Declarations of Dependence: On the Constitution of the Anthropocene

Henrik Enroth
Linnaeus University

Abstract
As the gravity of anthropogenic climate change is dawning on humanity, essential political aspects of the climatic situation remain unexplored. This article argues that our entering the Anthropocene amounts to a constitutive moment: a moment in which new principles of coexistence are being declared. Drawing on, as well as critically engaging with, the work of Bruno Latour and Hannah Arendt, I introduce and explain the metaphor declarations of dependence to make sense of what scientists, activists, academics and journalists are doing, in political terms, when they announce the Anthropocene. Theoretically as well as practically, this metaphor opens for a more helpful understanding of the fraught relationship between science and the public on the issue of anthropogenic climate change. I end by considering the possibility that this metaphor, literally construed, can help us make today the first day in the rest of our lives in the Anthropocene.

Keywords
Anthropocene, Hannah Arendt, climate change, Bruno Latour

Belatedly and unevenly, the existential gravity of anthropogenic climate change is dawning on humanity. As authorities on the subject explained already a decade ago, the ‘human imprint on the global environment has now become so large and active that it rivals some of the great forces of Nature in its impact on the functioning of the Earth system’ (Steffen et al., 2011: 843). Often noted is the urgent need for collective action and organization. Also frequently noted are the organized denial, the looming apathy, the anxiety, the fear, even the panic, while efforts to take control of the climatic situation can only be, at this point, damage control. Climate and earth system science make it clear to those willing
and able to pick up the message that the time has long since passed when anthropogenic climate change might have been reversed, and it presently appears that the window is closing on an opportunity to avert or at least reduce consequences of global warming that scientists agree will be nothing short of catastrophic (Clark et al., 2016; IPCC, 2018). ‘All progressive political thought’, Dipesh Chakrabarty has remarked in one of his pioneering pieces on the Anthropocene, ‘will have to register this profound change in the human condition’ (2012: 15).

This remark was made about a decade ago. Since then, social, cultural and political theorists have been busy exploring the Anthropocene. Yet it is as if this bleak predicament has so overwhelmed us that essential political aspects of the profound change remain unregistered, in spite of – or, as I shall argue, in part because of – the steady trickle of books and essays on anthropogenic climate change and its implications for social and political theory and practice (e.g. Forrester and Smith, 2018; Hamilton et al., 2015; Hamilton, 2017; Latour, 2017, 2018; Mann and Wainwright, 2018; Purdy, 2015, 2018). The literature has been caught up, like many of us, in the overpowering vortex of the Anthropocene, preoccupied with the unprecedented and the fateful, in the throes of planetary apocalypse. We keep hearing that an apocalyptic mode of discourse is necessary in our current situation; without such a mode of discourse, we are told, ‘there is no way to get us to move into action’ (Latour, 2017: 218; cf. Hamilton, 2010; Wallace-Wells, 2019a). The point has been to instill the sense ‘that something unfathomably great is taking place’ (Hamilton, 2017: x). To that end, it has been suggested that ‘we’re at a point where alarmism and catastrophic thinking are valuable’ (Wallace-Wells, 2019a). Given the gravity and urgency of the climatic situation, whatever precipitates our ‘waking up to the rude shock of the planet’s otherness’, as Chakrabarty has acutely put it (2014: 23), is presumably a good thing.

In this article I take issue with that presumption. Social, cultural and political theory has failed to identify and clarify the most immediate and consequential political aspects of our entering the Anthropocene; this is not only a profound transformation in geological, biological and climatological systems, and an incipient shift in human self-understanding; it is also a certain kind of political event, the nature and implications of which have so far escaped both theorists and activists. Critically engaging with, but also drawing on, the work of Bruno Latour, I argue that the apocalyptic tone recently adopted on the subject – not least in Latour’s work – is a symptom of this disregard as much as it is a reaction to anthropogenic climate change itself. My general argument, and the main contribution of this piece, can be stated plainly: at this point, at the point where alarmism and catastrophic thinking have come to seem valuable, academic and public discourse on the Anthropocene has reached a dead-end, and we need to reboot theorizing for analytical as
well as practical purposes. The language needed to make sense of the most immediate political aspects of our situation is currently missing in academic and public discourse, yet such a language is readily available if we change perspectives on the Anthropocene.

Drawing on, but also critically engaging with, the work of Hannah Arendt, I argue that our present situation is best understood, in political terms, as a constitutive moment, a moment in which new principles of coexistence are being articulated, in this case by scientists, activists, academics, journalists and others who profess to speak and act in the name of the Anthropocene. This is a kind of situation that needs to be unpacked in its own terms, and that is best unpacked, I argue, by reference to analogous moments in the past. Recalling what Arendt took to be the most successful and instructive such moment in modern political history – the American founding and the Declaration of Independence – I introduce and explicate the metaphor declarations of dependence to make sense of what is being done, in political terms, when this profound change in the human condition is announced.

What follows is an exercise in changing perspectives, a proposal for a new way of looking at the present moment in our entering the Anthropocene. This moment revolves around a certain mode of political action in which Arendt took a great interest: the act of starting anew, of reimagining and rearticulating in public the conditions under which we live together. As I hope to show, adopting such a perspective on the Anthropocene allows us to see more clearly what is at stake, theoretically and practically, in getting us to move into action on anthropogenic climate change. This turns, I suggest, on our understanding of the relationship between those who now declare dependence the new principle of co-existence – and the authority claimed or assumed in making such declarations – and those in whose name such declarations are made, the terrestrial community for which dependence is declared. In this as in any constitutive moment, we confront some of the most fundamental and intractable questions of political theory and practice, questions about the origins of authority and community, how these can be constituted and sustained – questions hitherto obscured by the apocalyptic mode of discourse in which we have all been enveloped.

A word on metaphor. I should clarify what I mean, and do not mean, when I refer to my organizing concept – declarations of dependence – as a metaphor. I use this term for public statements about the Anthropocene by scientists, activists, academics and journalists, statements to the effect that anthropogenic climate change implies inextricable interdependence among terrestrials, human and nonhuman (e.g. Brantley et al., 2017; Hamilton et al., 2015; Latour, 2018). If we take the American Declaration of Independence as the exemplar of a particular – and particularly modern – genre of political discourse (cf. Armitage, 2007), statements to this effect can be construed as declarations in a
metaphorical sense; they are clearly not intended as contributions to this genre of political discourse, but they can helpfully be construed as declarations insofar as they articulate a new principle of coexistence: dependence, rather than independence. At its very simplest, metaphor, as Kenneth Burke noted, ‘is a device for seeing something in terms of something else’ (1941: 421), in this case, a device for seeing announcements of this profound change in the human condition not only in the esoteric terms of climate and earth system science, but in the exoteric – political – terms of authority and community and their constitution.

