Editorial. Imagining planetary health, wellbeing and habitability: Perspectives from the environmental humanities

Lijuan Klassen and Christof Mauch

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Introduction[1]

The planet is under increasing stress, significantly impacting the health and wellbeing of human and more-than-human life on Earth. There is abundant scientific evidence today that the burning of fossil fuels and the emission of CO_2 into the atmosphere not only contribute to climate change globally, but also produce air pollutants that are responsible for rising rates of respiratory diseases and millions of premature deaths each year.[2] It is equally evident that increasing global temperatures have led to more frequent and intense heatwaves, resulting in higher rates of heatstroke, dehydration and cardiovascular diseases.[3] Moreover, the continuous deforestation of rainforests for monoculture agro-industries and mining operations, devastating wildlife habitats worldwide, has been linked to an increased likelihood of the transmission and dissemination of novel zoonotic diseases.[4] These examples speak to the planetary character of health and disease, where ecological degradation and pollution in one part of the world may shape geographies of life and death elsewhere.

The precarious nature of these planetary entanglements – between

[1] First versions of the essays in this special issue were presented at an international conference hosted by the Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society (RCC), from 2–4 October 2024, at the Evangelische Akademie Tutzing. The conference, which brought together scholars from more than a dozen countries, was generously funded by the Volkswagen Foundation, under the title 'Strengthening the Environmental Humanities' within the framework 'University of the Future', and the RCC in cooperation with the Munich Science Communication Lab (MSCL). A couple of short essays emerging from the Tutzing conference are also available in the Rachel Carson Center's *Seeing the Woods: Ecopedia*: https://seeingthewoods.org/tag/planetary-health/

[2] R. Fuller et al. 'Pollution and health: a progress update', *The Lancet Planetary Health* **6** (6) (2022): e535–e547.

[3] The Lancet, 'Health in a world of extreme heat', *The Lancet* **398** (10301) (2021): 641.

[4] A. Fell et al. 'Global evidence synthesis on land-use change and zoonotic risks', *Nature Sustainability* **9** (2026): 142–52.

public health, multi-species co-habitation and global supply-chains – became apparent during the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic, when the spread of the novel SARS-Cov-2 virus brought global economic production, trade and travel to a momentary standstill. At the time, Richard Horton, the physician and editor-in-chief of *The Lancet* medical journal, argued that the causes and effects of the pandemic cannot be defined simply in epidemiological terms of 'contact' and 'contagion', but above all concern the distribution of power in society.[5] The ways in which an outbreak unfolds and who it affects critically depend on existing socioeconomic infrastructures, cultural habitus and the differential access to healthcare. In this sense, the pandemic functioned as a magnifying glass for social inequalities, revealing which groups are considered a healthcare priority and which, including nonhuman animals, are rendered expendable for the sake of securing the health of the wider population.[6] Understanding the pandemic as a symptom of wider systemic inequalities, rather than a cause, illustrates how biomedical fixes and pandemic preparedness will fail, as long as the structural conditions of ill-health are not addressed.[7] The struggle for health is thus tightly interwoven with the struggle for social and environmental justice.

Amidst the unprecedented and irreversible changes to the Earth caused by human activities, calls to protect the planet – not only for its own sake, but in order to safeguard human health – have grown steadily more urgent. Recognising that human wellbeing is inseparable from the wellbeing of the planet, the transdisciplinary field of Planetary Health has emerged to study the 'impacts of human disruptions to Earth's natural systems on human health and all life on Earth'.[8]

[5] P. Wald, *Contagious: Cultures, Carriers, and the Outbreak Narrative* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008).

[6] R. Horton, 'Offline: COVID-19–a crisis of power', *The Lancet* **396** (10260) (2020): 1383; C. Lesté-Lasserre 'Pandemic dooms Danish mink–and mink research', *Science* **370** (2020): 754.

[7] Stephen Hinchliffe et al., 'Planetary health publics after COVID-19', *The Lancet Planetary Health* **5** (4) (2021): e230–36.

