

**Working Paper No. 75, 2024**

**On the Earth Ethic**

Interview with Dipesh Chakrabarty

Sérgio Costa, Mariana Cavalcanti, José Maurício Domingues,  
and Wolfgang Knöbl



**Mecila:**  
**Working**  
**Paper**  
**Series**

The Mecila Working Paper Series is produced by:

The Maria Sibylla Merian Centre Conviviality-Inequality in Latin America (Mecila), Rua Morgado de Mateus, 615, São Paulo – SP, CEP 04015-051, Brazil.

Executive Editors: Sérgio Costa, Lateinamerika-Institut, Freie Universität Berlin, Germany  
Joaquim Toledo Jr., Mecila, São Paulo, Brazil

Editing/Production: Joaquim Toledo Jr., Paul Talcott, Nina Sarah Leibbrandt

This working paper series is produced as part of the activities of the Maria Sibylla Merian Centre Conviviality-Inequality in Latin America (Mecila) funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF).

All working papers are available free of charge on the Centre website: <http://mecila.net>

Printing of library and archival copies courtesy of the Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut, Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin, Germany.

Citation: Costa, Sérgio; Cavalcanti, Mariana; Domingues, José Maurício; Knöbl, Wolfgang (2024): “On the Earth Ethic: Interview with Dipesh Chakrabarty”, *Mecila Working Paper Series*, No. 75, São Paulo: The Maria Sibylla Merian Centre Conviviality-Inequality in Latin America.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.46877/costa-et-al.2024.75>

Copyright for this edition:

© Sérgio Costa, Mariana Cavalcanti, José Maurício Domingues, Wolfgang Knöbl

This work is provided under a Creative Commons 4.0 Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0). The text of the license can be read at <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/legalcode>.

The Maria Sibylla Merian Centre Conviviality-Inequality in Latin America cannot be held responsible for errors or any consequences arising from the use of information contained in this Working Paper; the views and opinions expressed are solely those of the author or authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Maria Sibylla Merian Centre Conviviality-Inequality in Latin America, its research projects or sponsors.

Inclusion of a paper in the *Mecila Working Paper Series* does not constitute publication and should not limit publication (with permission of the copyright holder or holders) in any other venue.

Cover photo: © Nicolas Wasser

## On the Earth Ethic: Interview with Dipesh Chakrabarty

Sérgio Costa, Mariana Cavalcanti, José Maurício Domingues, and Wolfgang Knöbl

### Abstract

This interview with historian Dipesh Chakrabarty discusses his book *The Climate of History in a Planetary Age* (The University of Chicago Press, 2021) which proposes understanding the human condition during times of crisis from both a planetary and a global perspective. In this interview, Chakrabarty suggests that adopting a planetary perspective, which de-centres the human, can provide a new outlook that enables us to respond more effectively to contemporary crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, something that is urgently necessary due to the failure of human agency to adequately deal with the COVID-19 pandemic and the climate crisis. He further addresses the ambivalent role that technology and the state play in today's troubled times. The interview was conducted as part of the international lecture series "Making Sense of the Post-Covid World: Continuities and Changes" which seeks to discuss the ambivalent consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on social life. The lecture series, sponsored by the Alexander von Humboldt Stiftung, was developed in collaboration with the Institute for Latin American Studies at Freie Universität Berlin, the Hamburg Institute for Social Research, and the Institute for Social and Political Studies at the State University of Rio de Janeiro.

**Keywords:** planetary ethics | earth system science | climate crisis | inequality

### About the authors:

Sérgio Costa, Mecila Principal Investigator and spokesperson, is a professor of sociology at the LAI at FU Berlin. Mariana Cavalcanti holds a PhD in anthropology from the University of Chicago and is a professor in the graduate program in sociology at the Institute of Social and Political Studies at the UFRJ. Wolfgang Knöbl has been a professor of sociology at several German universities and is currently the director of the Hamburg Institute for Social Research. José Maurício Domingues holds a PhD in Sociology from the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) and is currently a professor at the Institute of Social and Political Studies at the State University of Rio de Janeiro. Dipesh Chakrabarty is currently the Lawrence A. Kimpton Distinguished Service Professor in History, South Asian Languages and Civilizations at the University of Chicago and the Faculty Director of the University of Chicago Centre in Delhi. His acclaimed book *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton University Press, 2000), in which Chakrabarty systematized the results of his research in the field of postcolonial studies and global history, has been instrumental in reshaping antidisciplines such as global history and global sociology.

## **Contents**

<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2. From Postcolonialism to Planetary Paradigms</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>3. Planetary Thinking and Indigenous Philosophies</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>4. The State's Role in Climate Change</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>5. The Impact of Planetary Sociology on Traditional Disciplines</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>6. Politics and the Challenge of Human Disagreement in a Pandemic World</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>7. Ethics and Posthumanism in Planetary History</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>8. Is There a Critical Perspective on Planetary History?</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>9. Bibliography</b>	<b>21</b>

## 1. Introduction

**Mariana Cavalcanti:** Good afternoon from Rio de Janeiro, good evening in Europe, and it's the middle of the night in Australia. This is the fifth joint session of "Making Sense of the Post-Covid World: Continuities and Changes". This is an international lecture series convened by Sérgio Costa from Freie Universität Berlin, Wolfgang Knöbl from the Hamburg Institute for Social Research, and José Maurício Domingues and me from the Institute of Social and Political Studies in Rio de Janeiro.

Today we welcome, as our guest, Professor Dipesh Chakrabarty from the University of Chicago. He has kindly agreed to join us to discuss what he calls the Earth ethic. Now, Sérgio Costa will give a further introduction to Dipesh Chakrabarty's work and then I will mediate the Q&A. Thank you so much for joining us, Professor Chakrabarty.

**Dipesh Chakrabarty:** You are welcome. Thank you for inviting me.

**Sérgio Costa:** Thank you also from my side.

Dipesh Chakrabarty is the Lawrence A. Kimpton Distinguished Service Professor in History, South Asian Languages and Civilizations at the University of Chicago. He is a founding member of the editorial collective of *Subaltern Studies*, a founding editor of *Postcolonial Studies* and has served on the editorial boards of the *American Historical Review* and *Public Culture*.

Among his numerous publications, I would like to highlight his influential book *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* published in 2000 which systematized the results of his research in the field of postcolonial studies and global history by exploring how not primarily Europe, but entanglements between the different world regions have shaped modernity (Chakrabarty 2000). This book has decisively contributed to redesign antidisciplines such as global history and global sociology. More recently, Professor Chakrabarty has dedicated himself to the study of climate change and the anthropogenic transformation of the planet, including the assessment of the epistemological, moral, and political implications of these changes. The book *The Climate of History in a Planetary Age* published in 2021, that we will discuss in this session, offers an encompassing assessment of Professor Chakrabarty's findings in this field (Chakrabarty 2021). So, thank you very much again Professor Chakrabarty for joining us today for this Q&A session.

## 2. From Postcolonialism to Planetary Paradigms

**Sérgio Costa:** I would like to start with the first question. It is a quite general question to better understand the making of the book and your own trajectory from subaltern and postcolonial studies and global history to planetary and Earth ethics. You state in one

of your theses in the first chapter that it is necessary to connect the global history of capitalism with the species history of humans but at the same time you seem to reject the concept of the Capitalocene which tries to combine these two histories. So, if you look back, do you think that the interpenetrations of the history of capitalism and of humans as a species are adequately combined and discussed in this book? Could you please perhaps give us some insight on how these two histories and historiographies can be connected?

And perhaps a related question, one that at least for me it is not that clear in the book, is there a third layer which is the history of the planet? Or has our planet's history and our history as a species merged in your analytical approach? Sorry for this broad question, but this is just to start the discussion.

