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Climate Justice at the Edge of History

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Introduction: At the Threshold of the Planetary Age

We launch this journal at a *Kairos*- a threshold moment- in human history. Climate disruption is no longer a distant future discussed only in scientific reports or policy forums; it now shapes everyday life. Heat reshapes labour and survival. Rivers disappear and return with devastating force. Coastlines retreat, ecosystems unravel, species disappear, and entire communities move under the pressures of drought, flood, fire, conflict, and economic insecurity. A generation now inherits ecological anxiety as part of its emotional landscape. The earth is not simply warming; the living systems that sustain life are being destabilized.

Yet this is more than an environmental crisis. It is a civilizational rupture exposing deep fractures within modern life: extractive economies, colonial inheritances, racialized inequality, and the illusion that the earth exists for endless accumulation. At the same time, this journal does not reject modernity in total. Scientific inquiry, democratic struggles, human rights traditions, and critical scholarship have also made climate knowledge, ecological accountability, and emancipatory movements possible. The task, therefore, is not anti-modern nostalgia, but critical reconstruction: discerning what within modernity must be resisted, what must be repaired, and what may yet sustain just and ecological futures.

The atmosphere has become an archive of industrial ambition; carbon is condensed political history. Creation now groans beneath human excess. But the cry of the earth and the vulnerable is not only a cry of suffering; it is also a cry of knowledge. Frontline communities carry memories, practices, and ecological wisdom essential for climate justice and planetary repair.

The Journal of Climate Justice seeks to bring scientific research, ethical reflection, theological imagination, policy analysis, and the knowledge of communities most affected, into sustained dialogue. It emerges as an interdisciplinary and interreligious platform for rethinking life in the planetary age especially from the perspectives of frontline communities, vulnerable peoples, and the Global South living with ecological harm, where life has been most deeply wounded, resisted, and reimaged.

I. Climate Crisis as Civilizational and Theological Rupture

The climate crisis marks the destabilization of the ecological assumptions upon which modern civilization was built. For centuries, political and economic systems operated as though nature were inexhaustible, growth could continue indefinitely, and extraction carried no planetary limit. That world is ending. Climate disruption now converges with widening inequality, food insecurity, water scarcity, displacement, biodiversity collapse, and rising authoritarianism.

Ecological vulnerability always moves through social structures. Floods become catastrophic through unequal housing, histories of dispossession, and unequal access to infrastructure. Heat becomes deadly where workers lack protection. Drought becomes famine where land ownership is unequal. Those least responsible for planetary destabilization often bear its gravest consequences. Climate justice is therefore not secondary to the crisis; it lies at its centre.

The crisis is not only climatic but biological. Species extinction, collapsing ecosystems, and damaged forests and oceans reveal a profound rupture in humanity's relationship with the wider community of life.

From a theological perspective, the climate crisis reveals the consequences of transforming stewardship into domination and communion into commodification. Yet the theological horizon must remain broader than any single tradition. Christian ideas of creation, covenant, Sabbath, and creatureliness must enter conversation with Islamic reflections on trust, balance, and accountability; Hindu visions of interdependence and reverence for life; Buddhist insights into interbeing and compassion; Indigenous understandings of kinship with land, water, and more-than-human life; African ecological wisdom concerning community and relational belonging; and many other traditions of ecological restraint and sacred responsibility. These traditions do not speak with one voice, nor should their differences be erased. Yet together they challenge domination, recover reverence, resist the absolutism of endless accumulation, and nourish possibilities for planetary repair.

The question, therefore, is not whether one religious grammar will govern climate justice, but whether diverse theological and ethical traditions can deepen responsibility for life on a wounded planet. The wounds of the earth and the wounds of the poor increasingly mirror one another. Yet those wounds also speak. Communities most affected are not merely spaces of suffering waiting to be studied by the centre. They are places where the truth of the crisis becomes visible with unusual clarity. Farmers reading changing soils, Indigenous communities remembering forests

as kin, women sustaining life amid water scarcity, migrants carrying geographies of loss, and children inheriting ecological fear are not simply victims of climate disruption. They are bearers of ecological wisdom essential for climate justice and repair.

The *Journal of Climate Justice* therefore seeks research that brings climate science, ethics, theology, policy analysis, biodiversity studies, and frontline knowledge into sustained conversation. It welcomes scholarship on climate adaptation, ecological debt, migration, sacrifice zones, climate inequality, interreligious ecological ethics, and the epistemologies of vulnerable communities as vital resources for planetary repair.

