

# Introduction

This book occupies a neglected territory that lies between the care of the planet and the historical study of visual art. Many people, particularly those who feel uppermost the pressing needs of the planet, may not even believe such a landscape is worth exploring. Their scepticism may resonate with others for whom the arts and humanities, and specifically the visually orientated disciplines, are an obsession. The argument runs that the two registers of the environmental and the art historical can only productively meet in, for example, the discussion of 'environmental' or 'eco' arts. If art is unlikely to save the planet then what on earth are the chances that art history can?

The wish to write *The ecological eye* was born from a conviction that the history of art as a discipline (or practice) might, unlikely as it may seem, have something to offer in the face of formidable planetary changes that have been bracketed under the term 'Anthropocene'. Art history is not one thing, of course, and in its variety has the potential to play a much larger role in inspiring new sensibilities, politics and practices on the plane of culture, wherever that manifests itself regionally. To be more precise, art historians in their work might postulate original and constructive imaginaries about global ecological crisis in parallel with the artists they write about and other humanities specialists they work alongside. Art historians actually work more collectively than outsiders imagine (who know only the clichéd stereotypes) and my sense, as set out in this book, is that there is plenty in the histories and current practices of art history to suggest that, as one of the humanities, the discipline can 'find the inspirational courage to move beyond an exclusive concern for the human ... and to embrace more planetary intellectual challenges'.<sup>1</sup> *The ecological eye* as a project is distinctive in its aim to blend neglected ecocritical art histories of the past with sympathetic political ecologies that have hitherto made little impact. And these domains hybridise within these pages, again in distinct ways, with forward-looking trajectories in posthumanism, new materialism and ecological theory. A revitalisation is in the offing, with this book being only one contribution offered alongside those of an increasingly vocal and impatient group of scholars, activists and agents beyond the academy.

The rewards for art history could run both ways. All parties involved in the encounter with artistic works (those who create, show, write about and look at them) could benefit from widening the ecological repertoire when placing these works in an art historical discourse. In such a moment, the art historian is more firmly grounded in an expanded ecological set of coordinates and by extension defers, if not entirely resists, the way in which an artistic experience might ordinarily be closed down to a normative and limited event. Ecological imperatives allow us to create an art historical analysis beyond the usual horizon line of disciplinary perspectives.

In the sense that it may already be too late to save the planetary ecosystem from catastrophic decline, it may also be too late for art history to follow the other humanities disciplines (virtually all of them) that have already articulated sophisticated ecological perspectives. Yet anyone who chooses to write on a topic nested within terminal ecological crisis must do so in the hope that a redress is possible, that there will be time for cultural production in the arts and humanities to do its work, take responsibility and have an effect. *The ecological eye* makes the case for a gregarious, ethical and sophisticated reframing of art history that contributes to the pressing ecological imperatives of today. Ecocritical humanities, as we will see, can be envisioned as a politically fuelled rapport that one forms with the world through one's discipline; the more attentive, subtle, energised and ethical the engagement, the better the work. It is that simple (and that complicated). If the case is made here with any degree of success, then art history will be well placed to cast an ecological eye over our increasingly inhospitable and damaged world.

My view from the outset was to embrace the breadth of this project, to follow diverse thematic lines as they extended well beyond my own comfort zone (although staying there often makes me uncomfortable) and to suggest openly, through vignette form, chapter by chapter, the manifest possibilities that lay within the history of art and in its intersections with other disciplines. This has necessitated some degree of self-critique as a practitioner of art history, in the sense that our discipline has missed so many opportunities to take ecological contexts seriously, beyond visual imagery and obvious content alone. Yet, the conceptual, methodological and material breadth that exists in the very DNA of art history, however it is practised, means that a counterbalancing potentiality can and surely will play its part if the discipline asserts its own ecological eye. This is new and important work that must be done. Fortunately, I am not alone in believing that the contours of art history are distorted and misshapen without the additional consideration of ecology.

In order to elaborate coherently the diverse materials discussed here and to offer some chance of clarity and orientation for art historical specialists and nonspecialists alike, I have selected a filter or framing device for these sets of vignettes. For reasons of politics, ethics, culture and contrariness, the

unifying theme is *nonhierarchy*. This framing device (though it is also much more than that) is deployed throughout the book; we will see it in operation in many ways and on many levels. It is the main way I imagine the ecological eye of the title. I say ‘contrariness’ above because for many outside art history (and perhaps quite a few inside), the discipline is riddled with narratives, ideologies and structures of hierarchy, domination, elitism and power. In the twenty-first century, it is impossible to be unaware or uncritical of how this has manifested itself in art history and we have many decades of serious intellectual redress against its more obvious distortions and horrors. Yet we can go further. *The ecological eye* is about reclaiming the visual *ecologically* and resisting the elite structures that still have a hold over parts of our work. It is about exploring one way in which art history can take its place as a meaningful and engaged discipline set within the future of the Anthropocene and the myriad implications that flow therein. I find encouragement in this beyond art history – for example, Donna Haraway expresses her interest in ‘reclaiming visuality as a becoming-with or being-with’. For her, ‘[y]ou can’t walk away from important things like vision, *you can’t give them away*’.<sup>2</sup> Art historians work across all kinds of disciplines and materials of research, but they should think hard before giving away the visual. In this book’s title, there is a deliberate echo of Michael Baxandall’s influential phrase ‘the period eye’, articulated in *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy* (1972), yet my metaphor is set in an even more recent climate, hoping to mobilise new generations of sympathetic scholars who think, with me, that we need to cast a firmly horizontalising ecological eye over the work of both artists and art historians now and in the past. This is certainly not to police the work of others (which would be a disastrous return of hierarchy) but to suggest that ecological constructions, implications and poetics are nourishing and necessary to our field.

A tricky consequence of this book’s insistence on nonhierarchical approaches is how it plays out across current art historical preoccupations. I have tried without prejudice to draw in usually distinct and at times oppositional ideologies across art history, as long as they speak to the ‘flat ontologies’ of ecological thinking that I favour. Hence, I work with scholarship that is Marxist, anarchist, feminist, activist, materialist, green, scientific and formalist. I hope that the blend I offer is quite new, although of course I recognise the challenge of doing justice to the coherence and clarity of the ideas of the writers I have learnt from. What binds these broad positions together (even reluctantly) is an ability to inform a nonhierarchical, ecological sensibility of direct relevance to the discipline of art history. This is not liberal inclusivity at all; rather it is a recognition that art history needs to widen the objects of its obsessions, beyond visual culture and media, outwards towards the human and other-than-human vectors that animate the planet and its ecosystems.

This can be seen as a response to a double pressure. One is internal, from art that over the last century or more has shown that there is no subject, however material or immaterial, that is beyond the legitimate attention of artists. The other is external, in that global ecologies shape all human activity now more than ever, including the humanities within which lies art history. The consequence of both these pressures is that there is no scale, no theme, no method, no ethics, no organism, no mineral with which the history of art cannot be in symbiotic relationship. This is not a problem of language and, despite the challenges, it is not that complicated.

