

# Think We Must! (Otherwise)

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**ABSTRACT:** This essay considers the phenomenon of almanacs, encyclopedias, glossaries, lexicons, word books, vocabularies, companions, and (theoretical) toolboxes, which appears to be an outstanding feature of humanities today. By limiting her discussion to six specific examples of this genre, the author asks the following questions: Why is it that this method became so prolific? What are the objectives of almanacs, glossaries, and vocabularies? What do they do to thinking, writing, researching? What can they say about the moment we are in? And how do they contribute to defining this moment? Those questions orient discussions around humanities today toward the ethico-political practice of thinking otherwise.

**KEY WORDS:** glossary, lexicon, almanac, knowledge production, otherwise, Anthropocene, the Posthuman

*Think we must. (Woolf 1938: 95)*

*Rather than going for the new object of study, the new product to consume, one should work on new ways of seeing, of being, or of living the world . . . and to assess how—in our very ‘resistance’—we may have been working in complicity with what we set out to criticize. (Trinh T. Minh-ha, cited in Bunz, Kaiser, and Thiele 2017: 7)*

**A**lmanacs, encyclopedias, glossaries, lexicons, word books, vocabularies, companions, (theoretical) toolboxes pop up like mushrooms in the forests of the humanities in recent years. In this essay I investigate this phenomenon, acknowledging the fact that the current issue of *Philosophy Today* uses the same structure.<sup>1</sup> Why is it that this method became so prolific? What are the objectives of almanacs, glossaries, and vocabularies? What do they

do to thinking, writing, researching? What can they say about the moment we are in? And how do they contribute to defining this moment? In an attempt to answer these questions, I will narrow down this abounding field and concentrate on six examples only. These are: *Living Lexicon for the Environmental Humanities*, an online source initiated by Emily O’Gorman and Kate Wright as editors, with entries appearing since 2014; *New Materialism Almanac*, an online project started in 2016 as one of the outcomes of European Cooperation in Science and Technology (COST) Action entitled “New Materialism: Networking European Scholarship on ‘How Matter Comes to Matter,’” edited by David Gauthier and Sam Skinner; *Lexicon for an Anthropocene Yet Unseen*, assembled by Cymene Howe and Anand Pandian and introduced online in 2016; *Veer Ecology: A Companion for Environmental Thinking*, curated by Jeffrey Jerome Cohen and Lowell Duckert and published in 2017; *Symptoms of the Planetary Condition: A Critical Vocabulary*, edited by Mercedes Bunz, Birgit Mara Kaiser, and Kathrin Thiele and published in 2017; and—last but not least—*Posthuman Glossary*, edited by Rosi Braidotti and Maria Hlavajova in 2018.

My motivation behind choosing those particular projects was two-fold. On the one hand, I was aiming at covering—as much as possible—a diversity of geographical, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds of projects, of their editors (who often are also authors), and of their contributing authors. Coming from Eastern Europe I felt the urge to include authors from different European contexts, along with American and Australian initiatives that include Indigenous perspectives and research. I went through the authors’ affiliations (and/or backgrounds) mentioned in biographical notes in: *Living Lexicon for the Environmental Humanities*, *Veer Ecology*, *Symptoms of the Planetary Condition*, and *Posthuman Glossary*. I made notes on affiliations and—if provided by authors—other mentioned backgrounds (if the author specified only her current affiliation without mentioning a country of origin, I only added information provided by the author). The vast majority of contributors come from the States (61), the United Kingdom (43), the Netherlands (42), Australia (20), Germany (11), and Canada (10). Others associated themselves with Hong Kong, Sweden (5), Italy (4), Denmark, Finland, Switzerland (3), Estonia, France, India, Norway, Russia (2), Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Republic of Ghana, Hungary, Republic of Macedonia, South Africa, Spain, and Turkey; also one author identifies himself in his biographical note as Romani Gypsy. In the cases of the *New Materialism Almanac* and *Lexicon for an Anthropocene Yet Unseen* it is more difficult to provide background information as biographical notes are not included. Going through information on the Internet (I was not always able to find something on every contributor), one may state that those two references include authors affiliated with or with backgrounds in Bulgaria, China, Czech Republic, Colombia, Malta, and Poland—countries absent from the notes on contributors in the first four projects. These data may not serve as a basis for exhaustive research on

how knowledge production is distributed (especially as it is based solely on notes on contributors that were not always provided), but it may give readers a sense of cartographies of knowledge and the limits of diversity one is dealing with here.

On the other hand, my motivation to engage in those particular glossaries, lexicons, or word books was to approach new trends in the humanities: environmental humanities, (critical) posthumanities, feminist new materialisms, and studies that try to think with the complexity of the current moment described sometimes as the Anthropocene, other times as “environmental upheaval” (Cohen and Duckert 2017: vii), “dark times” (O’Gorman and Wright 2014), or simply as a “‘today’ [that always] requires re-evaluation” (Bunz, Kaiser, and Thiele 2017: 14). I will return to how each vocabulary presents its own stakes later on. Here, I will only note that the current issue of *Philosophy Today* actualizes the same method, and that I encourage readers to read this issue just like I have read the six aforementioned exponents of the keyword method (Williams 2015).

### HANDLING THE ABUNDANCE

Reading almanacs, encyclopedias, glossaries, lexicons, word books, vocabularies, companions, and (theoretical) toolboxes demands an introduction of a practice of handling the abundance. Almanacs single out words: nouns and verbs, neologisms and seemingly ordinary terms, words naming phenomena, scientific disciplines, tendencies, research projects and outcomes, manifestos and definitions, political interventions, artistic visions, theoretical essays, companions in all possible forms, and words as companions to think with. They collect works by many authors—working individually or in collaboration—forming a kind of assemblage curated by editors who provide either stricter or more flexible frames. They appear both online as projects—at least potentially—still open for new submissions and in print as books that although obviously have their own ways of staying open, appear—at least in that particular form—as more accomplished endeavors. Two out of three book projects have a directly open structure. *Veer Ecology* accomplishes such a structure by including a section called *Errata* that lists “words for wandering” not introduced in the volume (Cohen and Duckert 2017: 477). In contrast, *Symptoms of the Planetary Condition* opens by means of diagrams meant to “visualize connections” and serve as “think-maps” (Bunz, Kaiser, and Thiele 2017: 256). Four diagrams are suggested (*ibid.*, 257–58), but readers are also invited to fill in two “assemblages of terms” and determine relations between them (*ibid.*, 259) so as to prolong the efforts to think and critique.