[8] Planetary Health Alliance, 'What is Planetary Health?', https://planetaryhealthalliance.org/what-is-planetary-health (accessed 28 Feb. 2026).

First launched in 2015, with a report by the Rockefeller Foundation-*Lancet* Commission, the planetary health framework has since gained significant financial and institutional support.[9] While earlier frameworks, including Conservation Medicine, Geo/Eco health and One Health, also linked the environment with health concerns,[10] planetary health distinguishes itself through its focus on 'safeguarding planetary boundaries' and its effort of systematically connecting human medicine with system ecology, biogeography and social sciences.

From a scientific perspective, planetary health has made a significant contribution by expanding a narrow biomedical focus on individual bodies to systematically mapping the impact that environmental changes have on human health. Framing environmental degradation as a direct threat to health also has the strategic advantage of broadening the coalition for a 'great transition' away from extractive fossil fuel economies towards just futures. Such coalition building is especially crucial amid the resurgence of populist parties, the spread of misinformation and growing distrust in science and public institutions. Yet, with the current US government withdrawing from international climate agreements and foreign aid, and significantly cutting medical and environmental research infrastructure, meaningful social change is unlikely to come from global political and business elites.

While planetary health is described not only as a research field but also as a social movement, the framework often lacks critical reflection on its normative assumptions about 'health' and the power imbalance and privileges within its own institutional structures.[11] The official reports on planetary health tend to frame 'human civi-

[9] S. Whitmee et al. 'The Rockefeller Foundation–Lancet Commission on planetary health. Safeguarding human health in the Anthropocene epoch: report of The Rockefeller Foundation–Lancet Commission on planetary health', *The Lancet* **386** (10007) (2015): 1973–2028.

[10] H. Lerner and C. Berg. 'A comparison of three holistic approaches to health: One Health, EcoHealth, and Planetary Health', *Frontiers in Veterinary Science* **4** (163) (2017).

[11] S. Gepp et al., 'Planetary Health: Challenging power and privilege is key to a fairer and healthier future', *British Medical Journal* **385** (2024): q853.

lisation' as a unified agent and 'health' as a measurable, universal goal, thereby underplaying questions of power, inequality, scientific colonial legacies and contested values of what constitutes a 'healthy' life. Reproducing the health inequalities that drive planetary crises, however, would seriously undermine the central goal of planetary health 'to ensure a healthy future for both human health and all life on Earth' through sustainable and equitable processes.[12]

These potential blind spots have also been addressed by scholars from within the planetary health community, who, for instance, call for a centring of Indigenous perspectives which have been historically marginalised in climate discourses and assessments.[13] Beyond a merely symbolic acknowledgement, they argue for recognising Indigenous People's sovereignty, language and lifeways as determinants of planetary health. At the same time, they warrant that traditional knowledge – being collective, holistic, earth-centred and place-specific – is not assimilable as information into Western scientific frameworks.[14] Learning and unlearning different ways of seeing and relating to the world requires epistemic pluralism as a necessary component of a planetary health pedagogy.[15] Other voices point to the neocolonial and modernist tendencies within the planetary health framework, arguing that it often overlooks alternative health perspectives and practices emerging from the Global South. They further critique the initial Lancet report's anthropocentric language that frames non-human animals and natural systems primarily in instrumental terms – as a 'life-support system' for human health.[16] Lastly, they draw attention to the political economy shaping planetary health,

[12] Planetary Health Alliance, *Roadmap to Action Plan*, PHAM2024, 2024.

[13] N. Redvers et al., 'The determinants of planetary health: an Indigenous consensus perspective', *The Lancet Planetary Health* **6** (2) (2022): e156–63.

[14] Ibid., e156.

[15] N. Redvers, C.F. Guzmán and M. Parkes, 'Towards an educational praxis for planetary health: a call for transformative, inclusive, and integrative approaches for learning and relearning in the Anthropocene', *The Lancet Planetary Health* **7** (2023): e77–85.

