In the pages above, we have seen how the Anthropocene thesis can be roundly criticized for its assorted failings—terminological, philosophical, ecological, political. Nonetheless, the term remains significant for one reason: it registers the geological impact of colonial and industrial activities on Earth’s natural systems. As such, it offers an important wedge—one that unites climate science and environmental studies with the environmental arts and humanities—against climate change denial, funded generously by the destructive, profiteering fossil fuel industry.¹ And now, with the momentum of its growing adoption across diverse fields of academic, science, cultural, and artistic practice, the term Anthropocene is likely here to stay (and will probably be officially defined by the International Union of Geological Sciences in the next few years).

Chapter Five

years). This, despite, or even because of, its use value in generalizing and thereby disavowing responsibility for Earth-systems disruption, validating further geoengineering experiments, and diffusing political traction in the struggle against climate change.

There are of course other contenders for geopolitical descriptors, and among these the leader, in my view, is the Capitalocene—the age of capital—which, as we have seen, has the advantage of naming the culprit, sourcing climate change not in species being, but within the complex and interrelated processes of the global-scale, world-historical, and politico-economic organization of modern capitalism stretched over centuries of enclosures, colonialisms, industrializations, and globalization. Considering its fifteenth-century origins, Nicholas Mirzoeff writes that “the Anthropocene began with a massive colonial genocide.” Yet why retain the term at all? The Capitalocene thesis foregrounds how capitalism evolved within and against nature’s web of life, as well as brought ecological transformations to it. In other words, the crisis of climate change, according to this perspective, owes not simply to a substance like oil or coal, or to a chemical element like carbon—and certainly not to humanity’s species being—but to complex socioeconomic, political, and material operations, involving classes and commoditites, imperialisms and empires, and biotechnology and militarism. Of course there have been other economic systems that have also committed massive environmental destruction—such as Soviet Communism, which attempted to force nature into submission at enormous human and ecological expense—but those examples are now historically concluded or transformed into authoritarian market economies, so that we now confront the unavoidable globalization of neoliberal capital, which puts the Capitalocene front and center. This terminological choice is not simply a matter of semantics, but of historical truth, as well as prospective and transformative justice—to pursue an effective transition toward a post-fossil fuel future that is socially and politically just, and to create a common world in which all will not be blamed for the activities of the few, and where culpability for ecocide is assigned to those responsible so that that future becomes not only possibly but guaranteed.

That said, no doubt we need many names to account for the sheer complexity and multiple dimensionality of this geo-politico-economic formation, as well as to identify effective sources of resistance and inspire emergent cultures of survival. If so, then another readily available candidate is the Chthulucene, a proposal of Donna Haraway’s that draws on the resources of science fiction as much as science fact, speculative feminism as much as speculative fabulation, in naming our present age of multi-species intra-actions, non-patriarchal becomings, and generative collaborations. Distinct from sci-fi writer H. P. Lovecraft’s malevolent dragon-octopus-anthropos shaped monster Cthulhu, Haraway’s neologism is proposed rather as a name of names with a thick and global mythological genealogy. It references the “diverse earth-wide tentacular powers and forces and collected things with names like Naga, Gaia, Tangaroa (burst from water-full Papa), Terra, Haniyasu-hime, Spider Woman, Pachamama, Oya, Gorgo, Raven, A’akuujjusi, and many many more.” As such, the Chthulucene—from the Greek khthôn, the chthonic ones, and the “now” of kainos—suggests “myriad temporalities and spatialities and myriad intra-active entities-in-assemblages, including the more-than-human, other-than-human, inhuman, and human-as-humus.” Such is the post-anthropocentric, non-human-exceptionalist, and post-individualist basis for Haraway’s rejection of the Anthropocene’s regressive figuration,