**Dipesh Chakrabarty:** Thank you. When I started working on this project and when I first published my essay on the four theses, which became the first chapter of the book, I got a lot of criticism from people who were independently developing the idea of the Capitalocene or Plantationocene or Econoscene. They criticized me, in their view, for making all of humanity look responsible for climate change because per capita emissions were quite different from one place to another and only twelve nations emit the bulk of the emissions. So why would one blame the whole species? That was their argument, and for a while I was trying to answer these charges.

The reason I did not put "Anthropocene" in the title of the book was that as my thinking progressed, I realized that that debate was being framed very much as an either-or question. Because the question is even if you argued that capitalism had caused all the environmental problems or most of the environmental problems we face now, in order to understand what the problems were, you would actually have to go beyond the political economy and learn something about earth system science, the history of evolution on the planet and past great extinctions. So, whether you call it the Capitalocene or the Anthropocene or something else, what became clear to me is that human beings, internally differentiated through their institutions, are affecting planetary processes which have been around for a long time.

For instance, the cycles of ice ages are very long in human terms. And some people argue that we have already fended off the next possible ice age by thousands of years, some say tens of thousands of years. So, one point was that the theoretical tools of analysing capitalism, our conceptual tools, now had to be supplemented by tools that came from Earth system science, tools that came from evolutionary biology, tools that came from physics or chemistry. And in that sense, just as Frantz Fanon had once said in talking about the Third World, he said that every term in Marxism has to be stretched when you take it to the colony (Fanon 1961). Similarly, you have to stretch your

knowledge of political economy to connect it with these other knowledge systems. So that was one point. So that is why I argued that we have become planetary whether you blame capitalism or whether you blame something else. Today's reality is that we have to think about planetary processes which we normally did not think about, even Marxists did not before.

And the second point was that, in the social sciences, including in Marxist social science, every problem we think about ultimately relates to the human experience of the world and the prospects of there being a more just society, but human beings are the centre of the analysis. Whereas when you read Earth system science, the history becomes deep history. When you read about the great oxidation event you learn to think about when did the air begin to have more oxygen and you learn about the role of very ancient bacteria in producing more oxygen through photosynthesis and the way in which oxygen, being a poisonous gas, killed off many forms of life or drove them underground. The nitrogen-fixing bacteria finds are an example. So suddenly your vision of history expands, and you realize that what is interesting about Earth system science, what is interesting about the science behind climate change, is that it does not refer only to human experience. It refers to the role of the deep oceans in maintaining the climate system of the planet. It refers to the role that the glaciers play, that the Siberian permafrost plays. So, it is a science. It gives you a sense of history which decentres the human. And in that sense, this planetary thinking is vastly different from, say, Indian astrology which is planetary thinking but indexed to humans. Or even the planetary thinking of navigators who thousands of years ago settled in the Pacific Islands and looked at the night sky in order to navigate.

So, it is not that humans have not thought about the planet before. I mean, we are planetary. But this science as it develops now has created a system of thinking which decentred the human. So, in the end I ended up saying that whether you think through capitalism, whether you think through liberal or neoliberal capitalism or whether you think as a capitalist, most thoughts in the social sciences are human-centred. Whereas when you are confronted with the planetary, you are also confronted with human thoughts that are thought by humans, but thoughts that decentre the human because they tell stories that have happened over such a long period of time. And humans come so late in those stories that geology and evolutionary biology necessarily decentre the human. It is a story told by humans, but you cannot put humans at the centre of the story. Whereas in the history of capitalism, humans are at the centre of the story. That is why that is more the story of the globe as we have made it while I think of the planet as standing in for a different vision of history in the past. So, I would say that in the end I was not pursuing the debate about what to call it.

### 3. Planetary Thinking and Indigenous Philosophies

**Sérgio Costa:** You mentioned that the indigenous philosophies and cosmologies also connect these two histories in a certain way. This was also one of our questions because, if you look at some indigenous philosophies, you see exactly what you called in the introduction of the book, the consciousness of this double time, the *Jetztzeiten*, as you mentioned in the book. So, some indigenous philosophers are calling our attention to this sort of living in two different times: the time of our concrete action and the planetary time. Therefore, my question would be if you plan to integrate more intensive dialogue with indigenous philosophies into your discussions of not only the Anthropocene but also planetary ethics?

And this has two motivations: The first one is a cognitive motivation because this sort of combination of two different times is explicit in these sorts of philosophies, and at the same time, if you look at the political agency, the indigenous movements are necessary allies in constructing a more concrete idea of planetary ethics. Therefore, my question would be how do you see these possibilities, the potentials of a dialogue with indigenous movements and indigenous philosophies?

**Dipesh Chakrabarty:** First of all, let me just say up front that I think there is a lot to learn from indigenous philosophies. But I think I would underline *philosophies* because the indigenous group I have read about most are the Australian Aboriginal peoples because I have lived in Australia, I was a student in Australia, I taught in Australia, and that is where most of my engagement has been with indigenous philosophy and with indigenous points of view. And there is a lot to learn from them. And then there are the indigenous people in North America, in Latin America, and in India and other places. So, there is a lot to learn from these societies, I have no doubt.

Even if you look at peasant societies. Even if you look at any society that you might regard as pre-modern, where people depend on the seasons, where life depends on seasons, where the Earth produces in different seasons and you do not build all-weather roads, you do not have mangoes all through the year. So even in a peasant society, there is a sense of relationality. There is a sense that things are connected, that we depend on certain things that the planet does.

And secondly, something that is more prominent in indigenous societies, but you see it even in peasant societies, the non-human figures are more prominent in stories and in legends. So, the relationship between human and non-human is always up front. When Durkheim was writing about religion and was looking at ancient religions, for instance, he was looking a lot at Australian Aboriginal societies and what European colonizers were finding out, one of the points he made about totemism is that the totem



always signifies an identity that is not completely human (Durkheim 1912). There is a lot to learn from all of these things.

But having said that, the distinction is that when I say planet, and I have said it in the book in several points, my planet is really what Earth system scientists call the Earth system. So, it is not a planet I see. For example, the sky in Canberra is so unpolluted and clear that you can sometimes see our own galaxy. So, there is a way in which you can look at the world and a sense of cosmology and a sense of this planet can come to you. And even when you do not think about it, for example, if you fly one way you get jet lag when you fly in the direction in which the earth is spinning. If you fly the other way, you get a different kind of jet lag. The very fact that your muscles exist in the way they do depends on gravity. So, there are very many ways in which we are off the planet. It comes to us even before we encounter Earth system science. So, I think any culture, honestly, I would say whether it is Western culture or an indigenous culture, any culture has planetary kind of thinking because any culture has a long past.

I mean [Bruno] Latour says we have never been modern (Latour 1991). But even if you said we have only been modern for 500 years or 200 years, it is not like human beings have not had histories before then, even in the West. And there are accretions of those histories. So, I would say any culture has a sense of planetary thinking. It is only in the last 200 years, gradually, that we have lost a sense of the seasons. I mean, the first innovation the British made in India was to build what they called all-weather roads. Before the British came, all the wars depended on the seasons. You could not cross a river in certain seasons. You could not fight. You had to stop fighting. You could not pass on certain roads. Because of the rain and mud, you had to stop fighting. The Europeans built the capacity to fight in all weather. They built ships that could go through a storm. I mean, these are the capacities that modern technology has built.

But the distinguishing feature of earth system science as my planet is, as I said, that this planet is not a result of human experience with it, it is a product of modern technology. Paul J. Crutzen put the irony of it very well in an interview. He said the same technology that is destroying the planet allowed us to know certain truths about this planet. That is entanglement. So, for instance, to argue that the present warming of the planet is something that the planet has not seen for 800,000 years, so long before they were Homo sapiens, you cannot look at human experience.