[16] O.S. Baquero et al., 'From modern planetary health to decolonial promotion of One Health of Peripheries', *Frontiers in Public Health* 9 (2021): n. p.

particularly the influence of its major 'philanthrocapitalist' donors such as the Rockefeller Foundation and the Wellcome Trust.[17]

How can health be reconfigured across different spatio-temporal scales and cosmologies without reproducing the (neo)colonial dynamics through which medical knowledge is produced in the Global North and tested and imposed on populations in peripheral regions? From a critical humanities perspective, the concept of '*the planetary*' may offer a possible response. While 'the planetary' in planetary health is mainly defined through the universal episteme of large-scale Earth system boundaries, scholars in the humanities have mobilised the term to the opposite effect: to challenge the totalising logic of the globe and idea of a frictionless transition between scales.[18] Not everything in the living world is scalable – expandable without transformation of its basic elements – still the scalable and nonscalable are not exclusive to each other either, but exist with one another.[19] So, rather than reducing 'the planetary' to an aggregate of different scientific disciplines and the information that they provide, might we understand it as an assemblage 'in the making' and 'as a figure of collective responsibility and environmental relation'?[20] A 'planetary health humanities' can attend to these complexities and potentially incommensurable modes of thought, by foregrounding disparate visions of health and wellbeing that cannot always be neatly subsumed under a single overarching model or scaled up into a universal solution.[21]

[17] C. Butler, 'Philanthrocapitalism: Promoting global health but failing planetary health', *Challenges* **10** (24) (2019).

[18] G.C. Spivak, '"Planetarity" (Box 4, WELT)', *Paragraph* **38** (2) (2015): 290–92; A.J. Elias and C. Moraru, *The Planetary Turn: Relationality and Geoaesthetics in the Twenty-First Century* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2015).

[19] A. Lowenhaupt Tsing, 'On nonscalability: The living world is not amenable to precision-nested scales', *Common Knowledge* **18** (3) (2012): 505–24.

[20] J. Gabrys, 'Planetary health in practice: Sensing air pollution and transforming urban environments', *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications* **7** (1) (2020): 2.

[21] B. Lewis, 'Planetary health humanities–responding to COVID times', *Journal of Medical Humanities* **42** (1) (2021): 3–16; H. Härting and H. Meek, *Pandemics and Planetary Health Humanities* (New York: Routledge, 2024).

The essays gathered in this special issue respond to the planetary health humanities' call for an imaginative, critical and pluridisciplinary mode of thinking 'health' across multiple scales, places and interrelations of the planetary.[22] In a broader sense, the contributions situate the concept of planetary health within the environmental humanities – a multidisciplinary field that engages critically with questions pertaining to the representation, understanding, and transformation of 'the environment' within and beyond scientific discourses.[23] The field emerged in response to the pressing awareness of an ecological crisis since the 1970s, and the conjuncture of debates in environmental philosophy, ecocriticism, political ecology and cultural geography on the relation between 'culture' and 'nature'. Whereas its roots are often associated with North American writers in the tradition of Aldo Leopold, John Muir and Rachel Carson, it has since significantly been shaped by feminist and decolonial scholars who centre questions of environmental justice, world literatures, technoscience, waste studies and (post-)extractive landscapes.[24] Environmental humanities research emphasises that the planetary crisis is not merely a biophysical problem requiring scientific solutions, but is embedded in shared cultural imaginaries and historically situated socio-economic structures.[25] Conversely, 'thinking through the environment' unsettles the presumed exceptionality of 'humanist categories' such as language, culture, and meaning.[26] In short, it

[22] Härting and Meek, *Pandemics*.

[23] U. Heise, J. Christensen and M. Niemann (eds), *The Routledge Companion to the Environmental Humanities* (New York: Routledge, 2017); C. Mauch, 'What are the environmental humanities? And what is the secret of their appeal?', *GAIA: The Transdisciplinary Journal* **29** (2020): 209.

[24] E. DeLoughrey, J. Didur and A. Carrigan (eds), *Global Ecologies and the Environmental Humanities: Postcolonial Aproaches* (Oxfordshire: Routledge, 2015); M. Liboiron, *Pollution Is Colonialism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2021); M. Ferdinand, *Decolonial Ecology: Thinking from the Caribbean World* (Cambridge: Polity, 2022).