2 Mirzoeff, “It’s Not the Anthropocene,” 17.
and equally the Capitalocene’s insufferable reality—both, for her, are mired in cynicism, defeatism, and “game-over” rhetoric, or alternately an irresponsible (non-response-able) looking-away techno-utopianism: “The unfinished Chthulucene must collect up the trash of the Anthropocene, the exterminism of the Capitalocene, and chipping and shredding, and layering like a mad gardener, make a much hotter compost pile for still possible pasts, presents, and futures.” Contrary to the essentializing figure of anthropos, which assumes the human to be the self-sufficient, singular sovereign of its world, the Chthulucene conceptualization reveals the distributed, entangled, and interconnected agencies involved in climate chaos as much as its antidote: the condition of life’s ongoingness. Haraway’s language highlights the resilient generative practices of inter-species collaborations and the “sympoiesis” and “symbiogenesis” of co-becoming that determine the very material conditions of existence. While her term shifts the focus away from corporate neoliberalism, neocolonialism, and extractivism, emphasized by the Capitalocene thesis, which Haraway nonetheless also draws upon as a critical diagnostic with which to read elements of the present, it has the advantage of outlining the necessary ethics of what she terms “response-ability,” the skilled capacities for survival on a damaged planet that comprise so many “ecologies of practice,” including interspecies justice, ethical mutuality, and sustainable co-belonging.

Additionally, and not unrelated to the Chthulucene, there is the Gynocene thesis, implying a gender-equalized, feminist-led, anti-anthropos environmentalism, which locates human-caused geological violence as coextensive with patriarchal domination, linking ecocide and gynocide. As the 2015 “Manifesto for the Gynecene—Sketch for a New Geological Era,” authored by artists Alexandra Pirici and Raluca Voinea, explains:

We declare the imperative necessity for a new geological era to be commenced, before the Anthropocene is even officially admitted on that scale (it might be that by the time it gets fully acknowledged, it will be too late). Rather than continue to contemplate our annihilation, contributing to it or declaring hopelessness in front of it, we should at least try another approach—and this approach has to exclude patriarchy in all its expressions and institutionalized forms of violence: domination, exploitation, slavery, colonialism, profit, exclusion, monarchy, oligarchy, mafia, religious wars.

Contesting the ravages of anthropos, and equally the inequalities of capitalist rule, the Gynecene manifesto calls for new models

---

5 Haraway, Staying with the Trouble, 57. See also Donna Haraway et al., “Anthropologists Are Talking—About the Anthropocene,” *Ethnos: Journal of Anthropology* 81, no. 3 (2015), where Haraway intones: “Please tell me that you share my anger, that in this moment of trans-disciplinarity and multispecies everything, in this moment of beginning to get a glimmer of how truly richly complex the world is and always has been, someone has the unmitigated arrogance to name it the Anthropocene. [Laughter] Tell me you share my anger!” (11).

6 Haraway, Staying with the Trouble, 34.

7 According to my research, the first usage of the term “Gynocene” online was *Le forum TRANS—Rencontres transgenres—Transsexualité* (s), April 11, 2010, http://www.i-trans.net/forum-trans/viewtopic.php?f=3&t=11604&start=50&view=print.

of eco-feminist stewardship, resonating in part with Indigenous postcolonial reverence for Mother Earth, or Pachamama, as set within the multifaceted rights-of-nature mobilizations in South America. There, the generally benign indigenous practices of living and cultivating the forests, lands, and rivers over more than thirteen thousand years contrast with the natural-cultural plunder practiced by globally networked, high-tech, colonial, and industrial societies, which, over five centuries of colonialism and globalization have brought the biological, physical, cultural, and human measures of Amazonia to a devastating crisis point. The present movement of indigenous-led environmentalism is spreading rapidly, evidenced in the People’s Climate March in New York City on September 21, 2014, which, drawing together more than three hundred thousand participants, was the largest such demonstration in history. Protesters converged under the banners such as Oakland-based artist and climate justice activist Favianna Rodriguez’s *Defend Our Mother* (2014), depicting a Latina-appearing Earth Mother in folk-art style, her head haloed by our flowering planet, its title “associated less with New Age nature-worship than with the Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth at Cochabamba, or analyses of the ‘reproductive labor’ of women that bears the brunt of ecological crises in front-line communities,” as Yates McKee argues.