The authors and editors come from all different disciplines in the humanities (and beyond): anthropology, architecture, art, art history, comparative literature, conflict studies, cultural studies, curatorial studies, design, disability studies, environmental humanities, ethnicity studies, fashion studies, film studies, gender

studies, geography, history, law, literary studies, media studies, philosophy, poetry, political science, postcolonial studies, religious studies, sexuality studies, sociology, women studies, zoology. Contributors vary from young academics to advanced, from affiliated to independent; they are however mostly representing American or Western European academia. Almanacs, glossaries, and vocabularies are ripe also with reading lists, references, bibliographies; they use sources from different times (ancient, medieval, modern, contemporary), from different academic, disciplinary spaces (as one can imagine given the scope of academic backgrounds mentioned above), and of different kinds (literature, visual materials, works of art, personal accounts, theories, scientific data, natural phenomena, practices, texts). Sometimes texts are accompanied by photographs, drawings, paintings, film stills, graphs, maps. Those texts themselves also vary both in form and in writing style. Entries include formats so different as definitions (descriptive, explanatory, with pedagogical aims and instructive lists of references), manifestos (presenting political positions, engaging, having performative stakes, appealing to emotions, poetic), or essays (thinking with concepts, cases, stories, words, constructing their genealogies and futures, presenting arguments and conclusions, chewing them up).

As entries provide different writing styles, each of them designs their readers variously. In many ways this is a reading challenge. With every vocabulary one enters a world of slightly different stakes and emphases, disciplinary backgrounds and bibliographies, diverse ways of expressing, explaining, thinking, and writing. Usually the introductory words provided by editors serve as a frame embracing the diversity of individual entries. Still, each introduction is also only an entry point or a threshold opening the space and time for a multitude of individual and collaborative takes, for divergent ways of approaching and handling the entries' subjects, and for various ways of writing entries themselves. Editors set frames, but the authors—both individually and collectively—filter those very frames through their own interpretations and visions of those frames. The projects are not always easy to follow. The reader might feel overwhelmed and challenged by the necessity to constantly adjust or attune to this variety. One is reveling in one writing style, grasping its complexities, and trying to catch the sense and suddenly one needs to change the approach entirely. Thus, the reading rhythm is extremely intense and heterogeneous. The reader might also have to decide how to immerse in the world of lexicons: reading only some entries, reading entries from the first one to the last, or inventing one's own order of reading: jumping from one term to the next. What is more, as each entry literally buzzes with references, allusions, and further reading lists, the process of reading is in fact endless and in consequence a reader is indeed faced with a growing field of abundance. Each lexicon is a multivocal, multilayered, multigenerational, and multi-genealogical experience in the process of multiplication of this multitude by readers' own voices, layers, generations, genealogies.

It may also be that this abundance is a sign of the “accelerated science of the early 21st century” (The Slow Science Academy 2010), meaning here the great speed of knowledge production (new resources, new study fields, new data). In this respect the vocabularies I am reviewing here might be ways of handling the abundance, ways of getting orientation in it and making sense of it so as not to get lost, overwhelmed, or disheartened.

Let us dive into how the editors and contributors present their projects and their aims. Importantly, because of the abundant nature of the lexicons in question (and in general), I am not able to provide a detailed elaboration of them. Instead, I aim at thinking about the most explicit, visible, and distinct qualities of each project in hope that those singular features may say something not only about the one book analyzed, but also about lexicons more generally, and about the ways in which humanists today might use them.

### RELATE WE MUST! (OTHERWISE)

The *Living Lexicon for the Environmental Humanities* provides a very short on-line introduction, in which the editors see the role of the lexicon as assembling words that live up to requirements of environmental humanities as a discipline. According to O’Gorman and Wright (2014) environmental humanities combine critique (a critical approach devoted to “unsettling’ dominant narratives”) and action (the “need for thoughtful and constructive practice”). The editors do not give any further instructions on how to achieve this dual aim (“dual imperative” as they say); they leave it to the creativity and inventiveness of the contributors. Interestingly, the unacknowledged leitmotiv of the whole lexicon seems to be the question of relations. Fourteen out of twenty-two terms are invested in the theme of relationality. Some of them directly by reflecting on words such as: attachment, becoming-with, connectivity, encounter, wit(h)nessing; others by referring to words describing particular kinds of relations or their qualities like: broken, care, endangered, infection, invasion/invasive, labour, memory, sacrifice. Apart from entries referring to—broadly understood—relations the *Living Lexicon* includes two entries dealing with time: *aion* and future, along with other terms like: climate, fecundity, hope, installation, resilience, and rot. But even those terms that—at first sight—are not necessarily and directly related to the relationality theme like: climate, future, hope, installation, resilience, or rot, are in fact also about relations. For example, in an essay “Climate” the reader follows relations between climate, weather and human (Hulme 2015, in *Living Lexicon*);<sup>2</sup> in “Future” we are invited to conceive of future as “a *more than human* future” (Granjou and Salazar 2016: 241, in *Living Lexicon*), stressing “multispecies *relationships*” (ibid.: 242; my emphasis), and “[r]eintegrating human lives within the myriad multispecies *entanglements* of which we are a *part*” (ibid.: 243; my emphasis);

relationality is also highlighted in “Hope,” where the reader is faced with ways of “[c]onverting despair to hope” (Kirksey: 299, in *Living Lexicon*) while “caring for that which is beyond or outside your control” (Ahmed cited in Kirksey: 299; in *Living Lexicon*; my emphasis); “Installation . . . opens a space to rethink the Anthropocene in terms of *affective empathy* for the Earth” (Oppermann: 338, in *Living Lexicon*; my emphasis); in “Resilience,” where authors pair resistance with vulnerability understood as “an ethical *orientation to the other*” (Vardy and Smith: 177, in *Living Lexicon*; my emphasis); or in “Rot” while “learning to *live well with rot*” (Lorimer 2016: 238, in *Living Lexicon*; my emphasis). As such the *Living Lexicon for the Environmental Humanities* provides by far the foremost multifaceted insight into the question of relationality.