To call this metaphorical is not to downplay the irreducible and uncontestable, yet still intensely contested, reality and materiality of anthropogenic climate change, nor to disregard the material and institutional conditions under which it can be discovered and communicated by scientists (Latour, 2004, 2017, 2018). On the contrary, this is a way of reopening what has been effectively if inadvertently foreclosed in current theorizing: the relationship between science and the public, between the material and the discursive, between geo-climatological fact and human affect. Anthropogenic climate change is but one of many areas in which trust and distrust in science is presently at stake, and in this particular area the clash between climate science and climate change denial has diverted our attention from the questions of authority and community that come to the fore in any constitutive moment. Arendt’s reflections on the American founding and the Declaration of Independence both illustrate and illuminate those questions, not because our current constitutive moment is historically comparable in any detail with the American founding, but because it is comparable in kind, because Arendt perspicaciously identifies and elucidates the act of starting anew.

Another word on metaphor. The etymologically original meaning of the Greek verb μεταφέρω is to carry over, to transfer (Liddell and Scott, 1889). What is to be carried over or transferred in this case is our understanding of terrestrial dependence, from something that happens to us, whether as planetary apocalypse or as impenetrable transformations in earth systems, to something of which we are, all of us, inextricably and palpably a part, as both agents and patients. I end accordingly, aspirationally, with the possibility that this metaphor, literally construed, might help us make today the first day in the rest of our lives in the Anthropocene.

The Black Box

All this begins and ends with ‘the public existence of the situation’, as Latour has aptly put it, the fact that the very facticity of the Anthropocene ‘is coming from the sciences’. Those of us who are not scientists will have little or no knowledge by acquaintance of anthropogenic climate change, since ‘climatic mutations are not something you
see’ (Stein Pedersen et al., 2019: 219), nor can we easily partake of the necessarily esoteric knowledge by description produced by science on this matter (cf. Russell, 1910). As Latour has shown, our access to the Anthropocene is inseparable not only from the empirical knowledge but from the very ways of knowing of biochemists, stratigraphers, and climatologists (Latour, 2018; cf. 2005). Scientists are ‘proving with their instruments the existence of the situation’, and the rest of us are reduced to either take their findings at face value, or ignore or deny them (Stein Pedersen et al., 2019: 219; cf. Latour, 2018: 79–80). Regardless of its exact timing and duration (Hamilton et al., 2015: 1–3), and whether we approach it as a geo-climatological process or a shift in human self-understanding, or both (Bonneuil, 2015; Chakrabarty, 2014; Hamilton et al., 2015), we enter the Anthropocene only by way of such instruments, which is to say only through the statements of scientists and those who accept and promote their findings.

While recent theorizing, not least Latour’s, has had much to say about what this means for science in its relationship to the public (e.g. Latour, 2017, 2018), for want of an adequate understanding of the political aspects of our entering the Anthropocene, what this means for the rest of us remains not just poorly understood but perilously misrepresented. Theorizing has foundered in the asymmetrical relationship between science and the public that is integral to climate change as a collective action problem (Latour, 2018: 79). ‘Significant gaps’, Chakrabarty has noted, ‘open up in the existing literature on the climate problem, between cognition and action, between what we scientifically know’, on the one hand, and ‘how we think about it when we treat it as a problem to be handled by the human means at our disposal’, on the other hand (2014: 3). These gaps have grown into a veritable lacuna, the kind of systemic omission that scientists and engineers call a black box. Some have raised doubts about the level and extent of ‘scientific literacy’ among the public whose consciousness needs to be raised and whose action is deemed necessary, if not sufficient, to address the climate problem (Mann and Wainwright, 2018: 7). Latour has remarked that ‘the relationship between researchers and the public is anything but purely pedagogical’ (Latour, 2018: 79), but he has also expressed the hope that scientists, ‘in joining the citizenship in this new regime, in being with politicians, activists, artists, etc.’, may nevertheless help raise consciousness and prompt action (Stein Pedersen et al., 2019: 219). But the dynamic remains unaccounted for: just how what ‘we’ – or rather ‘they’, the scientists – ‘scientifically know’ might be translated into something ‘to be handled by the human means at our disposal’, by ‘the citizenship in this new regime’.

Latour’s recent invocation of the Marxist tradition is instructive in its selective neglect of this dynamic. Exploring the notion of ‘geo-social classes’, Latour suggests that ‘the New Climatic Regime is resurrecting and intensifying the ancient, two-centuries old socialist movement and its
struggle against injustice’ (Stein Pedersen et al., 2019: 220). ‘The sea-change’ in politicizing the climate issue, Latour argues, ‘is when people begin to take it as a question of self-interest’ (Stein Pedersen et al., 2019: 220). But the decisive step from geo-social class _an sich_ to geo-social class _für sich_ is conspicuously left unexplored, posited rather than exposited, whereas that kind of transition is what social, cultural and political theory now needs to help us understand, and, I suggest, bring about. In an illustrative sentence in _Down to Earth_, Latour explains that ‘we shall have to draw maps of the struggles of geo-social loci in order to identify at last what the real interests of these loci are, with whom they are going to make alliances, and against whom they are going to fight’ (2018: 63, emphasis in original). Yet it remains unclear in this scenario not only who ‘we’ are who are drawing the maps, but also whether and how the maps we draw may or may not be accepted as adequate to reality by members of those geo-social classes whose loci and real interests we purport to map. For my purposes, the notion of geo-social classes itself is not at issue, still less how this notion should be related to the Marxist tradition from which Latour derives it. What is at issue is that this notion begs rather than answers the question of how human agents may or may not come to recognize the profound change that is now being announced by climate and earth system science.