So you go back to ancient air that is trapped in old ice in the polar caps. So how do you get ancient air? You drill. Where does this drilling technology come from? It comes from the gas and oil companies. So, in a peculiar way, you could say that even Western technology and modernity that was premised on a nature-culture separation, as Latour or Philippe Descola would say, are not telling a story of separation. Earth system science

is also telling us the story about entanglement with the difference that Earth system science incorporates the role that deep oceanic currents might play. And because, as you know, this is Carl Schmitt's argument, the deep ocean was explored only with the kind of shipping technology that the West built in building empires (Schmitt 1942). So, I would say that there is an interesting difference, an important difference, between the planet conceived as a system, a scientific concept and the planet conceived in indigenous societies or in Indian astrology. I mean, I am sure all agriculture people have these sayings, but in Bengal where I come from there are distinct sayings about when to sow, when to reap, when to harvest. All these societies are extremely season conscious.

And the second thing I want to say is that if you look at the history of settler colonialism, where the Europeans settled, and because my bread and butter is Indian history, I can say this, in Indian history this question always comes up: Why did the Europeans not settle here? Because around 1816 a very "forward-looking" Indian man called Rammohun Roy, whose 250th birthday we are celebrating in India, was extremely interested in the independence of Latin American countries. And he was hoping that Europeans would settle in India in the same way that they were settling in Latin America: create a *mestizo* class, marry our people, and help us become modern. So, in Indian history, this question comes up: Why did Europeans not settle in India?

That is because Europeans thought India was already crowded. Even though the Indian population has grown four times in my lifetime, but when the Europeans found 200 or 250 million people living in India, they thought that India was already crowded and that they did not want to settle, they only wanted to rule. So, settler colonialism happened in societies that were sparsely populated in European eyes. In Australia there is this theory that nobody lived there. They denied the existence of Aboriginal people in any meaningful sense.

So, the question is, in the last seventy years since the war, one thing that has happened is that the human population has grown hugely. And it is now going to be eight billion and will probably stabilize at ten. And this question comes up, can we feed ten billion people without modern agriculture? I am not a specialist. I am not specialized enough in these subjects to have an answer. But it seems to me that this is a particularly important question. And while there is a lot to learn from indigenous societies, the real challenge is how do we marry what we learn from indigenous philosophies or peasant philosophies to the contemporary desires of an expanding middle class in the world which is also expanding exponentially.

There is a scholar, Hannes Bergthaller, who works on the Asian middle class and the Anthropocene. He shows that if you look at the number of people you consider

consumers, which is now about 3-4 billion, every additional billion is added more quickly (Bergthaller 2020). And whether you like it or not, that is a fact of the contemporary world. And in many ways, it is disastrous because anytime people join the middle class, they have more money, they want to eat more protein. It immediately leads to a certain kind of food industry. Where, as you know, Jan Zalasiewicz and his colleagues showed that the bird with the highest population on the planet is broiler chicken, 22 billion, and the population of the next most naturally popular bird is 1.5 billion (Bennett et al. 2018). But you have so many people wanting to eat well, and you cannot deny them to eat well, on the grounds of justice. So, this is where this question of how you help so many people survive and have intra-human justice but marry it at the same time to our planetary concerns. Whether you come from Earth system science, whether you come from indigenous society, that is the crucial question for me.

#### 4. The State's Role in Climate Change

**Mariana Cavalcanti:** Thank you so much. José Maurício, would you like to ask the next question?

**José Maurício Domingues:** Yes, I really appreciate your answer because you avoid the trap of a dichotomy and look straight into the face of modernity and the demands that real people have in the world without judging all the things that we may take into account in order to frame our answers to the climate emergency we are going through now. But the question I had for you is: What role does the state play? Of course, what comes up in your former chapters, lectures, and articles is capitalism. Of course, capitalism is especially important, and I agree with you as well, because we cannot separate the trajectory of the species, the evolution of the species, from its specific manifestations or embodiments. So, the bourgeoisie is not something external to the human species. That would be a very strange argument, although of course you have to see different responsibilities in historical and geographical terms. But I would like to hear from you, because that is interesting to me because of my own work, how you place the state, the modern state, within this development of humanity and in our relation to the emergence of climate change?

**Dipesh Chakrabarty:** Thank you. And thank you for appreciating the fact that even the worst capitalist is part of the human species and shares our characteristics. And the flourishing of a species can entail development of inequality. One could argue that a capitalist who has formed inequality has helped us to develop. And the fact that everybody lives longer now compared to where humans were before antibiotics were invented or penicillin was invented.

Coming to the question of the state. I think the state is both. The state is an inevitable player. The United Nations, which is the most global organization we have, was set up as a forum where states would come and bargain. As I say in the book, the assumption was that human beings have an indefinite amount of time at their disposal. For example, Israel and Palestine. So, if you look at the UN resolutions about Palestine, there are so many because we assume there is a problem that at some point of time will be solved. But we do not know when.

So, when the first indication of the modern climate problem came to everybody, which was the discovery of a hole in the ozone layer, the way the world dealt with it was through the UN. So, nations came together and set up what was known as the Montreal Protocol. And we were lucky that dealing with the ozone layer became a technical question. So, you could change the propellant in a canister. And at least you deal with this problem or think that you are dealing with this problem.

When it came to climate change, when scientists were saying that we are warming up the planet, the nations followed the same model of the Montreal Protocol to set up the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the Kyoto Protocol. The IPCC has become a bargaining forum. Scientists say something, nations bargain over it. So, in some ways states are a practical agency through which we have been working, but the IPCC process also shows how inadequate states are. And when you look at actual states, I mean, the war in Ukraine reminds you again, modern states are habituated to give geopolitics more importance than other aspects of geo, like global warming or problems that affect all. And the example I give often of this problem are the Himalayas.

So, there are eight or nine rivers that come from the Himalayas. The main product for humans of those mountain ranges is water. And these glaciers serve a number of countries from Pakistan to Vietnam. But these glaciers are completely nationalized. India and China are always ready to fight a war on the mountains. Pakistan too. So, the Himalayas have become the most militarized mountain range in the world. But what we need is clearly a multilateral authority. I am not saying global authority, but a multilateral authority with participation of the countries involved. We need an agency that will maintain the health of those glaciers because the glaciers are receding. So, I think that while the nation states are a practical reality, and we work through them, the climate crisis also shows how increasingly inadequate our model of global management that we set up after the Second World War is. So, I think of nation states as a structure that is falling short of what we need to do to address the climate problem.

But at the same time, the reasons why nations want to have nation states are not all extinguished and we still live in times where, taking India or Ukraine as an example, there are so many areas where people actually want the nation state. They think that

the one practical way to work out their sense of freedom and autonomy is through acquiring a form of a state. So, I think that the political thought that has guided us since the Second World War and before is inadequate for meeting the challenge of climate change, which requires us to come together and address what I call the calendars of definite time. That even IPCC gives. So, when IPCC gives us our carbon budget for the whole world that is because for the IPCC the planet is one. But nations bargain and fight over those calendars. So, India might say to the West: “You guys deal with this for 20 years. I need to burn coal because my people are poor.” So, we split the planet, even though the IPCC thinks there is one planet. But the politics of the nations are splitting the planet and say: “Look, the planet is your concern, not mine now. I need to develop.” So that makes the politics of addressing climate change exceedingly difficult because politics is founded on the idea of difference. Whereas the science of climate change is constantly positing one earth system. They do not even say Earth systems, they say Earth system in singular. And this is a major problem, and I do not have a way of seeing it around.

**José Maurício Domingues:** Thank you.

**Dipesh Chakrabarty:** Thank you.

## 5. The Impact of Planetary Sociology on Traditional Disciplines

**Wolfgang Knöbl:** Thanks a lot for this last answer. I would like to go into a little bit of a different direction with my question. I mean, I completely agree, and I am completely convinced that the kind of planetary history or planetary sociology really decentres our perspectives, that humanity and human beings are decentred. So, it will help us a lot in a sense, maybe to solve problems we probably could not solve if we had a different perspective. So that is one point, and I am really convinced about that.

