**Urban redevelopment and the new logics of expulsion: cultural representations of individual precarity leading to precaritising of community structures in *Aquarius* and *Last Man in Tower***

**Introduction: precarity and the new logics of expulsion**

Drawing on Kleber Mendonça Filho’s film *Aquarius* (2016) and Aravind Adiga’s novel *Last Man in Tower* (2011), this article is concerned with the impact on individuals and communities of forms of impersonal, systemic violence resulting from neoliberal accumulation and reproduction of mobile capital, which throws ever-widening nets of precarities as well as opening up new precarities. The article examines the experiences of the previously less precarious, i.e. members of the middle classes in Recife, Brazil, and Mumbai, India, rendered newly precarious. Through the narratives of a novel and a film, we analyse cultural representations of redevelopment projects as epitomes of frictionless, mobile capital that increase the precarity of individuals, which in turns frays the bonds of communities, heightening network and community precarities. The article frames the temporality of these precarities via themes of memory, presentism, and futurity, in order to depict how sites in the Global South are targeted by mobile capital, and how individuals and communities are impacted by growing extents of precarities, eroding long-established systems of social and communal protection, undermining social loyalties and securities.

The pressures of global financialization are linked to a logics of expulsion.[[1]](#footnote-1) Where Lauren Berlant observes that ‘capitalist activity always induces destabilizing scenes of productive destruction – of resources and of lives being made and unmade according to the dictates and whims of the market’,[[2]](#footnote-2) Saskia Sassen extends this idea of annihilation linked to capitalism to note how ‘[t]he notion of expulsions takes us beyond the more familiar idea of growing inequality as a way of capturing the pathologies of today’s global capitalism’.[[3]](#footnote-3) Patterns of ‘development’ build on the dissemination of neoliberal reason[[4]](#footnote-4) to transform individuals into disposable entities and, among other forms of radical expulsions, expel them from their family homes. The situations experienced by Mendonça Filho’s and Adiga’s protagonists expose the lifeworld vulnerability of individuals in the face of the power of capitalism and the possibility of its destructive force – a precarity the characters themselves may not have appreciated or comprehended before the trigger was activated by the global demands of the neoliberal marketplace. As Sassen explains, we can no longer understand today’s socioeconomic and environmental dislocations only in terms of poverty and injustice, but need to regard these dislocations and precarities as expulsions from livelihoods, living spaces, and the very biosphere.

Building on these expanding understandings of precarity which link it to the pressures of frictionless, mobile capital, we use Sassen’s idea of a ‘new logics of expulsion’.[[5]](#footnote-5) This brings to the fore the structural role that expulsion plays in the working of the global political economy within a general matrix of governmentality (as deployed by neoliberal regimes of power), and increasingly so in the last few decades. In fact, there has been a move in the literature on precarity from describing labour conditions, instabilities, and affects to migrants’ experiences of instability of the right to dwell. As Lewis et al. note about the diverse experience and effects of precarious employment, these are ‘intertwined with, other areas of life, such as household dynamics, individual circumstances, welfare provision’.[[6]](#footnote-6) Paret and Gleeson draw on Ettlinger’s findings to discuss how precarity ‘as being synonymous with uncertainty and unpredictability, and particularly “the unpredictability of terror”’ can have manifold manifestations, including ‘domestic and gang violence; the authoritarianism of formal and informal workplaces; various forms of surveillance; [and] ecological disasters such as earthquakes and tsunamis’.[[7]](#footnote-7) Ann Agathangelou discusses precarity as the slow violence of economic and environmental exploitation, which moreover is a ‘colonizing and enslaving project and is constitutive of the contemporary moment of capitalism’.[[8]](#footnote-8)

An example of this can be found in Emma Fraser’s (2018) work which shows that even a model of development which moves the urban spaces towards economic prosperity produces new modes of precarity for the built environment and for vulnerable individuals.[[9]](#footnote-9) Included in the *cultural geographies* special issue on precarity, Fraser’s article case studies Detroit to look at how growth-oriented imaginaries shape material and conceptual perceptions and encounters with space. In this article, we argue that the category of vulnerable people, shown fighting redevelopment projects in *Aquarius* *and Last Man in Tower*, is expanding to encompass the middle classes, not just the urban poor. As our examination of film and novel will illustrate, as a result of aggressive capitalism, more and more of the population are rendered vulnerable and precarious – precarity is moving from the peripheral into the mainstream, increasingly becoming a majority experience.

The concept of precarity has traditionally been associated more generally with labour insecurities in European contexts; in that of the Global North, ‘it has been used as a way of expressing livelihood insecurities associated with labour (working) conditions, including the implications of diminishing protections’.[[10]](#footnote-10) Marcel Paret and Shannon Gleeson explain that precarious or insecure work treats workers as commodities, overlooking their human need of social protection, and is a product of neoliberalism or market-driven globalisation.[[11]](#footnote-11) In addition to these motivators of precarity, Lewis et al. note that the erosion of the working classes also underpins ‘the rise of insecure, flexible and nonstandard employment relations over the past 30 years in the Global North’.[[12]](#footnote-12) Precarity has come back into prominence as a concept this decade partly in response to changing conditions on the ground, but also in part promoted by Guy Standing’s *The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class* (2011). He warns that the precariat is no longer an underclass, but growing into a mass class and, in fact, a class in the making, a situation which is reflected in *Aquarius* and *Last Man in Tower*, expanding precaritisation. Standing’s book still uses this term in the contexts of labour insecurity and the weakening of civil, political, and other rights, but attempts to extend the original use of the term beyond European contexts. So, although precarity as a term was coined to define an economic phenomenon related to labour conditions in the Global North, there is increasing recognition that even when focusing on precarity in terms of insecure labour conditions, there is a need to appreciate the overspill of this precarity into other precarities, geographically and otherwise.

As part of this movement to broaden the concept of precarity, scholars have taken issue with the limitation of an understanding of precarity which is only entrenched in European or Global North contexts, in other words using Europe or the Global North for theoretically and empirically framing the experiences of precarity.[[13]](#footnote-13) This dissatisfaction with the limitations of the concept stems from the fact that precarity has been long been endured in the Global South, but for the most part seems to have gone unrecognised in the literature. This is a state of affairs which Suliman and Weber insist ‘cannot be delinked from colonialism and its legacies’; these are the legacies that, paradoxically enough, ‘enabled welfare provisions in the West’.[[14]](#footnote-14)

While studies of precarity have for the most part been embedded in European contexts of the neoliberal marketplace, particularly given that the notion of precarity which originated in France was economic in its inception,[[15]](#footnote-15) this article looks at contexts in the Global South where the state has not provided as many safety nets as Western European governments have post-World War II. Discussing the social dimensions of the post-1945 boom, Neil Lazarus details how post-war reconstruction in the ‘core capitalist countries’ ‘took the form of social democracy’ as ‘[e]conomic growth on the one hand was complemented by the dispersal of social benefits on the other’.[[16]](#footnote-16) In the Global South, interdependency within society has been the counterbalance to precarity, given that precarity has tended to be the norm in these settings rather than the exception or the newly occurring.

