

I am going to shape my thoughts around some of the questions that have been kindly provided. The first is around how I understand climate colonialism. The most commonly used concept we have now is Anthropocene, and it has been effectively and rightly problematised. I see climate colonialism as a good start, but not perfect replacement. It is good because it re-frames and re-centralises the extractive and resolutely racialised histories that have led to the climate crisis, in ways that the term ‘Anthropocene’ appears to have made invisible.

The term climate colonialism has a critical dimension in that it questions who or what the ‘anthro’ refers to. It shines a light on the erasures when we think and speak of the current climate crisis. It reveals that the idea of the Anthropocene is quite literally anthropocentric in rather exclusive ways. There are two big important questions that climate colonialism rightly demands we consider:

1. Who exactly are the ‘we’, who even has historically been considered ‘human’? The absence or at least marginalisation of non-humans in term Anthropocene is one aspect of this question. Many posthumanists have critiqued this, pointing out that the climate crisis is ultimately a crisis of human making that is interested mainly in human survival. But it is more than this. In her attempt to rescue the term Anthropocene by confronting its inadequate account, Kathryn Yusoff writes that “The histories of the Anthropocene unfold a brutal experience for much of the world’s racialized poor and without due attention to the historicity of those events... To be included in the ‘we’ of the Anthropocene is to be silenced by a claim to universalism that fails to notice its subjugations...” One of the primary subjugations Kathryn Yusoff describes is the process by which racialised slave labour was rendered as inhuman, to the same inert, exploitable commodity status as the minerals that were being taken from the earth. ‘We’ has therefore never been all of us, it certainly is not now. It definitely will not be in the future, with the effects of climate change projected to disproportionately hit global south communities hardest.
2. Related closely to the first point is the question of why is it we talk about The End of The World only now the chickens have come home to roost in the so-called developed world? Deborah Danowski and Rodrigo Nunes have worked through the making of this particularly western mythology, within the context of multiple ends of the world experienced by black and brown communities. Kathryn Yusoff “The Anthropocene might seem to offer a dystopic future that laments the end of the world, but imperialism and ongoing colonialism have been ending worlds for as long as they have been in existence”.

All this good being said about climate colonialism, I want to highlight that there are already plenty of efforts to rescue – as Yusoff has tried to do - or replace the term Anthropocene with more historically appropriate and sociopolitically complete concepts e.g. Capitalocene focussing on the direct lines between capitalism and climate crises; Or what Anna Tsing refers to as Plantationocene. There is also the forward-looking posthumanist Chtulhucene, coined by Donna Haraway, to imagine a more upbeat post-apocalyptic future in which human and non-humans become necessarily and harmoniously entangled, a corrective to the erasure of the non-human in the ‘we’.

I want to suggest a small personal preference for the word imperialism as opposed to colonialism. I believe we need a concept to de-centre nation-states or geographically bound

colonies and instead re-centre relations to and of power. We need to think in terms of production or manufactures lines, supply chains, profit and power.

The term colonialism overlooks constant and consistent internal violence across both racial and class hierarchies. Imperialism I think starts to reconcile racialised histories, contemporary capitalist modes of production/consumption and ecological decline. Extractive behaviour is far from restricted to between nation-states, it occurs all the time within countries. UK definitely has much to answer for as a colonial power and its current capitalist-imperialist extraction is highly racialised. But while it is certainly nowhere near the same scale, Britain's cruel and complicit history of resource exploitation and forced displacement extended to its own population. A good chunk of Britain's history can be described only half tongue in cheek as white-on-white violence. In my own research for example, the continued impact of the Highland Clearances, for instance in terms of depopulation, has been quite clear.

So the term imperialism might also lead us to start thinking in terms of both racial lines and class lines. It raises the question of who the monied classes are who ultimately benefit from discursive climate change denial? Discursive, as devices, as in do as I say, not do as I do - because as Latour argues they don't actually believe what they are saying. They have drawn the lines in the sand and are now simply extracting and saving resources for themselves, building safe bubbles in New Zealand where they can live while all the rest of us drown.

