2011, p. 103) acknowledges that although problems remain with these movements, they offer insight into alternate ways in which emancipation can be understood and utilised, including 'for building a secure world community' through incorporating an engaged critique of universalising tendencies. Feminist scholars must therefore heed post-colonial scholars' warnings and ensure they do not speak for others and remain resolutely anti-imperialist (Wibben, 2011, p. 594).

Equity

Stemming from discussions about emancipation, planetary politics requires a shift from a neoliberal understanding of equality to a social justice approach centred on equity. The principle of equality is all too often defined by enabling access and opportunities. The focus is on adding to *existing* structures individuals who belong to minoritised groups. In so doing, equality is designed to overlook ingrained patterns of exclusion in politics, society or the economy. The idea of formal or legal equality builds on existing legal frameworks to achieve a 'level playing field', and in so doing, it reaffirms such a framework as 'natural' and 'pre-ordained'. It is a framework that inevitably leads to bias in favour of descriptive representation, and participation in the public sphere is defined by adherence to male values, which are reaffirmed as the 'norm' (Guerrina, 2005). The way public administration has adopted the language of representation and rights, instead of justice and transformation, testifies to the limits of equality (Bearfield, 2009). Equity, conversely, seeks to expose the biases encoded in our social universe. It requires a paradigm shift in the way we exist and interact with this universe in order to adopt a practice of emancipation.

We are specifically interested in the link between equity, social justice and ontological security. Kinnvall et al. (2018) introduced the concept of ontological insecurity into European integration theory in order to understand the pervasive sense of anxiety and fear dominating European identity and sense of self for the best part of the last 15 years. As they explain, ontological security

> talks about the difficulties experienced by many citizens and denizens in Europe in terms of access to resources and services, but also of the traumatisation, despair, uncertainty, and alienation many of them experience in terms of opportunities for social participation in the light of austerity policies, migration discourses, and populist politics. (Kinnvall et al., 2018)

This understanding directly connects to questions of equity and feminist futurities outlined in this article. More specifically, equity (unlike equality) requires active inclusion and socio-economic transformation, which in turn is a requirement for ontological security.

V. Our Concluding Challenge: Encoding the Feminist Pluriverse for Europe

So here lies our challenge for envisioning a nakedly feminist future for Europe. Whilst not specifically discussing planetary politics, Brianson (2015) called for a merging, or a healing, of Gaia and Europa that starts by acknowledging that green and feminist perspectives were directly implicated in Manners' (2003) understanding of 'Europaian Studies'. This focus on healing is particularly appealing in the context of the four Es presented here: ethic of care, empathy, emancipation and equity. However, it is limited in so far as it embraces a linear notion of progress. A feminist pluriverse for Europe transcends such linearity by focusing on the intersecting, multi-sited and post-colonial essence of emancipation as a defining feature of the feminist project.

A critical feminist approach seeks to position plural realities of emancipation as distinct but sometimes overlapping; a European feminist pluriverse is thus constantly reflexive and embracing of a non-linear relationship among the past, present and future. Moving beyond the mythologisation of Europe, including as a gender actor, requires a detailed engagement with the biases encoded in the European *acquis*; the effects felt today, the beginnings laid in 1957. At that time, those realities were distinct and rarely, if ever, overlapping, perhaps, perversely, *because* of decolonising processes at the time. Thus, despite the acceleration of decolonisation, 'others' figure little in the EU origins story; Europe, more accurately, Western Europe, the space that dominates imaginings. Those who developed, negotiated and signed the Rome Treaty did so with the intent of resolving their immediate and proximate problems and securing their own interests (as they saw them). But, we must recognise that the result of what we were then is what we are now. The 'founding fathers' language encodes and reproduces a gendered and racialised imagination, which should be challenged and thus exposed.

But such reproduction is not the inevitable end, for feminist futurities allow for the possibility, first (but not finally), of a pluriverse: what emerges from this will depend on the nature and effects of our entanglements. We hear echoes of Chiang's temporality, the idea that achievements come over the course of time, ends contingent on beginnings, and thus, we challenge Manners to envision planetary politics through the language of the four Es. In this context, our feminist pluriverse starts with the inclusion of a feminist ethic grounded in networks of care. This networked approach to care challenges its gendered association with sacrifice and love and helps us to move beyond dominant hierarchies. To care is thus to become part of planetary politics and the cosmopolity, as the process of feeling outside the self embeds empathy in our politics. This process requires our

second E: empathy, a concept and quality contingent upon but also constitutive of the trust and communicative ethics fundamental to the feminist pluriverse.

We assert here that an ethic of care can be brought into a single understanding of empathy: trust is necessary for empathy, communicative ethics a vital part of the expression of empathy. Communication is treated as listening, the discourses that make it up and narratives that emerge have to reflect the 'hearing' of each other – and the willingness to learn the language of others. Turning to our third E, emancipation, planetary politics allows us to occupy the past, present and future simultaneously, with all the inherent tensions this creates. To hear is to care, which in turn allows us to articulate and provide for needs and interests beyond narrow understandings of the self. And finally, to our fourth, equity, which replaces the language of neoliberalism to constitute a planetary politics that decentres all forms of domination, including anthropocentrism.

Together, the four Es constitute a feminist pluriverse that is open, fluid, reflexive and non-linear, constituting the basis for a reimagination of politics that embraces the planet as a whole. Fundamental to this is a recognition of the need for the *persistence* of reflexivity, for trust can only be maintained if there is a consistent policy of engagement with all parts of the pluriverse. Critical intersectional feminist approaches provide an entry point for us to consider the multiple sites, identities and temporalities of the EU in the context of planetary politics. The associated embrace of fluidity in our theoretical and methodological approach(es) opens further possibilities for achieving planetary politics. This is a process that transcends the anthropocentric gaze of our theories in order to envision a cosmopolity.

Correspondence:
Maxine David, Institute for History, Leiden University, Doelensteeg 16, 2311 VL Leiden, The Netherlands.
email: m.e.l.david@hum.leidenuniv.nl

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