The other question is what does this kind of planetary sociology or history do to the conventional matrix of the disciplines, disciplines like the humanities on the one side and the sciences on the other side? Maybe, I do not see it in Dipesh Chakrabarty, but when I read for example *Origin Story* (Christian 2018) my concern would be why should I teach my students about the history of the Earth from a sociological or historical perspective, if the scientists can do it probably much better? So, my question would be, I am not sure how best to put this, but if I may speak bluntly, are we not in a kind of a danger to give way to a crudely positivistic understanding of the world? Because in a way we are giving up a lot of our competence as historians or as sociologists and give natural scientists a lot of room to talk about things we really do not understand. Do you see that there is a kind of a change in the disciplinary matrix as well?

**Dipesh Chakrabarty:** Yes, I think so. I agree with you completely on the legitimacy of the question. And the way I deal with it is by philosophically taking human experience of the world seriously. We know that there are many physical facts about the world that scientists talk about that we do not experience. We do not experience electromagnetic waves around us. We do not hear ultrasonic sound. The range of colours we see is limited. There are many other colours that you could see. In fact, there is a German philosopher of the mind called Thomas Metzinger who has a very interesting book called *The Ego Tunnel* (Metzinger 2009), basically arguing that humans have a tunnel vision of reality. That if we could see everything that scientists talk about, this world would look vastly different. But the point is that we have a tunnel vision that constitutes our phenomenology. It is through this tunnel vision we fall in love; we go to war; we bring up children. Everything we do, everything that I would say from [Immanuel] Kant to [Martin] Heidegger we philosophized. And I think that has to be at the centre of the enterprise, so that decentring ourselves is not a question of forgetting what it is our experience of the world that is at the root of all the human institutions.

So, see, I have a slight difference from friends from whose work I have learned a lot like Bruno Latour or Donna Haraway or all these people who think that one day there may be a realm of politics that involves both the humans and the non-human and among the non-human the non-living as well. Now, whereas I tend to think that politics is a human vocation, as we understand it. But what we do politically can change once we are able to see ourselves from the outside. So, once we are able to decentre ourselves, we may be able to change our politics.

And the two books I use in the book to give the example are two books by two scientists who proceed from the shared assumption that humans are having a planetary impact on biodiversity loss. And the two scientists are both associated with Harvard. One is Edward O. Wilson, the late evolutionary biologist. The other one is called David Keith, who has been given money by the Gates Foundation to do research on geoengineering of the climate. And they are working on spreading aerosol sulphate in the stratosphere to reflect sunlight back, and the argument is that it will dim sunlight. If you can dim sunlight or scatter it, it will reduce warming and give us room to create other technologies. Now, right or wrong, you can see that here the project is making ourselves even more central to the management of the planet. So, you start from the premise that we are planetary and yes, we are planetary, so, let's become even more planetary. With that, we become the managers of this planet. And Edward O. Wilson has a book called *Half Earth* (Wilson 2016) where he makes a proposition, which in the language in which he puts it would seem very unpractical, where he says we should withdraw and leave half of the surface of the planet to other forms of life. But he has some very practical propositions which I think are already being implemented in several parts of the world.

So, he says that the world has however many national parks. And he said if we could restore all national parks to their pre-human ecology before human beings touched them – human beings often took the capstone species out, whether of a tree or another life form – then we will produce a lot of biodiversity hotspots, like in the demilitarized zone between the two Koreas.

But philosophically, I incline more towards Wilson's position, which says that politics may be provincially and parochially human. But politics can be informed by a perspective that decentres the human. I think of the book as contributing to what I call philosophical anthropology, because I think we need to conceptualize our position in order to think differently and allow our politics to be informed by that perspective. Thank you very much for the question.

## 6. Politics and the Challenge of Human Disagreement in a Pandemic World

**Mariana Cavalcanti:** Thank you. Well, some of what I wanted to ask you has already been asked, so I am going to improvise and ask a new question. One of the things that I was thinking as you were speaking was precisely about how these three histories, the history of the earth system, the history of life and the history of capitalism, they all are decentred in the face of what you call the planetary. But in this sense, they are not the only things that decentre human agency. What I am talking about is religion as a social force because it decentres some human agency. So, I was thinking that not just religion, but one of the things that the pandemic brought about was that it came to show how much denialism there is. It seems some people simply do not believe in science. People believe that the earth is flat. So, in the middle of such an emergency, we have to deal with that additional problem in the realm of politics, of men. So, I would like to hear from you about these different ways of decentring the human. And it is as if humanity becomes seemingly split into two. We believe increasingly more in science. And we have people who may decentre humanity from the universe, but it is not exactly a scientific way of reasoning. So, I would like to hear how we work out politics in the middle of all of this.

**Dipesh Chakrabarty:** First of all, I have to say, and I am sure you will agree that it would not be a view based on historical evidence if we assume that all humans can ever agree on one solution. So, politics is based on difference. Even if it is not based on a friend-enemy distinction, it is based on difference and on disagreement. Politics is the art of what you do with disagreement. Do you go to war, or do you deal with it differently? Eventually politics is about the exchanges you can make across differences. That is how you make a community.

So, the pandemic is a remarkably interesting case in point, because first of all, one of the major causes is connected to another environmental problem which is the destruction of forests. So even Anthony Fauci, the man who was advising Trump and then Biden, has been saying in his academic writings that in the last few years we have entered an era of pandemics where pandemics can happen with more frequency because for developmental purposes, we are destroying forests and making it possible for wildlife to come closer to humans (Morens and Fauci 2020). So normally wild animals do not seek humans out. But if we destroy their habitat, they come closer to us.

Other people, for instance, have studied chimps in Africa and found that when you build a road through the jungle, even groups of chimpanzees that previously were mixing and producing baby chimps get separated. And the gene pool becomes restricted, so they become more vulnerable to new diseases. And if you eat their meat, you get diseases from them. But it is truly clear, you see, on the one hand, that the story of this pandemic is a story of evolution, of a form of life called the coronavirus which has lived in bats for many years. So, on the one hand, you have an evolutionary history, a form of life is evolving, using our bodies as an evolutionary pathway. On the other hand, you see the human fatigue in dealing with the pandemic. When I look at America or Australia, most people do not wear masks. Most people act like the pandemic is gone. And the fact that most people dying in Australia are old people, also makes me realize that it has something to do with history of demography and families. For example, in India most people live with their parents. So, you cannot forget old people. So, you are careful because you think if you catch the virus, go back home, you might kill your mother. Whereas in Australia most people do not live with their parents. So, they do not have COVID at the front of their minds. They think it is like a common cold where you will suffer for two days.

The pandemic is fascinating. It takes us back to the first point I was making: that humans cannot produce a united response to something that is obviously hurting humans, it is hurting our economy. But we cannot find a united response for it in time, not to mention climate change which is a much more complicated problem. And so, I think the pandemic is a fascinating instance of the problems.

For instance, everything you throw at bacteria to prevent them from killing us, that technology becomes an evolutionary path. So, it is precisely because we could develop antibiotics that you have antibiotic resistant bacteria. Without antibiotics, those bacteria would not have evolved. So – and people do not remember this – most forms of life on the planet are microbial. They are not animals or insects. And again, the microbial part of the history of life would not have been known by humans without the invention of microscope. So, there is knowledge we owe to modernity and modern technology.



And we have that knowledge even from science, I mean if you read people who write about the history of infectious diseases, it is clear that we live in a connected world. If there was no connection between my body and a rat's body, how would you try out medicine on a rat? Why would you? But at the same time because of this human phenomenology, human short-termism, we see the separation. All I am saying is that we should at least use this knowledge to develop strategies, and clearly, we are failing, we are increasingly dependent. So now there is this argument about the development of a nasal vaccine which will be variant independent. Now that is our utopia. But nobody says we should stop destroying forests to the degree that we are doing. We should withdraw, as Edward Wilson was saying, and think imaginatively about forms of withdrawal which allow human beings to flourish, to have justice between human beings, but also allow biodiversity to continue without harming us.