**The Prophylactic Apocalyptic**

Empirically, Latour’s concepts fail to capture the heterogeneity of what we may loosely think of as ‘the climate movement’. Strategically, aligning ‘the New Climatic Regime’ closely with the ‘two-centuries old socialist movement’ will surely do nothing to ease the hyperpolarization that already threatens to consume what is literally a question of human survival. But nor do we get the theoretical resources we need to open the black box and flesh out the dynamic connecting those who now announce the Anthropocene with all of us who inhabit it. Instead we get apocalyptic fear, coming to the rescue as ‘a faint at the right moment, a saving aphasia’, as Roland Barthes described one of the functions of myth (Barthes, 1973: 167). The prospect of the end of humanity has been the unsurprising but unfortunate dominant in the discourse on the Anthropocene, an eschatology of biblical proportions by way of grim renderings of the earth as ‘defiant’ (Hamilton, 2017), an ‘angry beast’ (De Menocal, 2019; Schwartz, 2019), a ‘war machine’ capable of making itself, if or when we conclusively lose what is depicted as an indefinite losing battle, ‘uninhabitable’ (Wallace-Wells, 2019b).

Latour has articulated the main argument behind this – as he has appositely called it – ‘prophylactic’ use of the apocalyptic that has come to dominate academic and public discourse. It takes, in Latour’s words, a ‘powerful representation of the future in order to transform the
The invocation of planetary apocalypse has become a way to effectively cover over – rather than bridge – the gaps of which Chakrabarty speaks; fear, as Latour suggests, is supposedly the only way to get us to move into action. For theorists such as Latour and Clive Hamilton, and for influential public voices such as David Wallace-Wells, prophylactically boosting apocalyptic fear appears to be the only conceivable, if paradoxical, way to maintain hope that cognition may in fact be translated into action, that consciousness will in fact be raised so that climate governance measures may be effective and activism will come about, before it is entirely too late. We have been led to believe that the politics of fear is the only possible passage to the politics of the Anthropocene (Enroth, 2017).

There is plenty to take issue with concerning this saving aphasia: the simplistic view of human psychology; the ethically and democratically dubious reduction of most of us to mere pawns in a Pavlovian game of life and death, playing out, in real time, on a planetary scale (cf. Maris, 2015: 129–30). In view of Latour’s famous and infamous expansion of the category of agency, and the range of terrestrial agents to be reckoned with in the Anthropocene (cf. Latour, 2017, 2018), it is ironic that most of us are – initially, at least – reduced to patients rather than agents in this scenario, as if we first had to become the reactive objects of prophylactic fear-mongering in order for us then to become the active subjects of terrestrial interdependence.

Two main reasons suggest themselves as to why theorizing keeps ending up in this cul-de-sac – why otherwise subtle meditations on the ontology and epistemology of the Anthropocene conclude that, pragmatically, our best bet is to let ourselves be scared into action in the face of the end of the world. For one, the relationship between science and the public is regarded, by default, from the vantage point of the former. The seemingly obvious starting point is that we are confronted with an unprecedented geo-climatological transformation in need of a forceful response, and since we owe the public existence of the situation to science, any such response turns on the epistemic authority by way of which the public existence of the situation is established. Insofar as epistemic authority is in question, then, the gap between cognition and action appears insuperable; hence the need for prophylactic images of the apocalyptic.

For another, epistemic authority tends to be tacitly modeled on an understanding of authority in general as a command-compliance relationship (Enroth, 2013: 341–2). This is a relationship that Latour has suggested has been fortuitously broken, precisely because the commands of science are no longer, in the climatic situation, unquestionably complied with. Science can no longer, Latour argues, cling to the kind of ‘lofty and disinterested epistemology’ on which its commands have traditionally rested; claims to epistemic authority in relation to the climatic
situation are likely to be contested by a broad range of interested parties (Latour, 2018: 79–80). Any ‘matters of fact’ presented by science will also be ‘matters of concern’ for anyone with a stake in the matters at hand (Latour, 2017: 164). As Arendt once put it, ‘factual truth is no more self-evident than opinion’, which is why ‘opinion-holders find it relatively easy to discredit factual truth as just another opinion’ (1993: 243).

For Latour, climate change denial is the irrefutable proof of this, illustrated by the fact that ‘financing floods in’ to support the organized denial of anthropogenic climate change, while no ‘major corporation has spent a penny to produce ignorance about the detection of the Higgs boson’ (Latour, 2018: 79–80). But that only tells us that this traditional form of scientific authority is supposedly no longer effective – ironically, or tragically, at the very moment when we seem most in need of it. This again begs rather than answers the question of how the rest of us may or may not take heed of the profound change in the human condition, and how the dynamic through which that does or does not happen can be theoretically grasped and practically promoted.

The Critical Zone

Latour has suggested that a view of the earth as a critical zone might be helpful in this regard (Latour, 2014, 2018). Introduced in earth system science, the concept of a critical zone has opened for multidisciplinary study the ‘Earth’s surface from canopy to bedrock in its entirety as one integrated unit’ (Brantley et al., 2017: 842). In the singular, the term ‘critical zone’ designates ‘the thin layer in which life has radically modified the earth’s atmosphere and geology – as opposed either to the space beyond or to the deep geology below’ (Latour, 2018: 123). In the plural, a network of critical zone observatories has allowed researchers to gather information about atmosphere, water, land surface, regolith and biota from multiple sites of different dimensions, the sites having no preset ‘size or specified range of conditions’ aside from what is given by the research interests behind the observatories (Brantley et al., 2017: 848).

From the point of view of science, the notion of a critical zone and the evolving network of observatories come with numerous benefits, among them the possibility of conducting interdisciplinary research at the same sites; making long-term measurements; trying out modeling and prediction; gaining a better understanding of the systemic impact of catastrophic events; developing new techniques and instruments for measurement and monitoring; facilitating resource-management and public education; and coming up with hypotheses and making discoveries based on observations across multiple sites (Brantley et al., 2017: 849–51).

From the point of view of political theory, the benefit of the notion of a critical zone is commonsensical but equally consequential. The promise of the critical zone as a vision of terrestrial coexistence is that this is not
so much a vision as an embodiment, replacing the customary telescopic and microscopic points of view of our planet – both alien to human experience – with a way of life, a point de vie (Latour, 2018: 88, 125), conceived of in terms of action and reaction among a plurality of agents, human and nonhuman (cf. Starobinski, 2003). To conceive of the critical zone as a political zone would then require the creation of what Latour has referred to as ‘dwelling places’. A dwelling place is ‘that on which a terrestrial depends for its survival’, which inevitably includes consideration of ‘what other terrestrials also depend on it’ (Latour, 2018: 95). ‘To define a dwelling place, for a terrestrial, is to list what it needs for its subsistence’, something which, Latour points out, ‘holds as true for a wolf as for a bacterium, for a business enterprise as for a forest, for a divinity as for a family’ (Latour, 2018: 95).

