

Acceleration. Address. Anthropocene
Unseen: A Lexicon. Anticipation.
Apocalypse. Appreciation. Bloom.
Business. Carbon. Care. Cloud.
Conditions. Cosmos. Death.
Dispossession. Distribution. Dog.
Dream. Dredge. Drone. Earths.
Ecopolitics. Edited by Cymene Howe
& Anand Pandian. Ends. Environing.
Eschaton. Expenditure. Exposure.
Extinction. Fiction. Fire. Flatulence.
Flock. Generation. Gluten. Gratitude.
Heat. Hyposubjects. Industrialism.
Installation. Interstellar. Leviathans.
Melt. Miracles. Models. Monoculture.
Mood. Narcissus. Nature. Nemesis.
Ocean. Petroleum. Photosynthesis.
Plastic. Plenitude. Power. Predation.
Preparedness. Price. Probiotic.
Quotidian. Recalcitrance.
Relationships. Riddle. Rivers. Ruin.
Seeds. Shit. Slavery. Smugglers. Species.
Stability. Steps. Suburbs. Surprise!
Surreal. Sustainability. Terrain.
Thermodynamics. Thresholds. Timely.
Trump. Turtle. Unknowns. Unseens.
Vulnerability. Wildness. Zoonosis.

ANTHROPOCENE UNSEEN

BEFORE YOU START TO READ THIS BOOK, take this moment to think about making a donation to punctum books, an independent non-profit press,

@ <https://punctumbooks.com/support/>

If you're reading the e-book, you can click on the image below to go directly to our donations site. Any amount, no matter the size, is appreciated and will help us to keep our ship of fools afloat. Contributions from dedicated readers will also help us to keep our commons open and to cultivate new work that can't find a welcoming port elsewhere. Our adventure is not possible without your support.

Vive la Open Access.



Fig. 1. Hieronymus Bosch, *Ship of Fools* (1490–1500)

ANTHROPOCENE UNSEEN: A LEXICON. Copyright © 2020 by the editors and authors. This work carries a Creative Commons BY-NC-SA 4.0 International license, which means that you are free to copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format, and you may also remix, transform and build upon the material, as long as you clearly attribute the work to the authors (but not in a way that suggests the authors or punctum books endorses you and your work), you do not use this work for commercial gain in any form whatsoever, and that for any remixing and transformation, you distribute your rebuild under the same license. <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>

First published in 2020 by punctum books, Earth, Milky Way.
<https://punctumbooks.com>

ISBN-13: 978-1-950192-55-7 (print)
ISBN-13: 978-1-950192-56-4 (ePDF)

DOI: [10.21983/P3.0265.1.00](https://doi.org/10.21983/P3.0265.1.00)

LCCN: [2019951805](https://lccn.loc.gov/2019951805)

Library of Congress Cataloging Data is available from the Library of Congress

Book Design: Vincent W.J. van Gerven Oei



HIC SVNT MONSTRA

Anthropocene Unseen: A Lexicon

Edited by Cymene Howe
& Anand Pandian



*This book is dedicated to the young climate activists
in the streets and in our communities
who are demanding a better future yet unseen.*

Contents

Introduction	17
Acceleration	25
Address	31
Anticipation	35
Apocalypse	41
Appreciation	47
Bloom	53
Business	59
Carbon	65
Care	71
Cloud	77
Conditions	83
Cosmos	89
Death	95
Dispossession	99
Distribution	105
Dog	111
Dream	117
Dredge	121
Drone	127
Earths	133
Ecopolitics	139
Ends	145
Environing	151

Eschaton	157
Expenditure	163
Exposure	169
Extinction	177
Fiction	185
Fire	191
Flatulence	197
Flock	203
Generation	209
Gluten	215
Gratitude	221
Heat	227
Hyposubjects	233
Industrialism	237
Installation	243
Interstellar	249
Leviathans	255
Melt	261
Miracles	265
Models	271
Monoculture	277
Mood	283
Narcissus	289
Nature	295
Nemesis	301
Ocean	307
Petroleum	313
Photosynthesis	317
Plastic	325
Plenitude	331
Power	337
Predation	343
Preparedness	349
Price	355
Probiotic	361
Quotidian	369
Recalcitrance	375