The Earth-as-Mother (a figure of the Pachamamacena?) also links to post-heteronormative, ecosexualist care for Earth-as-Lover, as appearing in the carnivalesque Earth-marriage ceremonies of performance artist-activists Beth Stephens and Annie Sprinkle. They deploy matrimony as a radical act against environmental destruction, and Earth-love as a retort to ecocide. As announced in their “Ecosex Manifesto”:

> We are madly, passionately and fiercely in love, and we are grateful for this relationship each and every day. [...] We are aquaphiles, teraphiles, pyrofiles, and aerophiles. We shamelessly hug trees, massage the earth with our feet, and talk erotically to plants. [We are] artists, academics, sex-workers, sexologists, healers, environmental activists, nature fetishists, gardeners, business people, therapists, lawyers, peace activists,


Chapter Five

eco-feminists, scientists, educators, (r)evolutionaries, critics and other entities from diverse walks of life. [...] Ecosexuals can be GLBTQI, heterosexual, asexual, and/or Other. [...] We will save the mountains, waters and skies by any means necessary, especially through love, joy and our powers of seduction. 12

With their film Goodbye Gauley Mountain: An Ecosexual Love Story (2013), Stephens and Sprinkle mobilize documentary cinematic practice to investigate devastating mountaintop removal mining and extremely polluting coal extraction in West Virginia, where Stephens grew up. Shown smelling flowers, massaging river stones, lasciviously licking and hugging trees, bathing nude and luxuriating in mud, the artists’ joyful celebration of the natural world—where nature figures as an awe-inspiring site of queer becoming and radical indeterminacy, rather than any kind of essentialist ideal form 13—is nothing but infectious, even if their film is also alarming in its unswerving documentary exposure of industrial exploitation. Sprinkle and Stephens juxtapose anti-mining civil disobedience, unexpected alliance formation, and inspiring activist community-building, to the horrific blasting of mountain tops, the ecocidal destruction of streams and aquifers, and testimonies of corporate deceit, their loving ecosexual romance modeling a refreshingly libidinal way of being political. In the same vein, and building on Stephens and Sprinkle’s precedent, Pony Express, a collaboration led by performance artists Ian Sinclair and Loren Kronemyer, set up the Ecosexual Bathhouse in 2016 in their home town of Melbourne. The installation encompasses six chambers—including the Pollination gallery, the Composting Glory Hole, the


of globalization’s reduction of natures to the commodity-form via corporate-extractivist-strip-mining-oil-drilling-monocrop-planting-dam-building neoliberalism.17 “The destruction of global biodiversity needs to be framed [...] as a great, and perhaps ultimate, attack on the planet’s common wealth,” according to Ashley Dawson’s recent research on modern species loss, which is reaching a rate of 140,000 species per year, making the current mass species extinction event—an effect no doubt of Capitalocene exterminism—the greatest loss of biodiversity since the Cretaceous-Paleogene extinction event approximately 66 million years ago. For Dawson, “extinction needs to be seen, along with climate change, as the leading edge of contemporary capitalism’s contradictions.”18

And finally there is the Plasticene, the age of plastic, which, as Heather Davis argues, figures as perhaps the most exemplary material substrata of living and dying in contemporary capitalism.19 Indeed, there is so much plastic in our landfills, waste dumps, rivers, and oceans that micro polymer particles—the kind used commonly in toothpaste and cosmetics—have become omnipresent, found to have made a home even in the most remote deep-sea sites before the latter’s initial human exploration. We can expect traces of the material to last in the fossil records for millennia to come. Expressive of the fantasy of unending economic growth, the material’s seemingly death-defying quality—it takes tens of thousands of years for plastic to dissolve—is made possible by its petrochemical basis, which also indicates the permanency of its environmental devastation. Ubiquitous in consumerist society, its production is only set to grow: while 280 million tons of plastic were produced in 2012, it is expected to rise to 33 billion by 2050.20