In Latour’s words, the concept of a critical zone allows us to get ‘down to earth’, cutting the planetary down to size. ‘While it is impossible for people to grasp what it is to take up responsibility for the stewardship of the whole planet, it is much easier’, Latour wagers, ‘to see where one stands in relation to a critical zone of variable dimensions’ (Latour, 2014: 4). Intuitively, this is a plausible claim, and the notion of dwelling places is an auspicious one for a political theory of the Anthropocene. But just how much easier this is is by no means obvious. Although its terrestrial referents are closer to home, to the soil, the critical zone is itself an esoteric concept – a concept of earth system science – which, as such, does nothing to bridge the gap between cognition and action. This notion does not in and of itself put us – we who ostensibly belong to ‘the citizenship in this new regime’ – in a position where we can start defining our dwelling places, because we are only able to see where we stand in relation to critical zones in the plural by way of the instruments of earth system science (Latour, 2017: 252; 2018: 78–81). That, of course, is Latour’s point, but pointing this out within the confines of current theorizing only brings us back to where we started, that is, to the inscrutability of the black box and the seemingly impassable relationship between science and the public, and to yet another rerun of the politics of fear.

The Act of Foundation

Here a change of starting point and a rebooting of theory is called for. Instead of starting, again and again, by describing the climatic situation as an unprecedented terrestrial event, which, as such, is the epistemic prerogative of science, we should start by describing our situation as a rare, but far from unique, kind of political event. To that end, the Republican tradition in modern political thought is helpful. From Niccolò Machiavelli to the American founders and beyond, this tradition provides us with an irregular series of reflections on the nature and
role of the irregular in political life, so many attempts to broach, in different ways and in different contexts, the perplexing act of starting anew (Machiavelli, 1988; Arendt, 2006; Derrida, 1986; Honig, 1991; Pocock, 1975).

This is the kind of act in which the scientists and theorists of the Anthropocene that I reference in this essay are presently involved. What looks, from the starting point of science, like a gap between cognition and action, appears, from this starting point, as the constitution of authority and community in the critical zone. In political terms, when our entering the Anthropocene is being announced, those who make the announcements are engaged in what Hannah Arendt calls ‘the act of foundation’. Following Rousseau and Sieyès, Arendt identifies what she takes to be a genuinely political problem that the act of foundation brings to the fore, a problem she describes as ‘a vicious circle’: that ‘those who get together to constitute a new government are themselves unconstitutional, that is, they have no authority to do what they have set out to achieve’ (Arendt, 2006: 175–6).

What Arendt has in mind is not the institutionalized recurrent change of government in an electoral democracy, or even necessarily the state as a form of political organization, but the laying down of new principles of coexistence for any constellation of authority and community: ‘the fundamental law, the law of the land or the constitution’ (Arendt, 2006: 176). Note that before ‘constitution’ can be construed as a noun, referring to an object, however elusive or contentious such an object may be, it is a verb, referring to the act of constitution, an act that necessarily precedes the kind of framework for action and interaction typically designated by the word ‘constitution’ (cf. Waldron, 2000). The lack of foundation for any such act of foundation is palpable in the case on which Arendt based her ruminations on the subject. The American Declaration of Independence was issued ‘in the name & by authority of the good people of these states’ (Armitage, 2007: 163). Yet, as Jacques Derrida has pointed out in a variation on Arendt’s theme of vicious circularity, this good people ‘does not exist, before this declaration, not as such’ (1986: 10, emphasis in original). The lack of foundation with which any act of foundation is confronted means that this community, and the authority to speak and act in its name, effectively come into being only after – and as a consequence of – the very declaration of independence that they are invoked to authorize, ‘in a sort of fabulous retroactivity’ (Derrida, 1986: 10).

Similarly today when ‘the newly rediscovered value of dependency’ is invoked as the fundamental law, the law of the land or the constitution of the Anthropocene (Latour, 2018: 83). As a principle of terrestrial coexistence, dependence applies, Latour explains, to ‘workers as well as to birds in the sky, to Wall Street executives as well as to bacteria in the soil, to forests as well as to animals’ (2018: 87), yet these terrestrial agents
become a community – striking in its heterogeneity, radically indefinite in scope – only in view of dependence as the principle of their coexistence. In analogy with the vicious circularity or fabulous retroactivity of the American Declaration of Independence, the authority to declare dependence for a terrestrial community in the critical zone cannot be derived from the same community, precisely because this community does not yet exist, before this declaration, not as such.

Arendt’s interpretation of the American founding is an effort, noticeably strained, to solve this logical-cum-political problem: that those who undertake the act of foundation seem to lack, in the constitutive moment, the authority to do so. That the act of foundation in our current constitutive moment is undertaken by scientists and those who learn from them has regrettably diverted our attention from the political nature of this act. Arendt’s effort, strain and all, can help us see what has so far gone unnoticed: that the problem with the relationship between science and the public on the climate issue is not epistemic authority or the lack of it, nor the level of scientific literacy among the public, but a lack that is the indelible mark of any claim to authority in any constitutive moment. Insofar as this is a political problem, it certainly ‘cannot be fixed by simply delivering science to the masses’ (Mann and Wainwright, 2018: 7), but nor can it be fixed by simply pinning our hopes to a revivified socialist movement, let alone by subjecting ourselves to the prophylactic use of apocalyptic fear.

‘We Hold These Truths to Be Self-Evident’

Arendt’s own solution to this problem is to derive the authority of the act of foundation from that act itself, and from that act only. What Arendt wants to say about the American founding is that ‘it was the authority which the act of foundation carried within itself’ that ‘assured stability for the new republic’; that ‘there exists a solution for the perplexities of beginning’, a way to ‘break the vicious circle in which all first things seem to be caught’; and that this solution is inherent in the act of starting anew, which, for Arendt, is a defining aspect of human agency, indeed of humanity (1958: 8–9, 177–8). ‘What saves the act of beginning from its own arbitrariness’, she writes, ‘is that it carries its own principle within itself, or, to be more precise, that beginning and principle, principium and principle, are not only related to each other, but are coeval.’ And, less abstractly: ‘The way the beginner starts whatever he intends to do lays down the law of action for those who have joined him in order to partake in the enterprise and to bring about its accomplishment’ (2006: 191, 204, 205).

