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What Futures?

Our Future, the Planet, and Cohabitation

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Published in:
TRANSFERS. Interdisciplinary Journal of Mobility Studies

DOI:
10.3167/TRANS.2023.13010211

Publication date:
2023

Document Version
Peer reviewed version

Citation for published version (APA):
Haldrup, M. (2023). What Futures? Our Future, the Planet, and Cohabitation. *TRANSFERS. Interdisciplinary Journal of Mobility Studies*, *13*(1-2), 144–161. https://doi.org/10.3167/TRANS.2023.13010211

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**"This is a post-peer-review, pre-copy edited version of an article published in Transfers. The definitive publisher-
authenticated version: Haldrup, M. (2023). What Futures?: Our Future, the Planet, and Cohabitation. Transfers, 13(1-2), 144-161. is available online at: https://doi.org/10.3167/TRANS.2023.13010211**

What Futures?
Our Future, The Planet and Cohabitation

7339 words incl. cover page and references

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Biography

Michael Haldrup, professor at the Department of Communication and Arts, Roskilde University. He is the author of numerous publications on embodiment, culture and design, including *Tourism, Performance and the Everyday* w. J. Larsen, 2009 and *Experimental Museology* w. M. Achiam and K. Drotner, 2021. In addition to this he has done extended performance/design-based and curatorial work, and among other places, been featured at the Society for Artistic Research. He is currently interested in how art & design, collaborative/activist approaches and speculative-performative practices may afford enactments of planetary futures beyond current toxicities.

Keywords

Speculative Futures * More-Than-Human * Planetary Turn * Environmental Humanities

Abstract

At the dawn of the 21st century two interrelated themes emerged across art, activism and academia related to the fate of humans on earth. The first being the demise of "the future" and the prominence of dystopian scenarios for thinking of social futures. The other being the 'emergence of the planet' in social science and the humanities. John Urry explored both themes, especially in his later work on the complex interrelationships of carbon-based mobility systems in the shadow of climate change and ecological disaster. In this article I will seek to trace these two themes out, exploring how that the planetary turn resonates with also changes in 'the structures of feeling' and show how this may invite for re-imagining social futures from a More-Than-Human-Perspective perspective.

Introduction: Walking with John

"[Modern bourgeois society] is like the sorcerer, who is no longer able to control the powers of the nether world whom he has called up by his spells."

Marx and Engels [1848] quoted in Urry 2010: 191

"The sorcerer has indeed conjured up some spectacular spells for the 21st century magicians to deal with."

Urry 2010: 208

There is a photograph of John Urry on the wall next to my desk at my campus office. In the photograph John is seen standing with me (and colleague Jonas Larsen) on the volcanic slopes of Hekla, Iceland, September 2002. The photograph was taken by Jørgen O. Bærenholdt at a joyful moment in time when we were writing a book together (Bærenholdt et al 2004) as part of a research project that provided us with plenty of memorable time in each other's company discussing, theorizing and walking in the field. Looking at the photograph now, the resemblance with a personal family photograph is striking. As formulated in a joint paper that owes much to Urry, and that we were just doing the last corrections on during our long pre-smartphone evenings in Iceland, such photographs "enable us to travel back in time: to connect with, and revive memories of, events and people through imaginative travel. Being material objects putting a hold on time, photographs afford travelling in past times." (Haldrup and Larsen 2003, 39). The photograph on my office board is such a time travelling device; an invitation and an opportunity for one – and perhaps final - imaginative walk and talk with John. Gazing back at the photograph from more than 20 years distance I notice a slight awkwardness in our smiles as we balance our bodies on the steep slopes, probably partly an effect of being staged as 'happy family members' in the middle of the barren, black and unfriendly volcanic scenery; a scenery scattered with lava stones and fumes of gas evaporating from the 'nether world' beneath us; perhaps three academic 'magicians' displaying their unease of being staged like this smiling in the midst of the barren and seemingly hostile environment.