Relationality is a complex term. It has at once ontological, ethical, political, epistemological, and practical stakes. As stated in some entries of the *Living Lexicon for the Environmental Humanities* humans have their ways to detach from the world (these are sometimes quite directly life-threatening like in the case of two brothers who took a photo of themselves with their hair standing on end not knowing that actually it is their hair “becoming-with” a bolt of lightning that eventually caused serious burns to them while also killing other tourist, as described by Kate Wright in her entry on “Becoming-with”) in order to differentiate themselves as qualitatively or quantitatively distinct from the environment, surroundings, things, the more-than-human. Nevertheless, despite those anthropocentric tendencies, environmental humanities are engaged in showing that detachment or disconnection is marked by a kind of amnesia, error, fatal response-inability: “We can never disconnect from Earth’s ecological community, because we are always becoming-with, in a living multispecies world” (Wright: 280, in *Living Lexicon*). The theoretical efforts must thus be directed to recognize humans as always already becoming-with the world, the environment, other human and non-human beings, factors, phenomena. This is not pure theory. This is a practice of extending “ecological imagination” (Wright: 280, in *Living Lexicon*), being “attentive to the many kinds of boundary-making work that assertions of belonging, particularly by dominant cultures, can do” (O’Gorman: 284, in *Living Lexicon*). This is about learning to perceive, to be, to become, and to live otherwise and as such it is a continuation of a feminist practice introduced by Donna Haraway in the 1988 essay “Situated Knowledges: *The Science Question in Feminism* and the Privilege of Partial Perspective,” when she proposes to “become answerable for what we learn how to see” (Haraway 1988: 583). The theoretical and practical stakes of the *Living Lexicon for the Environmental Humanities* are also materialized in an effort to unveil the networks of relationality, support, and power relations imbedded in those networks; thinking about our politics of detaching and attaching; with whom do we de/at/tach? To whose benefit? What do we cover up in the process of de/at/taching? And what de/at/taches while we are busy with de/at/taching to/

from what we wish to de/at/tach? Because apart from human efforts to consider their politics of detaching and attaching, encounters themselves have destabilizing powers: “pose problems; reconfigure identities, space, political economies” (Barua: 265, in *Living Lexicon*). Humans are not in control over relationality, encounters, de/at/taching—recognizing this is a part of what I would like to call “anthropo-de-centering.”

The effort to think otherwise about relations is clearly visible: “What if we treated the broken as not something to fear, or to feel threatened by, but as the places, people and relationships that need understanding?” (Muir: 289, in *Living Lexicon*); “how placing care at the centre of our critical work might remake ourselves, our practices and our world” (Van Dooren: 294, in *Living Lexicon*); how to think about endangered species being at the same time “reflexive about the limitations of our fixation on species and the role of our values in shaping our choices” (Pooley: 262, in *Living Lexicon*); “how to live amidst the transfers, splicings, codings, and retroviral, opportunistic and occult becomings in which specific human and animal hosts are infected and others are simply implicated” (Lowe: 304, in *Living Lexicon*); “[w]ho has the right? Where is the violence, how does it hide? Whose hopes stand to be fulfilled, really, and whose losses compelled? Could we think this all otherwise? *How?*” (Reinert: 257, in *Living Lexicon*). Thinking otherwise might be here accompanied by a need (an urgent one) for the new. It is visible for instance in our relation to time: “[a] renewed sensitivity to time and its fruits is now incumbent upon us” (Hatley: 181, in *Living Lexicon*); “we not only need new ways of thinking about the world, but new ways of being in and of the world” (Hamilton: 183, in *Living Lexicon*).

As the authors contributing to the *Living Lexicon for the Environmental Humanities* struggle to think about the world, imagine it, care about and for it, and critique it otherwise, they also make efforts to stretch ways of reflecting on the human itself:

The strangeness of these kin to us is unsettling, scandalous, even monstrous, as they remind us that we humans are born not only from out of our mother’s womb, but also the wombs, both human and more-than-human, both viviparous and oviparous, of our forebears. . . . Against the horizon of the geological eon, we find lodged in our very flesh an archaic past of a more-than-human lineage promising an anarchic future. (Hatley: 181, in *Living Lexicon*)

The turn to the human in the posthuman times is an expression of the belief that instead of abandoning the concept of the human entirely, we need to conceptualize it anew and otherwise to make the otherwise (in thinking about the world, imagining it, caring about and for it, and critiquing it) possible at all.

Reading the *Living Lexicon for the Environmental Humanities* one is invited to join in the process of thinking otherwise, asking questions as to how to do it,



reimagining what we grow accustomed to, practicing seeing otherwise with stories, cases, photographs, thoughts. This is an unfinished process, not only because the very project is not finished and entries may still be added, not only as the entries live in the readers long after being read, but also because the *existing* entries are in many ways unfinished, open, living indeed. They are triggers to think otherwise and as such they can never be complete, but are always ready to connect, viscous, response-able, and hopeful that readers would also become response-able while becoming-with.

### PRODUCE KNOWLEDGE WE MUST! (OTHERWISE)

The *New Materialism Almanac*, an online project started in 2016, is also quite literally unfinished, as editors David Gauthier and Sam Skinner are going through the reviewing process of the entries sent in response to the last call for contributions while I write these words. The *Almanac* is one of the outcomes of the aforementioned COST Action entitled *New Materialism* chaired by Iris van der Tuin and Felicity Colman. The *Almanac*'s authors predominantly consist of the members of the Action and the entries themselves reflect—to some extent—research undertaken from within the frames of Action, including new takes on or concepts stemming from feminist new materialist methodologies and research (this includes entries on (feminist) new materialist pedagogies, agents against agency, assemblages: assembling the unassembled, diffractive genealogies, diffractive pedagogies, literacy and agential literacy, and plant-thinking), emerging new collaborations (entries written as part of joint projects), and key terms for feminist new materialism as a research field (for instance: agential cut, algorithms, apparatus, becoming, body, cyborg, diffraction and reading diffractively, ethico-onto-epistem-ology, intra-action, (posthumanist) performativity, quantum entanglement, realism, transversality, and vitalism). The entries include also experimental formats like that of the manifesto (entry on frailty), artistic intervention (for example “Disease,” “Pain”), or experiment proposal (“Soilfarers”).

As for now the *New Materialism Almanac* lacks an introduction from the editors. As much as I was at first inclined to consider this as a drawback of the whole project, now I see it as its strength. What is emerging right in front of its readers' eyes is the process of knowledge production that lacks precise and decisive directives, *a priori* classificatory guidelines, or determinate frames. The only constraint is that the entry is supposed to cover a new materialist term (as expressed in the title of the almanac). A lot of questions emerge: what makes a term a (feminist) new materialist one? How to decide on the crucial terms? But also, how—given the variety of authors, their theoretical and practical backgrounds, research interests, and working styles—to care for a responsible politics of citation (inclusive of In-