There have been some useful studies of precarity as the norm as experienced by the urban poor in the Global South. For instance, Solange Muñoz focuses on gendered precarity, underscoring the uneven impact of precarity on women in studying squatters awaiting eviction in Buenos Aires.[[17]](#footnote-17) Muñoz’s work details the negotiations of microspaces of everyday life given how precarity is their existent framework. Our article builds on such studies, extending it beyond those already habitually framed and conditioned by precarious lifestyles and situations, to look at precarities as a newly-arrived-at condition. This is something which the middle classes of the Global South indignantly protest, resisting, as in our case studies, not just eviction from their homes, but the very placement in positions of precarity, fighting the imposition and experience of precarity.

Mendonça Filho and Adiga’s texts set in two geographical contexts in the Global South – Recife, Brazil and Mumbai, India –represent the impacts of the new logics of expulsion in the global economy on middle-class individuals who were not previously considered to be precarious as they were socially endowed with cultural privilege, as in the case of their protagonists, Clara and Masterji. We connect the emergence of the new logics of expulsion to calls for ‘development’ materialised in the lifeworld real-estate speculation and ‘redevelopment’ projects which trigger the plots of *Aquarius* and *Last Man in Tower*. The situations of economic violence depicted in these texts mirror lived experiences in the cities and countries that Mendonça Filho and Adiga use as settings for their film and novel. Furthermore, a comparison of these texts and contexts underscores the similarities of development models between Brazil and India – countries which have been experiencing unregulated patterns of development and whose economies are (or have been up until recently) hailed as ‘thriving’, resulting in their inclusion in the denominated ‘BRIC countries’, but which are nonetheless sites of precarity.

In the case of India, Alf Gunvald Nilsen and Srila Roy also pick up on how precarity is excluding, marginalising, and subalternising (or, as Sassen would term it, expelling) individuals, and how this criss-crosses with ‘structures of power based in caste, gender, and sexuality to create patterns of exclusion, vulnerability, stigma, and disenfranchisement that define subalternity in contemporary India’.[[18]](#footnote-18) For example, they observe that the idea of India Shining (a political slogan devised to celebrate the Indian economic boom both internally and externally) fails to represent entrenched poverty, widening inequalities, the deepening agrarian crisis in rural India, and the ‘rampant exploitation of casual labour in the country’s vast informal sector’.[[19]](#footnote-19) In this respect, there is social diagnosis and criticism in contemporary social realist fiction of authors such as Adiga that feature subaltern characters but at the same time write about the middle-class in *Last Man in Tower*, especially of its hypocrisy and self-centredness.

To address the temporalities of precarity we selected two cultural artefacts in different media, a cinematic and a literary text, whose protagonists are the last individuals resisting urban redevelopment projects. The selection of this source material is grounded on Jacques Rancière’s argument that ‘[f]iction is at work whenever a sense of reality must be produced’,[[20]](#footnote-20) and interrelatedly on the critical space offered by the interpenetration between fiction, political life, and the construction of social realities. Engaging with the situations depicted in *Aquarius* and *Last Man in Tower* adds to the understanding of what happens in the lifeworld when residents are thrown into a condition of sudden and acute precarity when coerced to evacuate their long-time homes as a result of redevelopment projects, and in particular the pressures faced by the last individual standing, especially when she speaks truth to power.[[21]](#footnote-21)

Studying resettlements which happened in the slum clearance drive during India’s state of Emergency (1975 and 1977), Jervis Read also utilised narratives as recalled by residents, thus justifying her methodology:

By engaging with both the content of the stories narrated, but also their social and spatial dimensions, narration can be seen as a social act and a spatial practice, as residents seek to emplot, incorporate and exclude others in difficult social relations. By considering the narration of place as a spatial practice, the more subtle and contradictory processes of dwelling in the city are opened up for consideration, how people create spaces to live in and speak from in the maelstrom of city life.[[22]](#footnote-22)

Read highlights that although narratives are not necessary coherent, residents use them as strategies of emplacement or re-emplacements, emplotting themselves as a method of mediating between spaces and experiences of spaces, inserting themselves into the wider framings of the circulating discourses. Narratives act as re-presented remembrances which ‘add to, contradict, position and reposition themselves in stories, entwining people present and absent into the space and the act of telling’.[[23]](#footnote-23) Read explains that ‘agency is redistributed’ by recounting resettlements and explaining how actions were impelled by both the desire for opportunism and threats of violence, which is exactly the same experience as those of Mendonça Filho’s and Adiga’s characters.

This article connects the key themes of memory, presentism and futurity to the main characters in two narratives of urban redevelopment, *Aquarius* and *Last Man in Tower*: the actions of the resistant individuals are mostly guided by memory, the members of the communities who are shown as not rescuing the individuals facing precarity illustrate an adherence to utilitarian presentism (i.e. the prime consideration of immediate benefits and advantages, at times an un-tensed view indifferent to past or future), and the endeavours of the developers are associated with the desire of futurity. The plots of both film and novel play out chiefly between the developers and the last individuals standing who refuse to share the former’s dreams or desire of futurity. Without communal support, when members of the local community adhere to the principle of utilitarian presentism, or the lives of individuals become ever more precarious. As depicted in the cinematic and literary texts under scrutiny, temporary individual precarity can be exacerbated by local communities when utilitarian presentism is valued, countering expectations of these communities as the providers of a safety net in the form of a sense of stability, security, or deep human connection. As Muñoz states, ‘[u]rban precarity and home-making must be understood as collective experiences that produce cultural meanings and realities for a community of people’.[[24]](#footnote-24) What this article unpacks is the opposite of home-making, what Richard Baxter and Katherine Brickell call ‘home *un*making’, i.e. ‘the precarious process by which material and/or imaginary components of home are unintentionally or deliberately, temporarily or permanently, divested, damaged or even destroyed’.[[25]](#footnote-25) Baxter and Brickell review how home can be unmade by a number of sources, ranging from evictions to conflict and natural disasters, and point to the positive fall out of how home unmaking can lead to recovery and remaking of home. However, our article primarily illustrates how, for the newly deprived middle classes, home un-making is experienced as multiple losses, of sanctuaries and physical shelters, and as erosion of networks, attachments, memories, community ties and trust and interdependencies, having perhaps not yet progressed to the stage of home-remaking.

