

Special Issue for *Tapuya: Latin American Science, Technology and Society* - Call for Papers

Ends in Other Terms: Uncommoning Extinction

Deadline for abstracts: April 30th, 2020

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Description

Extinction is around the corner. And not any extinction, but that of the human. 'We', as biological inhabitants of the Earth, face the real and concrete possibility of disappearance. Indeed, after decades of anthropogenic aggression to soils, airs, rocks, and waters, after having exhausted resources and exploited ecosystems, after having pushed and stressed all planetary boundaries, finitude is not anymore a scatological horizon for our species, but a present-future ready to be actualized—and to be acted upon. New imperatives arise. There's no time for contemplation nor speculation. Our house is on fire. We are summoned to intervene and change, and fast. Now, always now, before it's too late (Colebrook 2016).

Or so the narrative of the 'anthropocene' goes. Congealed in the quarters of the geosciences but extended and empowered by the social sciences and the humanities, the 'anthropocene' discourse articulates an agonistic of life in which human and biophysical boundaries, endpoints and urgencies enmesh into one grand human-planet relationality—and finale (Clark 2010, Walford and Bonelli, in press).

Hence the charisma of the 'anthropocene' arch: its capacity to engulf in one analytics the human and the geological, politics and technique, diagnosis and action, the urgent present of capitalism and the deep time of the earth's interiors, the One and its Others. The 'anthropocene', put differently, is both an object of inquiry *and* an epistemological operation—a mode of rendering amenable for thought and action otherwise incommensurable things and processes. The 'anthropocene' has no outside.

Inspired by several calls to open up the onto-epistemic politics of the 'anthropocene' narrative (Blaser 2019, Danowski and Viveiros de Castro 2016, Haraway 2016, Yusoff 2018), in this special issue we want to explore the hegemonic difficulties—even the obstacles—to think about the excesses, that while equally endangered, remain unaccounted for—even counting as not counting in Rancière's terms, in current epistemologies of finitude and extinction. We want to think extinction as an event, low and fast, that "catastrophically interrupts life-giving processes of time, death, and

generations” (Rose et al., 2017), but also to question the parameters by which time, death and (re)generation are defined. We want to explore modes of engaging with death, disappearance, and annihilation in our ecologically sensitive present without conceding to universalism nor to technocratic fixes and authoritarian exceptionalism—as mobilized, for example, under the narrative of ‘climate emergency’. As a key trope in environmental discourses, we take extinction as both an object and concept to engage with exhaustion and collapse in naturecultures and social projects beyond species conservation. We want to take seriously what extinction means and does in places, bodies, and processes, but without delimiting what these terms are and how their opposites are practically and politically brought into being. And importantly, we want to imagine analytics and modes of thinking death, ecologies, and the ‘anthropos’ beyond Euro-Anglo epistemologies.

Following these cues, this special issue attempts at *uncommoning* extinction: to think ends and finitudes as always generative and promissory categories that resist their mobilization as universal principles. Rather than taken death as common feature of (a univocal) life, we are interested in how deaths in the plural are also underpinned by *uncommonalities*, and how this condition “shapes a possibility for an alternative alliance, one that, along with coincidences, may include the parties’ constitutive divergence” (de la Cadena 2017).

So we ask: Is it possible to recognize the ‘anthropos’ without accepting its hegemony? Which operations can enable the denunciation of capitalist territorial occupations and environmental harm without rehearsing a common ‘we’? How are death, impossibility, exhaustion, and annihilation brought into being, by whom, and to what ethico-political purposes? How to narrate extinctions multiplying stories of death, life, and existence? How to render possible collaborations for change and reparation empowering refusal and divergence?

We are interested in stories, histories, and cases, ethnographic or not, able to situate these questions in concrete situations of extinction in the context of socioecological trajectories and tensions. We look for theoretically rich reflections able to think not just about but also *with* these ends—of existence, dignity, recuperation.

Potential themes

- Ethnographies of ‘extinction equivocations’.
- Time, generation, and regeneration in more-than-human ecologies.
- Problematization of the death/alive, inert/animated, geos/bios binaries in the context of climate crises.
- Alternative forms of reparation, restoration, and healing in multi-species worlds.
- Sociotechnical construction of “extinction” as a legal, political, and cultural category.

Practical information

Proposals should consist of an abstract (300 words) and a brief biographical note (100 words). Please submit abstracts to Manuel Tironi (metironi@uc.cl), Marcelo González (magonzalezg@uc.cl), and Marisol de la Cadena (mdelac@ucdavis.edu) by **April 30th, 2020** with the subject “Ends in Other Terms.” If accepted, full 7,000-word drafts would be due by **September 1st, 2020**. The special issue is planned to be published in 2021.

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