Relationships	381
Riddle	387
Rivers	393
Ruin	399
Seeds	405
Shit	411
Slavery	417
Smugglers	423
Species	429
Stability	435
Steps	441
Suburbs	447
Surprise!	453
Surreal	459
Sustainability	465
Terrain	471
Thermodynamics	477
Thresholds	483
Timely	489
Trump	495
Turtle	501
Unknowns	505
Unseens	511
Vulnerability	517
Wildness	523
Zoonosis	529
Figures	535

Acknowledgments

We are grateful to many people who have helped in the collaborative and imaginative work that has come to life in this book. Jessica Lockrem and Marcel LaFlamme provided critical infrastructural labor to make earlier versions of the Lexicon available through the *Cultural Anthropology* website, the original digital home for many of the 86 essays gathered here. The contributing editors at *Cultural Anthropology* also lent their voluntary editorial expertise to shepherd several of the original essays toward more perfect forms.

Our appreciation goes out to those who were with us at the 2015 American Anthropological Association panel where the idea for an Anthropocene Lexicon first debuted. Thanks goes (in alphabetical order) to Dominic Boyer, Timothy Choy, Abou Farman, John Hartigan, Stefan Helmreich, Eduardo Kohn, Stuart McLean, Timothy Morton, Natasha Myers, Elizabeth Povinelli, and Sarah Vaughn. Equal thanks go to all of the authors who have brought their work and words into play here; intellectual labor is so often unseen and yet without it we are in a far scarier place than the Anthropocene we already know.

Eileen Joy and Vincent W.J. van Gerven Oei have been enthusiastic supporters of the Lexicon project from the very beginning and we are honored to be publishing this collection with punctum books, for both the curatorial vision of the press as well as its commitment to open access publishing.

We extend thanks to Joseph Goetz and Lisa Spiro, information specialists at Rice University's Fondren Library, which provided a subvention for this project in order to make knowledge more equitably distributed through open access.

Finally, we give a huge amount of appreciation to Addison Verger whose capacity to manage an exceptionally complex project has meant that each of us, as authors and editors, have been able to preserve a few more hours of our lives and make this Lexicon a reality.



Gratitude

Iza Kavedžija

Considerations of the Anthropocene and its changing landscape are urgent and unsettling. They have to be. But is there a way to help people consider the current state of affairs while preventing the impulse to disavow responsibility, or to at least diminish an escapist urge to change the topic? I would like to suggest that gratitude, as a particular mode of attunement, might be fruitful in this regard and is ripe for cultivation.

Gratitude combines generosity and humility. It allows for a recognition that what we have and what we deserve are not the same. It encourages us to recognize the importance of others in making our lives liveable. Even the most autonomous individuals will have to admit that we all owe a great debt of gratitude to a great many people, for all kinds of favors, support, and kindness throughout our lives. During my own fieldwork with older Japanese in Osaka, I was repeatedly struck by the extent to which the involvement of others and serendipitous encounters were woven into people's life stories. One can easily recount a certain sequence of events in terms of one's own choices and decisions—but equally, like my older interlocutors, one could consider carefully the roles that other people, situations, and events have played in those choices.

Their stories reminded me that gratitude, while bringing out the role of others in our decisions and actions, does not make

us feel as though our life choices have been made for us either. It could be said that gratitude makes acting in the world possible, by making us aware of the interconnected nature of life. Becoming attuned in this way, one sees the involvement of others not as a limit to our freedom, but as enabling, facilitating, protecting.

My senior acquaintances and friends expressed gratitude, to me and in conversations with each other, even in relation to challenging events which were, upon reflection, seen to have been valuable opportunities for learning. In this sense they transformed negative experiences into sources of value — gratitude here underpins the sense of living well. This reminded me somewhat of *naikan*, a therapeutic practice developed in Japan, sometimes compared to a form of psychotherapy (Reynolds 1989). It can be seen as an example of the powerful effects gratitude can have for the way we inhabit the world. As Chikako Ozawa-de Silva (2006) writes in her insightful ethnography, *naikan*'s roots in Buddhist thought draw on the insight of “interdependent selfhood”: we are not independent actors in this world, but are here thanks to others. The person undertaking *naikan* (literally “inner-looking,” an introspection), guided by a practitioner's questions, is asked to quietly recollect their past while reflecting on three specific themes in relation to a significant person in their life: what they received from this person, what they returned to this person, and what trouble they caused to this person. The interviewer guiding the process visits them every few hours in a semi-secluded space and inquires about their recollections over the course of seven days, reconstructing or rearranging the memories of their life. This frequently results not only in an altered perception, but also in intense feelings of guilt and gratitude in relation to the care and favours received from others, which are seen to constitute one's life (Ozawa-de Silva 2006). While *naikan* is far from widespread, what captured my attention in its description was the emphasis on the efficacy of gratitude, and how strongly this resonated with my own interlocutors' discussions of living well.