I also notice that I (perhaps coincidentally) have arranged the photograph besides two other images that has significant meaning for me, Hundertwasser's *Imagine Tomorrows World* poster (blue) made for the World Conservation Union's 50th anniversary, and a black and white photo of the open plastic waste landfill that is now covering some fields where I worked cutting cabbage one summer as a child; a photograph I took just as I started my fascination with how art, design and performance may provide the comfort, empathy and transformative powers needed to cope with the current 'toxic climates' of our planet, and that I put next to Hundertwasser's poster as I was writing my first pieces on this (Haldrup et al 2015; Haldrup et al 2017a; Haldrup, Samson and McGowan 2020), probably as a continuous reminder of the duty to 'imagine tomorrows world' otherwise, and hopefully in better, more empathic, diverse and habitable ways than we, as academics and as a species, have done so far. In its afterlife on my office board next to these two images, the photograph of John in Iceland emerges as a 'magical object' a souvenir with the capabilities for folding, transforming and integrating spaces, and for counseling my

steps, providing itineraries and maps, contact points, lines of flight, routes to travel or reject for how my real and imagined walk and talk with John can be "anticipated, remembered, rehearsed and retold". (Haldrup 2017b, 53), to quote another paper indebted to dialogues with him.

Figure 1: My office board
Photo by Author

The last time I met John Urry was in 2013 in Copenhagen, and it was in this capacity I met him over dinner with other colleagues after he had given a keynote at a sociology conference. Since Iceland, we had had intense work relationships and encounters around other publications, events and research projects. Following *Sociology beyond Society* (2000), *Global Complexity* (2003) and *Mobilities* (2007) Urry had made his transit from an already well-respected theorist and scholar of tourism and mobility to one of the most significant social theorists of 'the global'. I had spent the last couple of years exploring how design and 'making' could 'empower' new generations of academics by equipping them with (digital) tools for expression and intervention (Author). Surprisingly, the theme of 'making' and a common interest in exploring 'near future' scenarios for education and research was a new contact point for us, and we delved into rather specific discussions of the potentiality of, for instance, 3D printing as a transformative (and potential) democratizing technology (see Birtchnell and Urry 2016 for perspectives on 3D printing's role in shaping scenarios for new industrial futures). However, the dialogue also made it clear that our perspectives in at least some respects differed greatly, with his always immensely knowledgeable investment in critically analyzing the systemic conditions for large-scale social processes and my own engagement in practical ways and examples of how to 'imagine tomorrows world' straying a bit too far into the world of art and activism as seen through a sociological gaze. Perhaps divergent ways of coping with the uncontrollable powers of the nether world unleashed by the sorcerer, but still a dialogue that may pay off. In all circumstances, I welcome the opportunity to resume that dialogue; an imaginative dialogue in which there are import contact points, but also very different routes to navigate around these.

In the following I will explore three such contact points and bring Urry's ever relevant perspectives into discussion with contemporary thinkers on some of the themes he explored. Firstly, I begin with the theme of 'futures', a theme he examined at length in what was to become his last book (2016). Secondly, I then move to address, the 'emergence of 'planetary thinking' in the social sciences and humanities before, thirdly, I relate to the possible consequences of this for how we may reimagine future planetary forms of cohabitation. My intention in 'routing' the imagined dialogue in this way is not to demarcate or dissociate me or others from Urry's thinking, but to the contrary show exactly the contact points and how important, contemporary debates on futures and 'the planetary' anticipated in his work. So, let us walk and talk our way into the landscape.

Our Future

The interest in *futures* intensified over the years in Urry's work. At first, perhaps, through his engagement with complexity theory and the notion of bifurcation points (2003, 26-9); points in which unstable, dissipative structures, driven by various positive feedback loops "reach points of *bifurcation* when their behavior and future pathways become unpredictable and new, higher

order, more differentiated, structures may emerge." (ibid., 28). Apart from offering an alternative to the limits of globalization theory, the notion of 'the social' as a complex system in Urry's work also has implications for how to theorize social transformations and acknowledge how social "systems can move dramatically from one state to the other" (ibid. 139). This idea of bifurcation and complexity theory is also striking in his depiction of the 'bleak futures' humanity is facing (Urry 2007, 285; 2010, 207-8) as a positive feedback loops reinforce and accelerate the 'consuming of the planet to excess' and only seem to leave us of the choice between 'regional war-lordism' or global 'digital panopticon' and in his skepticism towards normative, utopian thinking (Urry 2011, 139-40). Hence, the interest in anticipating (social) futures was already inherently present in most of Urry's work in 2000s, when he wrote what became his last single-authored book *What is the future?* (Urry 2016). Here Urry explicitly presents a manifesto for 'reclaiming' the future and takes off from observing that

> "[S]tudies of alternative futures that emerged over the past seventy years were mainly developed outside social science (…) developed as a specialized and increasingly professionalized discipline, generating its own journals, key books, iconic figures, global bodies (…), professional organizations (…) and founding texts." (Urry 2016, 6).