digenous scholars, researchers from Central and Eastern Europe, women, people of color, and other underrepresented groups)? These issues stay as challenges for editors and leaving them open attests to the innovative character of the *Almanac*. The fascinating thing about this lexicon is that some entries seem to be finished, whereas others are only half-baked, in the process of becoming, with support of editors, reviewers, other authors, still in need of further molding efforts. This processual character of the *Almanac* might be conceived of as a “stigmergic research practice,” as developed by Olga Cielemeńska and myself. Stigmergy is a biological mechanism that expresses how insects such as termites or ants organize themselves and communicate “without apparent hierarchies, commands, coercion, planning or task assignment” (Cielemeńska and Rogowska-Stangret 2015: 54). Proposing to see the *Almanac* as a stigmergic project in the making, I follow features characterizing stigmergic research practices. These are: “intertwinement of multiple beings” (ibid.) in research projects, “nonhierarchical modes of self-organization, co-operation, and . . . the idea of being attentive to the changes that occur in the world” (ibid.: 55), research being open to the unpredictable and experimental, “decisions made in the process of research activity [as] not entirely voluntary but . . . rather [as] effects of [a] swarm of factors” (ibid.), a “shift from the theory-practice opposition to theory as always-already practice” (ibid.), and the collaborative aspect of knowledge production “which overcome[s] the highly individualistic approach adopted in the humanities” (ibid.: 56). These features are clearly visible in the *New Materialism Almanac*. One may even state that they must be extended to all the lexicons and vocabularies under review in this essay. The six volumes discussed are indeed all stigmergic to some extent, being products of multiple factors and agents, fruits of collaborations, and very much stressing the fact of being both theoretical and practical at the same time. Nevertheless, the *New Materialism Almanac* stands out from other projects mentioned here as it is utterly deprived of centrally-driven guidelines: they are very much formed as responses to individual contributions; the editors follow authors forming a heterogeneous swarm moving in directions literally not determined beforehand.

Worth mentioning is also an unusual timeframe of the *New Materialism Almanac* as a format rendering it the most open in comparison to other theoretical toolboxes. Interestingly, the explanation of the chosen format comes from within (it is one of the *New Materialism Almanac*’s entries rather than included in the opening words). An almanac is a book reissued every year as explained by Maria Tamboukou in her entry on almanac: it includes “variations in the diverse tendencies of the spirits and the progress of the social truths that contain the prophesy of a better future” (Jeanne Deroin 1852; cited in Tamboukou in *Almanac*).<sup>3</sup> This format thus includes a time variable like in the concept of *chronopedia* coined by Michel Serres and recalled in an entry on photosynthesis by Vera Bühlmann (in this issue of *Philosophy Today*). Almanacs are particularly oriented towards variations,

change, fluctuations, fragile—yet possibly ripe with consequences—shifts, turns, deviations. Thus, the editors of the *New Materialism Almanac* take into consideration the possibility of introducing changes to already published entries, which makes them change and be of a future-oriented nature, susceptible to possible variations and attesting to the fact that the terms included in the *New Materialism Almanac* have lives of their own, attuned to different theoretical and practical circumstances, evolving, developing, actualizing their virtual senses, and having futures understood as “part of feminism’s virtual past” (Van der Tuin 2015: 29).

Lastly and distinctively, the *New Materialism Almanac*’s entries not only include the description of the chosen notion, but also offer a kind of terminological cartography of a term by including its keywords, genealogies, synonyms, antonyms, hypernyms, and hyponyms. Those maps of terms accompanying each entry help readers to get oriented and situate the entries on a broader plane of debates within the humanities and beyond.

### UN/LEARN WE MUST! (OTHERWISE)

The *Lexicon for an Anthropocene Yet Unseen*, curated by Cymene Howe and Anand Pandian (2016), is yet another example of an online resource. As stressed by the editors in the introductory words it is also a work in progress. It is planned as a book that will add some supplementary entries, not included in the online version of the project. Contrary to the *New Materialism Almanac*, its aims and scopes are defined very precisely. First of all, it is interested in how to approach the Anthropocene, not necessarily evaluating this notion’s impact in geology, but as deriving from intense debates in the humanities and particularly in anthropology. It is anthropology that—as a discipline and research methodology—is privileged in the *Lexicon for an Anthropocene Yet Unseen*. The editors aim at reflecting on “[w]hat can anthropology contribute toward these urgent concerns?” (Howe and Pandian in *Lexicon*),<sup>4</sup> while also critically referring to the very term Anthropocene. By means of anthropological research the editors put their (and their authors’) minds in the position of “bifocal perspective.” Putting bifocals on enables seeing from a distance (“global optics”) while having an eye for details, specificities, “smaller scales.” Thanks to this double vision, the reader gets the uncanny sense of being intimate with the phenomena or terms described, while at the same time not losing the bigger picture. Entries like carbon, flatulence, gluten, heat, petroleum, photosynthesis, and shit provoke mixed feelings of distant intimacy or intimate remoteness. Indeed, we become “intimate strangers” (Govindrajana in *Lexicon*; McLean in *Lexicon*) as we are getting to know the world “intimately and on [its] terms” (Myers in *Lexicon*).

Second, the editors are very cautious not to let malaise, apathy, and indifference on the one hand and fear and horror on the other take control over how we

discuss the Anthropocene, as is often the case according to editors' diagnosis. This mobilization of research methodologies, theories, and practices is seen as helpful in "finding new means of conceiving, engaging, and expressing the felt impasses of the present," dreaming "new dreams . . . , germinating unexpected ideas and novel forms of realization . . . , learning new ways of being . . . in a spirit of experimentation rather than existential dismay" (Howe and Pandian in *Lexicon*). The Anthropocene (as a notion embracing all different variations of it) might be—as suggested by Howe and Pandian—"a time to test, engage, and experiment with new ways of being in the world and with the world. . . . This lexicon is meant as a site to imagine and explore what human beings can do—have already been doing—differently with this time" (Howe and Pandian in *Lexicon*). With stakes formulated in this vein the *Lexicon for an Anthropocene Yet Unseen* is yet another effort at thinking anew and otherwise at the same time—a tendency clearly visible in all other vocabularies and one that may be treated as a desirable move within the new humanities.

The *Lexicon for an Anthropocene Yet Unseen* is perhaps—in comparison to the other projects here investigated—most occupied with precisely conceptualizing the quality of the present moment, the density of the now, the multilayered nature of the point in spacetime that we currently find ourselves in. One motivation behind it is the recognition that knowing our times (however complex this endeavor might be) is a *conditio sine qua non* for thinking about the future:

The hardest thing about seeing our future is that we cannot see our present, and if you don't know where you are, you don't know where you're going. . . . The hardest thing about seeing our future is how much we think we know about our world, and how little we know about ourselves. (Scranton in *Lexicon*)

That is the reason why we need to describe "a wasted earth" (Povinelli in *Lexicon*), monoculture "eradicating life" (Besky in *Lexicon*), "in-difference to the radically uneven impact of capitalism on ecologies, identities, and planetary life" (Besky in *Lexicon*), "the environmental impacts of the genocide of fifty million Indigenous peoples throughout the Americas, following Christopher Columbus's 'discovery' of America" (Todd in *Lexicon*), or ruins—perhaps as "allegories for the Anthropocene . . . , places where the corrosive force of history gnaws into a petrified present, threatening to degrade an uncertain future" (Roosth in *Lexicon*).