**Mariana Cavalcanti:** Thank you. Does anyone here have any more questions, or can I move on to the students' questions? I begin with the students in Berlin.

Before climate change was noticed, scientists distinguished natural history and human history, but then major changes resulted in climate change on the one hand and now we live in the Anthropocene. As you quoted [Mark Maslin's words] in your book: "It is unlikely that global politics will solve global warming [...] because most societies are unable to do so, because of the very short-term nature of politics" (Maslin 2004). Can agencies solve the problem before the human species goes extinct with the planet while climate change urges us to collectivity?

And the second question: Technology is the main cause for the development of the current size of the world population and for pollution. Meanwhile, technology has also become a cause for the decrease of population in Western societies. Do you think it could be a key answer to global warming? Or do you agree that technology is at the same time a cause of and a solution for rapid climate change? Do you think there is any such a solution at all?

**Dipesh Chakrabarty:** Thank you. So, to the first question, I would say that human agency is not something that stays the same in the face of an unfolding crisis. I draw hope from the fact that humans are a species that learns. It does not mean that there will not be suffering. There is already suffering. I mean if you are a poor person living on the coastal areas of India. I think if you are a woman, it is a gendered problem, you do not get fresh water to cook with because the water has become salty. So, you have to go further to get fresh water. I mean, in some ways climate change is present in the lives of poor people in those areas much more than it is in the lives of richer people. But as things happen, I mean, Australia has just gone through an election and one of the key electoral issues was actually climate change, mainly because they saw horrible,

horrible fires in 2021 which were followed by horrible, horrible floods. And even people who had suffered from previous floods and had then elevated their houses to escape this expected flood level did not in fact escape the floods because the floods were even higher.

All these experiences have made climate change a political issue. And this was one of the issues on which the previous government lost. So, most recently, what happened is fascinating. What happened is the electricity prices have gone up in all the states, except in the Australian Capital Territory, which is small territory, because ten year ago it made a decision to become completely renewable, and there the prices are now falling. So, all of these experiences will push people.

So, I would say human agency is not static. So, we do not have to assume that humans in 20 years or 30 years will think the same way as humans today. Because they will have 30 years of bad experience, 30 years of suffering. Some will learn something from that. It is a species that learns. And so, we do not have to be completely hopeless, but it is not like humans would come together one day and solve problems.

And that goes to the second question as well. Technology is a fascinating part of the equation. I totally agree that technology has been at the root of some of the problems we have, but it is also the root of human flourishing. Look at the statistics of human flourishing. There is a Harvard psychologist, Steve Pinker, who writes about how well humans are living and the fact that in our past we have never lived so well (Pinker 2018). You can see that if you look at the standard of living, consumption figures, violence in parts of the world.

Technology has also played a role in the destruction of other species. Partly because technology grows at an extremely fast rate compared to evolutionary changes. [Yuval] Harari, the Israeli historian, argues this nicely, though others have argued too, that lions evolved to big game hunters at the same time in which deer became good runners. So many deer would escape the lions. That is how evolutionary checks and balances remain (Harari 2014).

But when you create a fishing trawler that will catch many fish in the deep seas, the fishing trawler is not something that has happened on evolutionary timescale. If it took us millions of years to produce a fishing trawler, then the fish would have also learned how to avoid the trawlers. So, what happens is we take all these other creatures by surprise. Because technology does not give them the time in which to learn about the dangers of our technology. And that is what produces the imbalance between species because species live by eating other species. There is no other way life can sustain itself.

But the question is: What has tipped the balance too much in favour of humans? It is technology. So, it is both part of the solution and part of the problem. It would be natural for privileged human beings to desire a transition in which they keep their privileges. So, somebody who owns a car would want to imagine the same lifestyle with an electric car. And so, when I listen to Australian friends who are driving electric cars, their complaint is about how far you can go. Are there enough charging stations? Has Europe got more charging stations? So, when they visit Paris or Berlin, they see more charging stations. But, you see, behind that question is the idea that I should be able to go to the coast, I should be able to go on a long drive, right? Humans want the life they like to continue, but also transition to a climate friendly world. And the two may not always go together. But our desire is that technology will help us to sort of put the two together, but whether that will work or not, is a different question.

## 7. Ethics and Posthumanism in Planetary History

**Mariana Cavalcanti:** Thank you so much. Well, since we are running short on time, I am going to try to put together the questions from our students here in Rio and the questions from the Q&A so that you can answer as you wish. I am going to begin with a more theoretical question here that comes from one of our students. Could you give more examples on how to read a universal negative history from planetary and subaltern perspectives?

**Dipesh Chakrabarty:** That is a good question.

**Mariana Cavalcanti:** Of course, we all wanted to hear something about subaltern studies. The second question is, speaking in terms of species, how do you see the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the dominant species in the Anthropocene epoch? And we have a couple of questions here in the Q&A.

The first one is how would you define the idea of the Earth ethic and how do you relate it to the feminist idea of care? The person who asked the question thinks that the concept of earth care offers points of connection. Is it something that you have considered?

And in relation to the question of ethics, how do you see the scale of ethics? Is there or should there be something like a planetary ethic or rather specific territories, nations, and communities?

And the final question we are going to ask you is: I was wondering if we could talk about a more ontological flattening, and concepts of posthumanism, and how these fits today's topic. The person who was asking questions says that she is just amazed that

these concepts have not come up in the discussion yet. So ontological flattening and posthumanism, the feminist idea of care and subaltern studies.

**Dipesh Chakrabarty:** So, [Theodor W.] Adorno thought about negative universal history because he was sceptical of universal history. He thought universal history has become a ruse for domination. So, we can say, look, we are universal, but we use the universal actually as our excuse for dominating, which is the history of colonial rule. So, when he defined negative universal history, he was imagining a history in which we come together. But I do not have to become like you in order to be together. So, think of it conceptually, the question comes up when you think about the environment: Does the non-human, whether living or non-living, have to be anthropomorphized to some degree in order to give it a voice or a right or a standard?

So, when we say a tree or a rock should have a right, we create spokespeople for them, and they express the harm we are doing to the tree or the rock in the same way that you would understand the harm you might do to another human. So, a negative universal history would be where a polar bear would not have to communicate in the human language to express his or her problems. And therefore, a negative universal history is exceedingly difficult to imagine given the limited nature of interspecies communication and given that most life forms inhabiting this planet are microbial. So sometimes you can think of giving rights to trees and rocks, but what do you do with microbes? And they are inside us. So, that is why when I use negative universal history, and I have a small note about negative universal history in the book, but when I first used the term, I was using it to mainly communicate the point which did not get communicated to some that when I was talking about marrying the history of capitalism to the history of species, my species was not a positive universal that somebody could use as a ruse for domination.

Therefore, the critique that I got that I was blaming everybody was actually a misunderstanding of what I was saying and that is why I put negative universal history there, but people did not take the cue. They did not see the connection between my use of the word species and my use of the expression “negative universal” because the negative universal is not a universal that one can use for domination. So, in that sense there is a kind of subaltern studies proposition there that we can come together only by making room for our differences. There was another question that is not in the Q&A, the next one.

**Mariana Cavalcanti:** The second question had to do with the species. How do you see the impact of the pandemic on the dominant species in the Anthropocene?

**Dipesh Chakrabarty:** If by dominant species you mean humans... Actually, what is dominant is a complex of technology, humans and other species that depend on

humans. Depending on humans is not always a good thing. Like we have many more cows than we would have naturally because we want to eat them, milk them. So, we have industrialized cows for instance. But cows that are milked and sold as meat do not necessarily have good lives. Even though their numbers are dependent on our needs.