And that

> "The terrain of future studies should be reclaimed for social science and, in a way, for people in their day-to-day lives." (op. cit., 7)

Among the tools, or 'methods for making futures', he suggests here, are (1) learning from past visons of the future, (2) studying 'failed' futures, developing dystopic thought (as a warning), (3) emancipatory utopias, (4) extrapolating trends, and (5) scenario building (op. cit., 87-100). *What is the future?* is not a stand-alone book, but a book that in central ways summarizes his increasing interest in futures after the turn of the millennium, and perhaps also frustration with political and societal unwillingness or inability to 'make futures'. In suggesting a 'reclaiming of the future' Urry's book resonates with a more general resurgence of calls for acknowledging the presence of 'the future' across cultural studies (Appadurai 2016; Augé 2015), design theory (Fry 2009; Yelavich and Adams 2014) and posthuman studies (Tsing 2015; Haraway 2016) at the start of the millennium. As observed by Franco Berardi this resurgence of interest in the future that paralleled the increasing 'bleak' and dystopian images of it that emerged in these years, reflected that

> "[a]t the end of the zero zero decade (…) the actor is absent: you see actions but you don't see an actor. Actions without an actor play out on the ground of social visibility, but they don't create any common ground in the space of consciousness and affectivity. Actions are performed in the theater of social production, but the agent of recombination is not there, in the theater, but backstage, and the consciousness of the process does not belong to the process itself (…). This is why the future has lost its zest and people have lost all trust in it: the future no longer appears as a choice or a collective conscious action, but is a kind of unavoidable catastrophe we cannot oppose in any way." (Berardi 2011, 125-6).

Re-iterating Urry's quotation from, and paraphrase of, the Communist Manifesto cited at the beginning of this article: The sorcerer has unleashed all sorts of powers from the netherworld, but is no longer present, no longer visible, as part of the theatre of the social. Instead, the magicians of today are presented with the task to bridle the spells and mane them back in the ground. In this context Urry's work on futures can be seen as equally an observation of the approach of increasingly likely dystopian futures (and the interests that guide them) and a call for affirmative critique, but also for social science and progressive forces to explore "how a productive way of developing 'democratic' futures thinking and practice can emerge and become embedded." (Urry 2016: 191). What is less clear is who the progressive forces to build alliances with are, and how to more precisely develop 'futures thinking and practice', able to deal with the sorcerer's spell.

As mentioned above, Urry was not particular confident with normative and activist strategies. Nevertheless he contends that the ability to transform social structures in the direction of better – more preferable – futures rests on changes in what he drawing on Raymond Williams calls 'the structures of feeling'; "…dark matter [that] cannot be observed, […] but affects other matter through gravitational pull" (ibid., 35), and he uses this analogy to diagnose the change in *Zeitgeist* characterizing the global North's increasingly dystopian view on social futures at the turn of the millennium (ibid., 36-7). Whereas Urry acknowledged the impact of, for instance, the image of 'the blue dot' taken by Apollo astronauts in the late 1960s on the rise in environmental activism in the 1970s subsequent emergence of Earth System Science (ESS) during the 1980s (Urry 2011, 25-35; 2013, 80-1), his evaluation of more affirmative future potentials for global environmental action after the turn of the century seemed – at best – bleak. This is evident in an early comment on 'planetary responsibilities' as potential for formulating future ideas of citizenship and belonging:

> "Many appeals within the global media are concerned to develop a sense of planetary responsibility rather than responsibility for particular locales. This is a relatively new notion and one that appears to distinguish humans from other species. However, previous citizenships have been based upon antagonism between those who are inside and those who are outside, upon identifying the non-citizens, the other, the enemy. We can thus ask whether a sense of global citizenship is a historically unique notion that is not in fact based on the contestation between global citizens and others. So although global citizens are well aware of difference, has a conception of citizenship developed which does not presume an enemy, another? Or alternatively does the lack of an 'enemy' for the global citizen mean that such a citizenship will never develop on any significant scale-there are no global citizens because there is nobody to be excluded?" (Urry 1999, 323).