All of the terms discussed above—and there are still many more—provide urgently needed conceptual tools to test, rethink, and theoretically challenge the Anthropocene thesis. One additional problem with the latter, as we have seen, is what sociologist Jason Moore refers to as its “consequentialist” bias, meaning its tendency to focus on the effects of climate change (global warming, CO2 pollution, sea level rise, drought, etc.), while ignoring the structural causes (what Moore analyzes as the formation over centuries of “capitalism-in-nature” and “nature-in-capitalism”21). In this regard, Bill McKibben’s recent analysis of climate change’s world war appears conceptually misguided and politically questionable: it is not “climate change,” or “nature,” or “carbon,” that is the “enemy,” as McKibben’s liberal confusion of cause and effect has it, but rather the world historical system that has produced them, which Moore’s analysis of capital makes visible.22 This consequentialist bias also explains why the industrial revolution looms so large in much Anthropocene discourse and in green thinking more broadly, instead of the gradual formation of capitalism’s co-becoming with nature, including its colonization of nonhuman and human natures, as in the Americas, beginning in the late fifteenth century, which is its formative stage according to the Capitalocene thesis. As Moore argues, the diagnosis of a problem determines its solution.

17 The “Homogenocene” was suggested by Kieran Suckling, executive director of the Center for Biological Diversity, in a comment on T. J. Demos, “Ill Against the Anthropocene,” Still Searching (blog), May 25, 2015, http://blog.fotomuseum.ch/2015/05 /ii-against-the-anthropocene/#respond.
21 For Moore, capitalism never stood apart from nature but was always internal to it, just as nature provided the milieu necessary for capitalist development. Moore, “The Capitalocene,” 5–15. In fact, “Capitalism is not an economic system; it is not a social system; it is a way of organizing nature.” Jason W. Moore, Capitalism in the Web of Life (London: Verso, 2015), 2.
On the one hand, locating the climate change crisis in fossil fuels, and finding the answer in renewable energies, is ultimately superficial and inadequate—as if we can simply carry on exploiting and colonizing the world, only in new, green ways, and specifically via geoengineering projects. On the other hand, as Moore argues: “To locate the origins of the modern world with the rise of capitalist civilization after 1450, with its audacious strategies of global conquest, endless commodification, and relentless rationalization, is to prioritize the relations of power, capital, and nature that rendered fossil capitalism so deadly in the first place. Shut down a coal plant, and you can slow global warming for a day; shut down the relations that made the coal plant, and you can stop it for good.”

The Capitolocene proposition locates the origin of the crisis in capitalism’s exploitative relations to labor, food, energy, and raw materials. These figure as so many “cheap natures,” according to Moore, which, after centuries of exploitation, are now no longer easily available, as there are no more new frontiers and peoples to conquer, only evermore extreme forms of extraction, such as Arctic fossil fuel exploration, fracking for dirty oil, deep-sea drilling, and redoubled but ever-precarious modes of military resource wars and global interventions. This situation leaves us with a choice: either an Anthropocene-Capitalocene future of extreme geoengineering in an age of climate change catastrophe, ruled by centralist, increasingly authoritative governments and their repressive, militarized police forces alongside ever-heightening forms of socioeconomic and political inequality—this future is foretold in countless eco-dystopian films, the present state of police violence and military brutality (as contested by the international #BlackLivesMatter movement), and glimpsed in the destructive extreme weather events happening already across the world, from forest fires to desertification, melting ice to rising seas. Or, alternately, the formation of re-localized, sustainable cultures based on renewable energy systems, degrowth and redistributive economics, climate justice, regional sovereignty, rights of nature, and new forms of human, even inter-species political inclusion (Chthulucene governance?) and post-capitalist democratic practice. While the latter scenario may seem more challenging than ever, and politically beyond reach at present, it is in fact the belief that we can carry on according to the status quo without radical changes to our social, political, economic, and environmental systems that is truly delusional. The goal must be one of hope: to make the impossible gradually possible, for we have no other acceptable choice.