#### The rise of the environmental humanities

‘All critical examinations of the relation to nature are simultaneously critical examinations of society.’ (David Harvey, *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Distance*, 1996)

It might seem ludicrous to juxtapose the discipline of art history with the catastrophic scenarios of climate change, global warming, pollution, nuclear winters and genetic engineering if the related disciplines of history, geography and literature had not long been there before. Whilst the main danger to the survival of many species on our planet is not primarily one of words, it is striking how the current discussion of whether we can properly rename our own geological epoch as the Anthropocene, marking us from the Holocene where we currently lie, has galvanised the ecologically minded. If it is to galvanise an entire generation and produce ‘a social imaginary’ then the adoption and development of this term may be of consequence to those human disciplines that deal with imaginaries, such as the history of art.<sup>3</sup> McKenzie Wark pithily describes the Anthropocene as ‘[a] bad name for a bad time, thus not unfit’.<sup>4</sup> Neimanis *et al.* put it more fully: ‘any policy or action aimed at ameliorating environmental problems must take into account human desire, motivation, and values; a deep understanding of environment cannot be divorced from human imagination, culture, and institutional and social practices’.<sup>5</sup>

What is already very clear is that all humanities disciplines are feeling the pressures of the ecological, the climatic and the environmental that collectively represent a call for reflection and action beyond what, for an earlier academic generation, was purely about specialism versus generalism or about one kind of institutional structure for universities over another. Neimanis *et al.* propose environmental humanities as ‘a means by which fundamental concerns within the humanities ... can be brought to bear on questions of the environment through the deployment of humanities modes of enquiry’.<sup>6</sup> The authors go on to delimit four problems (alienation and intangibility; the post-political situation; the negative framing of environmental change; and

compartmentalisation of ‘the environment’<sup>7</sup>) and four directions (‘attention to diverse environmental imaginaries; rethinking the “green” field in terms of naturecultures and feminist posthumanisms; developing environmental humanities in a specifically transdisciplinary and postdisciplinarity vein; and finally, increasing efforts in developing a “citizen humanities”<sup>8</sup>) that help us understand some of the dimensions of Anthropocenic humanities. This echoes the disciplinary porousness observed by Levi R. Bryant relating to the term ‘ecology’ as now not being just about nature but about the discourse on relations and interrelations.<sup>9</sup> Considerations of environmental and anthropogenic change have freighted the humanities with new weight and new possibilities of responsibility though, as Clark observes, they find themselves constricted by an educational system ‘still largely bound to the reproduction and legitimation of the status quo’.<sup>10</sup>

Around a generation ago, David Harvey’s *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Distance* (1996) put forward tremendous insights on transglobal, nature–culture tensions, the problems of environmental difference, on Marx’s ecological speculations, and how considerations of place and territory flowed directly into the global justice movement. Remember that Harvey’s book was written only six years after the first Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change meeting and long before climate change became more popularly discussed.<sup>11</sup> Building on ecopolitical work in archaeology, anthropology and geography,<sup>12</sup> Harvey wrote of an ecological-historical Marx, who ‘argued ... that we can discover who and what we are (our species potential, even) only through transforming the world around us and in so doing put the dialectics of social and ecological change at the centre of all human history’.<sup>13</sup> If, as I believe, failure of the imagination (whether at corporate, governmental, community or individual level) sits behind today’s ecological crisis, then Harvey is surely right in understanding the role of a reconfigured imaginary as the prerequisite to ecological action. ‘It will take imagination’, he concludes, ‘to construct a requisite poetics of understanding for our urbanized world’.<sup>14</sup> This leap of the mind also entails a new perspective on scarcity, production and limits – and as such would seem set very differently to the preoccupations of art history, with its longstanding foundations on the transformation of materials, their transformative effects on the human mind, and elaborate systems of circulation and exchange that keep them within the higher domains of value and preservation. What, this book asks, would a history of art look like that attended more to its own limits, materially and culturally? What might art history become when it takes responsibility for helping to shape the imagination of large population groups rather than the expert and initiated?

This is a complex and entangled position, where ethical standards are shaped depending on how differences play out. Across multiple languages of nature and varieties of register ‘[o]rganisms ... do not *adapt* to environments;

they *construct* them. They are not simply *objects* of the laws of nature, altering themselves to the inevitable, but active *subjects* transforming nature according to its laws.<sup>15</sup> I have followed Harvey's call, quite beyond his own Marxist position, towards strands of nonhierarchical thinking and radical relational categories wherever they may be found: 'Emancipation should mean opening up the production of difference, even opening up a terrain for contestation within and between differences, rather than suppress them.'<sup>16</sup> It is beyond the scope of this book to draw out the full implications of Harvey's observations on the socio-ecological categories of competition, struggle, adaptation, diversification, collaboration, cooperation, mutual aid and environmental transformations, but cultural ecology and production need this insight and it should surely dominate our attention as the discipline moves on.<sup>17</sup>

The metaphor of the metabolic has found new life in recent scholarship, with Wark calling the Anthropocene 'a series of metabolic rifts' (following Marx's coinage of this term) that largely involve matter being improperly extracted by humans for their own ends.<sup>18</sup> Harvey also invokes metabolism to stand for the relationship between money and materials that are extracted from the earth and that use networks for transmission and conversion.<sup>19</sup> Metabolism can be invoked productively within this context, in the sense that artworks metabolise the earth's materials into objects of value and aesthetic experiences that themselves set up chains of transformation. Art joins the social functions of nature, religion, family and community in giving a sense of 'ontological security and permanence'.<sup>20</sup> So, from this, a crucial extension of Harvey's idea is that art history might be reframed as a study of ontological security created through materially transformed experience. Hence art and its attendant histories and analysis change when things become less secure and permanent. This is art history for the Anthropocene.

Central to any cultural discussion of the Anthropocene as a meaningful term has to be the issue of scale, and it has been addressed by a number of thinkers. It is certainly the case that (particularly Western) humans 'organize their dominant imaginaries, practices, and politics around a human-scaled existence',<sup>21</sup> and the resulting intangibility is entirely alienating.<sup>22</sup> Similarly for Timothy Clark, the Anthropocene presents scalar challenges on cultural, ethical, aesthetic, philosophical and political registers,<sup>23</sup> which thus 'resist representation at the kinds of scale on which most thinking, culture, art and politics operate'.<sup>24</sup> Melancholic resignation is an obvious option. The way in which ecopsychology, despite some of its problematic assumptions, cuts across scale effects might relate to the 'three ecologies'.<sup>25</sup> Crucially for my support for nonhierarchical approaches, the larger environmental-ecological register threatens coherence of the smaller scale. However, as Clark rightly puts it, this is an operation that 'does not deepen so much as flatten'.<sup>26</sup>

Returning to Harvey, his is a systemic approach, replete with metaphors of process, transformation, relation and tensions that produce difference. To think on this grand ecological scale is to propose a 'reenchantment' and an 'Esthetics of Development' that seems to offer much to my take in *The ecological eye*.<sup>27</sup> Usefully, Harvey refuses to conflate the local/particular with the global/general, signalled in his approving use of Ingold's assertion that 'the local is not a more limited or narrowly focused apprehension of the global, it is one that rests on an altogether different *mode* of apprehension – one based on an active, perceptual engagement with components of the dwelt-in world ... rather than on the detached, disinterested observations of a world apart'.<sup>28</sup> Throughout this book readers will be forced to set aside or face squarely the different registers of apprehension, of materiality and ecological processes as I try to set out the contours of an ecocritical (or 'dark green') art history. It certainly needs to be one that goes beyond green-washed and tinted environmentalism, which 'amounts to little more than a concession to trendiness and to that bourgeois esthetics that likes to enhance the urban with a bit of green, a dash of water, and a glimpse of sky'.<sup>29</sup>