[25] S. Sörlin, 'Environmental humanities: Why should biologists interested in the environment take the humanities seriously?', *BioScience* **62** (9) (2012): 788–89.

[26] D. Bird Rose et al., 'Thinking through the environment, unsettling the humanities', *Environmental Humanities* **1** (1) (*2012*): 1–5.

prompts us to be reflexive about the use and abuse of metaphors and concepts through which our worlds come to be and which shape our becoming in the world.

How appropriate, after all, is a concept such as 'health' when applied to the planet? Can a planet, or its populations, be considered healthy in the same sense as an individual organism? Even on the level of an organism, health is far more than the mere aggregation of properly functioning organs; it is shaped by the subjective experience, shared cultural norms, social expectations and historical contingencies. To call someone healthy is already to invoke a vision of what counts as a life well lived. What counts as an optimal level of health or environmental robustness? Who determines what is good for the planet? The perspectives from the environmental humanities gathered in this special issue ponder these questions from different methodological angles, which we thematically categorise under 'Genealogies', 'Narratologies', 'Sense of Place' and 'Food Relations'.

Genealogies

In an exaggerated modernist sense, the natural sciences are often characterised as discovering 'hard facts' – objective truths about nature – whereas the humanities are associated with subjective and speculative forms of inquiry. As scholars in the field of Science and Technology Studies have shown, this dualism is flimsy, since the stabilisation of scientific facts equally involves processes of negotiation and mediation that rely on inherited metaphors and material tools.[27] In brief, knowledge is always situated within a social, historical and embodied partial perspective.[28] This calls us to probe the normative assumptions and conceptual foundations that shape contemporary notions of planetary health, as articulated in the official literature.

[27] B. Latour and S. Woolgar, *Laboratory Life: The Construction of Scientific Facts* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986).

[28] D.J. Haraway, 'Situated knowledges: The science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective', *Feminist Studies* **14** (3) (1988): 575–99.

Inquiring into the historical emergence[29] of this concept and its epistemological underpinnings,[30] allows us to question what might otherwise appear as self-evident and to develop a moral and political attitude towards how one wants to be governed, by whom and at what cost.[31]

Narratologies

A critical examination of the cultural and epistemic grounds of planetary health raises the question of which alternative narrative forms of wellbeing, suffering, harm and healing may be not only conceptually useful but also sensibly effective? Whereas the monitoring and modelling of planetary processes and human health have their pragmatic use, they make the world intelligible in often quantifiable and unitary ways, often thus concealing as much as they reveal. To subvert the tenacious myths of human exceptionality, infinite economic growth and species level survival perpetuated in Anthropocene discourses, including planetary health, narratological strategies may be employed to convey a different sense of reality, one that includes the play between fact and fiction, thinking and feeling as modes of world-building.

Ecofeminist narratives constitute one such alternative genre for world-building.[32] Another is the genre of climate fiction, such as Michel Nieva's *Dengue Boy* (2023), which highlights the entanglements of climate change, disease, colonial histories and class inequality. It reminds us that beyond apocalyptic diagnoses lies a vast

[29] L. Klassen, 'Controlling the planet's health: From homeostasis and geophysiology to the Planetary Health Watch', *Global Environment* **19** (2) (2026): 296–316.

[30] F. Worral, 'Crisis of the planetary: Epistemological holism and the production of environmental risk', *Global Environment* **19** (2) (2026): 278–295.

[31] M. Foucault, 'What is critique?' in *The Politics of Truth*, ed. by S. Lotringer and L. Hochroth (New York: Semiotext(e), 1997). The essay is based on a lecture originally given the French Society of Philosophy on 27 May 1978.

