

Reporting civilizational collapse research notes from a world-in-crisis

Global Media and Communication

1–20

© The Author(s) 2023



Article reuse guidelines:

sagepub.com/journals-permissions

DOI: 10.1177/17427665231186934

journals.sagepub.com/home/gmc**Simon Cottle** 

Cardiff University, UK

Abstract

There is a woeful silence in global media as well as a widespread reluctance in the fields of media and communication studies to fully recognize and research the systemic and interlocking nature of deepening existential threats that *together* now constitute today's 'world-in-crisis'. It is time to move beyond disaggregated news reporting and research parochialisms and grapple conceptually and theoretically as well as empirically and politically with the complexity of the planetary emergency and its communication. This article elaborates on these claims and provides conceptual and theoretical coordinates of use in re-imagining mainstream journalism's potential for processes of transition and transformation.

Keywords

Anthropocene, Capitalocene, existential aversion, global crises, planetary emergency, Symbiocene, world-in-crisis

Introduction

We live at the dawn of a new age, or, more probably, at the dusk of a dying age that presages no new ages at all. The language of civilizational collapse is starting to be heard. We hear it in the considered prose of scientific reports and academic writing, in the expressive genres of film and fiction, and in the anguished pleas of growing numbers of protestors, such as Extinction Rebellion and Just Stop Oil, on the streets. But we hear it obliquely and occasionally at most in the mainstream news media. Here it is marginalized within source hierarchies and remains dependent on periodic 'newsworthy' events. For most of the time, voices seeking to raise the alarm and respond to immanent

Corresponding author:

Simon Cottle, School of Journalism, Media and Culture, Cardiff University, Two Central Square Cardiff CF10 1FS, UK.

Email: CottleS@cardiff.ac.uk

processes of unfolding collapse are unheard in the news media. And this notwithstanding the daily bombardment of press accounts and televisual scenes of lost and smashed infrastructure, of failing global supply chains, food shortages and forced migrations, of desolated environments and destroyed wildlife, of mega-fires and melting ice caps.

The onwards and accelerating crush of global crises and catastrophes can no longer be ignored or simply taken as the latest coincidence of randomly destructive events. These are not accidents of nature or society, and neither are they the malevolent acts of someone's preferred God. We are witnessing a *world-in-crisis* and its unfolding in real time. A world in which anthropogenic crises *caused* by the inexorable and ecologically destructive advance of human society and its predominant economic system, are finally reaching their nadir – or endgame.

The gargantuan progenies running amok in the world garden have been set loose by human parentage. They are born from and borne along by human history's most globally rapacious, economically extractive, and ecologically devastating system of production and consumption, and reinforced through a normative world-view wedded to ideas of incessant growth, material progress and human exceptionalism. Climate change straddles the earth as the most precipitous threat to humanity, but it is dangerously inept to think that this is the only existential catastrophe now bearing down on life on planet earth. Pandemics, biodiversity loss, the sixth mass extinction, energy, water and food insecurity, soil degradation and toxic pollution, and weapons of mass annihilation and artificial intelligence, all now pose further threats to existence. Entangled within and precipitating many of them are global financial crashes and deepening inequality, increased political polarization and instability, failing supply chains, world population growth and mass population movements and, inevitably, increased humanitarian disasters. The latter, moreover, are no longer *spatially* confined 'over there' in the Global South but take root 'at home' in the Global North and *temporally* threaten to become permanent emergencies everywhere.

This article sets out the case for journalism and journalism scholars to step up to the table of unfolding civilizational collapse, recognizing the urgency and repercussions for world society and the biosphere, whilst also playing their part in enacting pathways of transition and transformation. It is imperative that the world of journalism and its academic interpretative community recognize the increasingly entangled and compounding nature of global crises today and address these holistically as endemic to contemporary world society. The existential threats to life on planet earth are not, unfortunately, confined to self-contained 'issues', whether climate change, global pandemics or food precarity. They are expressive of and entangled in today's unfolding planetary emergency that now threatens both world society and ecosphere. This trajectory is only set to worsen in the years and decades ahead.

The dark telos of civilizational and biosphere collapse should not be dismissed as alarmist, as simply catastrophist thinking, though it may prove psychologically comforting for some to do so. The accumulating weight of evidence, including scientific and expert projections, simply cannot be ignored. The world of journalism(s) as well as its scholarly interpretative community have a responsibility to communicatively address the performative, symbolic and deliberative play of strategic politics and corporate power in

a world-in-crisis, as well as the wider field of cultural engagement and prefigurative politics that offer, just possibly, seeds of hope in the civil sphere.

My argument is set out over five interlinked subsections. Each, necessarily, is advanced in synoptic, overarching terms as it maps different terrains and identifies coordinates of possible use for more empirically grounded and systematic studies in the challenging years ahead. First, the accumulating evidence of probable, impending civilizational collapse is briefly set out and a case is made for why we need to move beyond particularized thinking about global crises to a more systemic, holistic view of our interconnected, interdependent world-in-crisis.

Second, ideas of civilizational collapse are situated in relation to recent theoretical perspectives on the Anthropocene, Capitalocene, and the ecological ideas and sensibilities coalescing under the mantle of the Symbiocene. These help to make sense of the dark telos of collapse as well as necessary trajectories of deep adaptation and change.

Third, developing on these theoretical frameworks, a critique of journalism's general reporting stance to a world-in-crisis is outlined, based on its diluted, disaggregated and dissimulating nature. Mainstream journalism, it is argued, continues for the most part to propagate a world-view of 'business as usual' against a background assumption of 'life as normal', and does so notwithstanding the evident incursions of accelerating and deepening crises now impacting life chances and indeed the chance of life itself for millions around the planet.

Fourth, a parallel observation is made in respect of journalism's academic interpreters and interlocutors, where research specialisms and preferred disciplinary outlooks have contributed to the muted response to today's planetary emergency and its reporting. This journalistic *and* academic 'existential aversion' is elaborated as the evident aversion to recognizing the systemic, entangled and unsustainable nature of global existential threats that constitute today's world-in-crisis, as well as an aversion to engaging in life-affirming responses to them (whether in reporting or research). This is noted and accounted for at multiple levels, including political-economic, professional, psychological and phenomenological.

Fifth, drawing on the preceding discussion, journalism's critical role and responsibilities in communicating the planetary emergency as well as processes of deep adaptation and pathways to societal transition are reimagined and a research agenda commensurate to our world-in-crisis is thereby better envisioned.

Civilizational collapse beyond catastrophism

The mapping and prognoses of the growing catalogue of scientific reports and scholarly research should stop us all in our tracks. The International Panel on Climate Change Report is unequivocal: 'Pathways reflecting current nationally stated mitigation ambitions as submitted under the Paris Agreement would not limit global warming to 1.5°C, even if supplemented by very challenging increases in the scale and ambition of emissions reductions after 2030' (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [IPCC], 2022). Between 2010 and 2019 the world experienced the highest levels of emissions in human history and the upward curve continues (United Nations Environmental Programme UNEP [UNEP,], 2023). The consequences of exceeding

1.5°C global warming as predicted will be catastrophic for millions around the planet. And we are already witnessing the devastating impacts of climate change on millions of people (and other species) through extreme weather events and collapsing environments. And this notwithstanding the urgent clarion calls from scientists to the world's politicians decades earlier. If global warming continues beyond 2.0°C to 3.0°C or even 4.0°C, as many now foresee on current trends, vast swathes of the planet will become uninhabitable in decades, not centuries, billions of people are likely to die, and human civilization as we know it will collapse (Bendell and Read, 2021; Hickel, 2021; IPCC, 2022; Read and Alexander, 2019; Servigne and Stevens, 2020; Servigne et al., 2021; Wallace-Wells, 2019).