The rising sense of urgency that lies behind this thinking has been prompted by real data emerging from climate scientists but has galvanised wider communities not least because a name has emerged by which to fix these negative findings. The Anthropocene denotes the geological effect and permanent trace of humanity's industrial activity over recent centuries (particularly nuclear, fossil fuel and chemical production). It also gives the West a marker and a name for the actions it has taken to poison and to pollute its own world and the worlds of others, even accepting that it is 'an unintended consequence of human choices'.<sup>30</sup> The Anthropocene as a speculative term was coined in 2000 by Crutzen and Stoermer,<sup>31</sup> but nearly thirty years earlier the anthropologist Mary Douglas, at the ICA in London, was already speaking in strikingly fearsome and phenomenological tones to humanities' sensibilities – 'Flooding in through all our senses, pollution destroys our well-being'.<sup>32</sup> The kinds of informed yet surprising formulations she came up with foreshadow the ideas that were to emerge from Rosi Braidotti, reflecting on the humanities in the early twenty-first century. Douglas felt that, '[i]f there are to be solutions to a grave problem, they will come from the fringes of the profession, from the amateur even, or from those areas of knowledge in which two or three specialisms meet'.<sup>33</sup> The environmental concerns in the 1970s were very real but humans had not yet been recognised as capable of leaving traces in rock. Now, however, there exist all kinds of writers in the humanities and at the more speculative ends of the social sciences acknowledging a 'geological urgency' that needs to enter our historical narratives. This phrase comes from one of the most influential voices in this enterprise, Dipesh Chakrabarty, who sets out a crucial question for art history, alongside all other historical disciplines, when

he asserts: 'The idea of the Anthropocene, the new geological epoch when humans exist as a geological force, severely qualifies humanist histories of modernity/globalization.'<sup>34</sup> I believe that the term 'Anthropocene' (on the cusp of being scientifically accepted at the time of writing) captures an important imperative that, from now on, scholars must write as if the histories of the human and the other-than-human are part of the same intimately interwoven spectrum rather than lying in binary opposition.

This is why it is impossible, or self-limiting to my argument, to draw only on select discourses within the humanities and beyond. Using a nonhierarchical perspective that pulls in mutually energising insights and disrupts normative divisions and power relations, whether they lie in ecofeminism, technical art history, cultural theory, politics or queer theory, will help, if not impel, us to write (about art) differently. We live in changing times, yet, as Berlinger points out, '[c]ultural history shows that the climate has always been in change and that society has always had to react to it'.<sup>35</sup> He continues: 'the climate is changing. The climate has always changed. How we react to it is a cultural question, and a knowledge of history can be of some help ... We cannot leave the "interpretation" of climate change to people ignorant of cultural history.'<sup>36</sup> For ecofeminist Val Plumwood, '[t]he ecological crisis can be thought of as involving a centric and self-enclosed form of reason that simultaneously relies on and disavows its material base, as "externality", and a similar failure of the rationalised world it has made to acknowledge and adapt itself adequately to its larger "body", the material and ecological support base it draws on in the long-denied counter-sphere of "nature".'<sup>37</sup> As readers will discover in the following section, many of the most striking recent ideas around nature and the humanities have had a literary cast, whether this be, in the words of Timothy Morton, imagining the environment as 'a gigantic library, a palimpsest of texts *waiting to be read*',<sup>38</sup> or Braidotti's appeal for 'bio-literacy' in the humanities.<sup>39</sup> Behind my consideration of English Literature and ecocriticism is the belief that a visual historical sensibility, broadly conceived, has to join (not confront) this literary effort.

### Ecocriticism in English Literature

'I am large, I contain multitudes.' (Walt Whitman, *Song of Myself*, 1855)

The discipline of English Literature shares with art history the interest in objects of human fictive creativity. Art historians can learn from both the productive and more problematic directions in which this related discipline has gone, and how in the 1990s it built up a canon on foundational scholarship and criticism particularly in the USA and UK that has shaped its development. How long will it be before the history of art can establish an equivalent



of the decade in English Literature that produced Jonathan Bate's *Romantic Ecology: Wordsworth and the Environmental Tradition* (1991), Lawrence Buell's *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing and the Formation of American Culture* (1995), Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm's *The Ecocriticism Reader* (1996), Richard Kerridge and Neil Sammells' (eds) *Writing the Environment* (1998), Laurence Coupe's *The Green Studies Reader* (2000) and Jonathan Bate's *The Song of the Earth* (2000)? Yet one would expect and hope that our future canon would, firstly, be less dominated by male scholars, secondly, avoid something of the disciplinary schism that splits this Anglo-American field and, thirdly, that it could be less dependent on nineteenth-century Transcendental-Romantics such as Melville, Emerson, Fuller, Thoreau, Wordsworth and Clare. (Though these foci have largely been superseded in more recent work in ecocriticism.) There are a number of reasons why I have avoided as far as possible to locate my points in *The ecological eye* around specific artistic practices – something I will explain in the pages that follow – but in this context it seems that anything approaching a green art history simply does not need a set of foundational artists who have prior claim on the 'ecological' as most widely and dynamically framed. So, I use ecocriticism enthusiastically but not uncritically.

In order to understand many of the guiding ideas in ecocriticism and to appreciate its leverage within English Literature and literary theory, a look at Peter Barry's *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory* illuminates much. The second edition of this textbook (2002) added a final chapter on 'ecocriticism', which was the only substantive change from the first edition of 1995. Parallel to the kind of advancement I am proposing in this book, Barry placed the ecological *alongside* Marxist, feminist, gay/lesbian, poststructuralist and postcolonial criticism. Ecocritical theory provides a powerful framing of what ecocritics do – directions that are surely useful as I map out an ecocritical variant for art history. The role of ecocritics, as characterised by Barry, is to re-read major literary works from an ecocentric perspective (particularly thinking with the natural world). They also use ecocentric concepts beyond the natural world (such as growth, energy, balance, symbiosis, mutuality, sustainability). And they demonstrate a canonical interest in writers who foreground nature and – in ways that intersect with colonial, postcolonial and documentary turns in art – ecocritics attend more seriously than their peers to factual writing (such as essay, travel, memoir). The cumulative effect is a rejection of 'social constructivism' and 'linguistic determinism', in favour of 'ecocentric values of meticulous observation, collective ethical responsibility, and the claims of the world beyond ourselves'.<sup>40</sup>

Barry captures in ecologically orientated scholarship a broad scepticism of the deconstructed and overly semiotic – the thinking being that even poststructuralist and postmodern models, however powerful, might

nevertheless miss the ‘real Real’ that they cannot yet touch. Kate Soper’s often-repeated adage – ‘It’s not language that has a hole in its ozone layer’<sup>41</sup> – is the emblem of such a persuasive position. If humans are clearly part of evolution ‘then it follows that all our vaunted cultural constructions are, in a sense, natural constructions’.<sup>42</sup> Thus in extrapolation, all art is part of a green imaginary, being a form of cultural construction, therefore all art history is too. This might be why I wish to encourage readers, scholars and students to conceive of ecocritique and its equivalent in art history in eclectic terms – as something that draws on a wide range of materials, methods and practices.