[32] I. Janicka, 'Ecofeminist grand narratives? Cohabitability with more-than-human worlds', *Global Environment* **19** (2) (2026): 317–336.

terrain of multispecies suffering and grief – experiences that otherwise risk being concealed by the abstractions of techno-scientific solutions to planetary problems.[33] Can a recalibration of the sensible and of action and thought outside dominant capitalist cultural forms contribute to the building of capacities for palliative care, collective grief, and solidarity?[34]

Sense of place, sense of planet

Planetary diagnosis often regards specific small-scale places as subordinary to the larger planetary system. Thus, turning our attention to singular places helps ground the universalising figures of planetary health. How can we account for these context specific stories, without losing sight of the bigger picture?

Historically, islands in the Caribbean and Oceania have been occupied by colonial regimes as sites of military strategy, scientific experimentation, slavery, and economic exploitation. These places are shaped by histories of multispecies cohabitation, cosmologies and practices that are highly specific and not easily transposable elsewhere. Of particular importance in these stories are bodies of water, such as the fishponds[35] and wetlands[36] featured in this issue. The particularity of these places does not render them irrelevant in a planetary context; rather, it makes them especially significant as allegories for the planet, revealing both where current trajectories of extraction and ecological disruption may lead and what forms of life and relation might emerge in damaged landscapes. A perspective that takes

[33] A. Castro, 'Tropicalizing planetary health: Ecologies of contagion under chemical colonialism in South America', *Global Environment* (2026) **19** (2) (2026): 337–359.

[34] D.M. Harris, 'Planetary palliation: Dying, grief, and solidarity on a damaged planet', *Global Environment* **19** (2) (2026): 360–378.

[35] T. Matzta and N. Heller, 'Interscalar health: From Hawaiian fishpond to planet (and back)', *Global Environment* **19** (2) (2026): 379–402.

[36] K. Crane, 'Shifting wetlands attitudes in Singapore and Perth: Tracing metaphors, values and mobilising publics on site', *Global Environment* **19** (2) (2026): 403–421.

individual places seriously offers something different: a view in which justice and equity are not abstract ideals but lived realities.

Food relations

Metabolic relations are a fundamental to life, often blurring commonly presumed boundaries between organic and inorganic, living and nonliving. One need only consider the afterlife of 'dead' trees as sustenance and breeding grounds for new generations of species. In this sense, an essential part of how we relate to our surroundings, and to each other, our communities and even ourselves, is mediated through what we ingest and excrete. Food thus occupies a crucial intersection of human health and environmental sustainability: what and how we cultivate, distribute and consume shapes biodiversity, soil health, freshwater systems and climate trajectories. Yet, the quantitative framework that operates with food groups as categories, measures value in calories and defines food primarily as a source of energy, do not always prove to be accurate or just.[37]

In the wake of colonialism and especially capitalist industrial agriculture, the biochemical composition of this 'web of life', stretching across and beyond individual organisms, has been significantly altered. We are only slowly beginning to grasp the latent and often invisible consequences of toxins that have sedimented in our soils and oceans, effects that are still unfolding. Examining food relations beyond the quantitative nutritional value and function present in the *Lancet EAT*-Commission's proposal for a universal 'planetary health diet', gives a more complex account of how agricultural systems both depend on and transform ecosystems. A planetary diet that aspires to be truly just, not merely in name, should perhaps acknowledge that food relations are ecologically and historically situated, culturally specific and bound to territorial struggles.

[37] A. Krebber and N. Mackert, 'Rationing planetary relations: Multispecies agencies as challenge to quantification in the Planetary Health Diet', *Global Environment* **19** (2) (2026): 422–439.

The first article of this issue, by Finian Worral, offers a philosophical critique of the 'epistemological holism' that underpins the planetary health framework as defined in the Rockefeller-*Lancet* Commission report. Questioning the 'normative horizon' that the definition of environmental risk at the level of the whole Earth system constitutes, Worral argues that planetary health undermines its own appeal to a holistic, yet, importantly, grounded, normative conception of health. He, thus, proposes to reverse this logic by starting 'with values, with norms and ideals and their historical contexts, before moving to the quantifiable and measurable'.[38] In a similar vein, yet with a historical inflection, Lijuan Klassen traces a genealogy of a certain 'physiological understanding of health … characterised by a dynamic stability within narrow limits' in the planetary health discourse.[39] Showing how the concept of *homeostasis* traveled across early twentieth-century physiology, cybernetics and system ecology, she asks what presuppositions and prescriptions this notion of 'health' as planetary system stability holds for politics and society and who is excludes from this epistemic frame.

