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Arrival of Normative Power in Planetary Politics

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Abstract

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

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

Introduction: Arrival

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

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

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

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

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

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

I. Language of Arrival: Normative Power in Planetary Politics

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

II. Simultaneous Mode of Awareness: Agonistic Cosmopolitics

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

III. Non-Adversarial Relationships: Subjective Sharing of Relations

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

V. Story of Our Lives: Planetary Symbiosis

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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