There is no ‘pre-theoretical’ arcadia, either in ecocriticism or its visual equivalents,<sup>43</sup> and in the conditions of ‘mutual constructivism’ in which scholars find themselves, where physical and cultural environments shape each other symbiotically, we might start to imagine an art history of the Anthropocene where natural catastrophe blends both world deconstruction and word construction. Whether we wish to write about gender, class, race, labour, beauty, spirituality, geographies or materials, such terms all presuppose ecological sustainability. Learning from the dynamics of ecocriticism and its relatively short history, including the acknowledgment that there is ‘no single, dominant world-view guiding ecocritical practice’,<sup>44</sup> surely means ensuring that a green art history does not set itself against other forms of art history which see themselves as having more specific tasks at hand. This is one of the underlying messages in Guattari’s *The Three Ecologies* – that the registers of the ecologic go far beyond familiar tropes of ‘nature’ or ‘the environment’, as perhaps the more traditional forms of ecocriticism have done with their literary objects of study. And in ecocriticism in literary studies in particular, many of these lessons are already embedded and understood. Take, for example, the kinds of ‘scalar’ readings that certain scholars mentioned above have deemed crucial. This technique, anticipatory to what I conceive of as the ecological eye, works well for artworks too. Clark uses three scales (or three ‘ecologies’) to read a Raymond Carver story – firstly, the critically naive personal scale, followed by the scale of national culture, which works with the timeframe of decades, and lastly at the impersonal ecological level of the whole earth and its inhabitants across many centuries.<sup>45</sup>

We will have cause to return to the curious and paradoxical position that any environmental humanities discipline must acknowledge – the extreme counterpointing of the modesty of its means and the field of disaster and vulnerability within which it sits. These modest means, however, do merit a little more consideration, given that the power of the arts and their attendant partners in the humanities have demonstrable purchase on the psychological, social and environmental ecologies (in Guattari’s terms) that all of us inhabit. To conclude this rapid overview of some of the important insights within ecocriticism offered to a possible green art history, I wish to concentrate on

some of the intellectual infrastructure, guiding themes and possible methods that English Literature has explored.

Greg Garrard's *Ecocriticism* is a disciplinary standard introduction to the topic. With chapter headings that are illuminatingly themed (pastoral, wilderness, apocalypse, dwelling, animals, futures, the earth) he draws in concepts like scarcity, rhetorics, attention, form and defamiliarisation. These themes and concepts translate well either directly or in some variant to the kinds of structures that would lie behind a green art history. I follow Garrard's view that one should credit any humanities discipline concerned with these broad conceptions of the ecological as offering 'a more effective rhetoric of transformation and assuagement' compared to the universalism of deep ecology on one side or technologically orientated modernity on the other.<sup>46</sup> Though I would not preclude other scholarly interests by fellow art historians, the civic responsibilities, liberating potential and exegetical power of art history should have the weight and creativity of the art it works with. (This is one of the reasons why I prefer to think of art history as a 'practice' rather than a 'discipline' or a 'subject'.)

It is easy to find fruitful comparative theorising in earlier canonical texts of ecocriticism, such as Lawrence Buell's *The Environmental Imagination*.<sup>47</sup> Buell's four criteria for eco-writing (that the nonhuman environment is more than just a *framing*, but human and natural history are entwined and co-implicated; that its writing requires more than just human interest alone; that human accountability produces an *ethics*; and that the environment is seen as a process rather than a given) can very easily be rewritten in art historical formations. We would be able to assert that: natural history is entangled with the images and processes of the visual (social history of art is a natural history of art); vegetable, animal, mineral worlds are actants in art; an ethics of images and visual processes essentially binds art historians to an ethics of their discipline; and there is a contingent and changing ecology of images endemic to art history. Given that humans are part of evolution and that therefore 'all our vaunted cultural constructions are, in a sense, natural constructions',<sup>48</sup> then we can envisage the work, impulses and obligations of art historians being linked *at root* with deep green imaginaries of which artists are too a part. This rather expands the normal model of art historians being the willing exegetical or interpretative followers of artists and their work. Whilst of course this is little more than an initial sketch (and perhaps is already in the minds of many art historians who write within an ecological register), it offers enormous potential and multiple possible lines of enquiry within the practice.

I am writing in the second decade of the twenty-first century. The propositions in this book are more concerned with future art historical practices than those of the past, implying that the lessons of ecocriticism need to be recast from their origins in the 1980s and 1990s. This is, no doubt, why the

more extreme and challenging work that now comes out of ecocriticism, such as the writings of Timothy Morton, has a more provocative flavour than the foundational texts of the last century, as they circulated around a few canonical writers such as Wordsworth and Thoreau. Morton's heady brew of continental theory, deconstruction, new materialism, contemporary art and eclectic improvisations around 'the ecological thought' have attracted the interest of a small number of 'green-leaning' art historians and even more artists. In fusing Viktor Shklovshy's usefully modernist notion of defamiliarisation and Tim Luke's similarly edgy term 'ecocritique' with the idea of the 'ecotone' (a convergence of sound and place, close to the German term *Stimmung* and related to Humboldt's connection between climate and culture), Morton gets beyond normative and unified thinking about nature. Indeed, he works with the belief that there is no such thing as nature itself. 'Nature ... stands at the end of a potentially infinite series of other terms that collapse into it ...: fish, grass, [...] freedom of choice, heterosexuality, free markets ... Nature'.<sup>49</sup> He opens up the possibility of being ironic about nature, ecology and environmentalism – characteristics that the green movement is not used to. This distancing process is very familiar in the work of artists, at least since Marcel Duchamp, but is freighted in Morton with obligation and ethical worry beyond brow-furrowing liberalism. He observes that 'ecological writing keeps beating itself against the glass of the other, like a fly ... The only way to remain close to the stranger without killing them (turning them into yourself or into an inanimate object) is to maintain a sense of irony. If irony and movement are not part of environmentalism, strangers are in danger of disappearing, exclusion, ostracism or worse'.<sup>50</sup> I will have reason to return to Morton often but here, on this point of productive irony, I believe he opens up the possibility of an escape from the charge often levelled at nature writing (both the discipline of ecocriticism and, by association, creative writing itself) that is of *earnestness*. Scholars need to construct an art history that works with degrees of irony and playfulness (as indeed Morton's *Dark Ecology* of 2016 explicitly promoted *play*) in how it explores the ecological (and by association seeks out creative visual arts practice that also wears its ecology lightly).