Yet, before throwing 'grand narratives' out with the bath water for the sake of localised, small-scale narratives, Iwona Janicka challenges readers to reconsider their conceptual force.[40] In reference to a recent reclaiming of metanarratives in ecofeminist thought, she outlines major concepts, including *universality*, *care*, *generativity* and *subsistence*, for rethinking 'our position of being human on the planet and conceive of a more-than-human cohabitability on the grandest – and most effective – scale'.[41] One of the most powerful narrative tools in exploring multi-species modes of cohabitation is the novel, as Azucena Castro demonstrates, in her literary analysis of Michel Nieva's *La infancia del mundo* ('Dengue Boy', 2023).[42] Castro connects the novel's cyberpunk aesthetics set in a future tropicalised

[38] Worral, 'Crisis of the planetary', p. 294.
[39] Klassen, 'Controlling the planet's health', p. 299.
[40] Janicka, 'Ecofeminist grand narratives?'
[41] Ibid. p. 320.
[42] Castro, 'Tropicalising planetary health'.

landscape with the histories of extractive colonialism and toxic fumigation campaigns in the South Americas. Her analysis shows how the novel through its protagonist–a non-binary humanoid mosquito child–challenges colonial modernist narratives of health and diseases, that build on the dichotomy between clean/contaminated, healthy/unhealthy, civilised/savage. In the discourses on planetary health, death and grief are rarely reflected upon, but, all the while, so much of life in the Anthropocene is characterised by such experiences. A very personal story is the starting point of Dylan Harris' compelling engagement with this conundrum that raises the question of how to deal with these universally shared, unequally distributed and often socially invisibilised experiences of death and harm.[43] How can we make room and hold space for collective mourning, palliative care and solidarity as a 'politics of easing suffering' on a damaged planet which has not seen the end of its ecological crisis?

Building capacity and practices of care and revitalisation of devastated landscapes and lifeways is something that Indigenous and traditional communities have been engaged in for centuries. One such story is told by Matza and Heller in their report on the restoration of a fishpond in Waiheʻe, a small coastal refuge in central Maui, Hawai'i, where 150 land stewards are engaged in the collective and spiritual practice of *uhau humu pōhaku* (Hawaiian dry-stack stone masonry), literally meaning 'rock weaving'.[44] Resonating with Worral's proposal to move from the ground of lived experience to the planetary scale, Tomas Matzta and Nicole Heller invite us to think of *pōhaku* (the stone and spiritual object) as an 'interscalar vehicle' that 'help us to see relationships among scales, objects and political histories'.[45]

From the fishpond in Waihe'e we move to another waterbody that holds significance for planetary wellbeing: wetlands, which are often described as the 'kidneys' or 'sinks' of the planet due to their CO_2 storing and filtering capacities. Pushing against this anthropocentric narrative, Kylie Crane draws on her experiences during

[43] Harris, 'Planetary palliation', p. 368.
[44] Matzta and Heller, 'Interscalar health'.
[45] Ibid., p. 392.

field trips to wetland sites in Perth, Western Australia, and Singapore to show their differences but also commonalities in rallying local communities to fend off capitalist urban developments.[46] Could these wetland sites also act as a kind of 'interscalar vehicle'? With their characteristic of connecting different habitats through the tidal flows of water, Crane suggests, they may compel us to see the inherently relational character of planetary health.