Since 1970, more than two-thirds of the world's population sizes of all mammals, birds, fish, amphibians and reptiles have been lost (WWF, 2022). Invertebrates haven't escaped the destruction. A scientific consensus, displayed each summer on car wind-screens, tells us that an 'insect apocalypse' has been under way for some time, including pollinators so central to plant propagation, food production and biodiversity (Goulson, 2021; Millman, 2022). Not only are species population sizes plummeting, but species are also increasingly becoming extinct at an historically unprecedented rate. We are living in the era of the sixth mass extinction, this time human induced (Cowie et al., 2022; Kolbert, 2014; Erlich, 2017).

A recent study has calculated that 'by 2070 soil erosion will increase significantly, by 30per cent to 66per cent' (Borrelli et al., 2020). Intensive agriculture, including the use of fertilizers and pesticides, and increasing water run-off due to climate change, threaten to massively reduce agricultural yields and generate world food shortages as well as undermine waterways and aquatic ecosystems (UNEP, 2019).

The World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations and WWF International, along with the world's leading virologists, have argued in the context of the COVID-19 global pandemic that new and evolving zoonotic diseases will only increase in the years ahead due to the destructive impacts of human societies on nature and the climate. This includes deforestation, monocultural agriculture, biodiversity loss, trade in wildlife and human encroachment upon natural environments, all of which exacerbate the rise of potentially deadly diseases and their communication across species. (Lawler et al., 2021; Vidal 2023). COVID-19 has caused between 15 million (WHO, 2022) and 18 million (Wang et al., 2022) excess mortality deaths to date.

Currently nine countries in the world possess roughly 12,700 nuclear warheads, the majority owned by Russia and the United States (Federation of American Scientist FAS [FAS], 2022). A single Trident missile submarine can carry 100 hydrogen bombs with the explosive power of 1000 Hiroshima bombs (Toon, 2018). Survivors of a nuclear war who manage to escape death from incineration, shock waves and radiation fallout will venture out into a nuclear winter blanketing out the sun and extinguishing photosynthesis and, thereafter, the remnants of human society as we know it. In February 2022, Russian President Vladimir Putin invaded Ukraine and warned the world that he had put his nuclear forces on a 'special regime of combat duty', or high alert. One minute to midnight has moved considerably closer and upended international stability and nuclear arms control.

Published scientific and expert reports on these and other planetary threats, then, make for discomfiting reading and underpin projections of a world of worsening catastrophism and, if unabated, probable civilizational collapse. This dark telos is immanent to a world fundamentally premised on relentless economic growth and the overshooting of sustainable ecological limits. Adaptation, resilience and mitigation have become the *lingua franca* of living in a world accelerating along existential tracks, and pathways of transition and societal transformation are increasingly demanded if we are to have a chance of denting or slowing the juggernaut of civilizational collapse (Bendell and Read, 2021; Berners-Lee, 2021; IPCC, 2022; Read and Alexander, 2019; Servigne and Stevens, 2020; Servigne et al., 2021; Wallace-Wells, 2019; WWF, 2022).

Such global crises are now endemic to our contemporary world-in-crisis. For the most part they are globally encompassing (which is not to say they are experienced equally around the globe and issues of inequality and injustice are implicated in them all). Importantly, they are also complexly entangled with each other – though too often this is insufficiently recognized and understood. For example, COVID-19, climate change, conflicts (including Ukraine) and rising fertilizer and food costs are all implicated in the world’s latest ‘seismic hunger crisis’, with 811 million people in the world going to bed hungry and 44 million people in 38 countries ‘teetering on the edge of famine’ (World Food Programme, 2022).

There is a tendency, based in institutional arrangements, academic disciplines and the constructs of mind and pragmatics of action, to cognitively discriminate between global problems or issues and place them into separate categories and arenas of specialist attention (see, e.g. the United Nations website on ‘Global Issues’ (United Nations [UN], 2022)). We fail as a result to see them in holistic, joined-up terms, as immanent and an integral expression of an economically overdetermined world that now poses a threat to the very fundamentals of life (Foster, 2022; Saito, 2022). The dark telos of today’s world system amounts to more than the devastating sum of multiple, contiguous crises and is quite different to earlier historical and localized forms of civilizational collapse (Diamond, 2011).

Theorizing beyond the anthropocene

According to Amitav Ghosh, we are living in ‘The Great Derangement’ (Ghosh, 2016), a time of widespread denial, political disavowal and collective insanity as the world continues on its ‘business as usual’ and ‘life as normal’ path. This notwithstanding the growing scientific consensus that we are living in the Anthropocene, an era that has brought the 12,000 years or so of the Holocene to a humanly induced close. Such is the extent and depth of the recent impacts of human civilization on earth systems and biocene. Though the exact periodization of the Anthropocene is still disputed along with the extent to which earth systems are not simply reactive but constitutive in respect of human impacts (Clark, 2014; Ghosh, 2022), and continue to exert ‘more than human’ agency (Haraway, 2016; Tsing et al., 2022), all generally agree that the evidence of the ‘great acceleration’ of human society’s footprint on earth systems and the biosphere since the Industrial Revolution is undeniable, and has proved ecologically devastating (Lewis and Maslin, 2018; Steffen et al., 2015).

The biologist E.O. Wilson, in recognition of this, coined the term ‘the Eremocene’ to signal the impending Age of Loneliness that will follow the Anthropocene following the mass extinctions of other species wrought by human civilization (Wilson, 2013). And Paul Erlich, one of the first biologists to draw attention to human society’s culpability in processes of extinction, including its own (Erlich, 2017; Erlich and Erlich, 1988), remains in no doubt that collapse ‘is a near certainty in the next few decades, and the risk is increasing continually as long as perpetual growth of the human enterprise remains the goal of economic and political systems’ (Erlich, 2018).

James Lovelock’s planetary thesis of ‘Gaia’ had earlier positioned recent human impact on earth systems as unsustainable, given the planet’s delicate equilibrium of life and non-life systems (Latour, 2017; Lovelock, 2015, 2021). It took time for the scientific community to catch up with Lovelock’s novel planetary conceptualization of interacting earth systems and their import for the precariousness of life on Planet Earth, first set out in the 1970s. A similar response, it seems, greeted the Club of Rome’s publication of *Limits to Growth* in 1972, which, based on early computing simulation power, extrapolated world population growth and economic trends to argue that planetary limits would soon be breached with catastrophic human and environmental costs (Meadows et al., 1972). When revisited 40 years later, Graham Turner essentially reaffirmed the study’s predictions of planetary overshooting and the validity of projections of collapse (Turner, 2014), as did the Club of Rome’s own revisiting 50 years later and its declaration of a ‘planetary emergency’ in 2019 (Club of Rome, 2019). Ideas of planetary boundaries (Stockholm Resilience Centre, 2015) and overshooting have now informed major challenges to orthodox (ecologically myopic) economics, including influential formulations of doughnut economics (Raworth, 2017), steady-state economics (Daly, 1991), circular economies and regenerative culture and agriculture (Wahl, 2016) as well as ideas of post-growth (Jackson, 2021), degrowth (Hickel, 2021), sacred economics (Eisenstein, 2018) and ecological civilization (Eisenstein, 2021; Korton, 2021; Lent, 2021).