So what? Let's say the dominant species is humans. And it is remarkably interesting to see the impact of the pandemic on humans. If you listen to Bill Gates as a representative human, then he is saying we should prepare for the next pandemic. So, what I see on the part of the elite is a complete reluctance to address the main causes of the frequency of pandemics which is the destruction of forest and environmental disruption. When you read people like Anthony Fauci, there is a paper by Anthony Fauci and his colleague David Morens in the biology journal that came out in 2020, and they are very clear. They say that humans are the cause of pandemics (Morens and Fauci 2020). But that is the message that we do not want to take. We want to go the path of creating more vaccinations, creating more technology.

There is a biologist called Nathan Wolfe who was a professor at Stanford and then set himself up as a consultant virologist with the independent research and he has a book called *The Viral Storm* (Wolfe 2011). And his argument is that - it goes back to the discussion we are having before –to fight pandemics, we should give more power to WHO to actually override nation states because we should have commando-like groups that at the first information received about any possible breakout of a pandemic goes there and isolates that group of people. How will you get the first information? Suppose something breaks out in a remote village in Africa. So, his proposition is to give everybody a mobile phone and the place where the outbreak of a disease is will show up on mobile phones. And we should be monitoring mobile phone chatter throughout the world to get early signs of the breakout of a pandemic. But nobody is saying “Do not cut down so many trees. Let wildlife be”.

As I said, there are two ways to go. One is to withdraw our overexpansion, the root cause of the problem, which is what Wilson is saying. All other solutions are doing more of the same, which is creating more technology. See, we do not have treatments for most viruses and bacteria that we know affect humans. A common cold is something we do not have treatments for. If you get it, doctors will tell you to just sit it out. And they play a very important role in the history of life, in the history of our emotions. I mean, sometimes bacteria and viruses produce the chemicals we need to feel the feelings we like. So, we are totally immersed in them. So, the lesson of the pandemic is that yes, humans are learners, they learn from experience, but they do not learn immediately. We are a little bit slow. Very bright, but terribly slow.

About the idea of the Earth ethic: It is probably deeply connected to the question of care. But I do not see any contradiction between the concept of care and the Earth ethic and what Edward Wilson is saying, withdrawal. The principle is the same. And I use the word reverence following a geologist in my book, but reverence in the sense that the Earth is both marvellous, marvellous in the sense for us humans. We are almost programmed to find it marvellous and beautiful because we are part of the explosion of multicellular life. And when you look at the history of multicellular life, to us evolution would seem marvellous. It is amazing to see the designs of different things. So, you can go the religious path and even as a secular person, it affects you spiritually when you think about it. So, the Earth is beautiful, but it is also awesome. And it is awesome in its capacity to destroy our lives.

And that is why the idea of reverence where you actually feel both respect and fear – and fear was a particularly important part of interspecies regulation of life, which is why most animals can bluff, can do something to give you the signal that they want you to fear them. And basically, the history of technology is that we called their bluff. So, we individually, are scared of foxes. But I will try to build a city where foxes are not my next-door neighbours, though that is changing for London and Berlin and other places where foxes are becoming urban animals.

But in India, for instance, because of their loss of habitat, leopards are trying to be urban animals. And they have discovered that street dogs are harder to eat because they work in gangs. But domestic dogs are better prey, both better fed and isolated animals. And people in the outskirts of Bombay/Mumbai are trying to cope with this problem because we still fear the leopard. So, the idea of building a city is that the city should be free of wild animals. Which is something I discussed in the last chapter of the book, that even when Hobbes thought of political order, he assumed that wild animals would not be part of it and that they would belong to the state of nature. So human beings need safety, but the best way of getting this safety is to make sure that they have their spaces because they do not seek humans out. Because they know that humans are dangerous in numbers. A single human is not dangerous, but humans are dangerous. We can collaborate, we are intelligent. With technology, we can kill them. We kill them through our collaboration, our cooperation and technology. So that is why you use the word reverence. But whether you think through reverence or whether you think through Hannah Arendt, there is a question about how do you care for other forms of life? So, I agree with the spirit of the question.

And the last question was about the posthumanistic ontological flattening. So, I do think that a certain amount of ontological flattening happens in some posthuman approaches or in some new materialistic approaches. I mean I learn a lot from posthumanism and from new materialism. But at the end of the day, as I said before, that I make room for

human phenomenology, and therefore, for human ontology and therefore I probably would resist the flattening aspect of it.

**Mariana Cavalcanti:** So, thank you so much for these answers and all these questions. Sérgio has one more.

**Sérgio Costa:** If there is space for a final question because it is something that is really intriguing to me. It is still about the connection between Earth ethics and politics and agency because if you look at the previous history of the two histories – the history of global capitalism and the planet's history – if you look at the history of global capitalism, it is more or less easy to construct a critical perspective based on the pair of equality and inequality. This has also been the way how you have dealt with this sort of critique of capitalism. But if you look at the planet's history, at least in a simple way, to phrase this sort of perspective you construct. Do you have a critical perspective on planetary history? I do not know if the question was clear.

**Dipesh Chakrabarty:** Yes, it is interesting.

## 8. Is There a Critical Perspective on Planetary History?

**Sérgio Costa:** Perhaps just to add one small point, of course the idea of equality-inequality you cannot apply to planetary ethics because of these sorts of interdependences between the different living beings have nothing to do with equality-inequality. So, the idea of equality is simply not valid in this sort of register.

**Dipesh Chakrabarty:** No, that is a remarkably interesting and relevant question. I think you are right in saying that I do not pick it up in the book, even the question whether one can have a more critical planetary history as distinct from planetary history. I will come back to the critical question about being critical.

For me, what I got out of my studies about systems, science, evolution, etc. is an appreciation of how much deep history runs through us. And how much we forget deep history in thinking about human history, whether it is war, politics, teaching. So now, today, I can say to a student "Look, your body was born with you, it will die with you. But it took millions of years to design it." And I mean we are products of deep history in that sense. So, in appreciation of deep history I can say that the human body and the body of a mouse or body of any mammal are connected bodies. You can see that pretty clearly in research on medicines. Why would you try them out on monkeys and rats if we did not have something in common? And that dotted line relationship is about evolution and the designing of bodies. So, in that sense, I have become much more aware of how deep history runs through us, through everything. And the history of medicine is about the history of illness, is about history of deep history, is about history

of evolution. Whether it is genetics or whether it is even beyond that. And I talk about that in the book, about the falling into deep history, that we can have that sense of falling, being thrown into deep history by the crisis. As a historian, it was always in the background, something you did not need to know about, something scientists might need to know about.

But coming to the important part of your question, can we have a critical planetary history? My answer – and it is a provisional answer - would be no because the word critical has such a genealogy in interhuman history because it is about harmonious suspicion. That is where it is coming from. And it is very powerful in thinking about equality, inequality, oppression, all of those things.

I remember when I was teaching in Melbourne University, we had to think about how to sell humanities students to the government and to businesses and we used to say that we gave them critical skills and the dean would say “Critical is a bad word, give them analytical skills.” Analysis was more neutral than critical. Critical was almost political. The problem is if the moment you have a political view of the planet you fold it back into human history. Just planetary history entails things that happened when no humans were here. How do you have a critical perspective? How do you have a critical view of the history of the great oxidation? The reason why planetary history and deep history is important is because it provincializes human history. In that sense, it tells you what is parochially human. And our provincial history requires criticality. Because I think of humans as a just animal. We do not give justice, but we seek justice. So, we are always interested in seeking justice. But we bestow it quite seldom. Such as, when we are in the position to be just, we end up being mostly unjust. So, in that sense, justice for me is, in a Derridean sense, always to come. And that is the function of being critical, think of it in the Derridean-Levinasian way, always to come. So that would be my answer to your interesting question which I do not think the book addresses directly. But I am actually just finishing a short book called *One Planet, Many Worlds: The Climate Parallax* (Chakrabarty 2023) and I will probably pick up this question. Thank you for it.