**Memory**

*Aquarius*, a 2016 Brazilian-French drama film directed by Kleber Mendonça Filho, is set in Recife, in the north-eastern state of Pernambuco, Brazil. It opens with a sequence of vintage black-and-white stills from the 1960s–1970s of the coastline of Recife, specifically of Boa Viagem, a seven-kilometre urban beach. These are picture-perfect postcards of a beach lined by palm trees, inhabited by sunbathers, families seeking refuge under thatched straw umbrellas. These images of tropical sandy beaches that have made of Recife a major tourist attraction are, at first, mostly populated by children, enjoying some well-deserved fun in the sun (Fig. 1).

The opening sequence is in 1980. Clara is at a birthday party taking place in her family’s beachfront apartment in the Aquarius building, a 1940s two-story building sitting among the high rises in upmarket Praia da Boa Viagem. She is celebrating after having survived breast cancer. The movie leaps into 2014, where in the same location, we see ‘Dona Clara’, now a local celebrity (a retired music journalist and author) writing a new book, her skin aged by the sun and the passing of time. In Mendonça Filho’s film, various stories starring Clara, past and present, conflate in the building. For example, in one of the film’s initial scenes, we see a man taking photographs of the Aquarius building, a character later introduced as Diego, a young civil engineer boasting an American business major turned project manager who is embarking on his first redevelopment project. Meanwhile, Clara is taking a nap, oblivious to what is happening. Accompanied by another two men, one the proprietor and one from the building’s administration, Diego calls out at Clara’s doorstep, offering her an ‘over the market value’ proposal to acquire her apartment. They are acting as representatives of a construction company that intends to tear the two-story Aquarius down and erect a new building: ‘The New Aquarius’. Diego will be the head of the project. The site of the Aquarius, soon to be redeveloped to boast a modern high-rise, befitting an increasingly gentrified location, is to become the stage of Clara’s resistance in the face of impending and unexpected individual precarity and the utilitarian presentism of her local community.

An apartment block (in Vakola, Bombay) also marked for demolition is the focal setting of Aravind Adiga’s 2011 novel *Last Man in Tower*. Dharmen Shah is a builder and developer who intends to buy the old apartment blocks in Tower A to demolish them, in order to build his ‘Shanghai’, a glistering state-of-the-art, new apartment block. While ‘The New Aquarius’ is Diego’s first incursion into redevelopment projects, Shah’s ‘Shanghai’ is seen as the culmination of his success as an entrepreneur. Residents in Tower A have a cooperative called Vishram Society. (Tower A is the less affluent block, the poor cousin to Tower B.) Shah makes offers to all the resident apartment owners – all the residents of Tower B accept. Tower A has four residents who reject the offer from the outset: Mr Yogesh Murthy (Masterji), a 61-year-old retired schoolmaster, Mr and Mrs Pinto (an elderly couple; Shelley Pinto is nearly blind), and Mrs Rego (the ‘Communist Aunty’, a social worker), a single mother of two whose husband left her (apparently taking all her dowry), and who hence has rather come down in the world. Of this four, Mrs Rego quickly capitulates at the thought of being able to move her children to Bandra, a ‘nicer’ part of Bombay where her affluent sister lives. The elderly Pintos yield when (at Shah’s instigation) they are threatened with physical violence. Plus, they hope to have more money after selling up to be able to send ‘dollars’ to their two children abroad. Masterji alone continues to refuse to sell or leave, having recently lost his wife and daughter but taking comfort from still perceiving their presence via memory and joint histories in the building.

Similarly, Clara is adamant in her refusal to sell her family home, where her three children were born, to make way for a ‘New Aquarius’. When Diego, the property developer, attempts to convince Clara to sell, he proceeds to talk of the Aquarius as a building that ‘used to exist’ in that spot (to which Clara retorts: ‘The building exists now. You’re leaning on it!’). Retaining the name ‘Aquarius’ for the new project (an earlier option had been ‘Atlantic Plaza Residence’) is arguably (in Diego’s words, brimming with pride and excitement over his project) ‘a way of preserving the memory of the original building’. Diego is hence forcing identification with the past, possibly to ease the residents’ acceptance of the redevelopment project by suggesting renewal rather than removal or even destruction. As Derek Alderman and Joshua Inwood observe, ‘Naming also represents a means of taking ownership of places, both materially and symbolically’.[[26]](#footnote-26) Renaming this space as ‘New Aquarius’ is a way for Diego to create a sense of new order and to establish a new perspective (his), while claiming a stake and placing himself and his redevelopment project within broader networks of memory. The ‘New Aquarius’ reflects the developer’s relationship with that particular place, becoming inextricably ‘part of the social construction of space and the symbolic construction of meanings about place’.[[27]](#footnote-27) The ‘real’ history of the Aquarius building is hence to be replaced by nostalgic pastiches of the past.

For Clara, the ‘old’ Aquarius represents social and historical values; its place identity is heavily invested with emotions and attached with meanings given through cultural processes – a space that has become a place. The experience of place is subjective, relational, historical, shaped by the material. Nigel Thrift underscores the inexorable link between identity-building processes and place: ‘[p]laces form a reservoir of meanings which people can draw upon to tell stories about and thereby define themselves’.[[28]](#footnote-28) The groundedness and rootedness – the placeness – that the family home offers to Clara is first of all physical, an intimate knowledge and feeling of connectedness with the physical place materialized in the recurrent affective image of the chest of drawers that has kept the memories of the place for decades, maintaining a secure and familiar connection with the past. The chest of drawers reoccurs in the present frame crosscut with scenes of love making (on that same chest of drawers) when Clara’s aunt, Lucia, was younger and her husband was still alive – metonymically displaced onto the present, that treasured piece of furniture becomes Lucia’s memory of the feel. Clara’s apartment in the ‘old’ Aquarius is hence strengthened as a focal point of personal and group interactions, a site of culturally shared emotional and affective meanings that need to be protected. There is a multiplicity of presences in the building and her apartment, inhabited by memories and objects from the past, such as the poster of Stanley Kubrick’s 1975 film *Barry Lyndon* on the wall. Physical media (vinyl records, tapes, CDs, photo albums) are abundant in her house – physical fragments of memory (Fig. 2).