This bleak outlook on the possibility for developing forms of global responsibility and citizenship beyond an antagonism between 'insiders' and 'outsiders' also seemed to prevail in his evaluation of the fate of planetary futures, for instance, in his article on 'consuming the planet to excess' (2010), quoted at the beginning of this article.

At the beginning of the 21st century the 'death of the future' seems a given fact, perhaps most significantly reflected in the aesthetic and performative practices of 'new' global environmental activist movements such as "Extinction Rebellion" (XR) in which "die-ins' and

other radical performance events as a radical plea to avoid the dystopian scenario of the 6th planetary mass extinction (Johnston and Bonnet 2023; https://rebellion.global/), but also as a starting point for developing 'more-than-human' sensibilities towards planet Earth and its various otherspecies. Sensibilities also enacted through the aesthetic, imaginative and embodied experiments by 'art-activist' collective Aerocene (founded and supported by Tomas Saraceno, see for instance "The Aerocene Manifesto", 2023, and Engelmann 2021), and in Jon Ardent and Anab Jains contribution *Refuge for Resurgence* to the 17th Biennale of Architecture in Venice that stages a banquet in the post-apocalyptic ruins of a once human-centered planet held by, "humans, animals, birds, plants, moss, and fungi gathering around a shared hope for our more than human future." (see https://superflux.in/index.php/work/refuge-for-resurgence/#).

Such examples point to what I will term a new planetary structure of feeling that has been emerging in recent years in parallel to the 'death of the future'; a structure of feeling that at its core decentres humans and replaces it with 'the planet' and does so in parallel with 'the emergence of planet' in humanities and social theory (Chakrabarty 2019). Numerous recent contributions responding to the 'planetary turn' focus on political strategies for a 'politics of landing on Earth' (Latour and Weibel 2021; see also Latour 2019), hacks for fixing or repairing planetary systems and ecologies (Kostigen 2020; Tironi 2023; Papadopoulos et al 2023) or critically propositions for planetary citizenship' (Lenton and Latour 2018; Bratton 2021; Seitzinger et al 2012). In this article I take another route to explore how discussions in especially environmental humanities and decolonial thought, may enable us to think 'futures' through the 'planetary turn', not as a matter of grandiose global visions, but as humble occasions for situated, ethical dialogues about planetary futures beyond the social, beyond our (human) species. But before engaging further in this I will briefly tease out sources of what Chakrabarty and others have diagnosed as 'the emergence of the planet' in social science, design, politics, and humanities.

The Planet

The emergence of 'the planet' as a category within the humanities and social science can be traced through a variety of sources. According to Chakrabarty (2019) a series of concepts emerged from late 19th century to the early 21st century, beginning with *world* as a sphere of commerce and settlement, *earth* as the soil and nature (primarily agrarian) that nurture humans, *globe* as the space for techno-scientific and -economic expansion and extractivism. In contrast to these human-centered concepts, the notion of *planet,* implicitly decenters humans by emphasizing the geophysical forces and bio-chemical processes that push back on humanity, haunting it through increased states of geo-physical (climate) and biologically (biodiversity) crisis. The evolution of Earth System Science (and the so called 'Gaia Hypothesis') and a growing understanding of how disturbances caused by humans in geo-physical and biological sub-system as main causes for this in politics and by social movements are pivotal moments in the evolution and consolidation of such a 'planetary' perspective. However, there are at least three other trajectories through which the planet has emerged in contemporary humanities and social theory.