If gratitude fosters attention to relationships, these need not be limited to people. Gratitude enmeshes human and non-human actors in subtle ways. My older friends were thoughtful in relation to their possessions and to the environment around them. They often passed on the things they were no longer using as part of the eternal, incessant, and extensive gift giving network. Grateful for a favor they received, they tried to offer something that might in turn be useful to the receiver. Many older women told me they preferred passing on their kimonos and precious possessions to people around them while alive, not waiting for them to be redistributed after their passing: “That way, you can see things being used and get so much more joy out of them.” When handing things to others, they would often express the hope that something might be of use. If disposing of something, with reluctance, they might think how well the thing had served them. In this way gratitude involves non-human beings and material objects.

What are the consequences of such an orientation in ethical terms? Political theorist William Connolly proposes an ethical orientation of immanent naturalism, in other words, an ethics not grounded in a transcendental field, acknowledging that many of our ethical reactions originate in the visceral and “infrascensible.” To temper this tendency, he calls for a cultivation of a “nontheistic gratitude for the rich abundance of being amid the suffering that comes with being mortal” (Connolly 2002, 105) as a source of ethical inspiration. While not necessarily available or suited to everyone, in Connolly’s pluralist framework, this kind of orientation can be likened to a Foucauldian technology or “tactic” of the self (Connolly 2002, 107) — one among many. In his recent work, Connolly links this orientation of gratitude explicitly to the increasing recognition of complex interactions of global capitalist processes and non-human geological processes in the Anthropocene. He suggests an orientation of existential gratitude as one of the ways to “face the planetary” and the reality of climate change (Connolly 2017). If existential gratitude seems somewhat abstract, taking a cue from Japanese elders might make it seem more palpable and practical: small gestures

and daily objects all figure differently around one when received with gratitude.

References

- Connolly, William. 2002. *Neuropolitics: Thinking, Culture, Speed*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- . 2017. *Facing the Planetary: Entangled Humanism and the Politics of Swarming*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Ozawa-de Silva, Chikako. 2006. *Psychotherapy and Religion in Japan: The Japanese Introspection Practice of Naikan*. London: Routledge.
- Reynolds, David K. 1989. *Flowing Bridges, Quiet Waters: Japanese Psychotherapies, Morita and Naikan*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Figures

Address Dear Climate #M13.

Acceleration A biodiesel plant in agro-industrial Amazonia.
Photo by the author.

Anticipation Larson C Ice Shelf Rift In Motion. Courtesy of
NASA.

Apocalypse “The Fourth Horseman” from the *Apocalypse of
Angers*, from the workshop of Nicolas Bataille, ca. 1373–1382.

Appreciation The spaces of global capital in which
sustainability is defined and made valuable. Photo by
Sebastian ter Burg.

Bloom Gelatinous Future Food, Chitra Venkataramani.
Courtesy of the artist.

Business Workers carrying solar panels for Masdar City
rooftops, 2010. Photo by author.

Carbon Still from an infrared video published by
Environmental Defense Fund. Invisible to the human eye,
the Aliso Canyon methane plume released an equivalent
of about 2 million metric tons of carbon dioxide into the
atmosphere in 2015–2016. Used with permission.

Care Students of herbal medicine “garbling” goldenrod
blossoms by pulling them off their dried stems. The
blossoms will be used in medicinal tincture and teas. Photo
by Charis Boke.

Cloud The Asian/atmospheric brown cloud buoyed above the Indian sub-continent. Image by Jeff Schmaltz, MODIS Rapid Response, NASA Goddard Space Flight Center.

Conditions Hannu I. Heikkinen fixing his skis on a day with good *keli* for back-country skiing in northern Finland. Photo by Franz Krause

Cosmos Anthropos = Little Prince, Lonely Planet, Empty Cosmos. Digital collage by Abou Farman.