When approached through a lens of critical political economy, the Anthropocene can be better conceived as the Capitalocene (Moore, 2015; Patel and Moore, 2018). In contrast to factually based descriptions and generalized claims of ‘human society’, the Capitalocene invites a more historically nuanced explanation for the ecological devastation wrought by successive waves of capitalism and its colonizing and commodification of nature. ‘The crisis today’, argues Moore in his treatise on world ecology, ‘is not multiple but singular and manifold. It is not a crisis of capitalism *and* nature but of modernity-*in-nature*’ (Moore, 2015: 4). Immanuel Wallerstein’s influential ‘world-systems’ theory had earlier projected the ‘end phase’ of world capitalism characterized by a period of deepening and terminal crisis (Wallerstein, 2004), with no clear successor system in sight. And Saito (2022) and Foster (2022), in their respective exegeses of Marx’s writings, find, contrary to established Promethean interpretations, evidence for Marx’s early ecological thinking in his conceptualization of ‘metabolic rifts’ and their devastating consequences under the inexorable economic trajectory of capitalism. A trajectory culminating today in ‘cannibal capitalism’ that now threatens to devour our planet (Frazer, 2022).

Voices outside the traditional academy are now heard referring to the ‘Great Unravelling’ (Macy, 2021), the ‘Great Turning’ (Kelly and Macy, 2021), the ‘Great Dying’ (Haque, 2021) and, as we have heard, the ‘Great Derangement’ (Ghosh, 2016).

Pantheistic ideas of spirituality, Buddhism and Taoism have also coloured the so-called ‘Great Awakening’ to not only the immanent forces of collapse inherent to the world system but also to the demand and desire for a more earth-centred and symbiotic way of life based on increased recognition of our ecological interdependency and (inter)being (Hanh, 2021; Lent, 2021; Loy, 2019; Macy, 2021). Importantly, this ‘awakening’ recognizes not only psychological feelings of eco-grief, anger and despair, of disempowerment and mortality (Gillespie, 2020), but also the ‘gift’ to re-vision our sense of self and relationship to others and the natural world (Macy, 2021), and thereby to engage in practices of active hope (Macy and Johnstone, 2022).

A powerful intellectual bridge, built on a recent paradigm shift in the Western philosophy of science, has further considerably eased the way for such disparate outlooks and philosophies to coalesce under a more encompassing and ecologically centred view of impending civilizational collapse. The new philosophy of science, better attuned to complex systems that are holistic, open, emergent, interdependent, interconnected and autopoietic, challenges the hold of traditional Western science and Enlightenment thinking with its linear, closed, mechanistic, atomistic and reductionist approach to inquiry and laws of causality (Capra and Luisi, 2014; McGilchrist, 2021). It is from here as well as from the legacy of Romanticism (Sayre and Lowry, 2021), deep ecology (Naess, 2021) and traditional indigenous wisdom (Kimmerer, 2013, 2022; Pascoe, 2016; Yunkaporta, 2020) that ideas of ‘ecological civilization’ and the ‘Symbiocene’ (Lent, 2021) are now posited as a necessary antidote to the unsustainable ecological and human degradations wrought by the planetary-encompassing Anthropocene and Capitalocene.

Ulrich Beck notably had also positioned ecology at the heart of his formulations of world risk society (Beck, 2000, 2009). And this carried through to his final reflections published posthumously in *The Metamorphosis of the World* (2016). ‘Global risk comes as a threat’, says Beck, but it also ‘brings hope’. Here ideas of ‘emancipatory catastrophism’ reverse his earlier focus on the societal production of ecological ‘bads’, seen as the unintended side-effects of producing commodified ‘goods’, to a new focus on the unintended common ‘goods’ of manufactured catastrophic ‘bads’. In the context of climate change, for example, the growing ‘anticipation of global catastrophe violates’, he says, ‘sacred (unwritten) norms of human existence and civilization’, and feelings of ‘anthropological shock’ can produce wide-ranging processes of ‘social catharsis’. In such circumstances, argues Beck, ‘new normative horizons as a frame of social and political action and a cosmopolitized field of activities emerge’ (Beck, 2016: 117–118).

While the writing of Joanna Macy and others encourage a personal inward journey of hope in the face of ecological and societal collapse, Beck’s hope for today’s ‘civilizational community of fate’ is encountered in the sociological consequences of ecological catastrophe and the collective responses to shattered norms and expectations. The progressive as well as repressive potentiality of disasters, especially when staged in the cultural eye of the media, has also been noted by others (Alexander and Jacobs, 1998; Cottle, 2014; Klein, 2007). When reported on the media stage, disasters, conflicts and catastrophes can become ‘global focussing events’ with cultural affect and political charge that reverberate around the world (Cottle, 2009a, 2009b, 2011, 2014, 2019).

These disparate theoretical perspectives on today’s world-in-crisis and impending civilizational collapse nonetheless share a general recognition of: (1) the historically

unprecedented and accelerating anthropogenic impacts of human society on earth systems; that these are (2) rooted in the predominant form of economic system and its insatiable pursuit of economic growth; (3) that the planet has finite ecological limits which are being dangerously and unsustainably overshoot; and (4) this has set the human and ecological world on a historical trajectory of immanent and probable imminent collapse. Embedded within the analysis of civilizational collapse is also, (5) an enhanced recognition of the symbiotic dependence of humanity on nature and the planet's biosphere (that, for some, challenges the duality of human separateness and exceptionalism); and (6) prompts the revisioning of humanity in closer, symbiotic and sustainable relation to the natural world and each other.

Reporting planetary emergency: Diluted, disaggregated, dissimulated

The world of journalism, in all its different forms, continues to occupy a pivotal role in today's complex media ecology and in the communication of different global crises. Journalism often proves critical in the epistemological framing and constitutive in the ontological unfolding of crises and their societal responses (Cottle, 2009b, 2011, 2014, 2022). Journalism historically has often assumed the responsibility of raising the alarm and signalling the latest catastrophic events and informing civil society of their magnitude, repercussions and onwards trajectory (Carey, 1996; Cottle, 2014). Journalism also serves to visually dramatize, culturally symbolize and meaningfully narrate the human stories and emotions of global crises (Cottle, 2009b, 2013a; Smith and Howe, 2015). It both breathes and oxygenates the cultural air of sense-making and helps orient society to the world we live in. And so too can journalism variously stage public debates and political deliberation that give vent to the stakeholder disagreements that flow in, through and around crises, their political prescriptions, and wider responses (Cottle, 2009a). Journalism we also know, however, is institutionally entrenched, economically determined, and often culturally and politically aligned to predominantly national structures of power and established social networks. And so too in a digital age has journalism become increasingly fractured and fragmented into public sphericules and echo-chambers, and epistemologically challenged. This is well known and documented (see below).