**Sérgio Costa:** Thank you.

**Mariana Cavalcanti:** Thank you so much. I hope that we can invite you over to discuss your new book when it comes out too, because it was really wonderful to listen to you this afternoon. I can speak for all of us here and certainly for all of my students here in the classroom. And so, I mean just thank you so much for everything.

**Dipesh Chakrabarty:** Thank you also for inviting me. This was very early in the morning but was very enjoyable.



## 9. Bibliography

- Arendt, Hannah (1998 [1958]): *The Human Condition*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Bennett, Carys E.; Thomas, Richard; Williams, Mark; Zalasiewicz, Jan; Edgeworth, Matt; Miller, Holly; Coles, Ben; Foster, Alison; Burton, Emily J. and Marume, Upenyu (2018): "The Broiler Chicken as a Signal of a Human Reconfigured Biosphere", in: *Royal Society Open Science*, 5, 280325, 1–11.
- Bergthaller, Hannes (2020): "Thoughts on Asia and the Anthropocene", in: Dürkbeck, Gabriele and Philip Hüpkes (eds.), *The Anthropocenic Turn: The Interplay between Disciplinary and Interdisciplinary Responses to a New Age*, New York: Routledge, 77–90.
- Chakrabarty, Dipesh (2000): *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- (2021): *The Climate of History in a Planetary Age*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- (2023): *One Planet, Many Worlds: The Climate Parallax*, Waltham: Brandeis University Press.
- Christian, David (2018): *Origin Story: A Big History of Everything*, New York: Little, Brown and Company.
- Dürkbeck, Gabriele and Hüpkes, Philip (eds.) (2020): *The Anthropocenic Turn: The Interplay between Disciplinary and Interdisciplinary Responses to a New Age*, New York: Routledge.
- Durkheim, Émile (1912): *Les formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
- Fanon, Frantz (1961): *Les damnés de la terre*, Paris: Maspero.
- Harari, Yuval (2014): *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind*, New York: Harper.
- Latour, Bruno (1991): *Nous n'avons jamais été modernes*, Paris: La Découverte.
- Maslin, Mark (2004): *Global Warming. A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Metzinger, Thomas (2009): *Der Ego-Tunnel. Eine neue Philosophie des Selbst: von der Hirnforschung zur Bewusstseinsethik*, Berlin: Berlin Verlag.

Morens, David M. and Fauci, Anthony S. (2020): “Emerging Pandemic Diseases: How We Got to COVID-19”, in: *Cell*, 182, 5, 1077–1092.

Ott, Paul (2009): “Word and Earth: Hannah Arendt and the Human Relationship to Nature”, in: *Journal of Philosophy and Geography*, 12, 1, 1–16.

Pinker, Steve (2018): *Enlightenment Now: The Case for Reasons, Science, Humanism, and Progress*, New York: Viking.

Schmitt, Carl (1942): *Land und Meer: eine weltgeschichtliche Betrachtung*, Leipzig: Reclam.

Wilson, Edward O. (2016): *Half-Earth: Our Planet’s Fight for Life*, New York: Liveright.

Wolfe, Nathan (2011): *The Viral Storm: The Dawn of a New Pandemic Age*, New York: Times Books.

## Working Papers published since 2017:

1. Maria Sybilla Merian International Centre for Advanced Studies in the Humanities and Social Sciences Conviviality-Inequality in Latin America (Mecila) (2017): "Conviviality in Unequal Societies: Perspectives from Latin America: Thematic Scope and Preliminary Research Programme".
2. Müller, Gesine (2018): "Conviviality in (Post)Colonial Societies: Caribbean Literature in the Nineteenth Century".
3. Adloff, Frank (2018): "Practices of Conviviality and the Social and Political Theory of Convivialism".
4. Montero, Paula (2018): "Syncretism and Pluralism in the Configuration of Religious Diversity in Brazil".
5. Appadurai, Arjun (2018): "The Risks of Dialogue".
6. Inuca Lechón, José Benjamín (2018): "Llaktapura sumak kawsay / Vida plena entre pueblos. Un concepto emancipatorio de las nacionalidades del Ecuador".
7. Wade, Peter (2018): "*Mestizaje* and Conviviality in Brazil, Colombia and Mexico".
8. Graubart, Karen (2018): "Imperial Conviviality: What Medieval Spanish Legal Practice Can Teach Us about Colonial Latin America".
9. Gutiérrez, Felipe Castro (2018): "La violencia rutinaria y los límites de la convivencia en una sociedad colonial".
10. Wasser, Nicolas (2018): "The Affects of Conviviality-Inequality in Female Domestic Labour".
11. Segura, Ramiro (2019): "Convivialidad en ciudades latinoamericanas. Un ensayo bibliográfico desde la antropología".
12. Scarato, Luciane (2019): "Conviviality through Time in Brazil, Mexico, Peru, and Río de la Plata".
13. Barreneche, Osvaldo (2019): "Conviviality, Diversidad, Fraternidad. Conceptos en diálogo".
14. Heil, Tilmann (2019): "Conviviality on the Brink".

15. Manzi, Maya (2019): "Fighting against or Coexisting with Drought? Conviviality, Inequality and Peasant Mobility in Northeast Brazil".
16. Guiteras Mombiola, Anna (2019): "School Centres for 'Savages': In Pursuit of a Convivial Sociability in the Bolivian Amazon".
17. Costa, Sérgio (2019): "The Neglected Nexus between Conviviality and Inequality".
18. Banzato, Guillermo (2019): "Soberanía del conocimiento para superar inequidades. Políticas de Acceso Abierto para revistas científicas en América Latina".
19. Gil Montero, Raquel and Albiez, Sarah (2019): "Conviviality as a Tool for Creating Networks: The Case of an Early Modern Global Peasant Traveler".
20. Briones, Claudia (2019): "Políticas contemporáneas de convivialidad. Aportes desde los pueblos originarios de América Latina".
21. Rojas Scheffer, Raquel (2020): "Articulating Differences and Inequalities: Paid Domestic Workers' and Housewives' Struggles for Rights in Uruguay and Paraguay".
22. Potthast, Barbara (2020): "*Mestizaje* and Conviviality in Paraguay".
23. Mailhe, Alejandra (2020): "¿Legados prestigiosos? La revalorización del sustrato cultural indígena en la construcción identitaria argentina, entre fines del siglo XIX y los años treinta".
24. Segsfeld, Julia von (2020): "Ancestral Knowledges and the Ecuadorian Knowledge Society".
25. Baldraia, Fernando (2020): "Epistemologies for Conviviality, or Zumbification".
26. Feltran, Gabriel (2020): "Marginal Conviviality: On Inequalities and Violence Reproduction".
27. Rojas Scheffer, Raquel (2020): "Physically Close, Socially Distant: Paid Domestic Work and (Dis-)Encounters in Latin America's Private Households".
28. Gil Montero, Raquel (2020): "Esclavitud, servidumbre y libertad en Charcas".
29. Manzi, Maya (2020): "More-Than-Human Conviviality-Inequality in Latin America".

