

Introduction

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The book is in the form of an edited anthology of essays selected to offer a range of approaches that examine the critical role of visual culture in shaping and interrogating conceptions of ecological crisis in relation to the northern imaginary. This is a broad field but the focus is largely but not exclusively on landscape photography, a medium particularly sensitive to the politics of place and difference. At its most challenging the visual culture of place is able to represent a complexity and heterogeneity frequently absent or displaced within dominant discourses of environmental catastrophe. Conversely, many images of landscape and place within both fine art practice and commercial and popular forms play a role in supporting a more conventional interpretation of environmental crisis. It is our argument that images of northern places and landscapes have a pivotal function within the geopolitics of visual representation, and through the production of different visual imaginaries. Such images can typically exclude any reference to the everyday consequences of ecological crisis for heterogeneous populations; common strategies involve the inclusion of images of pristine wilderness as well as melancholic representations of man-altered landscapes and environmental damage, and of an alternative sublime of eco-catastrophe in which scenes of ecological violence are invested with an awe-inspiring, perverse beauty. The findings of the research detailed in the various chapters suggest that the visual culture of northern places has not remained static in the era of ecological crisis but has played a dynamic role within this broad discursive field. Northern landscape photography can still give visual form to historically settled conceptions of a natural world, but these images are frequently placed within a context of human mastery and thus sanction the latter's purported achievements, while ubiquitous representations of environmental disaster can also reinforce the notion of its techno-utopian resolution.

Contributions to the book explore this visual field, presenting wide-ranging critical appraisals of landscape photography and its related practices, particularly more recent developments in art and visual culture in relation to the representation of place. All essays consider professional photographic or other visual practice, including fine art, documentary, photojournalism, aerial photography, promotional and touristic material, plus examples of film and television as well as architectural plans

and maps. The book questions the validity of such visualisations where they may function as vehicles for the consolidation of the world order around enhanced networks of power, but also considers the potential role of a visual culture of place as part of an emancipatory project in the era of global environmental catastrophe. The geopolitics of visual culture is addressed within a wider discursive field concerning the politics of climate change and ecological crisis. Our aim is to engage with recent debates about the Anthropocene: arguments concerned with identifying the socioeconomic and political causes of environmental crisis, and with the profound problem in regarding the latter as the consequence of undifferentiated human activity.

The geopolitical is a complex framework not reducible to a simple definition, but, as Dodds (2019) has recognised, an important dimension is that of global power relations represented and imagined in geographical form, through maps and visual images, for the purposes of strategic calculation, and from a Western perspective. Geopolitics, in other words, has a geographically discursive aspect giving shape to inequalities of wealth, power and privilege, determining the forms of their global reach and entanglement. Geopolitics is also, however, the site within which different positionalities might be formed, and in the case of essays selected for this collection, involves the development of critical visualities and alternative conceptions of northern landscape. A critical geopolitics identifies the complex interplay between economic and political processes of exploitation and dispossession, occurring through a long and ongoing history of imperialism and colonialism. This process has manifold effects in terms of specific locations and regions and the politics of place, particularly in relation to Indigenous peoples, where the landscape has been shaped through the historic and continuing exigencies of capitalist exploitation, with tangible and often catastrophic material effects. But the northern landscape is also an imaginary, the site of contested representations: long-established notions of pristine wilderness, the skewed perspectives of Western Environmentalism, suppressed narratives of Indigenous people and communities, and the recent work of critical photography, art, and commercial practice. The book offers a critical approach to the historical and ongoing process of the northern landscape's imagining.

This introduction aims to orientate the reader – to note briefly some common themes, and to highlight potentially useful links and points of comparison. The association of northern landscape with different conceptions and aspects of the Anthropocene is a theme of several contributions. Chris Goldie draws on Susan Rudick's argument discussing how notions of environmental crisis contained within Western conceptions of the Anthropocene are characterised by an inability to comprehend "the multifarious nature of duration", which is a consequence of imagining time as linear and neglecting the multiplicity of durations and tempos that are subordinated to the single timescale of capitalism. Pursuing this temporal theme, Aileen Harvey provides several examples in which photography addresses the dev-

astated landscapes of extraction, where memory of their ruination and the accompanying historic violence has been erased. She considers work within which an exploration of multiple and suppressed histories point towards notions of the north as inhabiting a distinct timescale, characterised by the infinite slowness of its geophysical change and the supposed pastness and archaism of its indigenous peoples. Harvey considers the scarring and devastation of landscapes given over to extraction through the work of Ryan Moule, whose work also addresses how ruined landscapes erase memory and its accompanying historic violence. Moule achieves this by making “work of exaggerated transience”, wherein the slow degradation of exhibited photographs allows the viewer to perceive how “seeing and destroying” are “entangled”. The dominant timeframes through which such conceptions arise assume a temporal linearity challenged in the work of Marianne Bjørnmyr and Dan Mariner, wherein there is an engagement with “nonlinear models of time, with time’s pleats, twists and inversions”. These are also significant themes in the contribution of Julia Peck.

That northern landscapes are the product of ongoing social and historical processes is a theme across a range of contributions focused on popular media forms such as newspapers, magazines and tourist materials. In “Visualizing the Pristine: the role of imagery in local stewardship of landscape”, Flora Bartlett gives an account based on her ethnographic fieldwork in Arjeplog, a large municipality in the North of Sweden and Swedish Sápmi. The study considered the visual culture of the region promoted through the tourist industry, found in local magazines and circulated through social media. These images were curated by Bartlett and exhibited in order to promote discussion amongst local people and explore underlying assumptions about landscape. The premise of this approach is that landscape, in the expanded sense employed within visual anthropology, is a process of making the physical environment – something produced rather than merely observed – a mode of visibility reinforcing and actively producing relations between people and environments.