If we were to develop a critical and creative methodology against the Anthropocene, what kind of solutions would its diagnosis make possible? Here I am in agreement with McKenzie Wark: there are no simple solutions to our current predicament—the market will not solve our problems; nor will technology, ethical consumerism, or romantic anti-technological primitivism. Rather, we need “to create the space within which very different kinds of knowledge and practice might meet,” including “economic, technical, political, and cultural transformations” and “new ways of organizing knowledge.” Ultimately, if ecology means relationality, and as such proposes an analogue for a comprehensive politics

24 Ibid., 5.
of intersectionality, then the struggle must be waged on multiple interconnected levels. We must attack new oil pipelines, fracking, deforestation, and all forms of senseless extractivism, as well as target the colonization of nature, violence against women, institutional racism, militarism, and capitalist exploitation. If environmental violence is predicated upon racism and sexism, then racial and sexual reparation must be at the basis of climate justice. It becomes clear, as Daniel Hartley argues, that “at its outer limit, ecological struggle is nothing but the struggle for universal emancipation.”

If the Capitalocene sanctions a more directed address of, and intervention into, the processes and causes of current ecological violence, then numerous artistic-activist practices are already providing proposals that insist on embedding experimental visual culture within social engagements and collaborative social movements that are posed against the Anthropocene. They are doing so in order to foster creative forms of life, joining survival to cultural resilience, Indigenous sovereignty to multi-species composition, democratic practice to economic justice and ecological sustainability, which hope to overcome what Haraway provocatively calls the Anthropocene’s “killing of ongoingness.” Let me identify only a few examples in conclusion.

One model is Ursula Biemann and Paulo Tavares’s *Forest Law* (2014), a video and mixed-media installation that investigates the history of destructive oil extraction in the Ecuadorian Amazon, Indigenous resistance and environmental activism, and legal proposals for transformative justice. Between 1964 and 1992, Texaco, before it merged into Chevron in 2001, dumped approximately eighteen billion gallons of toxic wastewater in the tropical rainforest (the Deepwater Horizon spill, by contrast, was roughly two hundred million gallons of oil), plaguing local communities with the slow violence of increased rates of cancer and miscarriages, immune system deficiencies, and other serious health problems. The organization Amazon Watch described the pollution as “one of the worst environmental disasters on the planet.” Biemann and Tavares’s project, which also includes research material presented as a small catalogue, details the struggle of the Shuar and Serayaku for justice through laws—newly enshrined in Ecuador’s constitution—that protect the rights of nature. That struggle amounts to a revolutionary juridico-political movement prioritizing eco-centric legality in places like Ecuador and Bolivia, which are the vanguard in what is a growing international formation in Earth jurisprudence. Indeed, Indigenous nations comprise part of the thirty thousand people in this Amazon region who have filed a lawsuit against Chevron in 2001, for which they were awarded $18 billion in cleanup costs and damages in Ecuadorian courts, a sum reduced to $9.5 billion on appeal. While the American corporation has had the verdict overturned in an American court, the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague has recently upheld the Ecuadorian judgment. Investigating this intersection of eco-centric legality, environmental reparation, and Indigenous rights, Biemann and Tavares’s *Forest Law* exemplifies the ecological commitments of growing numbers of artists-activists exploring the structural conditions of capitalism’s colonization of nature—such as the collective platform World of Matter, of which Biemann and Tavares are both involved.

---

28 For elaboration on this notion of ecology as intersectionality, see Demos, *Decolonizing Nature*.
30 Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*, 44.
members—and it parallels the growth of transnational alliances in civil society, facilitated by new media ecologies, seeking to establish sovereign and environmental rights from Argentina to the Arctic. In this regard, the project connects to calls for a nonviolent, globally connected, constitutional “climate insurgency,” as articulated by Jeremy Brecher. If it is true that we live in a “post-constitutional” juridical present, owing to the corporate intrusion into our legal systems, and the security state’s hollowing out of civil rights protections, then we must consider the “moral imperative to revolt” to contest the convergence of growing economic inequality, social and political corruption, corporate oligarchy, police brutality, the criminalization of protest and civil disobedience, and the destruction of the environment, as Chris Hedges advocates.