Firstly, the acceleration of the uneven distribution of the consequences of biodiversity loss (in the form of wildfires, draught, flooding, scarcity and so on) have also heightened the awareness of the environmental injustices both climate change and mitigation gives rise to (see Sheller 2018, 137-158, and in this volume). This in turn has given rise to multiple examples on

circular, reparative and/or regenerative economies to local production and consumption; examples that prefigure ideas and practices for new forms of 'planetary commoning' both as resistance, and affirmative strategies for sharing and collaboration to cope with current planetary breakdown (Lawrence and Layburn-Langton 2021) and by promoting ideas of planetary citizenship and co-existence such as the *Terra Viva* manifest in order to promote earth-centered politics and economics (Shiva 2015a, b) recognizing the role of humans as one planetary species (among others). A central point here is acknowledging how planet Earth is made up of multiple, interconnected, symbiotic, biological systems (Margulis 1998; Haraway 2016).

Secondly, the discovery of exoplanets (with the first being confirmed in 1992) have made it clear that planet Earth in many ways is not unique, with more than 5000 exoplanets discovered as of 2023 (NASA 2023) of which one fifth are likely to be "earthlike" planets orbiting in the habitable zone. At the same time this also raises questions about the centrality of human life as many of these may be expected to – if any at all – be home to extremophile, microbial lifeforms rather than humanlike aliens. In doing this the discovery of exoplanets and the rising interest in astrobiology have shattered the anthropocentric worldview (Dick 2018) in ways that resonates with the images of the fragile and vulnerable Earth from the late 1960s, and together with the discovery (on Earth) of extremophile organisms thriving in sulphury ponds, in the deep of the earth or the oceans, and at extreme temperatures, challenges our conception of how life evolves as well as humanities claim to be an expression of (supreme) intelligent life (Frank 2022).

Thirdly, the perhaps earliest formulation of 'the planetary' as an alternative to globalization theory can be found throughout in Gaytri Spivak's work, from the 1990s as call (or imperative) to "reimagine the planet" (1999) from a transversal, non-hierarchal and non-totalitarian perspective as opposed to techno-scientific and -economic globalization. This call for 're-imagining' our planet as a decolonial perspective in contrast to neoliberal globalization resonates with contemporary calls for increasing our sensibilities for building a 'planetary consciousness' (Mbembe 2021) by listening and learning from non-western, situated and pluriversal entanglements between humans, earth, and cosmologies (see for instance, de la Cadena 2011; Mbembe 2023, discussed below and contributions to Reiter (2023)).

Although it definitely can be argued that 'the planet' as it has emerged in academic discourse in recent years, stressing its geophysical properties or role in postcolonial and biopolitical thought, is yet another anthropocentric construction (Tzanelli 2023, 6, 14-15, 25), the specific trajectories through which 'the planet' has emerged as a category in recent years has significant impact for how we think about the role and positionality of humans on the planet. Here, I will focus on the arguments put forward by Dipesh Chakrabarty and Achille Mbembe. As compared to the other root metaphors discussed by Chakrabarty (world, earth and globe), the planetary perspective *dislocates* the gaze of the observer, from humans to the planet, with a central concern on what makes it habitable for "complex, multicellular life, in general", arguing that:

> "The question at the center of the habitability problem is not what life is or how it is managed in the interest of power but rather what makes a planet friendly to the continuous existence of complex life. (…) The immediately relevant point is that humans are not central to the problem of habitability, but habitability is central to human existence. If the planet were not habitable for complex life, we simply would not be here." (Chakrabarty 2019, 20-21)

Departing from a concern for sustainability and arriving at a concern for habitability, not only encourages us to care for our nonhuman planetary cohabitants (microbes, insects, arachnoid alike) from a utilitarian perspective on the work they do for us (humans). Neither does it simply imply a (moral) obligation to (also) care for the rights and life of other species we share our planetary habitat with. Instead, it encourages us to work further away from anthropocentric concerns and acknowledge our intrinsic interdependency with - and vulnerability from - the planet we inhabit and the multiple other forms of multi-cellular life. Furthermore, as there is no human collective subject capable of grasping "the planet" and its multiple, slow-moving temporalities, there exists a profound disjuncture between planetary processes and the processes and the institutions of human society. (Chakrabarty 2021, 49; 2022, 230). Hence, the shift in focus from human-centered to planet-centered ways of thinking poses a significant problem regarding temporality, as the pace of, for instance, geological transformations (such as those associated with climate change) and biological processes (such as biodiversity loss and recovery) do not seem to be easily grasped and integrated with the temporalities of human-centered everyday practices and institutions (see, in particular Chakrabarty 2018). Consequently, there are no shortcuts or solutions that enable us to answer the question about what the future "is" outside the multiple situated and pluriversal ecologies and entanglements we are part of. What we have is "One Planet. Many Worlds" (Chakrabarty 2023), and at best planet Earth as a potential, a performative idea, an ethics.