This is what Arendt wants to say, but it is not quite what her sources allow her to say. As Arendt herself was the first to note, and lament, the American founders do not seem to unequivocally share her strong
convictions about the act of foundation and its *sui generis* authority. Instead of authorizing Arendt’s claim that the act of foundation carries its authority ‘within itself’, the founders sought ‘a transcendent source of authority’ for their act of foundation. Arendt mentions the references in the preamble of the Declaration of Independence to ‘the laws of nature’ and ‘nature’s God’ as transcendent authorities to vouch for the good people and its claim to independence. She also mentions the famous line ‘we hold these truths to be self-evident’ (2006: 183–4). Arendt seizes on the ambiguity and apparent counter-finality in this construction – the pledge ‘we hold’ seemingly undercutting the self-evidence of the truths being declared; or the self-evidence of the truths seemingly rendering the pledge redundant:

Jefferson’s famous words, ‘We hold these truths to be self-evident’, combine in a historically unique manner the basis of agreement between those who have embarked upon revolution, an agreement necessarily relative because related to those who enter it, with an absolute, namely with a truth that needs no agreement, since, because of its self-evidence, it compels without argumentative demonstration or political persuasion. (Arendt, 2006: 184)

For Arendt, the problem with this construction is the reference to ‘an absolute’ to authorize the act of foundation. Arendt treats any absolute – whether its name is ‘God’, ‘nature’, or ‘truth’ – as being inadmissible as a source of authority in what she calls, more or less interchangeably, the realm of ‘human affairs’, ‘action’, ‘politics’, ‘freedom’, and ‘power’ (cf. Pitkin, 1998: 1). What ‘saved the American Revolution’, Arendt insists, in the face of the founders’ demonstrable equivocations, was the only admissible source of authority in this realm – ‘neither “nature’s God” nor self-evident truth, but the act of foundation itself’ (2006: 188).

As Bonnie Honig has remarked, to be able to make the Declaration of Independence support this interpretation, Arendt must ‘disambiguate’ the document (Honig, 1991: 101). Arendt separates and elevates ‘we hold’, purifying it into a perfect expression of the principle inherent in *principium*, a paradigmatic instance of ‘the making and the keeping of promises’ which, ‘in the realm of politics, may well be the highest human faculty’ (2006: 167). Before the Declaration of Independence, before the colonists even reached America, the Mayflower voyage brought ‘out in the open’ a ‘new American concept of power’, Arendt suggests, with ‘binding and promising, combining and covenanting’ as ‘the means by which power is kept in existence’ (Arendt, 2006: 158, 166). This immanent power of binding and promising, combining and covenanting, is invoked by Arendt as the sole source of the authority that she reads in, or into, the American act of foundation.
While ‘we hold’ is thus separated and elevated, ‘the laws of nature’, ‘nature’s God’, and Jefferson’s self-evident truths are relegated to the status of a ‘fallacy’ (Arendt, 2006: 185). In Arendt’s reading, the founders’ recourse to transcendent sources of authority needs to be explained, or explained away. As to Jefferson’s ‘we hold these truths to be self-evident’, the explanation offered is that ‘only mathematical laws were thought to be sufficiently irresistible to check the power of despots’; hence the appeal to an absolute – to self-evident truths – at the constitutive moment, as if what was being declared in the Declaration of Independence were on a par with ‘the axiomatic verities of mathematics’. Yet, Arendt points out, this is a ‘fallacy’, and one of which ‘Jefferson must have been dimly aware’, for ‘otherwise he would not have indulged in the somewhat incongruous phrase, “We hold these truths to be self-evident,” but would have said: These truths are self-evident’ (2006: 185, emphasis in original).

Arendt liberally speculates about what the founders ‘must have known’, what they must have been ‘dimly’, or ‘faintly’, aware of. While Arendt is – or wants to appear as if she is – absolutely sure of this, the founders ‘might have been faintly aware that there exists a solution for the perplexities of beginning which needs no absolute to break the vicious circle in which all first things seem to be caught’, namely, again, that the act of foundation ‘carries its own principle within itself’ (Arendt, 2006: 204–5). Although Arendt wants to say what her sources do not quite say, that the authority which the act of foundation carries within itself is inherent in the constitutive moment, even her own words on the matter suggest that the problem may not be entirely amenable to the kind of solution she seeks. Consider this instance of Arendt separating and elevating what the founders ‘must have known’, and contrasting that with what they actually wrote:

The very fact that the men of the American Revolution thought of themselves as ‘founders’ indicates the extent to which they must have known that it would be the act of foundation itself, rather than an Immortal Legislator or self-evident truth or any other transcendent, transmundane source, which eventually would become the fountain of authority in the new body politic. (Arendt, 2006: 196)

Note the conditional form and grammatical tense: ‘it would be the act of foundation itself’ which ‘eventually would become the fountain of authority’. Note also the vantage point: this is described not from the vantage point of posterity, where the act of foundation will always already have been authoritative. This is written from the vantage point of those who are themselves engaged in the act of foundation. The subjects in this passage are not ‘those who have joined’ the founders, after the fact, ‘to partake in the enterprise and to bring about its
accomplishment’, but the founders themselves, the founders who thought of themselves as such. From their vantage point, it cannot be said simply that it is the act of foundation itself which is the fountain of authority, precisely because those involved in the act of foundation ‘have no authority to do what they have set out to achieve’. Their authority is not yet extant, although, presumably, it will be; those of us who have joined, after the fact, know what the founders could not have known in the constitutive moment: that it would be the act of foundation itself which eventually would become the fountain of authority.

Pace Arendt, what this passage suggests is not that the act of foundation carries its authority within itself, but rather that authority can only make its appearance as such retroactively. Recall that Arendt uses not the term ‘authority’, but ‘power’, to describe the act of foundation. It is power, not authority, that is kept in existence, on and beyond the Mayflower, by way of ‘binding and promising, combining and covenanting’. As for authority, Arendt turns to her own favorite authorities, the Romans, to the founding of the city of Rome and the territorial expansion of the Roman empire, to derive a certain concept of authority, and to construct a certain etymology of the term to lend credence to her concept.