Another example that reinvents the conditions of visuality in relation to Capitalocene violence is the recent work of Finnish artist Terike Haapoja in collaboration with the writer Laura Gustafsson, which attempts also to realize the cultural terms of a post-Anthropocene form of life. With History of Others (2013—ongoing), the pair have developed a complex series of proposals for an inter-species cosmopolitics—an alternative post-anthropocentric world-making practice of human-nonhuman relations—mediated by images, performances, imaginary institutions, and diverse social agents. A number of works constitute this project. First, they initiated the Party of Others (2011), an inter-species political organization to compete in Helsinki’s 2011 parliamentary elections with an expanded human-animal constituency, approximating the terms of what Rosi Braidotti calls “zoe-centered egalitarianism,” an inclusive post-anthropocentric legal-political equality among species. Second, they produced the Museum of the History of Cattle (2013), assembling artifacts, historical information, and photographic documents presented from the vantage of cows. And third, they modeled a court of law capable of hearing testimony from nonhuman agents such as wolves and prosecuting people for cross-species crimes, where hunters can be charged with murder (The Trial, 2014). This work may be speculative, but it begins to map the juridico-political terrain of a post-Anthropocene future, a legal-artistic approximation of Haraway’s Chthulucene; as such, it prefigures a more just world yet to come.

Lastly, consider Climate Games, a climate-justice action-adventure game initiated by the Laboratory of Insurrectionary Imagination. Based in Brittany, France, the collective (including activist-artists Isabelle Frémeaux and John Jordan) has been working over the last decade at the intersection of climate justice activism, permaculture gardening, radical theater practice and pedagogy, and experiments in anti-capitalist collective living. In the fall of 2015, they organized Climate Games to intervene in and contest the anti-democratic power of multinational corporations in determining the agenda of the United Nations climate change conference (COP 21) meeting in Paris. Climate Games represented a transnational experiment in horizontalist and rebellious movement building, where visual elements, including satellite-generated maps, computerized graphics, cell-phone images, and tactical information, were shared through Internet-linked media networks, all elements supporting and embedded in the movements of insurgent bodies comprising an eco-activist intervention into global climate governance. Working in solidarity with global Blockadia

