



Book Review

Michele Lobo, Eve Mayes, and Laura Bedford (Eds.) (2024) *Planetary Justice: Stories and Studies of Action, Resistance and Solidarity*. Bristol University Press

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As Dryzek and Pickering (2018) observe:

Almost everyone thinks justice is a good thing. ... Yet injustice looms large in a disrupted Earth system. ... The very existence of some low-lying Pacific island states is threatened by sea level rise, yet it is overwhelmingly emissions produced in industrialized states that have caused the problem. The Anthropocene not only reveals new sorts of injustice but also intensifies pre-existing injustices. (p. 58)

So, familiar questions emerge: What is to be done? Who should be held responsible for remedying these injustices? As the editors of this timely and impressive text assert, “Past and present injustices must be named and reckoned with” (p.8).

Planetary Justice: Stories and Studies of Action, Resistance and Solidarity emerged from the Earth Unbound collective, responding to “the accelerating crises of anthropogenic global warming, catastrophic ‘natural’ disasters and struggles for climate justice and fossil-free energy futures.” Such crises are not only “accelerating” but can also seem to be “overlapping and uneven” (Sultana, 2021) or, indeed, frequently “converging” (Lam et al., 2022), with the editors recalling the impacts of fires raging across southeastern states in Australia, as well as the Amazon Rainforest and the Pacific coast of the United States, while “floods devastated Uganda, Burundi and Pakistan, and supercyclones pummelled coastal areas of India, Bangladesh, New Zealand and Vanuatu.” (p. 1).

The idea of “Planetary Justice” has been addressed in various ways in recent scholarship. For example, Moore (2019) argues that better comprehension of contemporary climate challenges would follow from a change of language from “Anthropocene” to “Capitalocene”, and a special issue of *Earth System Governance* (Biermann et al., 2020) engages with questions of relevance concerning Planetary Justice and research methods, environmental governance, rights, and philosophy. *Planetary Justice* offers



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something that is genuinely different, aiming to shift the focus of debates away from familiar pre-occupations with terminology and governance to the “differentiated *experiences* of injustice across the planet, and the need for intersectional, ground-up *solidarities* that cross national and onto-epistemic borders” (p.4 [emphasis added]). Here, as Lobo, Mayes, and Bedford write, “We centre ‘planetary justice’ as a *provocation to unsettle* human exceptionalism, climate inaction and the legacies of white colonial domination highlighted by feminist geographers, philosophers of science, Indigenous philosophers, decolonial/postcolonial historians and political theorists” (p.1 [emphasis added]).

The book’s 12 chapters, four short(-ish) interstices, and one postscript, are authored by a range of contributors speaking and writing from Australia, Canada, England, India, Japan, Kenya, New Zealand, Scotland and Wales. Unsurprisingly, the project and its conversations have used many terms and forms of language—a “dissonant polyphony” and “plurilogue” linking “different yet co-implicated constituencies and arenas of struggle” (p. 8). The editors and contributors are, however, comfortable with this, providing one of the many refreshing elements of the book that underpins calls for a “mode of justice that is unbound from normative frameworks and spatial constraints, that builds up from situated and felt ‘injustice, indignation, and harm’” (p. 10).

Planetary Justice is divided into three parts, and the spirit of the book is conveyed by the idea that we are presented with “Stories and studies”: Part I, covering *Solidarity as Responsibility, Resurgence and Regeneration*; Part 2, *Solidarity Without Borders*; and Part 3, *Learning and Living with Climate Change as Situated Solidarity*. This is a substantial collection and it would be impossible to discuss each chapter in a short review, so it is perhaps slightly invidious to note just two. Aleryk Fricker, in *Planetary Justice and Decolonizing Pedagogy: Teaching and Learning in Solidarity with Country*, explores how to negotiate and enhance “care for Country,” and also the questions that arise when identifying stakeholders, allies, and representatives committed to planetary justice. There is much that is important in this chapter—and the others in the book—such as the wonderful storytelling of the chapter by Anne Poelina, Bill Webb, Sandra Wooltorton, and Naomi Joy Godden, *Waking up the Snake: Ancient Wisdom for Regeneration*, but I was left wondering why peoples and nations of Latin America are not among those represented given there are parallel experiences and stories, challenges and innovations.

As Yin Paradies explains in *Saturated Strands of (In/Re)Surgent Solidarity*, “Country here refers to land, water, air, people, animals, plants, stories, songs, feelings and so on as they exist in merging waves of place-time” (p. 87). Other chapters also tell stories about, and discuss, these fundamentals of life on our planet, such as: land—forests, farming and soil geo-politics; fresh water—access and theft from the Indian Sundarbans to the Australian Murray-Darling Basin; and oceans—the Southern and Indian Oceans, the birth of cyclones, and the power of wind and waves. These chapters can be poetic and absorbing, but they also aim to shock and remind us of the dangers and threats that have been with us for some time but are accelerating in impact and spreading devastation wider than ever.

Planetary Justice concludes with a postscript—actually, a poem—by Alicia Flynn, titled (and suggesting that) *The Earth Is Undone*. We glean from Flynn, as we do from the book as a whole, that the Earth is unravelling, but that we can still learn from reflection, think differently, perhaps learn to dance with nature, and hope for new forms of scholarship. This original and thoughtful collection starts to lead us in the right direction.

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