The Romans, she notes, ‘were bound to the specific locality of this one city’, being ‘really rooted in the soil’, yet they were also ‘capable of adding to the original foundation’ of their city until ‘the whole of Italy and, eventually, the whole of the Western world’ were part of the same territory, ‘as though the whole world were nothing but Roman hinterland’ (Arendt, 1993: 120). This ‘adding to the original foundation’, Arendt calls ‘authority’, adding that the Latin word auctoritas ‘derives from the verb augere, “augment,” and what authority or those in authority constantly augment is the foundation’ (1993: 121–2). In Rome, she explains, ‘all authority derives from this foundation, binding every act back to the sacred beginning of Roman history’ (1993: 123). ‘The authority of the living was always derivative’, Arendt concludes, depending ‘upon the authority of the founders, who no longer were among the living’ (1993: 122).

But if it is only in and by adding to the act of foundation that this act itself becomes authoritative, then this suggests something that Arendt herself could only have been faintly or dimly aware of, although she must have known it: that the authority of the founders is just as derivative of the authority – or the power – of the living as the reverse. For the founders, it could not have been the act of foundation itself that was the fountain of authority, only the transcendent sources of authority mentioned by Jefferson: natural law, nature’s God, self-evident truths. Only ‘eventually’ – only after the augmentation which is the authority of the living – would it be the act of foundation itself which would become the fountain of authority, for the good people which does not yet exist as such in the constitutive moment.
Four Theses on the Act of Foundation

I have dwelled at some length, and in textual detail, on Arendt’s reading of the American founding because it offers important insights into our current predicament. We are now in a position to revisit the relationship between science and the public. As long as we regard this relationship from the vantage point of the former, it is bound to seem fraught: we will be compelled to ask whether and how the epistemic authority of science may or may not translate into authoritative commands with which the rest of us may or may not comply; but, as I have argued, we will have few theoretical resources with which to answer this question, save in an ad hoc manner. If we change starting points, and approach the relationship between science and the public from the vantage point of the latter, we get a better view of the dynamic involved in this relationship.

First, in political terms, what is at stake when scientists, academics and activists declare dependence the new principle of coexistence in the Anthropocene is not only or not primarily the epistemic authority of climate and earth system science but the specific kind of power that is involved in any founding act. And, pace Latour, the power of science in our current constitutive moment is not of the same kind as the power of climate change denial. Latour’s suggested equivalence, that ‘matters of fact’ introduced by science also tend to be ‘matters of concern’ for the rest of us, misleadingly turns climate science and its critics into equal combatants in ‘an acknowledged state of war’ (Latour, 2017: 164, 246). To be sure, the critical zone ‘is not a classroom’, but nor is it simply or solely a war-zone of ‘contradictory interests’, ‘conflicting interpretations’, and ‘competing bodies of knowledge’, where ‘the smallest study will immediately be plunged into a full-scale battle of interpretations’ (Latour, 2018: 79–80; cf. Latour, 2017: 245–6).

Metaphorizing the critical zone as a war zone is, I suggest, an agonistic fallacy. This is Latour’s Hobbesian-Schmittian extrapolation from the clash between climate science and climate change denial (Latour, 2017: 220–54). Indeed, Latour himself has described this clash as a ‘pseudo-controversy’ (Latour, 2018: 79), yet, being superficially akin to Schmitt’s favored variety of existential conflict, this pseudo-controversy is nevertheless elevated to the status of paradigm for the power politics of the Anthropocene (Latour, 2017, 228–32; 2018: 79; cf. Schmitt, 1996, 2005). The power of science in this situation is more helpfully construed as an instance of Arendt’s power of promise and covenant, that is, the constitutive power of agents – in our case, scientists, academics and activists – who agree to bind themselves by new principles of coexistence. In the political terms proper to our constitutive moment, climate change denial is the old world striking back, in the name of an odious variety of independence, against the dependence now being declared.
Second, as Arendt appears to have recognized but fails to spell out consistently, the power inherent in the constitutive moment is a power that can be turned into authority — that is, made authoritative for those who follow the founders, as much as for the founders themselves — only by those who follow, only by making and keeping the same promises that were made in and by the act of foundation. If the terrestrial community in whose name the authority to speak and act for the Anthropocene is claimed is the retroactive effect of the constitutive power claiming that authority, then the power or authority to turn constitutive power into authority in turn rests with the same community, that is, with the rest of us, constituting ourselves as a terrestrial community by binding ourselves to the principle of dependence being declared in our name, by organizing our coexistence accordingly. This is the ‘mystical foundation’ of authority and community that marks any constitutive moment (cf. Derrida, 1992).

Third, what Arendt does not recognize is that what she approaches as a soluble problem may well be insoluble, insofar as authority and community cannot be positively present in the constitutive moment, only presupposed and deferred, promises to be made and, eventually, hopefully, kept (Derrida, 1986; Honig, 1991). Far from being a soluble problem, for Derrida this is the generic structure of différence: ‘the inadequation to itself of a present’ (1986: 12; cf. 1982: 3–27). Hence the transcendent sources of authority invoked in the Declaration of Independence: in the constitutive moment, for those who are engaged in the act of foundation, ‘there must be a last instance. God is the name, the best one, for this last instance and this ultimate signature’ (Derrida, 1986: 12).

In our current situation there are many names for this last instance. In climate science and in public discourse, ‘the Anthropocene’ is such a name. For Latour, following James Lovelock, ‘Gaia’ is such a name (Latour, 2017; Lovelock, 1995). For some earth system scientists, ‘the critical zone’ is such a name — perhaps the best one. No matter the name of the last instance, the authority, in our constitutive moment, to speak and act — and to speak on behalf of action — in the name of a terrestrial community can be claimed only by treating the source of authority and community as transcendent, located out there, in the climatic situation as such, the existence of which scientists claim to prove with their instruments, and of which scientists, theorists and activists claim to be no more, or less, than spokespersons, speaking and acting only vicariously.