39 See the accompanying catalogue Laura Gustafsson and Terike Haapoja, eds., History According to Cattle (Helsinki: Into Kustannus, 2015).
movements positioned against oil pipelines and fossil fuel infrastructure, the artwork-as-mass-mobilization invited semiautonomous participating activists all over the world to coordinate creative political interventions and nonviolent civil disobedience, competing for Climate Games awards by registering and documenting their activities on a networked website.\footnote{Resonating with alter-globalization forces, \textit{Occupy}, and Spanish \textit{Indignado} tactics, their modeling of a neo-Brechtian performance of disruption, as well as a kind of neo-Boalian invisible theater that takes place seemingly spontaneously in everyday life, intended to intensify the joy of disobedience: “to stop this suicidal machine that has literally set the climate on fire and that has lead \textit{sic} to the extinction of two hundred species per day.”\footnote{Their Chthulucene-like motto was: “We are nature defending itself.”} Their Climate Games-like motto was: “We are nature defending itself.”\footnote{The achievements of Climate Games were substantial and widespread, even if their effects are still ongoing and difficult to measure: it enabled the international networking of local activist struggles; it generated large-scale media coverage (from the United Kingdom’s the \textit{Guardian} to Turkey’s \textit{BirGün}, France’s \textit{Libération} to Germany’s \textit{TAZ}); it introduced radical French movements to creative activist possibilities (as evidenced in the ongoing occupation practices at the ZAD, \textit{zone à défendre}, defending against the airport construction at Notre Dames des Landes); and modeled forms of joyful rebellion that will have a long-lasting influence beyond COP 21.\footnote{One amazing convergence of artist-activist energies occurred alongside Climate Games, joining together groups including: the United States-based \textit{G.U.L.F.}, Not an Alternative, and \textit{Occupy Museums}; the United Kingdom’s \textit{Art Not Oil}, \textit{BP or not BP?}, \textit{Liberate Tate}, Platform London, \textit{Science Unstained}, \textit{Shell Out Sounds}, and \textit{UK Tar Sands Network}; and \textit{Stopp Oljesponsing av Norsk Kulturliv} from Norway, creating an international coalition to contest Capitalocene environmental economics and cultural policy. Strategizing together, they held an unauthorized demonstration at the Louvre in 2015, attacking the flagship museum’s sponsorship by major oil and gas corporations Eni and Total. The event was particularly courageous given that public gatherings were considered illegal in the context of France’s declared state of emergency following the Paris terror attacks half a month earlier, a declaration—particularly anti-democratic in that it allowed the depoliticized activities of shopping and sports games to continue uninterrupted—that threatened to derail all COP 21 protest activities. Outside the museum’s I. M. Pei–designed iconic glass pyramids on December 9, performers carried black umbrellas spelling out the words “Fossil Free Culture,” and spoke of their support for life beyond petrocapitalism. At the same time, a smaller group created the scene of what appeared along with the Climate Games website, accessed December 2015.} \textit{Climate Games}: ‘We Are Nature Defending Itself,’” \textit{Makery}, May 11, 2015, \url{http://www.makery.info/en/2015/05/11/climate-games-nous-sommes-la-nature-qui-se-defend/}.} Resonating with alter-globalization forces, \textit{Occupy}, and Spanish \textit{Indignado} tactics, their modeling of a neo-Brechtian performance of disruption, as well as a kind of neo-Boalian invisible theater that takes place seemingly spontaneously in everyday life, intended to intensify the joy of disobedience: “to stop this suicidal machine that has literally set the climate on fire and that has lead \textit{sic} to the extinction of two hundred species per day.”\footnote{For more on \textit{Climate Games}, see T. J. Demos, “Playful Protesters Use Art to Draw Attention to Inadequacy of Paris Climate Talks,” \textit{Truthout}, December 13, 2015, \url{http://www.truth-out.org/news/item/34096-playful-protesters-use-art-to-draw-attention-to-inadequacy-of-paris-climate-talks}.} Their Chthulucene-like motto was: “We are nature defending itself.”\footnote{For an overview of participants’ responses to \textit{Climate Games}, see Amber Hickey and T. J. Demos, \textit{ed.}, “COP 21 Questionnaire,” \textit{Center for Creative Ecolories}, accessed September 27, 2016, \url{http://creativeecologies.ucsc.edu/cop-21-questionnaire-laboratory-of-insurrectionary-imagination/}.} The achievements of Climate Games were substantial and widespread, even if their effects are still ongoing and difficult to measure: it enabled the international networking of local activist struggles; it generated large-scale media coverage (from the United Kingdom’s the \textit{Guardian} to Turkey’s \textit{BirGün}, France’s \textit{Libération} to Germany’s \textit{TAZ}); it introduced radical French movements to creative activist possibilities (as evidenced in the ongoing occupation practices at the ZAD, \textit{zone à défendre}, defending against the airport construction at Notre Dames des Landes); and modeled forms of joyful rebellion that will have a long-lasting influence beyond COP 21.\footnote{For an overview of participants’ responses to \textit{Climate Games}, see Amber Hickey and T. J. Demos, \textit{ed.}, “COP 21 Questionnaire,” \textit{Center for Creative Ecolories}, accessed September 27, 2016, \url{http://creativeecologies.ucsc.edu/cop-21-questionnaire-laboratory-of-insurrectionary-imagination/}.}
to be a small oil spill in the atrium of the museum, and then proceeded to walk through it barefoot and then around in concentric circles, their footprints on the marble floor visualizing the fossil fuel corporations’ despoilment of the museum, and more broadly the environment. A number of participants were arrested by the French police and held for a short period for the “degradation of cultural property.” But for writer and activist Yates McKee, of G.U.L.F., the police had apprehended the wrong suspects: “The oil footprints mark the scene of crime, implicating the institution in the fossil fuel system and the climate crisis.”45 According to Beka Economopoulos, of Not An Alternative, “On the occasion of the UN Climate Summit in Paris”—the final agreement of which the leading climate scientist James Hansen concluded was a “fraud,” owing to its watered-down call for national nonbinding voluntary contributions to greenhouse gas reductions46—“we’re urging the Louvre to stop sponsoring climate chaos.”47