In one scene, Clara is interviewed by a young reporter who attempts to play out the facile opposition between old and new media based on the interviewee’s age and the objects she sees scattered around Clara’s house. She asks: ‘At a time when digital is taking over everything, do you only listen to music in the old-fashioned way?’ The opposition between vinyl records and MP3 and music streaming is immediately undermined by Clara, who tries to convey a message-in-a-bottle argument that would illustrate the layers of memory that can be peeled out when one looks at a physical object such as a vinyl record attentively. She takes John Lennon’s album *Double Fantasy*, released in December 1980 and which she bought at a used record store, from a shelf. As she recounts to the reporter, Clara had discovered on its sleeve an article from the *LA Times* published the month before the album’s release and weeks before Lennon’s murder on December 8. Hauntingly, the title of the article is ‘John’s Lennon’s Plans for the Future’. (As already mentioned, 1980 is the year where the initial sequences of the film take place, after Clara has survived cancer.)

The relevance of the timelines, the layers of memory encapsulated in that object, the border crossings and chance occurrences that brought that particular object into Clara’s possession in Brazil, the object that she is now holding in her hands and that have made it so special in her eyes, are however lost to the interviewer. Lennon’s album – not only the object itself, but also the playing of the record – becomes for Clara, in David Harvey’s words, ‘the focus of a contemplative memory, and hence a generator of a sense of self that lies outside the sensory overloading of consumerist culture and fashion’.[[29]](#footnote-29) Before the interviewer, Clara shares an exceptional sensible experience, a metonymy of affect, in an attempt to prolong the moment of the affect, to give it consistency in ephemerality, directly opposing the worldview of the interviewer who does not show openness to being affected. The metonymical connection fails. The clash between old and new played out in this scene of *Aquarius* also becomes a clash between the individual and the community in ways that will become more evident later on in the film.

**Utilitarian presentism**

Precarity, in Nancy Ettlinger’s words, ‘is located in the microspaces of everyday life’, and ‘is not limited to a specific context in which precarity is imposed by global events or macrostructures’.[[30]](#footnote-30) The concept of precarity has extended far beyond its original definitions in part because it describes the conditions of cumulative instabilities as well as uncertainties, and the increasing exposure to risk that confronts people everywhere, from the macrocosms of global contexts and backgrounds to daily life in the lived microcosms of the everyday of communities and individuals. As Judith Butler anticipates in her consideration of the centrality of social (but also physical) vulnerability to the concept of precarity, ‘Loss and vulnerability seem to follow from our being socially constituted bodies, attached to others, at risk of losing those attachments, exposed to others, at risk of violence by virtue of that exposure’.[[31]](#footnote-31) The characters in *Aquarius* and *Last Man in Tower* struggle to find a communal safety net (one they had good reason to assume would be available, but which has fragmented under threats of violence and economic needs), and are thus exposed to the realization of the destructive, even annihilating forces of capitalism. As the texts represent, precarious bodies – a precarity exacerbated by the absence of community support – are vulnerable to social and physical cruelty, and potentially to death as its definitive form.

Both *Aquarius* and *Last Man in Tower* are stories of individuals who find themselves in a situation of precarity if they do not capitulate and accept – and even embrace – the ‘redevelopment’ that her local community opted for. Precarity, as Merjin Oudenampsen and Gavin Sullivan identify, is ‘the condition of being unable to predict one’s fate or having some degree of predictability on which to build social relations and feelings of affection’.[[32]](#footnote-32) Mendonça Filho’s film and Adiga’s novel track the poignant disintegration of social relations and bonds of friendship and affection precisely because of the increased precariousness the local communities of both Vishram Society and Boa Viagem feel subjected to. Oudenampsen and Sullivan also highlight that when precarity is experienced, the person experiencing it lacks a ‘full social citizenship’, in alignment with Sassen’s new logics of expulsion fostered by the global economy. This is played out in *Aquarius* and *Last Man in Tower* when we witness previously pleasant and cordial neighbours turning to violence and persecution, renegading social conviviality when driven by the forces of capitalism.

The social context of the setting of *Aquarius*, Boa Viagem, is predominantly middle and upper-class. Likewise, the events which unfold in Vishram Society cooperative in Adiga’s narrative are all the more shocking for being perpetrated by and within a community that is characterised as ‘middle class to its core’,[[33]](#footnote-33) and ‘absolutely, unimpeachably *pucca*’, [[34]](#footnote-34) the mainstream of Indian society, the ‘decent’, ‘average’, ‘ordinary’ folk.:

The men have modest paunches, wear checked polyester shirts over white *banians*, and keep their hair oiled and short. The older women wear saris, salwar kameez, or skirts, and the younger ones wear jeans. All of them pay taxes, support local charities, and vote in local and general elections.[[35]](#footnote-35)

The novel exposes just how close to a whole range of precarities this ‘absolutely, unimpeachably *pucca*’ society actually is, being positioned in the context of neoliberal, consumer-driven new India, and how vulnerable individuals actually are.

Much of the denouncement of the hypocrisies of Indian middle-class society is seen by the juxtaposition of the opinions of the apparent criminal entrepreneur, Shah. His cynicism pulls the rug out from under the feet of the Vishram Society cooperative, exposing the baser side of human nature. In making offers to purchase their apartments, he tells his hitman:

‘You can’t insult these people, Shanmugham. You can’t offer them ten per cent or fifteen percent above market value. You’re asking them to give up their homes, the only home some of them have ever had. You have to respect human greed.’[[36]](#footnote-36)

Shah’s cynical but (as it turns out) astute estimation of his fellow Bombayites reveals the latent precarities for a community, if indeed their loyalties can be bought and sold, as market commodities.

Once residents have sold their loyalties, precarities multiply, as Adiga and Medonça Filho represent in their texts, because the community then turns on the individual who appears to be the ‘last man standing’ in the way of redevelopment – legally and morally. *Last Man in Tower* shows the disintegration of societal bonds and community trust as residents and associates of Tower A withdraw support from their elderly resident, whom they may arguably have a moral duty to protect. In *Aquarius*, Clara is bullied by her neighbours and her daughter tries to persuade her to sell in ‘her own best interest’, her housekeeper the only one who understands her resistance to sell and move out.