II. Crisis of Modern Knowledge and the Epistemology of the Margins

The climate crisis is not only a crisis of ecology or economy; it is also a crisis of knowledge. Modern intellectual systems often separated science from ethics, economics from ecology, and expertise from lived experience. These divisions produced extraordinary scientific and technological power, yet they also fragmented understanding. Climate science can model atmospheric warming, but it cannot alone determine whose lives are protected, what constitutes a just transition, or what responsibilities societies owe future generations.

The critique, however, must remain precise. Science itself is not the enemy. Climate science, biodiversity research, public health research, ecological modelling, and earth systems science remain indispensable for understanding planetary destabilization and for developing pathways toward mitigation, adaptation, and ecological restoration. The challenge is not scientific inquiry itself, but forms of knowledge detached from ethics, democratic accountability, ecological wisdom, and the lived realities of vulnerable communities. What must be resisted is technocratic supremacy: the belief that expertise alone can govern planetary life.

The crisis therefore demands more than cooperation among disciplines. It requires rethinking how knowledge itself is understood. This journal asks difficult but necessary questions: What counts as evidence? Who is recognized as an expert? How have colonial histories shaped dominant systems of knowledge? What forms of ecological wisdom were dismissed as oral, Indigenous, peasant, feminine, disabled, or unscientific?

Here the epistemology of the margins becomes indispensable. Climate justice cannot mean merely inviting vulnerable communities into conversations already designed elsewhere. It requires listening to them as bearers of knowledge. Communities living closest to ecological violence often perceive relationships dominant systems ignore: between land and memory, water and dignity, labour and heat, displacement and identity.

Knowledge is not produced only in laboratories, universities, satellites, or policy institutions. It is also carried in bodies enduring heat, in communities remembering vanished rivers, in Indigenous ecological practices, in women's traditions of water-sharing, in farmers' seed wisdom, and in the survival strategies of informal settlements. This does not romanticize suffering. Marginal-

ized communities are diverse and internally contested. Yet their situated knowledge reveals dimensions of ecological reality often invisible to those insulated from climate danger.

The climate crisis also unfolds through digital infrastructures of power: AI systems, climate surveillance, carbon accounting regimes, and planetary data governance. These technologies are not neutral; algorithms often inherit social inequalities. Yet digital tools can also support early warning systems, public accountability, climate litigation, disaster response, and community monitoring when democratically governed. The question is therefore not technology or no technology, but technology for whom, governed by whom, and toward what vision of life.

At its deepest level, the ecological crisis exposes the limits of a civilization that pursued knowledge without wisdom and power without humility. Scientific, theological, philosophical, Indigenous, artistic, and community-based traditions must now meet in the shared search for forms of knowing rooted in interdependence, reciprocity, responsibility, and care for human and more-than-human life. The *Journal of Climate Justice* encourages collaborative research, community-engaged scholarship, and forms of inquiry that bring rigorous scientific research into dialogue with lived experience and ecological wisdom from the communities living with ecological harm.

III. Crisis of Political Economy and the Idolatry of Endless Growth

The climate crisis is inseparable from the political economy that produced it. Fossil capitalism did not merely generate emissions; it reorganized civilization around extraction, accumulation, and disposability. Forests became inventory, oceans became transport corridors, land became commodity, and atmospheres became waste containers. Human labour itself became expendable fuel for economic growth. Entire regions were transformed into sacrifice zones for industrial expansion. The destruction of biodiversity is inseparable from economic systems that reduce forests, rivers, oceans, and animal life into units of production and financial value.

Today, even climate responses risk becoming financialized through carbon markets, adaptation finance, and speculative green investment systems. The atmosphere is becoming both a site of ecological collapse and a frontier of financial speculation. Yet transitions away from fossil fuels remain politically unavoidable. Renewable energy systems may reduce emissions while simultaneously reproducing lithium extraction, labour exploitation, water depletion, and Indigenous land dispossession. At the same time, post-growth or degrowth frameworks can fail to address poverty, healthcare inequality, infrastructural deprivation, and energy exclusion across much of the Global South. There are no innocent transitions.

Climate justice therefore requires serious engagement with tensions between development and ecological limits, decarbonization and extraction, and growth and sufficiency.

Theologically and ethically, the crisis exposes what may rightly be called the idolatry of endless growth. Profit became untouchable, consumption became virtue, and efficiency became moral justification. Yet religious and philosophical traditions across the world offer counter-vi-

sions grounded in Sabbath, zakat, reciprocity, restraint, and communal belonging. These traditions do not provide ready-made policy solutions, but they challenge the absolutism of endless accumulation and reopen the question of what wealth is for.