What is more, we need to zoom in on the human recognizing that "Anthropocene" does not only refer to human agency and its potential to influence life on the Earth. In fact, the authors of the *Lexicon for an Anthropocene Yet Unseen* orient themselves toward anthropo-de-centering by ways of stressing the geological or mineral aspects of humanity ("the Anthropocene does not mark a moment when geology passed into human time, but rather the inverse: when *anthropos* became

inherently and pervasively geological” and as such “always already a multispecies communication of biomatter and stored chemical energy across geological timescales” [Whittington in *Lexicon*]; “humanity’s own becoming-mineral—one more stratum, one more trace in the fossil record that may or may not be legible to the paleontological curiosity of a hypothetical posthuman observer” [McLean in *Lexicon*]; by highlighting the importance of plants (“*we are of the plants*” [Myers in *Lexicon*]) or by thinking the human as part of “nature’s own becoming” (McLean in *Lexicon*).

Contributors are determined to sketch the limits of human kind, human knowledge, human sensuality, human being in control, drawing up an explicitly ethical project for the Anthropocene. They suggest that we should push “our thinking beyond simplified ideas of human dominion. We should be unsettled just the right amount, in this so-called human era. We should not lose sight of ourselves as actors who create new forms of wildness even as we erase others. By carefully situating ourselves within not only social but also ecological webs of interconnection, we can guard against the grandiosity and anthropocentrism of the Anthropocene” (Graef in *Lexicon*). Moreover, “[w]e might finally feel less lonely, and also less significant” (Farman in *Lexicon*), search for “what in nature persists beyond our attempts to rule over and domesticate it” (Whiteman in *Lexicon*), be “struck by the limits of human attempts to control the other-than-human” (Govindrajan in *Lexicon*), advise submissiveness and withdrawal (visible in the concept of hyposubjects [Boyer and Morton in *Lexicon*] or in the suggestion that we should be “[t]aming our bigness, harnessing our leviathans, imagining forms of empowering smallness” [Golub in *Lexicon*]) rather than dominating or colonializing orders. Instead we should learn from plants how to care (Boke in *Lexicon*), from forests how to think (Kohn 2016), from seeds how stop being “greedy consumers” and become “the modest cultivators, weeders, waterers, minders, and seed-savers of this world” (Heatherington in *Lexicon*). This ethical project is largely based on the possibility of doing a lot of things otherwise and investigating the ways to do them differently, like for example how to think the “distribution of harms and hopes in a shared medium [that] may draw us together *otherwise*” (Choy in *Lexicon*; my emphasis), or to wonder: “what kind of world do our models create, and what *other* worlds might we manifest through simulation?” (Trombley in *Lexicon*; my emphasis), “[w]hat forms of existence can be held onto and which ones will be reshaped in this Anthropocenic *otherwise*?” (Povinelli in *Lexicon*, my emphasis), “[w]hat would it take to live *profoundly otherwise*?” (Pandian 2015 in a film essay *Wine Dark Plastic Sea* included in the *Lexicon* entry *Plastic*; my emphasis).

“The otherwise” however demands not only new ways of being, becoming, or thinking, but also new forms of sensing, exploring new modes of feeling, tasting, touching. The *Lexicon for an Anthropocene Yet Unseen* provides us therefore with some additional hints as to how the Anthropocene might taste (Barnes), feel

(Nading), sound (Helmreich), and moreover how the human might experiment with their senses by for example “vegetaliz[ing] our all-too-human sensorium” (Myers) or “learn[ing] to sense and live with disturbance” (Vaughn).

The bifocal perspective adopted by the editors of this lexicon and visible in many of its entries might be a methodology of seeing otherwise. It is both unlearning previous ways of seeing and learning how to see anew, alienating oneself from the familiar and mundane and getting closer to the bizarre, disturbing, uncanny. The methodology aims at domesticating the wild and untaming the tamed, distancing the same and becoming the other, disorienting anthropocentrism and orienting toward anthropo-de-centering.

### VEER WE MUST! (OTHERWISE)

*Veer Ecology: A Companion for Environmental Thinking*, curated by Jeffrey Jerome Cohen and Lowell Duckert (2017), is a book project thought of more as a companion than a lexicon or vocabulary. If a lexicon, then a vibrant one and “veercabulary” (*Veer Ecology*)<sup>5</sup> rather than vocabulary. The reason for this dynamic turn is that the editors aim at veering away from stabilized, ossified, encyclopedia-like projects and turning to ones that might indeed be companions; they—as Cheryll Glotfelty, the author of the foreword states—“want the collection to veer—that is, to send us in new directions and propel change” (ibid.: viii). The key term of the book is the word “environment” which the editors want to turn into a verb, that is “to find the motion in the noun” (ibid.: 4). Indeed, there is a verb embedded in “environment”: its French root “virer” meaning “to turn,” “to veer.” Thus, this lexicon is a collection of verbs and contributors were encouraged to “trace environment in motion, as an arcing verb, as *veer*” (ibid.: 2); after all “[e]cology is doing, emergence more than structure, housemaking more than household” (ibid.: 4). Notably, the very nature of movement in the verb is problematized in one of the contributions. Timothy Morton in his entry “Attune” provocatively asks: “Are we sure that using verbs and not nouns is truly subversive?” (ibid.: 155), given the quantum theory framework where distinctions such as stillness vs. movement are impossible to make. Be that as it may, enlisting verbs rather than nouns is not the only factor that makes this selection of essays veer. It is designed to become a “catalysis rather than mastery, incitement rather than codification” (ibid.: 2); it is a “collaborative project” (ibid.: 1), a “shared endeavor” (ibid.) oriented toward including “welcoming and heterogeneous fellowship” that “attempt[s] disanthropocentric modes of apprehending agency and urgency,” “striv[ing] to multiply points of view, to harness the ability of language to convey cognition and affect beyond the small orbit of the human” and to provide “better recognition of collective precarity” (ibid.).