#### A note on art practices and curatorial projects

'Every refutation is a mirror of the thing it refutes'  
(Robert Smithson, 'Letter to the Editor', 1967)

The work of art historians is inevitably bound up intimately with the lives of artists, their skills, objects, achievements, vulnerabilities, life stories, chronologies, egos and legacies. In what I believe to be a unique, certainly rare, approach in this kind of art history, I have set virtually all of these aspects

aside here. In seeking to encourage and inspire an ecological eye to be cast on art without limit to any particular period, theme or location, it seemed important to refuse the common practice of lining up brief vignettes of artist practices that might purport to stand in for an argument that is properly based in art historical method and practice. After all, as Clark observes, ‘an emergent effect of the Anthropocene is to revise strongly notions of what is and is not historically significant’,<sup>51</sup> and maybe for now, individual artworks are only a small part of that emerging picture. For my argument, I do not need artists working ecologically to prove my point. Choosing artists from my own specialist field would do justice neither to those artists (who would be overburdened with standing as a synecdoche for ‘eco-art’) nor to my proposition here to open up art history nonhierarchically. Whilst the specific lines of future art historical approaches are not in my hands, nor indeed in anyone’s hands alone, if this book resonates with the global art historical effort, then specific practices will of course be examined (as they will be in my work beyond this book). This is in addition to the voluminous works already swept up into books, journals, catalogue essays and online that address the ecological in visual creative practice.

Guattari in *Chaosmosis* offers some other reasons for not making artists ‘the new heroes of the revolution, the new levers of History’.<sup>52</sup> The reason is that ‘[a]rt is not just the activity of established artists but of a whole subjective creativity which traverses the generations and oppressed peoples, ghettos, minorities ... the aesthetic paradigm – the creation and composition of mutant percepts and affects – has become the paradigm for every possible form of liberation’.<sup>53</sup> He goes even further, questioning whether the intellectuals or artistic classes ‘have got nothing to teach anyone ... they produce toolkits composed of concepts, percepts and affects, which diverse publics will use at their convenience’.<sup>54</sup>

What I believe does need attending to here are the possibilities for transposition from art practice to art history, particularly as much of the former and the discussions around it offer clear transversal lines into the practices of art history. So, when one reads in an interview with Jean-Luc Nancy that ‘art’s *labour* is both a sensing and a spacing of the shared separation of the Anthropocene’,<sup>55</sup> one might then wonder why art history, as the interpretative ally of art practice, cannot share that labour and that responsibility for labouring in the effort to create a ‘sensing’ and ‘spacing’ within the Anthropocene.

Morton, again, offers confidence to this enterprise, specifically with regard to bypassing the ‘already ecological’ in art’s history and current practice. In a couple of key passages in *Ecology without Nature*, he rightly asserts that ‘[i]f we restrict our examination to the citation of ecological “content” – listing what is included and excluded in the thematics of the (literary) text – we hand over aesthetic form, the aesthetic dimension and even theory itself, to the

reactionary wing of ecological criticism. The aesthetic, and in a wider sense perception, must form part of the foundation of a thoroughly transnational ecological criticism.<sup>56</sup> Earlier in the book, he states: ‘We can expect to find ambient qualities in any artwork whatsoever. We need not restrict ourselves to works that are specifically ambient ... In a world properly attuned to the environment, we would read poems with an eye to ecology, no matter what their content.’<sup>57</sup> I believe that the kind of expansiveness and application that Morton argues for here finds an echo too in how Hilary Robinson defends Luce Irigaray’s resistance to offering in her writing on visual art, a view on what women’s art might look like, because ‘[t]o do so would be to offer a form of security, but a false security: it would be to set a fixity to that which has not yet developed its porosity, nor recognise the sites of its limits’.<sup>58</sup>

The idea of going beyond explicitly ecological content is given specific form in Barry’s *Beginning Theory*, where he cites ecocritical readings of *King Lear* in which the analysis demonstrates how the natural world shapes the narrative content of Shakespeare’s play. Clarity, for example, is always found in outside environments (among storms, moors and seashore).<sup>59</sup> He also looks at Edgar Allan Poe’s *The Fall of the House of Usher* in relation to its implicit themes of energy, entropy and symbiosis. All of this points to freeing art historians from the burden of reinscribing the ecological content of ecological art and opening up the possibilities of discussing very many more artworks and artistic practices in history through the expansive lens of the ecological eye. Occasionally, one finds this kind of point made within visual arts writing itself. For example, artist and theorist George Gessert noted: ‘Ecology is still too recent a development to have significantly affected more than a few strands of Western culture. In ecologically mature cultures there are no such categories as ecological sensibility or art. All art and sensibility are ecological.’<sup>60</sup> I also suggest that by setting aside artefactual criticism for now leaves us freer self-reflexively to reinvent aspects of the discipline of art history.

In the 1980s Murray Bookchin and Félix Guattari separately expressed their scepticism of, for Bookchin, the ‘ecological evangelists who tap out ecomiums to hard work and the “simple life” on their word processors’,<sup>61</sup> and, for Guattari, the ‘usual archaizers and folklorists’ of ecological groups and their association with ‘the image of a small nature-loving minority or with qualified specialists’.<sup>62</sup> Even recent publications in which a long list of specific practices is discussed, such as Malcolm Miles’s *Eco-Aesthetics* (2014) or T. J. Demos’s *Decolonizing Nature* (2016), rightly resist any temptation to become an advocate for ‘eco-art, eco-writing or eco-architecture’,<sup>63</sup> but rather set some art historical contexts for the discussion of artwork that embodies ‘evocation and integrity’.<sup>64</sup> I have applied the same logic in not making curatorial projects the main focus of study, despite, of course, the

implicit influence that curatorial work exerts on my thinking.<sup>65</sup> The kinds of relevant curatorial projects, from the 1990s onwards, would include: Barbara C. Matilsky's *Fragile Ecologies: Contemporary Artists' Interpretations and Solutions* (1992), Grant Kester's *Groundworks: Environmental Collaboration in Contemporary Art* (2005), Francesco Manacorda's *Radical Nature* (2009), Nato Thompson and Independent Curators International's *Experimental Geography: Radical Approaches to Landscape, Cartography, and Urbanism* (2009) and T. J. Demos's *Art and Ecology in the Americas* (2015) among many more. Online curatorial platforms include (at the time of writing) Greenmuseum.org, New Climates, environmentalarts.net, yet even this list soon becomes out of date and woefully incomplete. So, both art and curatorial practices shape the thinking expressed in *The ecological eye* but are not manifestly present.

There is of course a danger of over-emphasising the radically open potentialities of the ecological eye in the minds of fellow art historians, but at least it is now easier to appreciate the flatness of the disciplinary landscape and the multiple paths that might be taken through it. The repetition of nonhierarchical perspectives that lie across this flat landscape is clearly a move to collapse distances, boundaries, power structures and obsolete value chains. I imagine art history as part of a complex lateral network of disciplinary concerns; no better, no worse but distinctive and available for collective enterprise, as is demanded in this age. Keeping our distance is no option. There is an ambitious scope to the book (perhaps overly so) but one impelled by a sense that the nonhierarchical in culture and politics is more powerful and urgent than has hitherto been appreciated except in the most radical and perhaps marginal of traditions. It is time for this to change.

#### The challenge to art history

'Our attempt at focusing must give way to the vacant all-embracing stare'  
(Anton Ehrenzweig, *The Hidden Order of Art*, 1993)

I wish now to press more firmly on the historical implications of configuring an ecocritical art history in the light of this wide frame of environmental humanities. We need at least to imagine a time when swathes of art history (and art practice) will demonstrate informed knowledge of and engagement with anthropogenic, ecological and radical imperatives – which other disciplines have already embraced. As McKenzie Wark suggests, we need some 'new-old' critical theory (which I take as a warning not to throw out *all* the old tools in the box).<sup>66</sup> Whilst art historians take their discipline seriously and can seek, in their way, to develop daring, ethical and adventurous moves within their own context, external perceptions of the work is less kind.