This also implies, as pointed out by Mbembe, that planet Earth is "…a global political unit [that] exists only as a utopia, perhaps the last of all. It must be imagined, convened, assembled, created and driven." (Mbembe 2023, 26). Hence, reversing the gaze from human species on the planet to the planet as host for the human (and numerable other species), also requires a shift in from possessing to inhabiting (cf. also Chakrabarty above).

> "[The Earth] is not a "common thing" but a "community", an *ambiguous community.* (…). Taken all together, human persons cannot be said to own the Earth. Rather, they are its citizens, insofar as they are given an indisputable place on it. If they have a right to this basic hospitality, it is limited to a *right to shelter.* This right is strictly speaking, a *right of lodging,* and it is unconditional." (ibid., 37)

Like this, the planetary turn also has implications for how the notion of hospitality, as it departs from the idea of a (human) sovereign able to grant shelter or citizenship on certain conditions and within certain limits, as it re-positions all humans (and other species) as permanent strangers with an unconditional (and therefore utopian) right that moves beyond norms, rules laws and other human institutions (see Derrida 2000; Lynch et al 2011); a right, Mbembe argues, "…necessarily supposes co-habitation, that is to say, *making room for others,* for beings other than oneself, other than human, …" (Mbembe op. cit.). Dislocating the perspective like this from from humans (on this planet) to planet (including, but not exclusively, humans), raises interesting challenges for how to think about cohabitation beyond institutional laws and rules (cf Urry's skepticism towards 'planetary citizenship' discussed in the preceding section) and in effect beyond human society. At the same time, it also have implications for how to think about futures in terms of more-than-human cohabitation. In the next section I will try to develop the perspective of cohabitation as a future perspective resonating with the emergence of the planet as drawn up here.

Cohabitation

In the preceding section I emphasized the emergence of the planet, as a category from a human-centered to a more-than-human perspective. I also emphasized that this transformation in important ways challenge established notions of citizenship and cohabitation. The central problem in 'thinking with the planet', its spaces and temporalities, in ways that enable imaginations of more-than-human cohabitation as a condition for people is how to integrate the planetary into peoples day-to-day lives (and social and political institutions).

As argued by Clark and Szerzinsky (2021, 3) the planetary perspective indeed challenges how we may think of ourselves as a species and of what future we may (or may not) have. A key element in how they frame the "planetary challenges" to social science is that it forces us to acknowledge the *multiplicity* of the Earth:

> "To keep on spiralling back, downwards and out into space is to remind ourselves of the contingency of our morphological and evolutionary being. But so too is it intended as a reminder that this planet is a planet of multiple layerings and changeable operating states, and that however much damage some of our species have caused we still dwell amongst an excess of possibilities." (ibid., 76)

On this background they propose, that the planetarian perspective not only is a challenge, but also an opportunity for developing a "…comparative and speculative planetology [that may help] us to probe future possibilities open to us and our planet" (ibid., 188). Central to the issue of planetary multiplicity is, as also noted above, the issue of temporality. Earth, in itself is multiple, in the sense that its geophysical and biological properties have shifted significantly over time; resulting in the destruction of multiple species and symbiotic ecologies as well as the emergence of new species, and formation of symbiosis'. The temporality of the planet, its geo-physical properties (over a longer timespan) and its multiple other species (often with life-cycle's considerable smaller or 'different' from humans) follow very different trajectories than human society. Hence, the task of becoming-with the planet and its species, is difficult. Turning back to the work of Urry we see that he also dealt with the disjuncture between geo-physical temporalities and the everyday in in a number of texts. According to him what he coins 'glacial time' is a form of temporality that

> "…is extremely slow-moving and ponderous, de-synchronised from both clock and instantaneous times. Change therefore occurs over generations and indeed only can be observed inter-generationally." (…) The time of the glacier is part of its existence qua glacier and is not something to be imposed via particular measuring devices." (Urry 2000, 157)