But, fourth, such a transcendent source of authority cannot in and of itself engender the kind of worldly authority that is wielded in the constitutive moment. As Arendt points out, a transcendent source of authority — any absolute, any last instance — can be directly turned into political authority only in an authoritarian context. Indeed, Arendt describes it as ‘the essential characteristic of specifically authoritarian forms of
government’ that ‘the source of their authority, which legitimates the exercise of power, must be beyond the sphere of power and, like the law of nature or the commands of God, must not be man-made’ (Arendt, 1993: 110–11). Arendt’s preferred context is our own, that is, a nominally democratic context, where the terrestrial dependence declared by climate and earth system science can become a binding principle of coexistence only if and insofar as we ourselves pledge by it, turning the constitutive power that is epistemic authority into political authority by the making and keeping of promises.

The vexed question today, as in 1776, is of course how the ‘we’ engaged in the founding act – scientists and those who learn from them – can become the ‘we’ that is to abide by the principle of coexistence announced through that act, which is to say, ideally, but also de facto, all of us. In the terms I have introduced here, this comes down to whether and how the climatic situation can be conveyed in political terms, in the modality of a pledge, in lieu of the apolitical invocation of the apocalyptic. This is where the notion of a critical zone, and the vision of terrestrial coexistence it implies, can indeed be helpful, but only if this notion comes embedded in the exoteric language of political discourse, in which such a pledge can be made and received as such by a lay audience, rather than in the esoteric language of earth system science, or, for that matter, of social theory.

**Declarations of Dependence**

I conclude by considering one possible step in that direction. This essay being an exercise in changing perspectives, fleshing this out can only, at this point, be conjectural. Hence a thought experiment: what if we were to conceive of declarations of dependence not just metaphorically, but literally: as Declarations of Dependence? These would be actual documents, charters, should some groups of terrestrial agents take it upon themselves to draft, sign, and auto-authorize such documents, thus authorizing in the same stroke the epistemic authority cum constitutive power that would have prompted the drafting of such documents in the first place. Such actual Declarations of Dependence might list, as the Declaration of Independence listed, the relationships in which specific terrestrials find themselves entangled, along with the rules of engagement to be observed in interaction among the same terrestrials. Declarations of Dependence would thus codify the kind of framework typically designated by the word ‘constitution’, thereby augmenting – which, as we have seen, is the same as retroactively authorizing – the founding act that precedes any such framework.

In his insightful interpretation of the Declaration of Independence, David Armitage reminds us that the ‘thickening global connections’ of the day ‘challenged contemporaries to understand their world in
innovative ways’ (2007: 10). Mutatis mutandis, we face the same challenge today. In the face of that challenge, Declarations of Dependence would give a recognizably political form to Latour’s laudable notion of providing inventories of what various terrestrials need for their subsistence in the critical zone, and this would be a form with considerable historical and institutional capital. Declarations of Dependence, like Declarations of Independence, are situated, or situate themselves, in an interplay of action and reaction where a Declaration requires reaction, terrestrial recognition. Arendt describes the Declaration of Independence as a ‘list of very specific grievances against a very particular king’ that ‘develops into a rejection on principle of monarchy and kingship in general’ (2006: 120). With Declarations of Dependence, the order would rather be the reverse: a blanket declaration of terrestrial dependence issued by climate and earth system science, prompting specific lists of dependencies by specific terrestrial agents.

Declarations of Dependence may conceivably be drafted by any people or group of people: social movements, political parties, corporations, churches and congregations, villages, towns and cities, municipalities, states and regional associations of states; they may be drafted by an international organization such as the United Nations. The material and technological aspects of such documents and their production are beyond the scope of this essay, but it would obviously take resources – human, economic, cultural, social, and institutional – to produce them and to secure uptake by relevant audiences, that is, institutional validation (cf. Armitage, 2007). We may still entertain the hope that such documents would appear in a great many organizational forms, locally, regionally, and transnationally. And were such documents to materialize, we may also hope for ripple effects, as in the aftermath of the American Declaration of Independence, a document that inspired two centuries of declarations similar in spirit and not seldom in letter (Armitage, 2007). As a metaphor turned literal, Declarations of Dependence would let us tap into the aspirational universality of the declaration as a genre of political discourse. The implied reference to the Declaration of Independence would let those who wish conceive of their Declarations of Dependence as protest and emancipation from an existing order that has proved untenable.

Also, and back to where we started from, the substance of such declarations would – still conjecturally – undo the opposition of the esoteric and the exoteric, and bridge, as far as this can be done, the relationship between science and the public, between cognition and action. The new principle of coexistence is, after all, as old as the world – or, rather, as old as humanity; this is an inexorable aspect of ‘the common world’ in which we always and everywhere find ourselves as human beings (Arendt, 1958; cf. Heidegger, 1953; Butler, 2005). The anthropological datum of dependence may be as close to universal as we can hope to get; as a
principle of coexistence this will at least be existentially familiar, however neglected or suppressed the very notion of dependence has been in the theory and practice of Western modernity (cf. Lingis, 1998; Pitkin, 1999; Scherz, 2014).

We must not fool ourselves into believing that this metaphor would magically get us all to move into action, but it would let us open the black box and get a better view of the dynamic connecting – or disconnecting, as the case may be – those who announce the Anthropocene with all of us who inhabit it. This might let us shed the paralyzing sense of apocalyptic doom, while letting us benefit from the findings of science without reducing political authority to epistemic authority, or epistemic authority to agonistic power, or the politics of the Anthropocene to the politics of fear. The experience of drafting, communicating, debating, and – hopefully, at some point – acting on our Declarations of Dependence would serve to remind us that a constitutive moment is not in fact momentary but, as Derrida knew, indefinitely deferred. Today is the first day in the rest of our lives in the Anthropocene.

Acknowledgements

This essay is for Emilia and Elias. I want to thank the editors of TCS and four anonymous reviewers for helpful comments on a draft version. Thanks also to Alexander Hjelm.