30. Klengel, Susanne (2020): "Pandemic Avant-Garde: Urban Coexistence in Mário de Andrade's *Pauliceia Desvairada* (1922) After the Spanish Flu".
31. Gomes, Nilma L. (2021): "Antiracism in Times of Uncertainty: The Brazilian Black Movement and Emancipatory Knowledges".
32. Rocha, Camila (2021): "The New Brazilian Right and the Public Sphere".
33. Boesten, Jan (2021): "Violence and Democracy in Colombia: The Conviviality of Citizenship Defects in Colombia's Nation-State".
34. Pappas, Gregory F. (2021): "Horizontal Models of Conviviality or Radical Democracy in the Americas: Zapatistas, Boggs Center, Casa Pueblo".
35. Gutiérrez Rodríguez, Encarnación (2021): "Entangled Migrations: The Coloniality of Migration and Creolizing Conviviality".
36. Reis, João José (2021): "Slaves Who Owned Slaves in Nineteenth-Century Bahia, Brazil".
37. Streva, Juliana M. (2021): "*Aquilombar* Democracy: Fugitive Routes from the End of the World".
38. Chicote, Gloria (2021): "Los tortuosos pactos de convivencia en *El juguete rabioso* de Roberto Arlt".
39. Penna, Clemente (2021): "The Saga of Teofila: Slavery and Credit Circulation in 19th-Century Rio de Janeiro".
40. Cohen, Yves (2021): "Horizontality in the 2010s: Social Movements, Collective Activities, Social Fabric, and Conviviality".
41. Tosold, Léa (2021): "The Quilombo as a Regime of Conviviality: *Sentipensando* Memory Politics with Beatriz Nascimento".
42. Estrada, Jorge (2022): "Ruthless Desires of Living Together in Roberto Bolaño's *2666*: Conviviality between *Potestas* and *Potentia*".
43. Stefan, Madalina (2022): "Conviviality, Ecocriticism and the Anthropocene: An Approach to Postcolonial Resistance and Ecofeminism in the Latin American Jungle Novel".
44. Teixeira, Mariana (2022): "Vulnerability: A Critical Tool for Conviviality-Inequality Studies".
45. Costa, Sérgio (2022): "Unequal and Divided: The Middle Classes in Contemporary Brazil".
46. Suárez, Nicolás (2022): "Museos del cine latinoamericanos: Políticas de preservación fílmica en contextos conviviales y desiguales".

47. Wanschelbaum, Cinthia (2022): "El proyecto educativo conservador del gobierno de Macri y los vínculos con actores privados".
48. Rojas Scheffer, Raquel (2022): "Another Turn of the Screw: The COVID-19 Crisis and the Reinforced Separation of Capital and Care".
49. Pinedo, Jerónimo (2022): "'¿Cómo se vivió aquí en la pandemia?'. La trama convivial de la covid-19".
50. Schultz, Susanne (2022): "Intersectional Convivialities: Brazilian Black and Popular Feminists Debating the *Justiça Reprodutiva* Agenda and Allyship Framework".
51. Castellón Osegueda, José Ricardo (2022): "Inequidades y convivialidades en movimiento. La familia y los inicios de la migración del Triángulo Norte de Centroamérica hacia los Estados Unidos".
52. Moschkovich, Marília (2023): "'Família' e a nova gramática dos direitos humanos no governo de Jair Bolsonaro (2019-2021)".
53. Kessler, Gabriel; Vommaro, Gabriel y Assusa, Gonzalo (2023): "El proceso de polarización en América Latina: entre la secularización y el conflicto distributivo".
54. Dünne, Jörg (2023): "Interspecific Contact Scenes: Humans and Street Dogs in the Margins of the City".
55. Toji, Simone (2023): "Conviviality-in-Action: Of Silence and Memory in the Cultural Performance of Generations of Japanese Migrants in a Riverine Town in Brazil".
56. Piovani, Juan Ignacio; Alzugaray, Lucas; Peiró, María Laura y Santa Maria, Juliana (2023): "Convivialidad en el ámbito doméstico. Arreglos familiares y relaciones de género en los hogares del Área Metropolitana de Buenos Aires durante la pandemia de Covid-19".
57. Flamand, Laura; Alba Vega, Carlos; Aparicio, Rosario y Serna, Erick (2023): "Trabajo remunerado y de cuidados en la Ciudad de México. Los efectos de la pandemia de covid-19 sobre las desigualdades sociales y la convivialidad".
58. O'Leary, Jessica (2023): "The Trial of Íria Álvares: Conviviality and Inequality in the Portuguese Inquisition Records".
59. Brun, Élodie y Carrillo, Jesús (2023): "La política global como una 'configuración convivial': hacia un entendimiento holístico de las desigualdades mundiales interestatales".

60. Costa, Sérgio; Teixeira, Mariana, and Mattos, Thomás (2023): "Conviviality-Inequality during the Pandemic: The Case of Berlin".
61. Massuchetto, Vanessa (2023): "Women, Normativities, and Scandal: The Crime of Concubinage through Conviviality Lenses in Southern Portuguese America in the Late 18<sup>th</sup> Century".
62. Durão, Susana (2023): "Conviviality in Inequality: Security in the City (São Paulo)".
63. Torquato, Ana Carolina (2023): "Animal Display in Fiction: Clarice Lispector's 'O búfalo' and Other Stories Framing Animal Captivity".
64. Kolb, Patrizia (2024): "The Impact of the Corona Crisis on the Gender Gap in Care Work And Housework".
65. Schapira, Raphael (2024): "Brazilian Jiu-jitsu as a Marker of Whiteness and Anti-Blackness: Embodying Inclusive Conservative Conviviality in Rio de Janeiro".
66. Callsen, Berit (2024): "Liquid Conviviality in Chilean Documentary Film: Dynamics of Confluences and Counter/fluences".
67. Moszczyńska, Joanna M. (2024): "Truths That Hurt: Socialist Affects and Conviviality in the Literary Journalism of Gabriel García Márquez and Ryszard Kapuściński".
68. Bianchi, Guilherme (2024): "As formas da comunidade: convivialidade, corpo e política pós-conflito entre os Ashaninka do rio Ene (Amazônia peruana)".
69. Gandhi, Ajay (2024): "The Porous and the Pure: An Artifactual History of Ties Between Asia, Europe, and Latin America".
70. Medeiros da Silva, Mário Augusto (2024): "Social Memory, Conviviality, and Contemporary Antiracism: Valongo, Pretos Novos, Aflitos, and Saracura".
71. Etzold, Jörn (2024) "Theatres of the Proto-Juridical".
72. Brage, Eugenia (2024): "Tramas populares-comunitarias de convivialidad. Reflexiones en torno a la sostenibilidad de la vida y la producción de lo común en contextos transfronterizos".
73. Strasser, Melanie (2024): "Receiving Words: Towards a Poetics of Hospitality".

74. Gil Mariño, Cecilia Nuria (2024): "Reversos de la oscuridad. Fantasías, erotismo y acosos en las salas de cine de Buenos Aires y São Paulo en la primera mitad del siglo XX".
75. Costa, Sérgio; Cavalcanti, Mariana; Domingues, José Maurício; Knöbl, Wolfgang (2024): "On the Earth Ethic: Interview with Dipesh Chakrabarty".





UNIVERSITÄT  
ZU KÖLN



Ibero-Amerikanisches  
Institut  
Preußischer Kulturbesitz



CEBRAP  
centro brasileiro de análise e planejamento



IdIHCS | Instituto de Investigaciones en  
Humanidades y Ciencias Sociales



EL COLEGIO  
DE MÉXICO



The Maria Sibylla Merian Centre Conviviality-Inequality in Latin America (Mecila) was founded in April 2017 by three German and four Latin American partner institutions and is funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF). The participating researchers investigate coexistence in unequal societies from an interdisciplinary and global perspective. The following institutions are involved: Freie Universität Berlin, Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut/Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Universität zu Köln, Universidade de São Paulo (USP), Centro Brasileiro de Análise e Planejamento (CEBRAP), IdIHCS (CONICET/Universidad Nacional de La Plata), and El Colegio de México. Further information at <http://www.mecila.net>.

**Contact**

Coordination Office  
Maria Sybilla Merian Centre  
Conviviality-Inequality in Latin America

Rua Morgado de Mateus, 615  
São Paulo – SP  
CEP 04015-051  
Brazil

[mecila@cebrap.org.br](mailto:mecila@cebrap.org.br)

SPONSORED BY THE



**Federal Ministry  
of Education  
and Research**