Importantly, ecological thinking as enacted in this collection is a very particular example of “situated knowledges” (Haraway 1988) that turns away from performing “the God trick”: the “view of infinite vision” (ibid.: 582), “promising vision from everywhere and nowhere equally and fully” (ibid.: 584). In *Veer Ecology: A Companion for Environmental Thinking* even “unmoor” means “situate,” as Stacy Alaimo proposes: “To unmoor would mean shifting from the ‘conquering gaze from nowhere,’ a place long occupied by the Western human knower, toward ‘situated knowledges’—thus veering away from veering away” (410 in *Veer Ecology*).

Readers are here encouraged to think with plants and as plants (in an essay “Vegetate” by Catriona Sandilands in *Veer Ecology*), shifting scales of thinking so that the globality of thinking, its “planetary entanglements,” are rethought “on a scale at which they can become present to us, from within” (42; “Globalize” by Jesse Oak Taylor in *Veer Ecology*). Readers must think in “companionable” ways that are “a realization of our earthbound identity” (144; “Compost” by Serpil Oppermann in *Veer Ecology*) or, as Brian Thill suggests in “Shade,” they must “attempt to stop looking at the planet and start *thinking* it” (206 in *Veer Ecology*) in order to act “against the tyranny of the spectacle” (ibid.: 196). Those new and veering modes of thinking are also a means to facing the ruins, leftovers, remnants, residues, what Claire Colebrook refers to as “a matter that fails to come to life,” “unproductive and devoid of relations” (2008: 59). What happens to the exhausted in late capitalism, what might be an “aesthetics of exhaustion” (as advocated by Joseph Campana in “Power Down” in *Veer Ecology*)? How to approach a “commodity [that] falls into disuse, how might we understand its modes of existence and its larger impacts as it undergoes transformation?” (79; as investigated in “Obsolesce” by Margaret Ronda in *Veer Ecology*). How to handle questions, phenomena, beings that are positioned outside the spectacle (as discussed by Brian Thill in “Shade” in *Veer Ecology*)? Also, how to love “the damaged places, the scarred, the mutated, the unloveable” (377 in *Veer Ecology*); “[w]ho will love the postmining landscape?” (381; as asked in “Love” by Rebecca R. Scott in *Veer Ecology*). “[H]ow best to grieve” (274; as reflected on by Coll Thrush in “Haunt” in *Veer Ecology*).

There is a great deal of tenderness, attentiveness, and care implied when asking questions like that. This tenderness is woven into the fabric of the whole book. The authors veer, but very carefully—paying attention to how they veer, in what surroundings, with what and whom, and asking how the veering influences others, what and who are left behind, and why. Veering here does not mean moving for the sake of movement, but is a “power-sensitive” (Haraway 1988: 589) activity. As such the book itself makes a strong ethical statement. As Cohen and Duckert state in their introductory words: “we hope for a shared ethics of veering, a turning *toward* and *with* that entails deep attunement to human and nonhuman thriving” (5 in *Veer Ecology*). The ethical stakes of the project are oriented toward anthropo-de-centering and to this end, a lot of unlearning processes need to take



place. For example, we need to “denaturalize our ethos of speed and novelty” and dissolve narcissism “along with other decaying matter” (Ronda: 86, in *Veer Ecology*; Oppermann: 142 in *Veer Ecology*), practicing at the same time a kind of ethics of sedimentation: by not forgetting the networks of dependency, situating knowledges and practices, “remember mattering” (LeMenager: 175 in *Veer Ecology*), rejecting “erasures of indigeneity (of peoples, places, living in place) undergirding colonialist practice” (ibid.: 176), not searching for purity, sticking to “quietness” as a means to “listen and . . . practice what it means to be social with other human and non-human persons, to be alive beyond pride and its signal, speech” (ibid.: 180). This approach is one of withdrawal from anthropocentric privileges and worldviews but it is also a struggle to do things differently. To conceptualize representation as both human and non-human potential (“Represent” by Julian Yates in *Veer Ecology*); to “capture the alternative meanings of human-nonhuman enmeshments” (137; in the entry “Compost” by Oppermann in *Veer Ecology*); to try in a way that “engages in world making” as Duckert advances in the entry “Try” (215 in *Veer Ecology*); to wait otherwise, which would be—as Christopher Schaberg suggests in “Wait”—“knowing at the same time that this is it” (338 in *Veer Ecology*), that there is nothing to wait for; to love otherwise, according to Scott, as “[l]oving becomes less about ownership, and more about response, while sexuality becomes less a project of subjectification and more of an interaction in the open” (384 in *Veer Ecology*); to “[u]nmoor by sinking to the abyssal and benthic realms, where there is little to hold onto” as envisioned by Alaimo (416 in *Veer Ecology*) and maybe to learn to swim rather than walk (as offered by Steve Mentz in “Seep” in *Veer Ecology*).

*Veer Ecology: A Companion for Environmental Thinking* has also some clearly expressed political aims. This is how the editors explain their motivation:

The ethos we attempted to cultivate was one of intensification, a building together of fugitive havens for thoughts that might not thrive in solitude. In these days of narcissistic nationalisms, closed borders, gated communities, human-engineered ecological disaster, neoliberal resourcism, and proliferating hatreds, we are attempting to place a little more motion into concepts like home and haven. (6 in *Veer Ecology*)

This is important because in doing so they situate their own efforts in a place and time between utopia and retrotopia (Bauman 2017). They do not succumb to a naive illusion of an ideal place outside of power relations, nor do they join those who turn their backs on the future in longing or nostalgia for the lost “Golden Age.” Instead they struggle to think (otherwise) to make room for hope. Readers are offered what I would call hetero-chrono-topia. Hetero-chrono-topia would be another spacetime where “‘nothing is first yet everything is new’ . . . [and] also . . . nothing is last and everything is already ancient” (7 in *Veer Ecology*). It is a spacetime of sedimentation, seepage, haunting, composting, where and when



one “witness[es] the past impressed on the future through the vanishing traces of the present” (Oppermann: 141 in *Veer Ecology*). Imagining hetero-chronotopia, those lands of being, thinking, becoming otherwise, those other places and other times—these we must attend to as to save hope.