ORCID iD

Henrik Enroth https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9975-6371

References

Arendt, Hannah (1958) *The Human Condition*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
Arendt, Hannah (1993) *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought*. London: Penguin Books.
Arendt, Hannah (2006) *On Revolution*. New York: Penguin Books.
Armitage, David (2007) *The Declaration of Independence: A Global History*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
Barthes, Roland (1973) *Mythologies*. London: Paladin.
Bonneuil, Christophe (2015) The geological turn: Narratives of the Anthropocene. In: Hamilton, Clive, Gemenne, François and Bonneuil, Christophe (eds) *The Anthropocene and the Global Environmental Crisis: Rethinking Modernity in a New Epoch*. London: Routledge.
Brantley, Susan L., McDowell, William H., Dietrich, William E., White, Timothy S., Kumar, Praveen, et al. (2017) Designing a network of critical zone observatories to explore the living skin of the terrestrial earth. *Earth Surface Dynamics* 5: 841–860.
Burke, Kenneth (1941) Four master tropes. *The Kenyon Review* 3(4): 421–438.
Butler, Judith (2005) *Giving an Account of Oneself*. New York: Fordham University Press.
Chakrabarty, Dipesh (2012) Postcolonial studies and the challenge of climate change. *New Literary History* 43(1): 1–18.
Chakrabarty, Dipesh (2014) Climate and capital: On conjoined histories. *Critical Inquiry* 41: 1–23.

Clark, Peter U., Shakun, Jeremy D., Marcott, Shaun A., Mix, Alan C., Eby, Michael et al. (2016) Consequences of twenty-first-century policy for multi-millennial climate and sea-level change. *Nature Climate Change* 6: 360–369.

De Menocal, Peter (2019) Obituary: Wallace Smith Broecker (1931–2019). *Nature*, 26 March.

Derrida, Jacques (1982) *Margins of Philosophy*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Derrida, Jacques (1986) Declarations of independence. *New Political Science* 7(1): 7–15.

Derrida, Jacques (1992) Force of law: ‘The mystical foundation of authority’. In: Anidjar, Gil (ed.) *Acts of Religion*. New York: Routledge.

Enroth, Henrik (2013) The concept of authority transnationalized. *Transnational Legal Theory* 4(3): 336–353.

Enroth, Henrik (2017) Fear as a political factor. *International Political Sociology* 11(1): 55–72.

Forrester, Katrina, and Smith, Sophie (eds) (2018) *Nature, Action, and the Future: Political Thought and the Environment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hamilton, Clive (2010) *Requiem for a Species: Why We Resist the Truth About Climate Change*. London: Earthscan.

Hamilton, Clive (2017) *Defiant Earth: The Fate of Humans in the Anthropocene*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Hamilton, Clive, Bonneuil, Christophe and Gemenne, François (2015) Thinking the Anthropocene. In: Hamilton, Clive, Gemenne, François and Bonneuil, Christophe (eds) *The Anthropocene and the Global Environmental Crisis: Rethinking Modernity in a New Epoch*. London: Routledge.

Heidegger, Martin (1953) *Sein und Zeit*. Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag.

Honig, Bonnie (1991) Declarations of independence: Arendt and Derrida on the problem of founding a republic. *American Political Science Review* 85(1): 97–113.

IPCC (2018) *Summary for Policymakers of IPCC Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C*. Available at: https://www.ipcc.ch/2018/10/08/summary-for-policymakers-of-ipcc-special-report-on-global-warming-of-1-5c-approved-by-governments/ (accessed 20 November 2020).

Latour, Bruno (2004) *Politics of Nature: How to Bring the Sciences into Democracy*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Latour, Bruno (2005) *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Latour, Bruno (2014) Some advantages of the notion of ‘critical zone’ for geopolitics. *Procedia Earth and Planetary Science* 10: 3–6.

Latour, Bruno (2017) *Facing Gaia: Eight Lectures on the New Climatic Regime*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Latour, Bruno (2018) *Down to Earth: Politics in the New Climatic Regime*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Liddell, HG and Scott, Robert (1889) *Liddell & Scott’s Greek-English Lexicon*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
Lingis, Alphonso (1998) *The Imperative*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Lovelock, James (1995) *The Ages of Gaia: A Biography of Our Living Earth*. New York: Norton.

Machiavelli, Niccolò (1988) *The Prince*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Mann, Geoff and Wainwright, Joel (2018) *Climate Leviathan: A Political Theory of Our Planetary Future*. London: Verso.

Maris, Virginie (2015) Back to the Holocene: A conceptual, and possibly practical, return to a nature not intended for humans. In: Hamilton, Clive, Gemenne, François and Bonneuil, Christophe (eds) *The Anthropocene and the Global Environmental Crisis: Rethinking Modernity in a New Epoch*. London: Routledge.

Pitkin, Hannah Fenichel (1998) *The Attack of the Blob: Hannah Arendt's Concept of the Social*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Pitkin, Hannah Fenichel (1999) *Fortune Is a Woman: Gender and Politics in the Thought of Niccolò Machiavelli*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Pocock, J.G.A. (1975) *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Purdy, Jedediah (2015) *After Nature: A Politics for the Anthropocene*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Purdy, Jedediah (2018) The world we’ve built. *Dissent*, 3 July.

Russell, Bertrand (1910) Knowledge by acquaintance and knowledge by description. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 11: 108–128.

Scherz, China (2014) *Having People, Having Heart: Charity, Sustainable Development, and Problems of Dependence in Central Uganda*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Schmitt, Carl (1996) *The Concept of the Political*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Schmitt, Carl (2005) *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Schwartz, John (2019) Wallace Broecker, 87, dies; sounded early warning on climate change. *New York Times*, 19 February.

Starobinski, Jean (2003) *Action and Reaction: The Life and Adventures of a Couple*. New York: Zone Books.

Steffen, Will, Grinevald, Jacques, Crutzen, Paul and McNeill, John (2011) The Anthropocene: Conceptual and historical perspectives. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society A* 369: 842–867.

Stein Pedersen, Jakob, Latour, Bruno and Schultz, Nikolaj (2019) A conversation with Bruno Latour and Nikolaj Schultz: Reassembling the geo-social. *Theory, Culture & Society* 36(7–8): 215–230.

Waldron, Jeremy (2000) Arendt’s constitutional politics. In: Villa, Dana (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Hannah Arendt*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wallace-Wells, David (2019a) Time to panic. *New York Times*, 16 February.

Wallace-Wells, David (2019b) *The Uninhabitable Earth: A Story of the Future*. London: Allen Lane/Penguin Books.
Henrik Enroth is Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science at Linnaeus University. He has wide-ranging interests in social, cultural, and political theory. His work has appeared in journals such as *International Political Sociology*, *European Journal of Social Theory*, and *American Journal of Cultural Sociology*. He is a contributor to *The Nordic Civil Sphere* and *Populism in the Civil Sphere*. He is currently finishing a book about the problem of social order in political science and doing initial work on a book about aesthetic theory in the study of political life.