> "So glacial time is slow-moving, beyond assessment or monitoring within the present generation. It involves the relating of the processes within their imagining what will happen over many generations. It is a time intrinsic to its mode of dwelling, thus mimicking the enormous long 'timescapes' of the physical world. Such timescapes include the thousands of years it takes soil to regenerate, for radioactive

contamination to dissipate, or for the impact of genetically modified organisms to be clearly evident." (ibid., 158)

Apart from the fact that the impact of global warming now is evidently visible in most parts of the world, 'glacial time' is also the temporality through which planet Earth, its past and future is experienced, not only as a form of resistance to instantaneous time, but also as a potential for reimagining the planet, our co-becomings with it and how humans may inhabit it with other beings. As such it provides us with an access point through which a 'speculative planetology' can enter into people's day-to-day-lives and experiences of the practical world-making practices of the damaged and impure anthropocene world, we have all become co-creators of (Tsing et al 2017).

Paying close attention to 'glacial time' understood as the slow-moving temporalities of geological and microbial processes and the various other temporalities of symbiotic entanglements between species, ecologies and matter through practicing what Rose and van Dooren has termed 'lively ethnographies' that facilitates "arts of becoming-witness, which include both attention to others and expression of that experience: to stand as witness and actively to bear witness" (2016, 89, see also Tsings concept of "acts of noticing" (2015)); a fictional space to explore tactics for "landing on Earth" (Weibel and Latour 2021:19) and the multiple, symbiotic entanglements with other species we are becoming-with on this planet (Haraway 2014, in particular, 40 and 134-68)).

During the Covid19 pandemic – itself an example of complex and unanticipated entanglements caused by current planetary states of crisis – I converted a part of my lawn to a small piece of meadow. A banal and minor gesture towards planetary cohabitation, but also an opportunity to challenge and question the positionality of me as a human and caretaker of a particular piece of the planet's surface. I do not claim that notes from this exercise (fig. 2) in themselves to have far-reaching implications, but as an act of becoming and bearing witness, they may hint how 'speculative planetologies' are inherently grounded in embodied everyday worldmaking practices, hence, also to suggest a starting point for imagining morethanhuman futures.

Figure 2: Snapshots from my garden
Photos by Author

(a) I turn my gaze downwards. I see the earth 6 feet below me. Three years ago, I decided to make a micro meadow. To convert approximately half of my very small lawn to a wild flowers. Two years ago, I was preoccupied with finding the right seeds. When I finally found a selection of native meadow plants suitable for the shade and sun in my garden I dispersed them, with absolutely no result. But lockdown has given me lots of time to plan terra-forming my little envelope of land. I remove the turfs to substitute the fertile soil with sand to make the land habitable for the meadow flowers. My first encounter is with the larvae of *cetonia aurata*, which in its grown-up state after years spend with eating grass roots below the turf for only a few weeks short transform to green-golden beetles shining in the sun. I try to remove them gently to another part of the lawn and concentrate my attention on the big stones that is hiding beneath the turfs. Removing them is difficult and discloses a vibrant ecology of creatures. I can't name but a few ants and woodlice –

in itself a conglomerate of multiple species. I can recognize that they are disturbed. Busy. Communicating with each other – within or across the division of species constructed by humans: *lumbricus terrestris, armadillidium vulgare, formica rufa.* They have their own social ways of organizing, individual and collective paths to walk– often crossing each other's routes, sometimes crawling across the body of another creature. They are probably disturbed by me. But basically, indifferent to my presence preoccupied by taking their own measures to protect themselves and their fellow creatures underneath the turf.

(b) I turn my head up. Towards the night sky. Venus is passing below Vega. Bright, dark and cold nights enable us to pay attention to the silent movement of celestial bodies, including our own, drawing up new and ever dynamic vectors, lines, making connections between our bodies, sensibilities and planetary bodies, and creating moments of dizziness, disorientation and bewilderment sometimes causing us momentarily to stumble and fall. A planet has apparently been discovered revolving around Vega twentyfive lightyears away adding to the more than 5000 other planets that have been identified in recent years. The existence of Vega and its planet (and the planet passing below revolving around the same sun as the one I am standing on) is in sense fundamentally irrelevant. I and, let's be honest, probably *no one* or very few will ever go there. And if they would; for life as such it would probably just be an immense waste of resources and time. Humans have named stars according as part of their own world. *Vega* (from An-nasr al-wāqi, the falling Eagle), *Mizar* (the apron), *Alcor* (the humble) - in itself a double star system or rather 6 double as Mizar itself consists of 4 suns rotating around themselves.