The final section of the special issue turns to a significant problem for planetary health: the dual food crisis. Current global food systems are major drivers of ecological degradation and climate change, which aggravates the breakdown of arable land and freshwater resources, leading to increased risk of malnutrition and loss of food sovereignty. André Krebber and Nina Mackert challenge the Planetary Health Diet's proposed solution of a sustainable 'universal health reference diet' and its translation of a complex food web into a quantitative set of nutrients and proteins.[47] With its roots in nineteenth-century calorie counting, they argue, this technoscientific solution reflects the logic of an Enlightenment rational that reduces food production, cultures, relations and dependencies to quantifiable, economic terms. As a counterpoint to universalist nutritional models, Shivani Kaul and colleagues analyse the '1000 Golden Days in Bhutan' campaign.[48] By drawing on traditional recipes and locally grown crops, the initiative demonstrates how context-sensitive approaches may prove more sustainable and socially just than standardised global interventions based on abstract models of 'growing humans'. This 'science from below' offers a compelling example of how to 'how to feed humans otherwise in an era of uneven climate crisis'.[49] Against a different historical background than Bhutan, one strongly shaped by colonialism and plantation slavery, Helena Lopes and Bruno Prado present three stories from Brazil – from the

[46] Crane, 'Shifting wetlands attitudes'.

[47] Krebber and Mackert, 'Rationing planetary relations'.

[48] S. Kaul et al., 'From Sprinkles to *kabchi*: Ethnographic insights on planetary health and the pluriverse from Bhutan', *Global Environment* **19** (2) (2026): 440–465.

[49] Ibid., p. 462.

South, the Northeast and the Amazonian borderlands.[50] Their contribution illuminates the local struggles of grassroots agroecological movements against commercial deforestation, contamination and restricted access to land and water. In these contexts, territorial sovereignty and food sovereignty emerge as inseparable dimensions of planetary habitability and climate justice.

To conclude, Fabienne Will's visual essay shows how objects might function as interscalar vehicles to help visualise the unseen aspects of planetary health. Her text guides us through the exhibition titled *Planetary Health – Am Puls von Mensch und Planet* ('*Planetary Health – One Planet. One Health. Our Future.*'), on display at the Deutsche Museum in Munich from February through September 2026.[51] The exhibition succeeds in concretising the complex and abstract relations of planetary health with the help of scientific models, artworks and everyday objects, like a glass of tap water or a doll found after a flood. Taken together, these objects make the interdependence of health of human communities and the health of ecosystems sensible to visitors.

Planetary Health thus appears not as a settled paradigm but as an evolving and contested field of inquiry – a heuristic device and a provocation. The contributions assembled in this special issue do not seek to stabilise its meaning; rather, they open it to plural genealogies, narrative experiments, grounded practices and situated food relations. Taken together, they advance a more reflexive and plural conception of planetary health(s): one that treats the planetary not as a fixed scale of governance but as a figure of shared responsibility. In doing so, this issue invites continued dialogue across disciplines, cosmologies and political struggles about how we might inhabit a damaged planet differently.

[50] H. Lopes and B. Prado, 'Activism and stories around agroecology and climate justice for new ways to inhabit the planet', *Global Environment* **19** (2) (2026): 466–85.

[51] F. Will, 'Visualising the unseen – challenges in exhibiting planetary health', *Global Environment* **19** (2) (2026): 486–507.

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Lijuan Klassen is a doctoral researcher at the Rachel Carson Center and the Munich Science Communication Lab (MSCL). Her research in cultural analysis is situated within the environmental humanities with a science historical focus. Drawing on critical theory, feminist care critiques, political ecology and media studies, her dissertation project explores how current and historical representations of 'planetary health' have shaped public and scientific understandings of the framework. Her research focuses on the question how 'the planetary' has been mediated and made operable as an object of governance, and on the changing role of science communication within a neoliberal academic landscape.

Email: *lu.klassen@rcc.lmu.de*

https://orcid.org/0009-0000-2914-3820

Christof Mauch is Director of the Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society, Chair in American Cultural History and Professor of History at LMU Munich, and an Honorary Professor in Ecological History at Renmin University, China. Mauch has held Visiting Professorships around the world, including recently at Venice International University and the University of Wisconsin. Mauch is a Past President of the European Society for Environmental History. His most recent books include *Wie der Mensch die Erde verändert: Die verwandelte Welt* (2024) and *Paradise Blues: Travels Through America's Environmental History* (2024).

Email: *mauch@lmu.de*

https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4017-1467