Art history is often viewed in suspicious or negative terms, ranging from a frivolous, superior, elitist, over-specialised, monetised and ultimately inconsequential activity – and worse, as something that has been deeply embedded in the West's dark histories of violence, domination and cultural appropriation. This is a denial that Timothy Clark neatly characterises as 'a subtle mix of knowledge, inertia, self-deception, evasion and material entrapment'.<sup>67</sup>

So even if public perceptions of art history include a sense that traditional, conservative or 'materialist' versions of value predominate, ecocritical art history, by contrast, acknowledges that humanity and its products emerge from a mesh of interconnected materials, worlds and subjects beyond the 'developed' world's restricted sense of nature as instrumental resource. This seems abstract but it is not. Nature thus configured has not only value but agency, intention and emotion.<sup>68</sup> These are terms that any art historian immediately recognises as central to their work. Art history becomes, under this light, just one of the ways of working in microcosm with the affective elements that move globally on much wider scales. Ecofeminist Val Plumwood has called for 'a project of profound cultural remaking and renewal',<sup>69</sup> and Donna Haraway approvingly adopts 'sympoiesis' or a 'making together' from communities of practice, a term with its origins in landscape design,<sup>70</sup> all pointing towards a more collective remaking and reimagining the essential tasks of art history.

Art history cannot be implicated alone – Edward Said reflected on the academic humanities 'that had for years represented an apolitical, unworldly and oblivious (sometimes even manipulative) attitude to the present, all the while adamantly extolling the virtues of the past'.<sup>71</sup> Yet we can see the accusation's force all too clearly. Marjorie Levinson has commented on the problems around the commodity form (surely central to those lucrative wings of the art history business): 'which turns labour and use-value, human histories of making and doing, into petrified things that paradoxically immortalize the living value which they ceaselessly consume'.<sup>72</sup> Kropotkin, a major focus for Part II of this book, saw a tendency in the West to structure all of its narratives around violence, wars, geopolitical suffering, exploitation, poverty and self-aggrandisement. Thankfully, in recent decades a number of art historians, representing younger generations, have envisaged a history of art that rewrites its own history around moments of imagination, insight, creativity, intelligence, skill, mutuality, civic sense and justice. Any ecologically conversant art history must do the same. *The ecological eye* is predicated on the idea that art history (not just art alone) will need to learn from and contribute to discussion in the humanities about human/other-than-human boundaries, cultural constructions of nature and biopolitics, and how environmental justice and activism affects political and cultural formations. To do this, art history will certainly have to move beyond its familiar boundaries and carefully cultivated heartland (easier words to write than to enact).



To give this some specific sense, we might reflect on the rise of the already-mentioned modish art historical phrase ‘What is at stake...’. Invariably, this signals no more than an etiolated reading of narrow import. Whilst it might be rather too easy to reclaim ‘What is at stake...’ for the ecologically minded, I recognise that using the term, in the eyes of some beyond the discipline, appears naive and solipsistic (as it often is). As many of the writers cited in this book already exemplify, work across the humanities cannot be isolated from the sociopolitical contexts of today and can instead be an antidote to ‘inattentional blindness’.<sup>73</sup> After all, art history shapes and changes cultures, perceptions and emotions. I do, however, suggest some discrimination around where the real stakes might lie in the tensions that anthropogenic climate change and pollution cause and the work that humanities scholars feel the need to do.

I suspect there are many art historians who, like Chakrabarty, are impelled towards ‘making sense of this planetary conjuncture within which humanity finds itself today’.<sup>74</sup> In the realisation that climate change ‘challenges not only the ideas about the human that usually sustain the discipline of history but also the analytical strategies that postcolonial and postimperial historians have deployed’,<sup>75</sup> Chakrabarty is a powerful lever in the thinking behind this book because he is ‘one of us’ – a historian and a visionary one at that. He believes that ‘Anthropogenic explanations of climate change spell the collapse of the age-old humanist distinction between natural and human history’,<sup>76</sup> and he uses striking visual arts metaphors, like the one that drives home his Thesis No. 4: ‘The cross-hatching of species history and the history of capital is a process of probing the limits of historical understanding.’<sup>77</sup> More specifically, Chakrabarty lauds the pioneering work in Braudel’s *The Mediterranean* (1949), in which climate and geography figure as ‘an agentive presence’.<sup>78</sup> Might art historians – particularly the many who have spent lives devoted to the arts created around Mediterranean cultures – be more willing to accept climate as shaping the arts of a region in a more adventurous way, where they close the gap between natural and human histories? This is deep history, which, according to Bruno Latour, ‘now moves CO<sub>2</sub>, plate tectonics, pollution’,<sup>79</sup> whilst simultaneously and radically widening the objects of study without losing the material and immaterial presence of artworks. It sees them as shaped by forces larger than the human. Rising above disciplinary prejudice, art historians should consider asserting that their discipline is always a translation, an expansion around and beyond art objects, those who make them and the societies within which they circulate and are encountered. The history of art, Janus like, has responsibilities both towards the practices it addresses and the circumstances that the world finds itself in. Wark is wise to observe the importance of specifics at hand: ‘What can keep the larger project from becoming debilitating is getting to work on the kinds of knowledge practices that are useful in a particular domain.’<sup>80</sup> At this point in history,

whether or not you wish to call it the Anthropocene, climate change needs some new attention, expressed directly through specific knowledge practices.

This attention might just be a matter of survival, in the sense that climate change and environmental degradation are sensorial and perceptual events, at least in the human context. We (yes, even art historians) are in danger of being overtaken by events. And as Heather Davis and Etienne Turpin assert in *Art in the Anthropocene*: 'This overtaking is primarily an aesthetic event. Our sensorial and perceptive systems are being refashioned at rates that we can barely keep up with'.<sup>81</sup> Some of this appeal for disciplinary reorientation turns, quite rightly, on the issue of skills. Lucy Lippard, for instance, notes the new skills that have been gained by contemporary Western artists in recent decades, such as 'city planning, rural land use, infrastructure, traffic patterns, demographics, changing development regulations, zoning, water rights, land and stream reclamation, and inevitably, local politics and power structures'.<sup>82</sup> She raises the question of what new skills are needed by art historians, wherever and on whatever period they work. What is central to artistic practice must in time become central to global art historical practices too.

I support Lippard's nonhierarchical, flat ontology: 'I argue now for the nearby, a microview of land and art, grassroots connections rather than macro pronouncements ... much land art is a pseudo rural art made from a metropolitan head-quarters, a kind of colonization in itself'.<sup>83</sup> These critiques and problematics of certain art practices are, for my purposes, a distraction in the context of writing about an ecocritical art history (another reason for not addressing artworks specifically) but in Lippard's passage and around her pressing themes of creating a 'communal imagination' and a new set of expanded skills in order to do art historical work, I sense a nonhierarchical, social tone which fully fits my ideological orientation here. In what many art historians and theorists of the Anthropocene see as a new (or newly appreciated) entanglement of place, matter, people that leads us towards a redemptive adjustment, there is also a posthumanist strand that serves to challenge dominant, hierarchical discourses.