In Adiga’s novel, when the developer Shah’s initial attempts by flattery and cajolement to overcome Masterji’s reluctance to sell do not work, Masterji is then defamed by an anonymous public notice besmirching his character, while Tower A residents gather round to chant at him to sign the sales contract. When Masterji proves he will not be intimidated by his neighbours, the residents start a boycott – his students no longer come for classes, and his rubbish bin is overturned. Even old friends and allies turn on him. Mrs Puri, for example, long a good friend of Masterji’s and particularly close to his son Gaurav from childhood, joins in the persecution. Mrs Puri, whose son, Ramu, has Down syndrome, wants to sell the apartment block to move to a nicer place and secure Ramu’s future. She smears Ramu’s excrement over Masterji’s front door, and when that does not work, she persuades Gaurav to publicly renounce his father. Trivedi, the priest who conducted the last rites for Masterji’s wife (Purnima), refuses to attend her first-year anniversary as part of this boycott, despite having previously agreed to join the celebration. Even Mary, the servant, is complicit just through her knowledge of the planned persecutions of Masterji.

Things escalate alarmingly when Shah’s hitman, Shanmughan, hires two young men playing cricket to break into Masterji’s apartment one night to rough up and threaten the old man. Everyone in Tower A appears to have previous knowledge of this, and residents are even told to put cotton wool in their ears and stay in their apartments. No one attempts to intervene or put a stop to this. In the end, the two young men make a hash of their assault, and Masterji routs them. But the precarity of his situation lies more in the complicity of his neighbours than the risk of being beaten up by hired thugs. Life is now made precarious because neighbours and old friends, knowing of the imminent attack and danger, leave Masterji un-warned and completely at the mercy of the assailants: ‘You know a community by the luxuries it can live without. Those in Vishram dispense with the most basic: self-deceptions’.[[37]](#footnote-37) The boycott could be ended apparently: ‘at a rate of so much rage forsaken, of so much pride swallowed, he [Masterji] would be readmitted into the common life of his Society’.[[38]](#footnote-38)

This rather sordid deal could apparently be brokered by Ajwani, ‘a natural-born middle man’,[[39]](#footnote-39) if indeed feelings and principles were nothing more than currencies which can also be traded and commoditised. Adiga underlines the absence of humans and societies innately having a conscience, when he has Shanmugham say to Ajwani:

‘But … the truth is, even if they say no, *deep down*’ – he pointed the knife at Ajwani – ‘they want money. Once you make them sign, they’re grateful to you. Never go to the police. So all I am doing is making them aware of their inner intentions.’[[40]](#footnote-40)

Such a notion of everything having a price tag further precaritises an already precarious society that seems entirely without social safeguards and thus adheres to the safety of utilitarian presentism.

**Futurity**

In a setting of unprecedented financialization, the protagonists of *Aquarius* and *Last Man in Tower* are under threat of expulsion despite their social privilege or cultural capital. Clara was a music journalist and writer and Masterji was a schoolteacher; they are both retired and in their sixties. The unexpected social (and physical) vulnerability they are subjected to results from the pressures of financialization and, interrelatedly, from the ‘expulsions’ fostered by the global economy, in Sassen’s formulation, or ‘the neoliberal feedback loop, with its efficiency at distributing and shaping the experience of insecurity throughout the class structure and across the globe’, in Berlant’s words.[[41]](#footnote-41) Financialization – on which the entrepreneurs Diego and Shah’s desires of futurity rest – is a site of multiple expulsions, of economic violence exercised through actions such as foreclosures and evictions; expulsion hence appears as one of its chief aims and conditions of possibility. As defined by Arjun Appadurai, financialization is ‘the process that permits money to be used to make more money through the use of instruments that exploit the role of money in credit, speculation, and investment’.[[42]](#footnote-42) Appadurai’s research on the global dynamics of finance focuses on the ‘precarious forms of debt-driven daily life’ (particularly in North America) against the backdrop of growing financialization.[[43]](#footnote-43) Maurizio Lazzarato argues for an understanding of debt (both public and private) as a power relation of subjection and enslavement that is inextricable from the neoliberal project.[[44]](#footnote-44) Sassen attributes to financialization ‘the use of complex instruments in the making of a short, highly profitable investment cycle for some and elementary brutalities for the many millions who lost their homes’.[[45]](#footnote-45)

While the developers Diego and Shah are moved by dreams of futurity embodied in their respective ‘New Aquarius’ and ‘Shanghai’, made possible by frictionless capital, Clara and Masterji share a similar outlook on the pitfalls of ‘redevelopment’, and search for attachment and groundedness in the home. In effect, their homes represent sites of memory and contain forms of permanence, in stark contrast to the spatially mobile and derivative capital that energises the entrepreneurs’ actions. Filled with memories, Clara’s and Masterji’s family homes become the stage of resistance in the face of their imminent precarity resulting from their local community’s utilitarian presentism and the developers’ dreams of futurity.

In part two of *Aquarius*, when leaving her apartment, Clara is confronted with the sight of all the doors of the other apartments having been left wide open, already vacant and emptied of their contents. She shuts them up. Adhesive stickers with the construction company’s logo are on every door, except hers; she takes them off (Fig. 3). She is living in a ghost building, in her daughter’s words. Faeces are left on the stairwells. Mattresses are transported in by the company so that the upstairs apartment from Clara’s can be rented out for loud parties and orgies. Later, the mattresses are removed and burnt in the yard to make way for a religious cult and dozens of worshippers. She is pressured into selling by her former neighbours, who call her selfish and accuse her of boycotting the business arrangement many had made years before.

In part three, entitled ‘Clara’s cancer’, Diego notes how Clara’s accumulated cultural capital, which had resulted in her social status and mobility in a highly stratified society, despite her dark skin (he contemptuously points out that her ‘darker-skinned’ family ‘fought to get where they are’), no longer translates in the neoliberal register of economic capital. He tells her that a woman of her age living in Brazil would be better off in a place with quality infrastructures and CCTV security, not in an unsafe, empty building. In fact, whole colonies of termites had already been brought in to decimate the vacant apartments – a cancer had been growing in Clara’s home. With the building structure unsafe, the construction company would have legal grounds to evict Clara and demolish the old Aquarius. She discovers this secret and the illegal strategy involving termites, and to stop the harassment, threatens the company with exposure. In the last scene, Clara, the cancer survivor, asks for a meeting with the representatives of the construction company and releases the cancer they had spread in her home on the table of the meeting room. She opens a travel suitcase and empties out the contents that she brought from the Aquarius – blocks of wood infested with termites (Fig. 4). Fighting back, Clara materially and metonymically threatens to cause great damage of the construction company if they continue to enforce precarity of place on her. Precarity can thus encompass agency in its indictment of oppressors and denouncement of the destruction enforced by capitalist greed.