What we witness with Climate Games, and the larger civil society movement of which it formed a part, is a shift in artistic practice toward an activist creativity directed at challenging the very structures of climate governance and finance, including the political economy of cultural institutions. The momentum continues to grow, just as interventions are becoming more bold: earlier in March 2015, Not an Alternative’s The Natural History Museum project organized an “Open Letter to Museums,” signed by nearly 150 scientists, including several Nobel Prize winners, calling on American museums to “cut all ties with the fossil fuel industry and funders of climate science obfuscation.”48 Generating copious press coverage, the letter was likely a major factor in oil heir industrialist David H. Koch leaving the board of New York’s Natural History Museum in January 2016. An instance of what Not an Alternative has come to call “institutional liberation,” its practice moves beyond earlier forms of institutional critique, focused on the critical analysis of institutional functions, and toward emancipation of such spaces from petrocapitalist influence, social and economic injustice, and anti-democratic rule. At about the same time, Liber­ate Tate and other London-based groups won a nearly six-year campaign to compel the Tate to break off its sponsorship agreements with BP, thereby removing the corporation’s ability to “artwash” its identity and practice—that is, to make an environmentally destructive business appear as a benevolent cultural philanthropist, thereby securing a social license to pollute.49 (That said, BP recently announced a new £7.5 million, five-year deal with four major arts institutions in the United Kingdom—the British Museum, National Portrait Gallery, Royal Opera House, and Royal Shakespeare Company—despite all the recent opposition. The struggle continues, no doubt with more activism to come.)50 The goal of these groups is to reinvent democratic self-determination and support fossil free
culture through direct action, by contesting corporate power and its nefarious sway over public institutions. In other words, these practitioners are opposing the current petrocapitalist governmentality—the rule of the Capitalocenologists—that attempts to unilaterally decide how we address environmental crisis, a threat like no other, as complex and interconnected as it is singularly grave and consequential. The artistic element of these actions involves injecting playful theatricality, collaborative energy, and the spirit of positive fun into a forceful wedge striking at the heart of the Capitalocene political economy, revealing the contours of an emergent institutional liberation targeting global climate governance and its cultural normalization.

New media ecologies, climate games, institutional liberation: these are diverse engagements for sure—and there are certainly many more worthy of attention. What they generally share is taking a stake in anti-Anthropocene cultural activism, founded upon the refusal to generalize and depoliticize climate change agency, and the rejection of current corporate-dominated environmental governance. They each invent creative approaches to alternative forms of life beyond the Anthropocene’s techno-fixes and geoengineering ambitions; for these, as we have seen, prefer to address only the consequences, rather than interrogate the systemic and determinative processes of centuries of capitalism’s world-historical and colonial co-becoming with nature. As Roy Scranton observes, “if you want to learn to live in the Anthropocene, we must first learn how to die.” Learning to die means giving up on “carbon-fueled capitalism and its techno-utopian ideologues [who] have promised infinite growth and infinite innovation, yet [...] have proven incapable of saving us from the disaster they have made.”

It is precisely such an abandonment of the Anthropocene’s ideas, stories, and practices that the above-engaged artists have initiated. The transversal connections between politicized collectives and their rebellious poetics disperse, for sure, into countless names—the emergent lexicons of current geologies and potential future epochs now in the making. Whether they will be enough to stop the ravages of near-future catastrophe, even when they join with the power of growing social movements, is another question. But what other choice do we have? In the meantime, the future of Earth hangs in the balance.