Mainstream journalism as presently constituted, with few exceptions, is proving slow to recognize, contextualize and represent the severity and compound nature of existential crises now confronting human society and the planet. It continues for the most part to report in 'existentially averse' ways, as defined above, preferring to see the world through established professional and normative outlooks oriented to a world of 'business-as-usual' and 'life-as-normal'. When reporting on the most catastrophic global crises, this proves deficient and dissimulates the complex underpinning of today's planetary emergency. Consider, for example, three of the most globally pressing crises of recent times: climate change, COVID-19 and the Russian invasion of Ukraine. To what extent and how has each been reported in the global context and sought to draw out the complex underpinning and entanglements of today's world-in-crisis?

Recent reporting of Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reports, Conference of the Parties (COP) meetings and, more recent and belatedly, extreme

weather events have all sought to incorporate and relay scientific warnings about the inexorable advance of climate change. But this reporting is at best institutionally intermittent and event-dependent, whether on the release of the latest IPCC report, the public staging of COP events or major protests. Extreme weather events and the latest breaking of past weather records can also create opportunities for recognizing and signalling the onwards march of climate catastrophes, though this is not always followed through. But mainstream media quickly retreat to their preferred ‘life as normal’, ‘business as usual’ reporting and dilute and compartmentalize climate change, it seems, as a periodic and temporary newsworthy issue only, and not as an existential threat warranting daily exposure and multifaceted depth reporting on par, say, with previous collective fights for survival in times of total war (Boycoff, 2011; Cottle, 2013b; Painter, 2013). And rarely is it reported in its complex entanglement with other manifold expressions of today’s polycrisis.

Unlike climate change, the reporting of the COVID pandemic in most liberal democracies *was* granted daily prominence and, exceptionally, became characterized by daily updates, elite briefings and mediated dispatches from the frontlines of health care, as well as from the home front of lockdown (Cottle, 2022). Unlike the slow-burn of climate change, COVID-19 visibly impacted health and mortality, economies and everyday life in dramatic ways. The world of journalism generally failed, however, to explore probable connections between this global public health disaster and its likely ecological underpinnings as a zoonotic disease (UNEP, 2016; WWF, 2020). And the liminal period of the economic slowdown and personal lockdown of behaviour (Weil and Papacharissi, 2021) was not used to seriously reappraise and rethink the world of work, well-being and our relationship to the natural world or the opportunity to seriously cut back on carbon emissions through shifts to working out of home, less travel and changed consumption patterns. This business as usual, life as normal, normative reporting continues to shape reporting in the so-called ‘post-endemic’ period COVID (Cottle, 2022).

Reporting of the Russian invasion of Ukraine has been compelled to recognize and report on the entanglement of European economies, the continuing high dependency on hydrocarbon fuels, and the implications of restricted supplies on country plans to transition to clean energies and nuclear power in the context of climate change (Cottle, 2023). The forced migrations of millions of people, precipitation of a world food crisis, shortage of fertilizer and rising prices, and the renewed fears of nuclear escalation have also all featured in the reporting of this devastating Russian invasion. However, Western news reporting has tended to report such global system complexity and interdependency through a normative and nationally inflected news lens. This has focused predominantly, at the time of writing, on national economic instability, energy sovereignty and impact on consumers prices as well as the mass exodus of refugees amidst the daily military updates and political responses. The reporting for the most part does not contextualize and examine the Ukraine crisis as part of a preceding world-in-crisis, including the urgency of COP26 commitments to reduce carbon emissions, and it ignores the military carbon expenditure and, for the most part, dissimulates the devastating ecological impacts of contemporary warfare (Cottle, 2023).

The explanations for this generally disaggregating and dissimulating news response to planetary emergencies, even when focussing on three of its most prominent expressions,

are fathomable. We know that mainstream news providers are corporate entities shaped by political economy determinants and that they operate in a field of strategic power and vested interests, and that they enact culturally prevailing world-views (Bennett, 2021; Cottle, 2006; Schudson, 2019). In more institutionally and professionally proximate terms, news agendas, story selections and framing can also be understood in relation to the operation of basic news values (Harcup and O'Neill, 2017), elite source dependencies and elite indexing (Bennett et al., 2006), and the enactments of objectivity, impartiality and balance (Boykoff and Boykoff, 2007) as well as competing news epistemologies of scientific and social rationality (Cottle, 2000).

The event orientation of news – whether, for example, protests, conferences or press releases – can also be institutionally out of sync with planetary and crisis temporalities (Bødker and Morris, 2022), whether slow-burn disasters or permanent emergencies (see also Zelizer, 2017, 2021). And the pragmatic division of journalist labour into ‘news beats’ and specialist correspondents (Robbins and Wheatley, 2021) can further reinforce the cognitive division of the world into separate ‘issues’. The established communicative architecture of journalism further, and variously, enables and disables ideational and imagistic, analytical and affective, expository and expressive, and display and deliberative modes of reporting (Cottle and Rai, 2006), including when reporting planetary crises.

Professional journalist codes of conduct and newsroom expectations of journalist practice and conformity, we also know, are reinforced through structures of newsroom recruitment, hierarchy, and processes of story assignment and career progression. Each in their own ways can help account for the diluted, disaggregated and dissimulating reporting of today’s world-in-crisis. However, in addition, the phenomenological hold of taken-for-granted background expectations about life, work and daily routines can also play into habituated journalist thinking and reporting outlooks. This is rooted in the temporalities of everyday life, in its routinized practices and, to borrow Marx’s phrase, the ‘dull compulsion of the economic’, as well as private life commitments which, together, conspire to reproduce the phenomenological sense of life’s ongoing continuity rather than its immanent disruption or even destruction. A disposition that is at odds with reporting warnings of planetary collapse.

The psychology of denial and disavowal (Gillespie, 2020) can also be in the mix of contributing explanations for journalism’s seeming existential reporting aversion, a discomforting psychology that will be differently enacted by journalists who variously know, defer to some distant horizon, or blatantly deny the coming planetary apocalypse. This can further become institutionalized in a paternalistic response to imagined audiences by differing news organizations and through the massaged presentation of unpalatable messages and the purposeful avoidance of the charge of alarmism, a disposition also at work in some fields of academia.