*Last Man in Tower* unpacks layers of precarities, one laid upon the other, when it details Masterji’s valiant fightback. Masterji tells Mr Pinto they live in a republic and that a man has his resources:

Police.

Media.

Law and Order.

Social workers.

Family.

Students and old boys.[[46]](#footnote-46)

Masterji tries each resource. He attempts to take his case to his son, who is unsympathetic, then to his old student Noronha, who has a position at *The Times*; he writes to many of his old students, but all attempts fall on stony ground. A tabloid does publish the story, but Masterji is suspected of trying to profit from this, which turned out to be unhelpful. Eventually, he seeks a lawyer, Parekh, only to find he is also dishonest. At first, Parekh seems to be on his side, particularly when the Parliament of Vishram Group try to expel Masterji from the cooperative. But Masterji discovers Parekh is speaking with Shah and Shanmugham, and trying to negotiate a settlement, and indignantly confronts his lawyer. Mr Parekh justifies his perfidy by explaining that it is actually in protection of his elderly client:

Sir: these real-estate men pick on us senior citizens. Politicians and police are in their pay, you must know that. They shot an elected member of the city cooperative dead the other day, in broad daylight. Didn’t you see it in the papers? Old men must stick together in this new world.[[47]](#footnote-47)

When Masterji demands to know if his own lawyer is threatening him, Mr Parekh replies, ‘I am threatening you, sir, with the facts of human nature’.[[48]](#footnote-48) By the lawyer’s reasoning, it is human nature which has created all the precarities, which he is simply attempting to navigate or even mitigate against, but which he did not construct.

The extent of Masterji’s precariousness is exacerbated when, one by one, all the resources he tries so hopefully fail him; this corresponds to lifeworlds, as Waite puts it, becoming ‘inflected with uncertainty and instability’.[[49]](#footnote-49) Already stripped of his community’s solidarity, his work, his safety, and his friends, Masterji’s very life and survival grow increasingly precarious, given that his is the only life which stands in between assured profit and affluence for so many others. Ajwani (the apparently amoral real estate broker, the ‘natural-born middle man’) is deputed to push Masterji off the roof terrace. Ajwani, who is willing to deal in the suspect currencies of emotions and principles, finds he cannot kill a man, but instead of welcoming the realisation that he possesses morals, however tarnished, he curses ‘his luck. Of all the things to pick up from Falkland Road – all the horrible names he had worried about for all these years – gonorrhoea, syphilis, prostatitis, Aids – he had to pick this up: a conscience’.[[50]](#footnote-50)

In the end, Ibrahim Kudwa, Ashvin Kothari the Secretary, Sanjiv, and Sangeeta Puri go into Masterji’s flat to kill him by attacking him with a hammer and suffocating him with a pillow. When he is unconscious, they take him up to the roof terrace and throw him over. The narrative device of making most upright and decent people in the building conspire with and carry out murder leaves the reader without a safe berth in this novel, in this community, in this city. It is the unholy mix of different precarities coalescing which is particularly toxic – the precarity of dependence on people’s morals, plus the precarity of a lawless society where anarchy is close to the surface at all times.

Ajwani (the real-estate broker), worldly and apparently without illusions, says to Shanmugham (Mr Shah’s hit man):

Every builder has one special man in his company. This man has no business card to hand out, no title, he is not even on the company payroll. But he’s the builder’s left hand. He does what the builder’s right hand does not want to know about. If there is trouble, he contacts the police or the mafia. If there is money to be paid to a politician, he carries the bag. If someone’s knuckles have to be broken, he breaks them. *You* are Mr Shah’s left hand.[[51]](#footnote-51)

Thus does he explain the systemic lawlessness which characterises not just the construction industry, but from which it permeates into the wider society, with the dangerous undercurrents which can resurface at any time, anywhere they are needed. Given this kind of setup with so many left-hand men, life in Bombay is indeed precarious to an extreme.

Adiga’s representations of the more serious instances of precarity are cleverly interspersed with pettier instances but timed so that each is another demoralisation. For example, the Pintos started out as stalwart supporters and close friends of Masterji, with a 32-year-old friendship between Mr Pinto and Masterji. Rather endearingly, this long friendship is apparently based on the ‘No-Arguments book’, where small expenses are recorded and balanced. It is surprisingly as painful to learn that Mr Pinto has been cheating his friend for years as it is to learn of the planned attack on Masterji in his own home. The pervasiveness of the precarities Adiga flags up are not just the graver precarities of survival and eviction but also the precarities of bonds, friendships, trust, and solidarity, which, in this novel, can dissolve like dew in the face of greed and fear. Adiga also flags up how precarious a man’s reputation is, and his dignity:

But a man *is* what his neighbours say he is.

In old buildings, truth is a communal thing, a consensus of opinion.[[52]](#footnote-52)

At the end of Adiga’s novel, Masterji thinks he has won and found a new peace and will stay on in his old home. He even thinks about starting a new night class for the cricket-playing boys; but he is killed. His poignant murder underlines the danger of daring to feel safe, contented, to assume one’s affairs are sorted out satisfactorily, as if Adiga is underlining that precarity prevails always, and there is no sanctuary or safe harbour to be found, not even when one imagines one has found it. As Butler argues:

The body implies mortality, vulnerability, agency: the skin and the flesh expose us to the gaze of others, but also to touch, and to violence, and bodies put us at risk of becoming the agency and instrument of all these as well.[[53]](#footnote-53)

In *Last Man in Tower*, the precarities do not stop with the death of Masterji and the sale of the apartment blocks to Shah. For one thing, although the first instalments were paid to the previous residents, the second instalment is delayed, with an insinuation that payments may be less than straightforward. Shanmugham tries to threaten his boss, Shah, with exposure, but Shah intends to get rid of Shanmugham instead; the apparent lack of honour between thieves adds to the precariousness given that there is no loyalty to be had amongst either ‘good guys’ or ‘bad guys’. Moreover, Shah is in turn threatened by JJ Chacko of the Ultimex Group, his competitor. New precarities can emerge and manifest even from unsuspected angles. Even Mrs Puri, who gets her yearned-after new apartment and wooden cabinets, finds her precious son’s health failing and that material affluence is not sufficient protection against other possible precarities rearing their heads.