### CRITIQUE WE MUST! (OTHERWISE)

*Symptoms of the Planetary Condition: A Critical Vocabulary*, edited by Mercedes Bunz, Birgit Mara Kaiser, and Kathrin Thiele (2017), is the lexicon most oriented toward conceptualizing concepts differently—toward the very activity of conceptualizing, thinking, critiquing. In this volume we are offered meditations on concepts that have already had a long-lasting philosophical life (such as affect, capital, experience, immanence, inner voice, metaphor, *parrhesia*, perspective, play, power, process, risk, speculation, utopia), terms that have attracted more interest in recent scholarship (like affirmation, entanglement, the inhuman, plastic/ity, spectres), and novel conceptualizations (for example fable, semi-agency, symptomatology, terra). Essays collected in *Symptoms of the Planetary Condition: A Critical Vocabulary* illustrate—one more time—another case of ‘situated knowledges’: how to practice critique not as an outsider such as God, but from within by recognizing how the very practice of critique is involved in, complicit in “the conditions of phenomena that are under critical consideration” (7–8 in *Symptoms*).<sup>6</sup> This is undertaken in order to save critique, bringing back the steam that the critique has “run out of” (9 in *Symptoms*; cf. Latour 2004) so that it could be transformative, new, affirmative (reflected on by Thiele in her contribution “Affirmation” in *Symptoms*), creative, understood “as a praxis of intellectual and worldly intervention” (9 in *Symptoms*), a courage that “dare[s] to take risks and to exploit the leeway for negotiations that power permits: to push power a little” (16 in *Symptoms*). The notion of critique has many different definitions here. For instance, it is understood as “not taking and defending a point of view, it is bearing witness to what emerges in one’s view” as Veronica Vasterling suggests in her chapter “The Inhuman” (71 in *Symptoms*). Esther Peeren in “Perspective” defines critique as follows: “Critique is an expression of the world, yet emerges from a particular position and moment within this world’s becoming” (95 in *Symptoms*) and in an entry on “Spectres” she also sees critique as a caring praxis: “We may not be able to choose what or whom we must care for or about, as ghosts and their spectral inheritances press themselves upon us. Yet critical force may reside in how we give shape to our living *with* them” (171 in *Symptoms*). Another example is provided by Jennifer A. Wagner-Lawlor in “Vision,” where she opts for “critique, which refuses the fetishizing of vision, and makes possible the envisioning of others-as-ourselves, and vice versa” (243 in *Symptoms*).

It is to these critical ends that readers are invited to think with the “new images of critical practices” (11 in *Symptoms*) assembled here; to reflect on how singular terms could be used critically (this is expressed, among others, in “Affect” by Bettina Papenburg and “Experience” by Annemie Halsema in *Symptoms*); to visit once again the land of otherwise—hetero-chrono-topia. In “Terra” Kaiser and Thiele directly mention the *topos* of otherwise: “Acknowledging and keeping in mind the violence, exploitation, and asymmetry that are primary here, this critical condition of *terra* might be a locus from where to give rise to other imaginations of the earth” (209 in *Symptoms*) by “figuring critical practice *otherwise*” (13 in *Symptoms*; my emphasis), “learn[ing] to know, feel and live *otherwise*” (12 in *Symptoms*; my emphasis) by stuttering (like in “Stutter” by Peeren in *Symptoms*), inciting, conceptualizing, speculating on “rhizomatic map[s],” “open assemblage[s],” “constellations of terms,” “interference pattern[s] (a *diffraction*)” (14 in *Symptoms*) and inventing “new ways of speaking and new ways of living with-in always (re-) productive power relations” (15–16 in *Symptoms*). Attempts to think otherwise might be exemplified by nearly all contributions but let me refer to two entries for the sake of illustration. In “Semi-agency” Kaiser enacts the otherwise through conceptualizing agency differently: “‘semi-’ calls for agency ‘to present itself otherwise’” (145 in *Symptoms*); thus ‘semi-’ is introduced to problematize dualisms of presence/absence, something/nothing, agency/the lack of agency and catch the nuances of the concept in question. Also, Bunz in “Work” aims at “transform[ing] today’s destructive conditions of flexible and precarious work into something more productive” through solidarity, community, and recognition of the shared vulnerabilities (245 in *Symptoms*).

One may also interpret (as I do) *Symptoms of the Planetary Condition: A Critical Vocabulary* as an invitation to trace the genealogies of the otherwise, for example through a reference to Friedrich Nietzsche who in his *Daybreak* held: “We have to *learn to think differently*—in order at last, . . . to attain even more: *to feel differently*” (Nietzsche cited in Timothy O’Lear’s entry “Sensibility”; 149 in *Symptoms*) or to Félix Guattari’s experimentations “to bring into being *other worlds*” (Guattari in Birgit Mara Kaiser’s entry “Singularization”: 160 in *Symptoms*; my emphasis).

Newness in *Symptoms of the Planetary Condition: A Critical Vocabulary* does not result in forgetting; it is rather a practice of recognizing what is going on now, the “planetary condition” (“Entanglement” by Thiele, “Symptomatology” by Kaiser in *Symptoms*), and of thinking about the best means to approach it by un/learning past, ineffective, “established knowledge-regimes” (12 in *Symptoms*). What to do to save the possibility of difference without succumbing to the illusion of a final or best solution? Those goals, efforts, and questions are what constitutes to my mind the philosophical work of care: enacting a caring approach to the world as humanists who struggle with concepts. As Wagner-Lawlor (2017) states in her entry “Regard”: “Regard is a particular form of attention: intensive, evaluative,

care-ful" (121 in *Symptoms*). The authors of this vocabulary certainly hold the world in regard and are being very careful in terms of final conclusions. Rather than arriving at some determined visions they open a space and time for practicing critique otherwise and asking ourselves always anew: what awaits us? "New archipelagos of oppression or a drift to earthly gentleness?" (Kaiser and Thiele: 210 in *Symptoms*).

### CLASSIFY WE MUST! (OTHERWISE)

The *Posthuman Glossary*, edited by Rosi Braidotti and Maria Hlavajova (2018), is an overwhelming book with 168 entries on theories, art, politics, technology, new trends in research, new forms of critique and resistance. This is a book of multitude and even if it aims at providing a "meta-stability" of sorts, its "pace is so fast that the speed is breathtaking" (ibid., 5).<sup>7</sup> The *Posthuman Glossary* ambitiously intends to "keep up with the emerging scholarship" (ibid., 10); it embarked on a "roller-coaster of exciting new developments and brutal old injustices which is characteristic of our times" (ibid., 14) and struggles to provide its readers with a "navigational tool" or "road-map" (ibid., 7) to get better orientation as to what is going on, what is possible, how to maneuver between the new, emerging, or same-old phenomena, concepts, projects, threats, ideas.