Explaining existential aversion in the field

It appears that the field of journalism scholarship and media and communications research more broadly also suffer from ‘existential aversion’ when it comes to studying and researching today’s world-in-crisis. Any review of recent conference calls, publishers’ latest catalogues and published journal articles would all suggest that the

lexicon of ‘planetary emergency’, ‘world-in-crisis’, ‘civilizational collapse’ or similar cognate terms has yet to widely register in the critical imagination and responses of most media and communication and journalism scholars. A quick summary review, for example, of seven of the field’s leading journals’ article titles and abstracts (*Media, Culture and Society*, *European Journal of Communication*, *International Journal of Communication*, *Global Media and Communication*, *Journalism Studies*, *Journalism: Theory, Practice, Criticism* and *Journalism Practice*) found that of 2633 articles published across 3 years and 4 months (January 2019–April 2022), only 13 (0.4%) raised the compound nature of global crises or made reference to these at world or planetary level. Articles about single issues/crises (35, 1.3%) articles about COVID (35, 1.3%), articles about asylum seeking and migrancy (19, 0.7%) articles about climate change (11, 0.4%) and about weather-related disasters invariably focused on media framing or media affordances and processes of media production in specific countries but did not situate or seek to theorize these in global, world or planetary context (exceptionally, see: Atanasova, 2022; Borth et al., 2022; Cottle, 2019; Gutsche Jr and Pinto, 2022; Robertson and Schaetz, 2022). Studies of media and food, water and energy insecurity, biodiversity loss, the sixth mass extinction, population growth as well as weapons of mass annihilation were notable by their complete absence.

This is only a snapshot finding, but one, I suggest, that is generally representative of the field of scholarship at present. It also replicates an earlier review of climate change communication research, which has grown considerably across recent years. This study found published articles across 1993–2018 to be geographically biased, theoretically narrow and methodologically limited (Agin and Karlsson, 2021). But how are we to explain the wider existential aversion in the field of communication research, a field that is often noted for its critical orientation to real-world concerns?

In some respects, academics are not so unlike journalists and the explanations for their current research silence are equally multifaceted. Academics researching the world of journalism and media and communications tend to drill deep rather than skate wide, intellectually building specialisms and inhabiting their preferred disciplinary and research subject silos. This academic drilling in some ways mirrors journalism’s disaggregation of a world-in-crisis into separate and distinct ‘issues’. It is also in keeping with academic institutional norms and expectations. This enactment of specialist expertise proves efficacious, of course, to university finances and the delivery of university courses, producing collegially endorsed publications, winning competitive research grants, and managing bids for promotion and career advancement. It also has the psychological benefit of warding off possible feelings of imposter syndrome and does so by not skating on thin academic ice. Being a ‘Jack of all trades, and master of none’ is anathema in academia, where, generally, ‘Better to be a non-binary Jacquelin of one trade, than a mistress of many’ obtains. Today, however, we urgently need panoramic planetary vision as well as detailed (non-fossil-fuelled) research drilling.

The generally cool, dispassionate stance of academia can also play its part in keeping personal reflexivity at bay as well as the articulation of personal concerns, worries and feelings about the gathering clouds on the horizon. The psychology of eco-anxiety and eco-fear that can feed into forms of denial and disavowal in journalists, as well as the rest of us, and the phenomenology and temporality of every-day life and the ‘dull compulsion

of the economic', as indicated above, can equally ensnare academics, and helps explain their generally muted response to growing, deepening crises at the planetary scale.

But it is not only the hold of preferred research expertise and disciplinary interests that is at work here. The hold of 'methodological nationalism' (Beck, 2009), where research agendas are focused on institutions, processes and social relationships close to home and are often ring-fenced in national contexts, can also feed into the explanatory mix of planetary myopia. And some disciplinary allegiances are more rooted in nose-to-the-ground empiricism and presentism than others, preferring to map, analyse and theorize the empirical present than the 'less knowable' and more speculative dystopian future. This overlooks, however, how future imaginaries are, and must be of course, actioned and performed in the present (Oomen et al., 2022), whether in respect of the enactments of pathways of transition or the politics of denial and disavowal. Imagined futures take root in and help orient the present.

Epistemological commitments sometimes can further displace, if not entirely eclipse, real-world contexts, questions of extra-discursive ontology and causalities of collapse. Studies focused exclusively on the social construction of meaning within media texts, say, whether through the prism of semiotics, framing, discourse, narrative, dramaturgy or regimes of truth and the performative, are less disposed and ill-equipped to engage with the ontology of real-world crises now converging into planetary emergency – other than as a discursive construct. Disciplinary, presentist, methodological and epistemological optics are all at work, then, in the subfields of journalism and media and communication studies. Together they are generally proving to be short-sighted, existentially averse and out of sync with a world in which the communication of future imaginaries is desperately required if a future with hope is to be redeemed from the telos of despair.

Journalist imaginaries at the dusk of a dying age

Journalism and its increasingly complex world-news ecology (Chadwick, 2017; Cottle, 2012; Reese, 2016), we know, are situated and practised in a force-field of power, economics and vested interests (Bennett, 2021). But mainstream as well as minority or alternative journalism forms are also capable of giving expression to and sometimes channelling the changing concerns and hopes, sensibilities and moral horizons, of the civil sphere (Alexander, 2006; Cottle, 2008, 2019). Journalism is critically positioned to not only report on and deepen understanding about the accelerating trajectory of existential crises – global, systemic, and complexly intertwined – and needs to do so with an overriding sense of daily urgency, but also to report extensively on the forging and formations of pathways to transition and transformation. A new 'journalist imagination' or 'journalistic imaginary' is both needed and, increasingly compelled, by the onwards crush of deepening economic and ecological crises. Such a journalistic imaginary would be reoriented in at least eight distinguishable ways, each of which provides critical benchmarks for future journalism study and investigation in an unravelling world.

First, a culture of reporting today's world-in-crisis or planetary emergency needs to take root across mainstream news media as well as outside it, and with an enhanced sense of planetary interdependency and global inequality, and communicative responsibility (see Olausson 2023). This needs to be comparable perhaps to reporting in times of 'total

war', where a societal ethos of 'we're in this together' is performatively enacted both in the field of reporting and beyond.

Second, reporting needs to increasingly recognize the complex entanglement of seemingly distinct crises in a world-in-crisis. Such reporting must be undertaken with expanded vision on how accelerating and deepening global crises originate and reverberate unevenly around the world and not solely viewed through parochial and nationally inflected news glasses (Beck, 2009; Berglez, 2013; Cottle, 2011) (for instance, where this has happened in the context of war in Ukraine reporting, see Cottle, 2023).

Third, news presentism and journalism's preferred temporality of 'here and now' reporting (Zelizer, 2017) must be expanded to fit the unfolding temporalities of potential extinction. A temporality, in other words, in which future imaginaries, whether premised on predictions of collapse or the politics of transition, are deemed to be legitimate time-scapes for news reporting.

Fourth, journalism must give increased recognition to and communicatively enhance the public elaboration of pathways of transition and societal transformation and deepen its critical reporting of policy initiatives at the transnational, national and subnational levels. It must also recognize and give voice to the cultural flourishing of ideas and prefigurative politics of deep adaptation and pluriverse of established and emergent perspectives on ecology and sustainable life.

Fifth, journalism will need to seek to creatively deploy and innovate its established communicative architecture and traditional modes of reporting when visualizing and dramatizing, narrating and telling, expressing and deliberating stories that speak to our world-in-crisis, and to do so in and through the digital affordances currently available and in today's interconnecting and changing global news ecology (Cottle, 2012, 2014; Parks, 2020).