Here the epistemology of the margins becomes crucial. Communities living beneath extractive economies know, often with painful clarity, that growth can dispossess and development can arrive as eviction, pollution, debt, hunger, heat, or the loss of ancestral land. Their knowledge exposes the false innocence of economic abstraction and insists that development be judged not merely by market expansion, but by what happens to bodies, waters, forests, soils, languages, and future generations.

Reparative climate justice therefore requires more than compensation or expert-led policy models. It demands truth-telling, ecological healing, land restoration, debt transformation, cultural survival, and redistribution of decision-making power. The harmed must not merely receive repair; they must help define what repair means. The *Journal of Climate Justice* especially welcomes research linking political economy, climate science, biodiversity loss, labour, debt, Indigenous rights, and ecological repair.

IV. Crisis of Governance, Democracy, and Moral Responsibility

Climate disruption exposes a growing crisis of governance and democracy. States face mounting pressures from ecological breakdown, displacement, infrastructure stress, and social instability. Under these conditions, ecological crisis can deepen authoritarian tendencies through securitized borders, surveillance systems, and militarized adaptation.

Yet democracy itself must not be dismissed. Democratic traditions- however incomplete- remain essential for public accountability, rights, protest, Indigenous claims, labour protections, ecological litigation, and community participation. The problem is not democracy as such, but democracies captured by short-termism, corporate power, exclusion, and nationalism. Climate justice therefore demands the deepening of democracy, not its abandonment.

Climate governance increasingly reveals forms of ecological triage in which wealthy regions insulate themselves while vulnerable communities absorb escalating risk. Entire populations become zones of managed abandonment. At the same time, democratic systems remain trapped within short electoral cycles while climate disruption unfolds across generations. This raises urgent questions about responsibility, participation, and legitimacy in an interdependent world.

Here again, the vulnerable communities are not merely populations to be consulted. They are communities whose knowledge should reshape governance itself. Climate democracy cannot be reduced to representation within existing institutions if those institutions remain organized around elite expertise, corporate lobbying, or technocratic management. It must become a deeper practice of listening, accountability, and shared discernment.

Frontline communities often recognize the failures of governance long before institutions officially acknowledge them. They know when warning systems fail to reach the poor, when com-

pensation excludes the landless, when relocation destroys community, when conservation criminalizes Indigenous presence, and when adaptation funds disappear into bureaucracy. Their knowledge is not anecdotal decoration; it is diagnostic intelligence.

The climate crisis also confronts theological and ethical traditions with difficult moral questions: What does responsibility mean when future generations inherit the consequences of present consumption? What forms of truth-telling become necessary when denial becomes politically organized? What do justice, compassion, kinship, and responsibility mean on a planet increasingly divided between protected zones and sacrificial populations?

The *Journal of Climate Justice* welcomes research on climate governance, democratic participation, Indigenous sovereignty, migration, adaptation policy, ecological law, and public accountability as essential dimensions of climate justice and planetary repair.

V. Crisis of the Human Imagination and the Meaning of Creatureliness

Beneath the political, ecological, and institutional crises of the climate age lies a deeper crisis of the human imagination itself. The climate crisis reveals not only what humanity has built, but what humanity has desired. Modern consumer cultures normalized forms of selfhood shaped by acquisition, hyper-individualism, extraction, and disposability. Freedom increasingly came to be understood through consumption.

The crisis now destabilizes that imagination. What does it mean to be human on a finite planet? What forms of desire sustain ecological destruction? What happens to identity when ecological worlds disappear? Climate disruption reshapes emotional life through ecological grief, climate anxiety, exhaustion, and intergenerational fear. Yet contemporary societies possess few rituals, institutions, or moral languages capable of holding these experiences. The climate crisis is therefore also a crisis of meaning.

Theologically and philosophically, the planetary crisis exposes the limits of an understanding of humanity built upon mastery, separation, and control. Human beings are not autonomous rulers standing outside creation, but creatures within fragile webs of interdependence. The disappearance of species and habitats is not merely a scientific concern; it is a profound diminishment of the living community upon which human and more-than-human flourishing depends. Biodiversity protection is therefore not simply conservation policy, but an ethical and civilizational responsibility toward the integrity of life itself.

Air, water, forests, oceans, and climate systems are not background scenery to history; they are conditions of life. In different traditions, this truth is expressed through creatureliness, inter-being, kinship, and reverence for life.

The recovery of creatureliness- or more broadly, ecological humility- may therefore become one of the urgent tasks of the planetary age. The knowledge from wounded places deepens this recovery. Communities living close to land, labour, water, displacement, and ecological vulnerability often know interdependence not as theory but as daily reality. Their wisdom contests the

fantasy of the isolated individual and reminds us that life is received, shared, vulnerable, and bound to others.