The *Posthuman Glossary* is a horn of plenty: neologisms, interdisciplinary takes, an overwhelming number of references and sources, experimentations, efforts to think, describe, recognize, and handle new affects, new languages, "alternative humanisms" (13 in *Posthuman*) and above all impressively striving for full manifestation of the "posthuman predicament." The volume is convincing proof of the richness, diversity, and potential of theoretical tendencies, trends, approaches, and stakes that have been and are being developed under the umbrella of posthumanism. Central concerns of the glossary are: posthumanism, post-anthropocentrism, and an ethical orientation that stresses the need to "build bridges" and "connect scholarship and critical thought to the real-life issues and praxes that are of immediate relevance to individuals and society today" (ibid.: 4). Being aware of some limitations of this glossary (such as its partiality and not having enough space to cover topics like postcolonialism or race in depth) and maybe not fully aware of others (such as using "society" in very general meaning without differentiations, paying less attention to Indigenous studies or differences within Europe), the initiators vet the condition of the posthuman. They perform an open surgery on the human via critically mapping out anatomies in entries like: "the Ahuman," "the In-human," "In/Human," "It," "MakeHuman," "Monster/The Unhuman," "Non-human Agency"; tracing potentialities in the humanities: "Anthropism/ Immanent Humanism," "Blue Humanities," "Critical Posthumanism," "Decolonial Critique," "(Material) Ecocriticism," "Feminist Posthumanities,"

“Green/ Environmental Humanities,” “Insurgent Posthumanism,” “Posthuman Critical Theory,” “Posthuman Disability and DisHuman Studies,” “Rationalist Inhumanism,” “Transhumanism/ Posthumanism”; and investigating the dilemmas of the Anthropocene through for example the neologisms “Capitalocene and Chthulucene.” Importantly, the critical practices brought together in the volume are collaborative and heterogeneous, oriented toward making alliances as Braidotti one more time reminds her readers: “While ‘we’ are not the same, we are in *this* together” (ibid.: 12) and we are certainly not one, not two, not even three but many.

To my mind, the *Posthuman Glossary* enacts the ethics of joy offered by Braidotti in one of her entries in the volume. The *Posthuman Glossary* is indeed an affirmative tool involved in “vital interconnection with a multitude of (human and non-human) others” (221 in *Posthuman*), it is a tool of anthropo-de-centering, it “frees difference from pejoration and replaces it with positivity” (ibid.), it enacts counter-oppositional classificatory strategies, and it redefines the negative or the destructive. It might function as “a laboratory of the new” (ibid.: 223) also in relation to its classificatory strategies. These strategies are not to be exhaustive, universal, or cover the whole field of posthumanities. They function rather as what I call below *classifictions* and what Helen Palmer in the current issue of *Philosophy Today* develops in her essay entitled “Speculative Taxonomies.”

While reading the *Glossary* I found myself laughing from time to time. This laughter echoed Michel Foucault’s laughter that occurred while reading on a Chinese encyclopedia and its mode of classification as captured by Jorge Luis Borges (Foucault 2005: xvi). We are by now well aware of the limits of classifications and its classifixations (Van der Tuin 2015) and critical of our “boundary projects” because “boundaries shift from within; boundaries are very tricky. What boundaries provisionally contain remains generative, productive of meanings and bodies. Siting (sighting) boundaries is a risky practice” (Haraway 1988: 594). Yet, classify we must (only otherwise) to map out, navigate through conundrums of real-life and virtual-life, ethically, politically, socially, planetarily, identitarianly, digitally, technologically, and so on. What I offer as a name for what all the lexicons and glossaries aim to achieve is a genre of a kind: *classifiction* (CF). Classifiction is all stories told, tendencies depicted, definitions provided, all those multitudes captured in glossaries, lexicons, or companions in question here. Classifictions are not based on classifixations; they are fond of fictional terms, fields, and questions that arise when introducing boundaries. Instead of classifixations they are themselves outcomes of diffractive patterns, border shifts, and “unruly edges” (Tsing 2012) of classificatory projects. The fictional aspect of classifictions does not make the glossary projects unrelated to the rich and dense worlds we live in (“to the real-life”). On the contrary, it might bring about means with which the otherwise may come from within the here and now.

### CLOSING REMARKS

The almanacs, encyclopedias, glossaries, lexicons, word books, vocabularies, companions, (theoretical) toolboxes that were under investigation in this essay might be treated as instructive of the rich tendencies evolving in the contemporary humanities and as an answer to their stakes. They are diagnostic, symptomatic, and inspiring. And they, without a doubt, might be framed as guidelines introduced for its readers, researchers, artists, and activists to hammer out hope in troubled times while “troubling time” (Barad 2018). What is to be done? We must collaborate—write and read collaboratively, relate and pay attention to entanglements, modes of de/at/taching. Experiment, find ways to do things differently, build hetero-chrono-topias. Produce knowledge in “power-sensitive” ways. Learn otherwise and unlearn. Train our bifocal vision. Care. Critique. Classify through classifications. But above all, think. Practice and perform thinking. *Put it to work* (Dolphijn and Van der Tuin 2012: 103). Because think we must—always otherwise. The current issue of *Philosophy Today* enacts—or indeed *puts to work*—the ethics and politics of the genre investigated here. At the same time however it makes specific efforts to differentiate from other formally alike initiatives. One such difference is mentioned by the editors themselves in the introduction. It is the awareness of the dynamic and open nature of the examined field of materialism—“materialism is always *in the making*.” What Van der Tuin and Nocek are offering here are not answers, but rather an invitation to ask questions collectively. They are not aiming at taking a firm grip on the concepts, nor are they encouraging the authors to do it. The researchers are rather struggling to let the concepts live, evolve, blossom, entangle, or change their minds and disconnect, disentangle, decohere; experiment with and scrutinize their limits; trace their non-European or non-Western genealogies; bring in older traditions and philosophies; let the concepts flourish from the encounters between disciplines and beyond humanities and above all let them (the concepts) and us (the readers) travel in search of the otherwise.

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### NOTES

1. I wish to thank the editors, Iris van der Tuin and Adam Nocek, for inviting me to write this essay and for their generous feedback on the first version of the text. I would also like to extend my thanks to Gregg Lambert for encouraging me to write this essay.
2. When page referencing to *Living Lexicon for the Environmental Humanities* (O’Gorman and Wright 2014), I use the abbreviation *Living Lexicon*.
3. When page referencing to *New Materialism Almanac* (Gauthier and Skinner 2016), I use the abbreviation *Almanac*.

4. When page referencing to *Lexicon for an Anthropocene Yet Unseen* (Howe and Pandian 2016), I use the abbreviation *Lexicon*.
5. When page referencing to *Veer Ecology: A Companion for Environmental Thinking* (Cohen and Duckert 2017), I use the abbreviation *Veer Ecology*.
6. When page referencing to *Symptoms of the Planetary Condition: A Critical Vocabulary* (Bunz, Kaiser, and Thiele 2017), I use the abbreviation *Symptoms*.
7. When page referencing to the *Posthuman Glossary* (Braidotti and Hlavajova 2018), I use the abbreviation *Posthuman*.

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