Sixth, journalistic reflexivity needs to be encouraged in ways that are better aligned to the reporting of planetary existential threats. Here the possible promise of various alternative and/or complementary models of journalism practice and orientation (public/civic journalism (Rosen, 1999), development journalism (Waisbord, 2009), peace journalism (McGoldrick and Lynch, 2005), humanitarian journalism (Scott et al., 2023), engaged journalism (Nettlefold and Pecl, 2022), and constructive or solutions-based journalism (McIntyre, 2019) need to be explored and, when productive, deployed within the journalist imaginary to reporting existential threats. Examples of industry 'good practice', say, *The Guardian* newspaper's Climate Pledge (2019) and its exceptional climate and ecology reporting should be publicly valorized and where possible expanded across mainstream news outlets and platforms.

Seventh, journalism – as does the rest of society – needs to participate in a grown-up and ongoing conversation about the C-word, and how runaway financial and corporate capitalism and the elective affinity of normative ideas of incessant growth, material progress and human exceptionalism, have brought the planet to its current demise. To borrow the words of UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, 'It's time to say: enough. Enough of brutalizing biodiversity. Enough of killing ourselves with carbon. Enough of treating nature like a toilet. Enough of burning and drilling and mining our way deeper' (Opening speech of the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26), Glasgow, Scotland, 1 November 2021). Journalism is positioned to become a political crucible of contention

and opposing ideas as well as a cultural forum for the expression and flowering of sentiments towards ecology and its degradations.

Eighth, more compassionate forms of journalism will be required that recognize the collective and psychological trauma of people experiencing the sharp end of catastrophe and the legitimate fears of all those now waking up to the planetary emergency and its impacts not only on human society but the ecological web of life (Gillespie, 2020; Macy, 2021).

When read through the prism of current understanding of journalism organization and practice, such a journalistic imaginary will seem, well, just that, imaginary! Naïve, flawed and/or hopelessly idealistic may also come to mind. When based on what we already know from political economy, the sociology of news and sources, and culture of journalism practice and performance (Cottle, 2006, 2009a, 2009b, 2011), this is understandable. But we are no longer living in 'normal times', whatever historically they are, and the trajectories of decline and collapse only look set to accelerate and deepen in the years ahead. As in earlier historical times of 'total war', it is possible to anticipate and indeed to collectively demand that journalism better orients itself, and us, to the world and its existential demise. Journalism need not always be assumed to be historically static or intransigent to change (Carey, 1996; Schudson, 2019; Zelizer, 2017). The runaway juggernaut of late modernity (Giddens, 1990) can also give birth to its nemesis. It's in the ecological air we breathe as much as the compelled politics and changing economic relations forced to adapt to an increasingly catastrophized world. This is the terrain of Beck's societal metamorphosis that complexly, in myriad and often understated ways, reaches down into everyday life, into institutions and ways of doing things, and begins to form an 'epochal change of horizons' (Beck, 2015: 77).

Journalism historically has the proven capacity to recalibrate and readjust its cultural sights, its collective moral compass, though not always for the better, it is true. But we should not overlook or downplay the part played by modern means of communication in the deepening of democratic expectations (Scannell, 1989) and in the advance of progressive movements for change (Alexander, 2006; Cottle, 2004): whether in respect of the civil rights movement challenging racism, gender equality and new identity politics or the universal recognition of human rights and struggles for animal welfare and environmental justice around the world. Journalism takes its cue not only from owners and powerful vested interests, but professionally and culturally from the metaphorical winds of change blowing through wider society. In hot-housed times literally blasted by winds of change, in times of 'anthropological shock' and 'enforced enlightenment', the politics of 'emancipatory catastrophism' finds a foothold and may even be set loose (Beck, 2015). In such circumstances, journalism can become increasingly compelled to not only acknowledge but also grant expression to views and voices challenging the business as usual, life as normal world-view, a view long past its sell-by-date in a visibly dying world.

Journalism's imaginary, increasingly calibrated to a world-in-crisis, also need not be assumed to be a sudden and unlikely moment of ideological conversion, but as an ongoing process of societal metamorphosis in the fading dusk of world civilization and in the gathering vortex of demands for transition and societal transformation to a more sustainable (and survivable) world. Indeed, there are some grounds to say that this is already

emergent in some sectors and some outlets of the journalism field – whether in respect of political reporting, for example, of top-down policies and programmes of energy transition or the cultural valorization of small-scale initiatives and enterprises oriented to grass-roots sustainability and ecological well-being. We see it in the reporting of attempted regearing of economies in a slew of government policies and programmes that seek, if not always coherently or with sufficient urgency and vision, to move enterprises and behaviours to a carbon neutral or much reduced fossil-fuelled world. This includes meaningful shifts in every economic sector, including energy, transport, housing, food production and the provision of local services (Kaplinsky, 2021; Porritt, 2021).

This top-down national state-politics alongside international supra-politics, however, does not exhaust the creative flourishing of ideas and practices which now bubble and ferment in the sub-political spaces of the creative economy and in the relatively invisible spaces and imagined horizons of the civil sphere. Here we find an eclectic cornucopia of productive ideas and shifting sensibilities. These include, for example, the ideas of deep adaptation and practices of regenerative culture and agriculture, rewilding and relocalization; an appreciation of traditional indigenous wisdom based on ecologically sustainable relationships and reciprocity; ideas of circular, steady-state and alternative economies, of post-growth, de-growth and a new green deal and much else besides. This cultural flourishing informs the practices and prefigurative politics of ecological consciousness and thinking about the web-of-life and an emergent imaginary of the future as Symbiocene, as we heard previously.

Whether we know it or not, our life chances, and indeed the continuing chance of life on Planet Earth, has become a race to ecological consciousness. Journalism can yet perform an indispensable and vitalizing role in signalling, symbolizing and staging the inescapable necessity for deep adaptation and pathways of transition. It can do so by scrutinizing and exploring the credibility of government and corporate policies and the flourishing of ideas and prefigurative practices built on imagined futures and compelled new horizons. Journalism's interpretative community of academic scholars must now also step up and challenge today's 'Great Derangement'. Now is the time.

Funding

The author received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

ORCID iD

Simon Cottle  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8727-3367>

References

- Agin S and Karlsson M (2021) Mapping the field of climate change communication, 1993–2018. *Environmental Communication* 15(4): 431–466.
- Alexander J (2006) *The Civil Sphere*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Alexander J and Jacobs R (1998) Media, ritual and identity. In: Liebes T and Curran J (eds) *Mass Communication, Ritual and Civil Society*. Milton Park: Routledge, pp.23–41.