The *Journal of Climate Justice* welcomes scholarship in environmental humanities, theology, eco-psychology, ritual studies, multispecies ethics, literature, ecological arts, and interreligious ecological thought. It especially encourages work that connects biodiversity concerns, ecological imagination, and marginalized ecological wisdom in the search for more just and liveable futures.

VI. Crisis of Institutional Legitimacy and the Demand for Ecological Conversion

The climate crisis increasingly tests the legitimacy of institutions themselves. Governments promise transition while expanding extraction. Corporations market sustainability while deepening ecological destruction. Universities produce climate research while remaining entangled with extractive economies. Religious traditions preach stewardship, compassion, and restraint while often remaining institutionally cautious. International climate negotiations repeatedly acknowledge urgency while emissions continue to rise. Public trust erodes when institutions appear incapable of responding proportionately to planetary risk.

Academic institutions are not exempt from this crisis. Scholarly publishing remains shaped by linguistic inequality, unequal access, precarious funding, and Global North dominance. A journal committed to climate justice must therefore interrogate its own conditions of possibility: Who speaks? Who reviews? Whose knowledge circulates globally? Who remains invisible?

If the lived ecological wisdom is to be taken seriously, the journal cannot merely publish about vulnerable communities while maintaining unchanged systems of academic gatekeeping. Frontline knowledge must shape research design, authorship, review, and dissemination. Oral testimony, community memory, artistic practice, and local ecological knowledge must be recognized as legitimate forms of climate knowledge alongside rigorous scientific research.

The *Journal of Climate Justice* therefore commits itself to collaborative authorship, multilingual accessibility, community-engaged review practices, transparency in funding structures, and expanded access wherever possible. It seeks to create a platform where scientific research, ethical reflection, policy analysis, and frontline knowledge can meet in sustained dialogue. Where possible, the journal will encourage multilingual abstracts, community co-authorship, and review processes that include both academic and practice-based expertise.

At its deepest level, this is not only a crisis of institutional credibility, but of moral and spiritual integrity. Institutions lose trust when they no longer embody the truths they proclaim. The climate crisis therefore calls not merely for institutional reform, but for ecological and epistemic conversion: learning to listen where institutions have often spoken over others, and allowing wisdom from wounded places to unsettle, correct, and reorient the centre.

VII. Possibility of Planetary Repair and the Work of Hope

We do not believe the future can be redeemed through optimism alone. Many ecological losses are already irreversible. Entire ecosystems, species, coastlines, and ways of life are disappearing, and climate disruption will shape human history for generations. Yet despair is not politically innocent. Fatalism can become another form of surrender to systems that insist no alternative futures remain possible.

Hope, therefore, must become more disciplined than optimism. It is not certainty, denial, or faith in technological rescue, but the stubborn refusal to abandon the possibility of shared planetary futures. By planetary repair, we mean not a return to an untouched past, but the difficult work of restoring damaged ecosystems, transforming unjust institutions, repairing broken relationships, and renewing forms of knowledge distorted by extraction.

Planetary repair will not emerge through a single ideology, institution, religion, science, or political tradition. It will require democratic renewal, reparative justice, ecological restraint, institutional transformation, and renewed coexistence across human and more-than-human worlds. It will also require sustained scientific research on climate systems, biodiversity loss, ecological restoration, adaptation, renewable transitions, and planetary health, carried out in dialogue with ethical reflection and the lived experiences of vulnerable communities.

Repair begins wherever communities defend forests and rivers, restore ecosystems, protect biodiversity, democratize energy, and insist that no population should be treated as disposable. Such efforts remain partial and contested, yet they disclose another possibility of civilization.

The work of reparation cannot be separated from the work of listening. Reparative climate justice must be shaped by those whose lands, waters, labour, bodies, and cultures have borne the costs of extraction. Without their wisdom, repair risks becoming another project imposed from above. With their knowledge, repair can become a practice of restored relationships, truthful memory, and more just forms of power.

This journal is offered as one small but serious contribution to that unfinished work: a space where scientific research, ethical reflection, theological imagination, and the wisdom of frontline communities may together seek the conditions of planetary repair.

The *Journal of Climate Justice* seeks to become a global platform where climate science, biodiversity research, ethics, theology, policy, the humanities, and lived experience meet to address the planetary crisis, especially from the perspectives of vulnerable communities, frontline peoples, and the Global South. Its distinctive vocation is to hold rigorous scientific inquiry together with the wisdom of the communities most affected, so that climate justice may be pursued not only as policy response, but as a movement toward more just, ecological, and life-giving futures.

The journal especially encourages collaborative and interdisciplinary research connecting scientific inquiry, public policy, ecological ethics, biodiversity protection, and frontline experience in the shared search for planetary repair.