Davis and Turpin are alive to the act of writing itself and the problem of whether the registers of writing art history will also expand beyond the normative approaches. They acknowledge writing experimentation that emerged from the 1960s onwards, including artist books, new distribution models and, more profoundly, moves away from psychoanalysis and deconstruction 'toward an open field of naturecultures, infrastructure assemblages, and other newly contested territories [...] a more lithe, materialist mode of spatial enquiry'.<sup>84</sup> Examples of this beyond the art historical canon abound; within the canon it is slightly less easily to spot, though we can readily point to the journal *Art History* and its special issue on creative writing, in which a number of articles had the (unacknowledged) tone of phenomenological

environmental humanities, such as Gavin Parkinson's '(Blind Summit) Art Writing, Narrative, Middle Voice', C. F. B. Miller's 'Rotten Sun' and Nicholas Chare's 'Writing Perceptions: The Matter of Words and the Rollright Stones'.<sup>85</sup> Such strategies push against shallow historical time and instead invoke 'deep time', beyond the historical and even prehistorical. This would be a radical shift for art history, with its limited notion of the 'historical' rarely running beyond three thousand years. We see deep geological and evolutionary time in the biotic-political interests of Peter Kropotkin, Murray Bookchin, the new materialists and posthumanists. Are we ready for an 'ahistory of art'?

I began this section noting (with a mixture of regret and acceptance) the deeply hierarchical legacies within art history – its persistent air of connoisseurship and elitism, its market-led and corporate tendencies, its resource intensiveness, its self-policing, its celebration of growth, excess and plenitude (just to be clear). Luckily, not every art historian who studies royalty, colonial conquests or the art market is a monarchist, invader or capitalist. There are also good counter-readings of the place of the visual and its study that I can draw on – including some significant voices from beyond our own field. Donna Haraway's appeal not to 'give away the visual' was linked in her mind to 'reclaiming visibility as a becoming-with or being-with'.<sup>86</sup> Art historians may be multidisciplinary (implicitly or otherwise) but they should think hard before giving away the visual. *The ecological eye* is about reclaiming the visual ecologically and resisting the elite structures that did and still do surround many parts of it.

#### Outline of Parts I, II and III

The book is organised into three main parts, each around the central theme of nonhierarchy, examined from different perspectives and with different content. I have deliberately mirrored the thematic structure that Félix Guattari used in *The Three Ecologies* – namely using 'socius', the 'environment' and the 'psyche' as a way of locating the ecological eye in interlocking and overlapping registers. These three ecological registers are powerful and wide-reaching. They allow the book to move across politics, materialism, posthumanism and of course the environmental humanities, including art history.

The first part of the book surveys and recontextualises, in three chapters, a set of earlier potentialities in the history of art that, if viewed through the ecological lens, could formulate a 'proto-ecocritical art history'. A number of canonical writers are revisited, drawing out their contributions on the ecological, and this is expanded to consider closely proximate disciplines such as environmental aesthetics, material and technical art history. This part also considers some of the important challenges to the discipline that broadly seek new horizontalising forms, such as much work in feminism and queer studies.

Part II focuses entirely on the political – particularly anarchist and social ecologist – dimensions of ecological thought, speculating on some of the possible links to creative practice and visual culture. The early formation of anarchism and its many later manifestations are discussed, particularly in an effort to capture the massive scalar range that anarchism and social ecology have brought into the discussion. The three chapters that comprise Part II also acknowledge the important contribution of certain formations within Marx's thinking on ecology and nature. There is a particular focus on the bridging role of anarchist art historian, poet and political polemicist Herbert Read. We also consider wider political ecology where nonhierarchical networks have been uppermost. Drawing on a number of figures, Part II starts to align the discipline of art history with egalitarian and mutualist political positions that offer more critical potential for the future.

Part III analyses new art historical possibilities through critical theory and new materialism within a posthuman context. New materialism, as a vitalist, nonhierarchical political ontology, takes mutualism and ethics more radically beyond the human. Yet, I explore ways of appropriating certain ideas in it so as to flesh out an environmental humanities of the visual. Art history becomes, in fact, a perfect setting within which to explore a sensory attentiveness to the nonhuman. It ends with a nonhierarchical reading across the art history of flesh (widely conceived through the animal and vegetable worlds) rather than 'inanimate' matter. This kind of work becomes part of a larger, flattening ontological set of studies nested within the wider humanities discourse on ecology. Such radical 'flat' thinking is reflected by Grosz, when she asserts: 'Everything – territory, events, animals, man – are produced equally, without hierarchy, on the flat plane of canvas or board, the weather no more enveloping human and animal figures than being enveloped by them, humans no more the object of representation than the animals to which they are ancestrally connected, the earth no more a passive ground for the action of living agents than a living agent (or many) itself.'<sup>87</sup>

*The ecological eye* sketches out one way that art history could still take its place as an engaged discipline within the future of the Anthropocene. I hope that the disciplinary resistances to such an expansion within art history are a lot easier to overcome than the planetary ones the industrialised world has set in motion.

## Notes

- 1 Rosi Braidotti, *The Posthuman* (Cambridge: Polity, 2013), 153.
- 2 Heather Davis and Etienne Turpin, *Art in the Anthropocene: Encounters Among Aesthetics, Politics, Environments and Epistemologies* (London: Open Humanities Press, 2015), 258. Emphasis in original.

- 3 Davis and Turpin, *Art in the Anthropocene*, 9.
- 4 McKenzie Wark, *Molecular Red: Theory for the Anthropocene* (London: Verso, 2015), 223.
- 5 Astrida Neimanis, Cecilia Åsberg and Johan Hedrén, 'Four Problems, Four Directions for Environmental Humanities: Towards Critical Posthumanities for the Anthropocene', *Ethics and Environment* 1, 20, no. 1 (2015).
- 6 Neimanis, Åsberg and Hedrén, 'Four Problems', 69.
- 7 Neimanis, Åsberg and Hedrén, 'Four Problems', 70.
- 8 *Ibid.*
- 9 For example, see Levi R. Bryant, 'Black', in *Prismatic Ecology: Ecotheory beyond Green*, ed. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 2013), 290–310.
- 10 Timothy Clark, *Ecocriticism on the Edge: The Anthropocene as a Threshold Concept* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015), 195.
- 11 Wolfgang Behringer, *A Cultural History of Climate* (Cambridge: Polity, 2010), 196.
- 12 Karl W. Butzer, *Archaeology as Human Ecology: Method and Theory for a Contextual Approach* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982); John W. Bennett, *The Ecological Transition: Cultural Anthropology and Human Adaptation* (New York: Pergamon Press, 1976); Tim Ingold, *The Appropriation of Nature: Essays on Human Ecology and Social Relations* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986); W. L. Thomas, ed., *Man's Role in Changing the Face of the Earth* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956).
- 13 David Harvey, *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Distance* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 189.
- 14 Harvey, *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Distance*, 438.
- 15 Harvey, *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Distance*, 185. Emphasis in original.
- 16 Harvey, *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Distance*, 433.
- 17 Harvey, *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Distance*, 190.
- 18 Wark, *Molecular Red*, xiv.
- 19 Harvey, *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Distance*, 152.
- 20 Harvey, *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Distance*, 157.
- 21 Neimanis, Åsberg and Hedrén, 'Four Problems', 73.
- 22 Neimanis, Åsberg and Hedrén, 'Four Problems', 74.
- 23 Clark, *Ecocriticism on the Edge*, 2.
- 24 Clark, *Ecocriticism on the Edge*, x.
- 25 See Félix Guattari's *The Three Ecologies*, trans. Ian Pindar and Paul Sutton (London: Bloomsbury, 2014).
- 26 Clark, *Ecocriticism on the Edge*, 104.
- 27 Clark, *Ecocriticism on the Edge*, 2.
- 28 Harvey, *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Distance*, 37. Such an insight is echoed in art criticism when Lucy Lippard writes that '[t]he assumption of a dichotomy between local and global ignores the fact that the global is simply the sum of many locals.' *Undermining* (New York: The New Press, 2014), 136. Emphasis in original.
- 29 Harvey, *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Distance*, 428.