- Atanasova D (2022) How constructive news outlets reported the synergistic effects of climate change and covid-19 through metaphors. *Journalism Practice* 16(2–3): 384–403.
- Beck U (2000) *World Risk Society*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Beck U (2009) *World at Risk*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Beck U (2015) Emancipatory catastrophism: What does it mean to climate change and risk society? *Current Sociology* 63(1): 75–88.
- Beck U (2016) *The Metamorphosis of the World*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Bendell J and Read R (2021) *Deep Adaptation*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Bennett L (2021) *Communicating the Future*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Bennett L, Lawrence G and Livingston S (2006) *When the Press Fails*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Berglez (2013) *Global Journalism*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Berners-Lee M (2021) *There is No Planet B*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Borrelli P, Robinson DA, Panagos P, et al. (2020) Land use and climate change impacts on global soil erosion by water (2015-2070). *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 117(36): 21994–22001.
- Borth AC, Campbell E, Munson S, et al. (2022) Are journalists reporting on the highest-impact climate solutions? Findings from a survey of Environmental Journalists. *Journalism Practice* 16(2-3): 443–461.
- Boycoff M (2011) *Who Speaks for the Climate? Making Sense of Media Reporting on Climate Change*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Boycoff MT and Boycott JM (2007) Climate change and journalistic norms: A case-study of US mass-media coverage. *Geoforum; Journal of Physical, Human, and Regional Geosciences* 38(6): 1190–1204.
- Bødker H and Morris H (2022) *Climate Change and Journalism*. Milton Park: Routledge.
- Capra F and Luisi PL (2014) *The Systems View of Life*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Carey P (1996) *The Faber Book of Reportage*. London: Faber and Faber.
- Chadwick A (2017) *The Hybrid Media System*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Clark N (2014) Geo-politics and the disaster of the anthropocene. *Sociological Review* 62(1_ suppl): 19–37.
- Club of Rome (2019) *Planetary emergency plan*. Available at: <https://www.clubofrome.org/publication/the-planetary-emergency-plan/> (accessed 8 July 2023).
- Cottle S (2000) Environmental risks and the media. In: Allan S, Adams B and Carter C (eds) *TV News, Lay Voices and the Visualisation of Environmental Risks*. Milton Park: Routledge, pp.29–44.
- Cottle, S (2004) *The Racist Murder of Stephen Lawrence: Media Performance and Public Transformation*. Westport: Praeger
- Cottle S (2006) *Mediatized Conflict*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.
- Cottle S (2008) Reporting demonstrations: The changing media politics of dissent. *Media Culture & Society* 30(6): 853–872.
- Cottle S (2009a) *Global Crisis Reporting*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.
- Cottle S (2009b) Global crises in the news: Staging new wars, disasters, and climate change. *Journal of International Communication* 3: 494–516.
- Cottle S (2011) Taking global crises in the news seriously: Notes from the dark side of globalization. *Global Media and Communication* 7(2): 77–95.
- Cottle S (2012) Global crises and world news ecology. In: Allan S (ed.) *The Routledge Companion to News and Journalism Studies*. Milton Park: Routledge, pp.473–484.
- Cottle S (2013a) Journalists witnessing disasters: From the calculus of death to the injunction to care. *Journalism Studies* 14(2): 1–17.

- Cottle S (2013b) Environmental conflict in a global, media age: Beyond dualisms. In: Lester L and Hutchins B (eds) *Environmental Conflict and the Media*. New York, NY: Peter Lang, pp.13–28.
- Cottle S (2014) Rethinking media and disasters in a global age: What’s changed and why it matters. *Media War & Conflict* 7(1): 3–22.
- Cottle S (2019) Journalism coming of (global) age. II. *Journalism* 20(1): 102–105.
- Cottle S (2022) Insights on peace and conflict reporting. In: Orgeret K (ed.) *On the Edge of the World: Peace and Conflict Reporting in a World-in-Crisis*. Milton Park: Routledge, pp.10–31.
- Cottle S (2023) Ukraine war reporting: Obliterating ecological consciousness in a dying world. In: Pantti M and Mortensen M (eds) *Media and the Ukraine War*. Peter Lang.
- Cottle S and Rai M (2006) Between display and deliberation: analyzing TV news as communicative architecture. *Media Culture & Society* 28(2): 163–189.
- Cowie RH, Bouchet P and Fontaine B (2022) The sixth mass extinction: Fact, fiction or speculation? *Biological Reviews* 97(2): 640–663.
- Daly H (1991) *Steady-State Economics*. Washington, DC: Island Press.
- Diamond J (2011) *Collapse*. London: Penguin.
- Eisenstein C (2018) *Climate: A New Story*. Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books.
- Eisenstein C (2021) *Sacred Economics*. Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books.
- Erlich P (2017) *Biological extinction*. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1j7TpoLmR60&t=567s>.
- Erlich P (2018) Paul Erlich: Collapse is a near certainty within decades. *The Guardian* 22 March. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2018/mar/22/collapse-civilisation-near-certain-decades-population-bomb-paul-erlich>.
- Erlich P and Erlich A (1988) *Extinction*. New York, NY: Random House.
- Federation of American Scientist (FAS) (2022) Status of world nuclear forces. Available at: <https://fas.org/issues/nuclear-weapons/status-world-nuclear-forces/>
- Foster J (2022) *Capitalism in the Anthropocene*. New York, NY: Monthly Review Press.
- Frazer N (2022) *Cannibal Capitalism*. London: Verso.
- Ghosh A (2016) *The Great Derangement*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Ghosh A (2022) *The Nutmegs’ Curse: Parables for a Planet in Crisis*. London: John Murray.
- Giddens A (1990) *The Consequences of Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Gillespie S (2020) *Climate Crisis and Consciousness*. Milton Park: Routledge.
- Goulson D (2021) *Silent Earth*. London: Jonathan Cape.
- Gutsche Jr RE and Pinto J (2022) Covering synergistic effects of climate change: Global challenges for journalism. *Journalism Practice* 16(2-3): 237–243.
- Hanh T (2021) *Zen and the Art of Saving the Planet*. London: Penguin.
- Haque U (2021) *The age of the Great Dying Eudaimonia*. 9 July. Available at: <https://eand.co/the-age-of-the-great-dying-is-beginning-651b1a210432>
- Haraway D (2016) *Staying With the Trouble*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Harcup T and O’Neill D (2017) What is news? News values revisited (again). *Journalism Studies* 18(12): 1470–1488.
- Hickel J (2021) *Degrowth*. London: Windmill Books.
- Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) (2022) *IPCC sixth assessment report: Impacts, adaptation and vulnerability*. Available at: <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/>
- Jackson T (2021) *Post Growth*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Kaplinsky R (2021) *Sustainable Futures*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Kelly S and Macy J (2021) The great turning. In: Bendell J and Read R (eds) *Deep Adaptation*. Cambridge: Polity, pp.197–208.
- Kimmerer R (2013) *Braiding Sweetgrass*. London: Penguin.