**Conclusion**

Susan Banki points out that precarity of residence does not necessarily mean ‘imminent deportation from a country, but its very real possibility’.[[54]](#footnote-54) In the two fictional texts analysed in this article, the characters of Masterji and Clara are faced with a precarity of residence which, while it does not mean imminent deportation, nevertheless represents eviction as a very real possibility. Banki also observes that ‘social precarity does not describe an absence of supportive networks, but the potential for their dismantling’.[[55]](#footnote-55) In the Vishram Society and among the residents of the Aquarius, the developers’ offers seem to have caused the unravelling of social bonds and the dismantling of neighbourly friendship and solidarity at alarming speed. As Banki warns, ‘precarity of one kind may aggravate other precarities’.[[56]](#footnote-56)

Both *Aquarius* and *Last Man in Tower* depicts a situation when the city is not a space of community, nor a place of collective (self-)identity, and where the manifestations of protest, resistance, disruption, and civil or political disobedience before the pressures of financialization are no longer collective, but scaled at the individual level. As Fraser puts it, in redevelopment, even in the best case scenario when ruined and decayed spaces disappear to make way for new, green and aspirational spaces, there is a need for ‘a complex process of transition, not just one industrial ruin, or one abandoned house, but an intricate network of habitation and abandonment, in thrall to the contractions and expansions of the economy’.[[57]](#footnote-57) Thus, financialization, which tends to neglect this necessary complex process of transition, as well as the complex networks of the temporality of precarities contribute to disintegrate communal bonds and exacerbate vulnerabilities, augmenting the adverse effects. In Mendonça Filho’s and Adiga’s representations, characters are emplotted as precaritised by the violence of global financialization and new logics of expulsion, and also by the fragmentation of communal unity and disintegration of loyalties into ever weakening social situations, where it becomes each individual for herself. The crushing of the lone voice, or the ‘last man standing’ as seen in *Aquarius* and *Last Man in Tower*, exacerbates not just the precarity of the individual citizen-resident, but in turn heightens precarity for local and, in time, global communities exposing the innate weaknesses and faultlines dormant within these communities.

So entrenched has financialization and the model of redevelopment been in growth-driven urban spaces of the Global South, that Adiga’s novel playfully subverts conventional moral standards to suggest that being self-seeking, individualistic, and mercenary has become the new norm. Adiga has Shah reflecting thus: ‘A man who does not want: who has no secret space in his heart into which a little more cash can be stuffed, what kind of man is that?’[[58]](#footnote-58) Adiga highlights how human greed and desire have become the new building blocks of the aggressive capitalisms driving the types of redevelopment projects discussed in *Aquarius* and *Last Man in Tower*; they correspond to logic, respond to financial imperatives, and thus can be calculated and traded. Clara’s and Masterji’s stand against redevelopment is not just that of one woman and man standing between affluence for all their neighbours and for the developers – their defiance threatens the entire new system premised on prioritising individual gain or profit over communal wellbeing. When sentiment or principles are prioritised over financial gain, the entire new financial landscape may in turn be precaritised, even potentially derailed. However exploitative and oppressive that system may be, the threat to a system opens the possibility of new, as-yet-unknown precarities. This may cause the dice to be thrown anew, redesignating winners and losers, hence the outrage of developers in the face of residents’ recalcitrance. As Adiga suggests, adherence to consciences could precaritise the entire new system if things can no longer be commoditised and purchased.

Looking from the point of view of the ‘villains’ also helps to flag up the difference between precarity and vulnerability. Shah’s and Diego’s projects may be precaritised if they cannot get Masterji and Clara to sell up and move out, but it can hardly be argued that they are particularly vulnerable. Vulnerability has been defined as defencelessness, insecurity, and exposure to shocks and stress.[[59]](#footnote-59) Precarity, however, looks not only at the vulnerability of individuals and particular groups, but also at patterns of global dispossession[[60]](#footnote-60) which heighten insecurity and deprivation. Moreover, definitions of precarity hold open a space for agency, even creativity. In our case studies, both protagonists fight back as resourcefully as they can, not perceiving themselves as passive victims, even though they are victimised. Even those cast as villains – Shah and Diego – are creative when they feel their redevelopment projects precaritised by the stubbornness of residents, resorting to schemes beyond the law, such as introducing termites. Although contemptable, they are still instances of creative responses to precarious situations.

As During argues, precarity ‘applies to those with unstable, or no, access to the institutions and communities best able to provide legitimacy, recognition and solidarity’.[[61]](#footnote-61) In *Aquarius* and *Last Man in Tower*, precarity is shown to be due not merely to a loss of home, but because there is no secure or reliable recourse to justice when systems fail, or when lawlessness threatens. Masterji and Clara are threatened not just with the loss of homes, but of their individual human rights; their choice was either to be incorporated into the redevelopment projects or be steamrollered by them. As Sassen contends, ‘[i]nside capitalism itself we can characterize the relation of emergent forms of capitalism to more traditional capitalisms as marked by expulsions but also as erasure by incorporation’.[[62]](#footnote-62) When considering the temporalities of precarity, it is noteworthy that the characters of Masterji and Clara are relatively elderly, because, as Naomi Klein contends, ‘generations who had grown up under neoliberalism struggle to picture something, anything, other than what they had always known’,[[63]](#footnote-63) whereas Masterji and Clara knew a gentler, kinder, less capitalist-driven world, which they are indignant at losing. The ability to imagine another geography of neoliberalism, the ability to reconceptualise human beings as other than disposable entities, is vital in the counter-balancing of ever-increasing precarities.