- 30 Dipesh Chakrabarty, 'The Climate of History', *Critical Inquiry* 35 (Winter 2009): 210.
- 31 P. J. Crutzen and E. F. Stoermer, 'The Anthropocene', *IGBP Newsletter* 41, no. 17 (2000).
- 32 Mary Douglas, 'Environments at Risk', in *Ecology: The Shaping Enquiry*, ed. Jonathan Benthall (London: Longman, 1972), 144.
- 33 Douglas, 'Environments at Risk', 144.
- 34 Chakrabarty, 'The Climate of History', 207.
- 35 Behringer, *A Cultural History of Climate*, 217.
- 36 *Ibid.*
- 37 Val Plumwood, *Environmental Culture* (London: Routledge, 2003), 4.
- 38 Timothy Morton, *Ecology without Nature: Rethinking Environmental Aesthetics* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 178. Emphasis in original.
- 39 Braidotti, *The Posthuman*, 157.
- 40 Peter Barry, *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*, 2nd ed. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 264.
- 41 Kate Soper, *What Is Nature? Culture, Politics and the Non-Human* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), 151.
- 42 Greg Garrard, *Ecocriticism* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012), 11.
- 43 Barry, *Beginning Theory*, 252, and also in the following passage by Marjorie Levinson: 'Romanticism's discourse of nature had a critical, a utopian, and a transfigurative value in its own day, but it will not work the same magic two hundred years later and within a cultural formation that is not dominated by the commodity form, not sustained by colonial expansion, not defined by the reorganization of agrarian labour into patterns of industrial manufacture, and not faced with a nature that patiently abides our actions and gives predictable returns on our investments.' Marjorie Levinson, 'Pre- and Post-Dialectical Materialisms: Modeling Praxis without Subjects and Objects', *Cultural Critique*, 31 (1 October 1995): 111–27, 118.
- 44 Scott Slovic, 'Ecocriticism: Containing Multitudes, Practising Doctrine', in *The Green Studies Reader: From Romanticism to Ecocriticism*, ed. Lawrence Coupe (London: Routledge, 2000), 160.
- 45 Clark, *Ecocriticism on the Edge*, 99–100.
- 46 Garrard, *Ecocriticism*, 79.
- 47 Lawrence Buell, *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1995).
- 48 Buell, *The Environmental Imagination*, 11.
- 49 Morton, *Ecology without Nature*, 14.
- 50 Morton, *Ecology without Nature*, 100.
- 51 Clark, *Ecocriticism on the Edge*, 53.
- 52 Félix Guattari, *Chaosmosis: An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm*, trans. Paul Bains and Julian Pefanis (Sydney: Power Publications, 1995), 91.
- 53 *Ibid.*
- 54 Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, 129.

- 55 Davis and Turpin, *Art in the Anthropocene: Encounters Among Aesthetics, Politics, Environments and Epistemologies*, 21. Emphasis in original.
- 56 Davis and Turpin, *Art in the Anthropocene*, 171.
- 57 Davis and Turpin, *Art in the Anthropocene*, 79.
- 58 Hilary Robinson, *Reading Art, Reading Irigaray: The Politics of Art by Women* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2006), 199.
- 59 Barry, *Beginning Theory*, 258.
- 60 George Gessert, *Greenlight: Toward an Art of Evolution* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2012), 136.
- 61 Murray Bookchin, *The Ecology of Freedom: The Emergence and Dissolution of Hierarchy*, revised edition (Montreal and London: Black Rose Press, 1991), il.
- 62 Félix Guattari, *The Three Ecologies*, trans. Ian Pindar and Paul Sutton (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 35.
- 63 Malcolm Miles, *Eco-Aesthetics: Art, Literature and Architecture in a Period of Climate Change* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 2.
- 64 Miles, *Eco-Aesthetics*, 3.
- 65 We must defer a reflection on how, for example, Jane Bennett's extension of the ideas of writers such as Lucretius, Spinoza, Deleuze and Guattari on mosaicism and assemblages might be given a curatorial inflection. Bennett speaks of the conative activity of an agent in actually doing something – through the urge and activity of combinatorial thinking, knowledge is produced. Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 21. Bodies, in Bennett's expanded sense, are 'encounter-prone' [21] and 'bodies enhance their power in or as a heterogeneous assemblage' [23]. Furthermore, in tune with our interests in nonhierarchies, such assemblages are to some extent headless and distributed, acquiring meanings above and beyond any instigated in the curatorial process. But we must leave aside for the moment a meta-level treatment of curating as an ecologically based cultural practice, despite its obvious potential.
- 66 Wark, *Molecular Red*, xii.
- 67 Clark, *Ecocriticism on the Edge*, 159.
- 68 Curry, *Ecological Ethics*, 2.
- 69 Plumwood, *Environmental Culture*, 238.
- 70 Davis and Turpin, *Art in the Anthropocene*, 256.
- 71 Braidotti, *The Posthuman*, 18.
- 72 Marjorie Levinson, 'Pre- and Post-Dialectical Materialisms: Modelling Praxis without Subjects and Objects', *Cultural Critique* (Fall 1995): 124.
- 73 Davis and Turpin, *Art in the Anthropocene*, 17.
- 74 Chakrabarty, 'The Climate of History', 199.
- 75 Chakrabarty, 'The Climate of History', 198.
- 76 Chakrabarty, 'The Climate of History', 201.
- 77 Chakrabarty, 'The Climate of History', 220.
- 78 Chakrabarty, 'The Climate of History', 204.
- 79 Davis and Turpin, *Art in the Anthropocene*, 48.
- 80 Wark, *Molecular Red*, xx.

- 81 Davis and Turpin, *Art in the Anthropocene*, 11.
- 82 Lucy R. Lippard, *Undermining* (New York: The New Press, 2014), 183–4.
- 83 Lippard, *Undermining*, 88.
- 84 Davis and Turpin, *Art in the Anthropocene*, 15.
- 85 Catherine Grant and Patricia Lee Rubin, eds, *Creative Writing and Art History*, vol. 34/2 (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2011).
- 86 Martha Kenney, 'Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Chthulhucene: Donna Haraway in Conversation with Martha Kenney', in *Art in the Anthropocene: Encounters Among Aesthetics*, ed. Etienne Turpin and Heather Davis (London: Open Humanities Press, 2015), 232.
- 87 Elizabeth Grosz, *Chaos, Territory, Art: Deleuze and the Framing of the Earth* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 99–100.