- Kimmerer R (2022) 'Ancient green: Moss, climate and deep time. *Emergence Magazine*, April. Available at: <https://emergencemagazine.org/essay/ancient-green>.
- Klein N (2007) *The Shock Doctrine*. York: Allen Lane.
- Kolbert E (2014) *The Sixth Extinction*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Korton D (2021) <https://davidkorten.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Korten-EcoCiv-11032021.pdf>. *Ecological civilization*.
- Latour B (2017) *Facing Gaia*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Lawler OK, Allan HL, Baxter PWJ, et al. (2021) The covid-19 pandemic is intricately linked to biodiversity loss and ecosystem health. *The Lancet* 5(11): E840–E850.
- Lent J (2021) *The Web of Meaning*. London: Profile Books.
- Lewis S and Maslin M (2018) *The Human Planet*. London: Penguin Books.
- Lovelock J (2015) *A Rough Ride to the Future*. London: Penguin.
- Lovelock J (2021) *We Belong to Gaia*. London: Penguin.
- Loy DR (2019) *Ecodharma*. Somerville, MA: Wisdom Publications.
- Macy J (2021) *World as Lover, World as Self*. California: Parallax Press.
- Macy J and Johnstone C (2022) *Active Hope*. California, Novato: New World Library.
- McGilchrist I (2021) *The Matter With Things*. London: Perspectiva Press.
- McGoldrick A and Lynch J (2005) *Peace Journalism*. Stroud: Hawthorn Press.
- McIntyre K (2019) Solutions journalism. *Journalism Practice* 13(8): 1029–1033.
- Meadows D, Meadows D, Randers J, et al. (1972) *The Limits to Growth*. Ticehurst: Earth Island.
- Millman O (2022) *The Insect Crisis*. London: Atlantic Books.
- Moore J (2015) *Capitalism in the Web of Life*. New York, NY: Verso Books.
- Naess A (2021) *There is No Point of Return*. London: Penguin.
- Nettlefold J and Pecl GT (2022) Engaged journalism and climate change. *Journalism Practice* 16(1): 19–34.
- Olausson U (2023) *The Ethics of Sustainable Communication*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Oomen J, Hoffman J and Hajer MA (2022) Techniques of futuring: On how imagined futures become socially performative. *European Journal of Social Theory* 25(2): 252–270.
- Painter J (2013) *Climate Change in the Media*. London: I.B. Taurus.
- Parks P (2020) Researching with our hair on fire. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 97(2): 393–415.
- Pascoe B (2016) *Dark Emu*. Broome: Magabala Books.
- Patel R and Moore J (2018) *A History of the World in Seven Cheap Things*. London: Verso.
- Porritt J (2021) *Hope in Hell*. La Jolla: Simon & Schuster.
- Raworth K (2017) *Doughnut Economics*. London: Penguin.
- Read R and Alexander S (2019) *This Civilization is Finished*. Melbourne: Simplicity Institute.
- Reese SD (2016) The new geography of journalism research. *Digital Journalism* 4(7): 816–826.
- Robbins D and Wheatley D (2021) Complexity, objectivity, and shifting roles: Environmental correspondents march to a changing beat. *Journalism Practice* 15(9): 1289–1306.
- Robertson A and Schaez N (2022) Moving people: Proper distance and global news coverage of migration in 2019. *Global Media and Communication* 17(3): 321–343.
- Rosen J (1999) *What Are Journalists for?* New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Saito K (2022) *Marx in the Anthropocene*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sayre R and Lowy M (2021) *Romantic Anti-Capitalism and Nature*. Milton Park: Routledge.
- Scannell P (1989) Public service broadcasting and modern public life. *Media Culture & Society* 11(2): 135–166.
- Schudson M (2019) Approaches to the sociology of news. In: Curran J and Hesmondhalgh D (eds) *Media and Society*. London: Bloomsbury, pp.139–165.
- Scott M, Wright K and Bunce M (2023) *Humanitarian Journalists*. Milton Park: Routledge.

- Servigne P and Stevens R (2020) *How Everything Can Collapse*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Servigne P, Stevens R and Chapelle G (2021) *Another End of the World is Possible*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Smith P and Howe N (2015) *Climate Change as Social Drama*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Steffen W, Broadgate W, Deutsch L, et al. (2015) The trajectory of the anthropocene: The great acceleration. *The Anthropocene Review* 2(1): 81–98.
- Stockholm Resilience Centre (2015) The nine planetary boundaries. Available at: <https://www.stockholmresilience.org/research/planetary-boundaries/the-nine-planetary-boundaries.html>
- Toon B (2018) I've studied nuclear war for 35 years – You should be worried. TEDxMileHigh. Available at: https://www.ted.com/talks/brian_toon_i_ve_studied_nuclear_war_for_35_years_you_should_be_worried?language=en
- Tsing A, Deger J, Saxena A, et al. (2022) FERAL ATLAS; The More-Than-Human Anthropocene. Available at: <http://FERALATLAS.ORG/#> (accessed 15 February 2022)
- Turner G (2014) *Is Global Collapse Imminent? Research Paper Number 4*. Melbourne: Melbourne Sustainable Society Institute. Melbourne University.
- United Nations (2022) Global Issues. Available at: <https://www.un.org/en/global-issues>
- United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) (2016) *Frontiers 2016: Emerging issues of environmental concern*. Available at: <https://www.unep.org/resources/frontiers-2016-emerging-issues-environmental-concern?>
- United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) (2019) *Global biodiversity outlook 5*. Available at: <https://www.cbd.int/gbo5> (accessed 20 September 2020)
- United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) (2023) *Climate Change 2023: Synthesis Report*. Available at: <https://www.unep.org/resources/report/climate-change-2023-synthesis-report#>
- Vidal J (2023) *Fevered Planet*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Wahl DC (2016) *Designing Regenerative Culture*. Axminster: Triarchy Press.
- Waisbord S (2009) Rethinking development journalism. In: Allan S (ed.) *The Routledge Companion to News and Journalism*. Milton Park: Routledge, pp.148–158.
- Wallace-Wells D (2019) *The Uninhabitable Earth*. London: Penguin Books.
- Wallerstein I (2004) *World-Systems Analysis*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Wang H, Paulson K and Murray C (2022) Estimating excess mortality due to the covid-19 pandemic. *The Journal-Lancet* 399(10334): 1513–1536.
- Wilson EO (2013) Beware the age of loneliness. *The Economist* Nov.18 2013. Available at: <https://www.economist.com/news/2013/11/18/beware-the-age-of-loneliness>.
- Weil C and Papacharissi Z (2021) Covid-19 and the long revolution. *Journal of International Communication* 15: 1141–1153.
- World Food Programme (2022) A hunger catastrophe. Available at: <https://www.wfp.org/hunger-catastrophe>
- World Health Organization (WHO) (2022) 14.9 million excess deaths associated with the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021. May 5, 2022, News release. Available at: <https://www.who.int/news/item/05-05-2022-14.9-million-excess-deaths>.
- WWF (2020) *Nature and pandemics*. Available at: <https://www.wwf.org.uk/nature-and-pandemics>
- WWF (2022) *World wide fund for nature living planet report 2022*. Available at: <https://living-planet.panda.org/en-GB/>
- Yunkaporta T (2020) *Sand Talk*. Singapore: Collins.
- Zelizer B (2017) Thinking temporally about journalism's future. In: Zelizer B (ed.) *What Journalism Could be*. Cambridge: Polity, pp.239–262.
- Zelizer B (2021) Why journalism's default neglect of temporality is a problem. *Media Culture & Society* 43(7): 1213–1229.

Author biography

Simon Cottle is Professor Emeritus at the School of Journalism, Media and Culture at Cardiff University. He is the author and editor of 13 books and 150 articles/chapters, many on journalism, conflict and global crisis reporting. He is also General Editor of the *Global Crises and the Media* series for Peter Lang and is currently writing *Reporting Civilizational Collapse: A Wake-Up Call* (Routledge, forthcoming) and editing *Communicating a World-in-Crisis* (Peter Lang, forthcoming). Cottle now writes exclusively on communication, ecology and the planetary emergency and offers lectures on this to universities around the world. Email: CottleS@cardiff.ac.uk <https://profiles.cardiff.ac.uk/emeritus/simon-cottle>