Death “Far from my home” Still from video 24” × 36” printed on backlit film. Exhibited Urban Video Project, Multimedia Arts Initiative with Syracuse University, Everson Museum, Syracuse, New York.

Dispossession Papua New Guinea Forest Cover. Photo by Paige West.

Distribution “Untitled,” photograph of two men, trucks, road, and dust in Peru. Photo by Stefanie Graeter.

Dog “Dog house, animal shelter grounds” Photo by author.

Dream A worn out vacuum. Photo by Alf van Beem.

Dredge Dredging focuses our attention on the fact that global economic connection depends on situated environmental modification and maintenance. Drawing by Pearson Scott Foresman.

Drone A NOAA technician with the Coyote drone, just before launch. Photo by NOAA/Atlantic Oceanographic and Meteorological Laboratory.

Earths Spiral Galaxy captured by the Hubble Telescope. Photo by ESA/Hubble & NASA. Acknowledgement: Judy Schmidt (Geckzilla)

Ecopolitics “Plants of the Ecuadorian Rainforest”. Photography, scan and postprocessing by Hubertl. Source: Wikimedia Commons.

Ends “Ends” (2015). Photo by the author.

Environing Sea/Sky (Antipodes). Photo by Jeffrey J. Cohen.

Eschaton The Doomsday Clock. Image courtesy of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists.

- Expenditure** Nur Hashem shouts “Go!” Photo by Naveeda Khan.
- Exposure** Bodily Exposure, Mexico City, 2015. Photo by author.
- Extinction** Activists in dinosaur costumes protested a planned freeway expansion project by “haunting” a BC Liberal Party campaign stop in Tsawwassen, British Columbia, 2 May 2009. Photo courtesy of StopThePave.org.
- Fiction** Rachel Whalen. Gated Community, 2019. Acrylic, metal pull tabs, and thread on canvas.
- Fire** A more explosive fuel upends the détente between trees, birds, and burning grasslands. Photo by Daniel Fisher.
- Flatulence** Mountain cows grazing in a meadow in Uttarakhand, India. Photo by Radhika Govindrajan.
- Flock** Melvin and me. Photo by Anne Galloway
- Generation** Finland’s nuclear regulatory authority Säteilyturvakeskus. Photo by Vincent Ialenti, 2013.
- Gluten** Freshly cut wheat, Egypt. Photo by Jessica Barnes.
- Gratitude** Women praying. The same gesture is used to express gratitude for a favour. MK Photography.
- Heat** A pesticide bag, mounted on a branch, marks the corner of a Nicaraguan cane field, July 2017. Photo by Alex Nading.
- Hyposubjects** Virus Particles. Image by Carl Fredrik
- Industrialism** Composite image by Craig Campbell
- Installation** *E-Motions* (2015) by Raḥşan Düren, Haydarpaşa Train Station. Photo by Serpil Oppermann.
- Interstellar** Artist’s visualization of Earth’s magnetosphere, courtesy of Conceptual Image Lab, NASA/GSFC, and “StarshipSPIDER” by Frederik de Wilde.
- Leviathans** Detail from the frontispiece to a manuscript version of Thomas Hobbes’s *Leviathan*. Attributed to Abraham Bosse, 1651. Digital image from Wikimedia.
- Melt** Listening to the sounds of a melting Arctic, with Aimee Smith, Eva la Cour, and Wendy Jacob.
- Miracles** Mud covers Belalcázar’s school after an avalanche caused by the Huila Volcano, AP. *El País*. November 23, 2008.