(c) I sit in my garden. Head oriented straight forward. It is September and I do what I have been doing all too much lately. Sit in my garden. Watch the blooming micro meadow. Reading. Writing. Editing. I've been sitting here for so long every day that I have become the bearer of bees. From time to time a bee will land on my wrist to take a rest before choosing a flower to gather its nectar. Probably unaware or uninterested in that I am particularly different from the stump of my old apple tree or perhaps one of the oyster mushrooms growing on it. My affordance is to be a landing and resting place. Between flower and hive. *Benweed. Yarrow. Bees.* Together they form lasting entanglements that provide nurture and life for generations, with me as a de-centered, peripheral assistant whose virtue it is to hold position and not be the source of unrest.

Soil. Celestial body. Habit. The photographs and the notes shown here, are embodied visualizations. Devices to think with and think through beyond the disembodied image of 'the blue dot' we have seen so often. In contrast to this image, the three snapshots aim to capture, the situated, embodied entanglements with the spaces of and 'glacial' temporalities of the planet of which we are always-already part of and suggest three additional images of what planet that could emerge from the practices of lively ethnographies and speculative fabulations such as those proposed by environmental humanities. What worlds, what futures, may arise from thinking futures starting from humanities, symbiotic entanglements with the planet as soil, as celestial body, as habitat.

Conclusion: Landing on Earth

I began this article by reflecting on the photograph on my office board of John in the lava fields on the slopes of Hekla, Iceland. Iceland is indeed an interesting scenery for the imaginative walk and talk I suggested on futures, the planet and how we can live together. Suspended between extractivism (Icelands energy system is almost 100% based on geothermal energy), an emblem of a postcarbon, environmental friendly society, pristine nature, supermodern industry and vast areas of non-Earthly planetary landscapes seemingly devoid of biological life affords multiple transition points for reflecting on 'earthly multitudes' and planetary futures (Huijbens 2021; Clark, and Szerzinsky 2021). Landscapes that invite for reflecting and speculating on symbiosis with as well as disjunctures between humans and planet in a future perspective.

In central ways Urry's work prefigured many of the concerns that today are being addressed under the theme of 'planetary thinking' (Szerzinsky 2019). Although his perhaps most significant contribution as one of the great social theorists of the 21st century has been his ability to rethink 'the global' through notions of complexity and mobilities there are several themes throughout his work that point to the current planetary turn in humanities (Chakrabarty 2019, 2023), social science (Szerzinsky 2019; Clark and Szerzinsky 2021) and design (Escobar 2021; Author).

In this article I have especially stressed his awareness of how (invisible) changes in the collective 'structures of feeling' may affect how to conceive of our futures and how the notion of 'glacial time' in significant ways resonate with current discussions of heterogenous scales and temporalities and may offer a gateway; a transition point for addressing planetary scales and times. In addition to this, I have shown how contemporary decolonial thinkers engaged in the 'planetary turn' frames the apparently insoluble paradox, between planetary scales and times and human institutions. As argued this paradox was also a significant explanation for Urry's skepticism regarding the idea of 'global citizenship' based on an ethics of planetary responsibilities. However, in pointing to planet Earth as an inherently utopian imperative and a 'structure of feeling', rather than a political, territorial unit of organization, planetary thinking urges us to rethink what future we may have beyond the social and counselled by an ethics that sees humans as deeply entangled with their other-than-human planetary cohabitants and environments; a utopian practice of 'speculative cohabitation' based on an ethics of making room rather than boundaries and antagonisms. Whether this is a realistic option, remains an open question, but at least an option worth exploring. The alternative seems less attractive.

Acknowledgement

Apart from the thoughts of and (real or imagined) conversations with John Urry, this text is indebted to numerous dialogues and interactions with travel companions Jonas Larsen and Kristine Samson who have had significant influences on the routes I have taken here and elsewhere.

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