1. Saskia Sassen, *Expulsions: Brutality and Complexity in the Global Economy* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 2014). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Lauren Berlant, *Cruel Optimism* (Durham, NC.: Duke UP, 2011), p. 192. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Sassen, *Expulsions*, p. 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Wendy Brown, *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism’s Stealth Revolution* (New York: Zone Books and MIT Press, 2015). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Sassen, *Expulsions*, p. 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Lewis et al., ‘Hyper-precarious Lives’, p. 585. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Paret and Gleeson, ‘Precarity and Agency through a Migration Lens’, p. 280. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Ann M. Agathangelou, ‘What Suicide and Greece Tell us about Precarity and Capitalism’, *Globalizations* (2018), p. 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Emma Fraser, ‘Unbecoming Place: Urban Imaginaries in Transition in Detroit’, *cultural geographies* 25 (3) (2018), pp. 441-458. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Samid Suliman and Heloise Weber, ‘Global Development and Precarity: A Critical Political Analysis’, *Globalizations* (2018). [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Marcel Paret and Shannon Gleeson, ‘Precarity and Agency through a Migration Lens’, *Citizenship Studies* 20 (3–4) (2016), p. 279. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Hannah Lewis, Peter Dwyer, Stuart Hodkinson, and Louise Waite, ‘Hyper-precarious Lives: Migrants, Work and Forced Labour in the Global North’, *Progress in Human Geography* 39 (5) (2015), p. 584. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Ronaldo Munck, ‘The Precariat: A View From the South’, *Third World Quarterly* 3 (5) (2013), p. 752. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Suliman and Weber, ‘Global Development and Precarity’, p. 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. As Louise Waite details, Pierre Bourdieu is credited with first using the term ‘précarité’ in the 1960s in his work on Algeria, researching the social divide between permanent and casual workers. Louise Waite, ‘A Place and Space for a Critical Geography of Precarity?’, *Geography Compass* 3 (1) (2009), pp. 412–33. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Neil Lazarus, *The Postcolonial Unconscious* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Solange Muñoz, ‘Precarious city: home-making and eviction in Buenos Aires, Argentina’. *cultural geographies* 25 (3) (2018), pp. 411-424. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Alf Gunvald Nilsen and Srila Roy, eds., *New Subaltern Politics. Reconceptualizing Hegemony and Resistance in Contemporary India* (New Delhi: OUP, 2015). [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Nilsen and Roy, *New Subaltern Politics*, p. 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Jacques Rancière, *Modern Times: Essays on Temporality in Art and Politics* (Zagreb: Multimedijalni Institut, 2017), p. 13. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Ana Cristina Mendes, ‘The Marketing of Postcolonial Literature’, in Lucia Krämer and Kai Merten, eds., *Postcolonial Studies Meets Media Studies: A Critical Encounter* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2016), pp. 215–231. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Cressida Jervis Read, ‘A Place in the City: Narratives of “Emplacement” in a Delhi Resettlement Neighbourhood’, *Ethnography* 13 (1) (2012), pp. 87–101, p. 87. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Cressida Jervis Read, “A place in the city: Narratives of ‘emplacement’ in a Delhi resettlement neighbourhood.” *Ethnography* 13 (1) (2012): 87–101. p. 89. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
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25. Richard Baxter and Katherine Brickell, ‘For Home *Un*Making’, *Home Cultures*, 11 (2) (2014), pp. 133-143, p. 134. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
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28. Nigel Thrift, ‘Us and Them: Re-imagining Places, Reimagining Identities’, in H. Mackay, ed., *Consumption and Everyday Life* (Thousand Oaks, CA.: Sage, 1997), p. 160. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989), p. 292. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Nancy Ettlinger, ‘Precarity Unbound’, *Alternatives* 32 (2011), p. 320. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Judith Butler, *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (London: Verso, 2004). [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Merjin Oudenampsen and Gavin Sullivan, ‘Precarity and N/European Identity: An Interview with Alex Foti (Chainworkers)’, *Mute* (6 October 2004), accessible at http://www.metamute.org/editorial/articles/precarity-and-neuropean-identity-interview-alex-foti-chainworkers (accessed 19 October 2018). [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Aravind Adiga, *Last Man in Tower* (London: Atlantic, 2011), p. 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Adiga, *Last Man in Tower*, p. 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Adiga, *Last Man in Tower*, p. 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Adiga, *Last Man in Tower*, p. 107. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Adiga, *Last Man in Tower*, p. 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Adiga, *Last Man in Tower*, p. 219. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Adiga, *Last Man in Tower*, p. 219. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Adiga, Last Man in Tower, p. 238. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Berlant, *Cruel Optimism*, p. 192–3. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Arjun Appadurai, *Banking on Words: The Failure of Language in the Age of Derivative Finance* (Chicago, IL.: University of Chicago Press, 2016), p. 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Appadurai, *Banking on Words*, p. 99; See Appadurai’s earlier concept of ‘financescapes’, a term he included in his early 1990s overarching model of global cultural flow characterised by disjunctures between ‘ethnoscapes’, ‘technoscapes’, ‘financescapes’, ‘mediascapes’, and ‘ideoscapes’ to account for the fact that ‘the disposition of global capital [was] a more mysterious, rapid, and difficult landscape to follow than ever before’. See ‘Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy’, *Theory Culture Society* 7 (1990), p. 298. His more recent work proposes the challenge of understanding financial derivatives (via Emile Durkheim and Max Weber) as a way of offering ‘a positive reading of the potential of the derivative form to be a tool of financial inclusion and wealth generation, rather than of increased speculation, exploitation, and immiseration’. See *Banking on Words*, p. 83. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Maurizio Lazzarato, *Governing by Debt*, translated by Joshua David Jordan (Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press, 2015). [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. While isolating the United States as the ‘ground zero for this development and the innovation that enabled it’, she also addresses the workings of ‘the financializing machinery’ in a rising number of countries ‘that have experienced similar expulsions’. Sassen, *Expulsions*, p. 120. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Adiga, *Last Man in Tower*, p. 245. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Adiga, *Last Man in Tower*, p. 284. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Adiga, *Last Man in Tower*, p. 284. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Waite, ‘A Place and Space for a Critical Geography of Precarity?’, p. 416. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Adiga, *Last Man in Tower*, p. 380. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Adiga, *Last Man in Tower*, p. 128. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Adiga, *Last Man in Tower*, p. 216. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Butler, *Precarious Life*, p. 26. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Susan Banki, ‘Precarity of Place: A Complement to the Growing Precariat Literature’, *Global Discourse* 3 (3–4) (2013), p. 451. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Banki, ‘Precarity of Place’, p. 451. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
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57. Fraser, Unbecoming Place, p.455. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
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59. Robert Chambers, ‘Editorial Introduction: Vulnerability, Coping and Policy,’ *IDS Bulletin* 20 (2) (1989), pp. 1-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Simon During, ‘Choosing Precarity’, *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 38 (1) (2015), pp. 19–38. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. During, ‘Choosing Precarity’, p. 20. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. Sassen, *Expulsions*, p. 216. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. Naomi Klein, *No Is Not Enough: Resisting Trump’s Shock Politics and Winning the World We Need* (Chicago, IL.: Haymarket Books, 2017), p. 119. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)