- Models** The Chesapeake Bay Hydraulic Model, 1977. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Waterways Experiment Station.
- Monoculture** Indian teas lined up for tasting in Kolkata. Photo by author.
- Mood** Shadow Lines. Photo by Sandeep Banerjee.
- Narcissus** “Narcissus, becoming-flower.” Painting by Caravaggio.
- Nature** Low pressure system off the southwestern coast of Iceland, September 4, 2003. Image from NASA’s Aqua/MODIS satellite.
- Nemesis** “He made me in the Orkney islands, off the northern coast of Scotland, at the edge of the world.” Image by Laura Watts.
- Ocean** Short beach at dawn. Photo by Steve Mentz.
- Petroleum** Draft pages from *The Inheritance*, by Elizabeth A. Povinelli.
- Photosynthesis** Screenshot of “A year in the life of Earth’s CO₂.” Simulation of the earth’s carbon dioxide cycle by scientists at NASA Goddard Space Flight Center’s Global Modeling and Assimilation Office, 2014.
- Plastic** Still from *Wine Dark Plastic Sea*, Anand Pandian, 2015.
- Plenitude** Population to plenitude? Photo by Rob Curran on Unsplash.
- Power** Wild horses in Spain. Photo by John Hartigan Jr.
- Predation** The river Ganges in flood partially submerges a Shiva idol in northern India.
- Preparedness** Exercise of simulation of an avian influenza outbreak in Hong Kong, January 2009. Photo by Frédéric Keck.
- Price** Potato cultivation in Lahore, Pakistan. Photograph by Abdul Razzaq.
- Probiotic** Forest regrowth at the Knepp Wildland Project in Sussex in the UK. Image courtesy of Charlie Burrell.
- Quotidian** Architectural renderings of a Bangkok canal-side community hang above the high water mark of the 2011 floods. Photo by Eli Elinoff.

- Recalcitrance** Kirby-Bauer antibiotic sensitivity test.
Photograph by author.
- Riddle** Esther Ruiz, *New Stone Age*, 2012. Cement, blue marble, neon, Plexiglas, hardware. Photo courtesy of the artist.
- Relationships** Moss on pavement. Photo by Zoe Todd.
- Rivers** Waime Canyon, Kauai Island, Hawaii. Photo by Galyna Andrushko.
- Seeds** Seed samples prepared by Seed Savers Exchange for backup storage at Svalbard and Fort Collins. Photograph courtesy of Tracey Heatherington.
- Shit** A tractor hauls a large mound of biosolids (treated sanitation sludge) across a field near Mansfield, Washington (USA). Photo by Nicholas C. Kawa.
- Slavery** Beatriz Cortez, *Cosmic Bed*, 2019. Installation view of *Trinidad: Joy Station* at Craft Contemporary Museum. Courtesy of the artist and Commonwealth and Council, Los Angeles. Photo by Gina Clyne.
- Smugglers** Migrant Trail, Pakal Na, Chiapas, Mexico (Nikon F3, Ultramax 400). Photo by Jason De León.
- Species** A scanning electron micrograph of MRSA, an antibiotic-resistant bacteria that has generated new human categories as practitioners grapple with difficult-to-treat infections. Image courtesy of the National Institutes of Health (NIH).
- Stability** 2018 United States seismic hazard forecast, including anthropogenic and non-anthropogenic earthquakes.
Source: U.S. Geological Survey.
- Steps** SONO, Sion, 2012, *The Land of Hope* [film still, 55.27].
- Suburbs** Post-capitalist suburb? Photo by RCB.
- Surprise** Frontispiece to the 1906 edition of *The Coal Question* by Stanley Jevons, showing the remarkable rise in coal consumption per capita.
- Sustainability** Maize dries on a rooftop in highland Guatemala. Photo by Emily Yates-Doerr.

- Surreal** Negative space of a removed warning sticker on the window of a former FEMA trailer. Photo by Nicholas Shapiro.
- Terrain** A windy day in Salta Forestal, province of Salta, Argentina. Photo by Gastón Gordillo.
- Thermodynamics** Energy at Work, circa 1870. Courtesy of the Wellcome Collection.
- Thresholds** Chukchi Sea Ice at Kivalina, May 17 2019. Photo by P. Joshua Griffin.
- Timely** Glacier. Fláajökull, East Iceland. Photo by author.
- Turtle** Eve. Photo by Zach Stone.
- Trump** Artifact of the Trumpocene. Photo by R. Nial Bradshaw.
- Unknowns** MEDIUM MEDIAN, Alicja Kwade, 2016. Image courtesy of Whitechapel Gallery, London.
- Unseens** Photo and artworks by Luke Jerram.
- Vulnerability** A typical Sophia home. Photo by author.
- Wildness** Lichen growing on a brick wall in Massachusetts. Photo by Dana J. Graef.
- Zoonosis** Child receiving a rabies vaccination after a dog bite at Moramanga Hospital, Madagascar. Photo by Genese Sodikoff, 2015.