The question of research and education is one that stood out immediately to me – this is something I think about a lot about in my own practice as a researcher. It has become increasingly hard to overlook the tensions between contemporary research and education and climate imperialism and decline. At a surface level, we can think about things like the volume of travel, particularly air travel, undertaken by academics. Academic life demands mobility, be that moving for work or moving for conferences and research. These demands are far from inclusive, privileging global north, non-precarious, often straight male academics who can afford the broad costs, finances being only one aspect of the equation. But there is improvement good news on this front in the form of things like nearly carbon neutral conferences and this interaction – a qualified but good win for both climate and for inclusion.

But there is far more going on under the surface, ideologically within spaces of education that we need to challenge. Current university models increasingly designed on neoliberal models and metrics appear to be hell-bent on training students to become good capitalist subjects who have little understanding of their neo-colonial commodity relations. Within disciplines - we need to question the disciplines and approaches we align ourselves, and perhaps start to reject or dismantle the practices and perspectives built into them, for example highly questionable practices like bioprospecting. Even in disciplines that have done so much to cultivate practices of reflexivity and a benign image, like anthropology, there are pressing problems e.g. the denial of indigenous laws and rights. Zoe Todd for example wrote a poignant piece reflecting on her departure from the discipline, where she points out that “anthropology has itself been one of the bodies that works very hard to convince us that law is for the west, culture is for the rest.”

We need to ask where universities are putting their money. The People and Planet group (in Newcastle) has already done this with its campaign against fossil fuel investment. Divestment is a crucial win, but we need to stay with the trouble and keep questioning where else the monies are going. There are large investments from universities into housing and construction now and if we dig just a bit, we can make the connections with the fact that as

our resource consumption in fact increased in the past year and 40% of this goes into housing construction. This is saying nothing of how the investments might further devastate housing in this country, especially for the most marginalised groups.

We also need to ask where universities and academics get their money from. For instance, we can look at how we entrench global north-south divides with seemingly innocuous initiatives like the Global Challenges Fund. In a talk last year, the poet and filmmaker Imruh Bakari described such funds as giving people in the global south the bare minimum in the guise of capacity building, primarily to ensure they stay in their places. These sorts of funds can thus be read as a concerted western effort - filtered through universities and NGOs - to stem perceived potential threats caused by the global north's own activities e.g. climate refugees whilst enabling them to continue extraction. This is to say little of the saviour complexes and guises of good these sorts of funds appear to encourage. But I say this fully aware that there are very few thoroughly 'clean' research funds.

The other thing about funds like this that intrigue me greatly is the 'elsewhere' aspect – it diverts resources and attention to outside their own geographies, to the global south. I have had the distinct displeasure of attending, for example, a three-day political ecology conference where only two of the panels in the entire program discussed global north environmental conflicts, as if no environmental issues happen in our own backyards. One of my own case studies revolves around the proposed development of a golf course on a piece of land in the Highlands that is nationally, regionally and internationally protected. Academics need to pay more attention to local issues of global significance and to call our own "developed"-nation governments to account, rather than making a bad habit of studying downwards in communities in far-flung 'exotic' places.

This is more than simply aimed at academics and universities, it is about intellectual cultures. Earlier I talked about The End of the World as opposed to multiple ends, many that have already occurred, many still continuing. Resource extraction and colonialism has meant that indigenous cultures and the global south have faced the devastation of their worlds. But we now constantly read and regurgitate discourses about the "end of the world", overpopulation and "extinction" – I would argue these are also a manifestation of intellectual climate imperialism. This is not to deny the science and urgency of current conditions, but how we conceptualise of the problem and how we convey the sense of urgency and emergency matters too. We need to be thinking of the discourses and devices we ourselves employ, not least because there is evidence that these tropes appeal a great deal to nationalists and show up in far-right manifestos.