Bartlett examines how “notions of the pristine” have influenced the aesthetics of landscape imagery and conceptions of environmental stewardship in this rural northern location. The landscape practices of the “Arjeplogare” are premised on localised conceptions of “stewardship” and “care” rather than the notion of ecology at a global scale. Many with whom she worked viewed nature as too big to be affected by human action, discounting anthropogenic climate change and instead directing their care towards the visual environment, preserving the pristine wilderness through recycling and not littering; protecting place and nature was expressed through caring for the local landscape and avoiding polluting practices with visible effects.

This is a form of environmental engagement but at a local scale, photographs being shared online by local people in order to expose visible pollution, “while pollutants such as greenhouse gases are locally imperceptible”. Bartlett recognises in her

discussion that this localised point of view misses ecological problems occurring at the global scale, but also argues that “there can... be benefits to scales of care in which the local is given precedence”, where forms of appreciation can attend to the “local and non-human landscape in efforts to keep it visually unpolluted”. This contrasting of the local and the global necessarily “complicates the idea of Sweden as homogeneously concerned with environmentalism on the global scale”, while Bartlett’s discussion of the role of visibility in the construction of a “different way of caring for landscape” emphasises the importance of local practices within a nuanced conception of ecological crisis. From a different perspective, the self-perception of Swedes as a people and nation attuned to matters of sustainability and environmentalism is challenged in the chapter by Darcy White, of which more later.

In her chapter, “The future made present...”, Thale Sørli gives an account of journalism’s use of photographic images in relation to the changing conception of environmental crisis. Sørli analyses reportage in the Norwegian newspaper, *Arbeiderbladet*, from 1945 to 2006. The polar bear, ubiquitous in some climate communication, is rarely seen in *Arbeiderbladet* but other subjects are more systematically covered. Sørli conducts a quantitative visual analysis, focusing on both image and text, and also conducts qualitative analysis to understand the types of messages that the reporting creates. Her analysis finds that climate change is reported on a total of “1023 days accompanied by 1650 photographs” and identifies four main categories of victims – Humans, Nature, Cultural Landscape, and The Planet, with a particular emphasis on human victims of climate change. The quantitative analysis reveals distinct periods of climate communication. Initially, between 1948 and the 1970s, climate change is mainly reported as a positive phenomenon, with benefits for rainfall and hydropower. In the 1970s, there is a gradual realisation that climate change is driven by human activity, but this is understood to have a local and political impact. Towards the end of the 1980s, the global impact of climate change is more apparent in the reporting, and in the 1990s it is understood that the main impact will be experienced in the Global South, although there will be effects on health, flora, fauna, and ways of life in the Global North. The study reveals that “towards the year 2000, the media coverage of climate change reached a turning point”, demonstrating that, “to a significant extent, the victims and consequences of climate change became increasingly visible”, with the frequency of the depiction of human victims rising significantly in 2004.

Two substantial points emerge from Sørli’s qualitative analysis. The first is the function of testimony. Many of the photographs in *Arbeiderbladet* do not depict specific events, especially in the Global South. However, the newspaper does include images of climate refugees as family portraits, especially after they have settled in the country, at which point the “portrait becomes a proof of someone escaping climate change to start a new life in Norway”. These photographs, Sørli demonstrates, firstly depict “victims acting as a testimony of climate change”, secondly, these tes-

timonies create models “that serve to make the future present”. These kinds of photographs, Sørli argues, are able to function beyond singular specific incidences of flooding or damage and become “a model for imagination”, enabling a connection to the general idea of climate change and facilitating an imagining of the future.

Several contributions continue the theme of landscape as shaped through social, cultural and political processes. Janna Frenzel argues that contemporary northern landscapes are part of a procedure of place-making. Focusing on process but from a different perspective, Robert Saunders, Irina Souch, and Anne Marit Waade discuss how Nordic television reimagines the landscapes of Europe’s near-Arctic, as the latter are transformed in the era of environmental degradation. Liz Wells argues that contemporary photography has provided critical and alternative perceptions of the Arctic, and does not simply “reflect” but can also “re-infect cultural attitudes”, and thus “influence social change”. Aileen Harvey argues that photography practice can be intentionally disruptive in order to unravel entrenched ways of seeing landscapes. Such disruptive processes are evident in the way photography can aim to overcome or address the entrenched, binary distinction between nature and culture. Goldie argues that northern landscape can be apprehended from the perspective of the conjuncture: a process composed of uneven elements connected to different histories, temporalities, existences and ways of life, combinations of phenomena with quite dissimilar origins, prior associations, points of application and effectivity, etc; a complex unity not reducible to an external logic. From this perspective the northern landscape cannot be specified through geographical description, because ‘place’, location, and their putatively phenomenological characteristics – climate, precipitation, temperature, etc. – only acquire meaning through the process of articulation and structuring. Northern landscape thus understood is discussed in relation to Canada as a settler-colony, its historic and ongoing formation involving the constant articulation and disarticulation of different elements and social forces.

Several contributions examine the geopolitics of the northern landscape in relation to imperialist and colonial projects. Julia Peck explores the geopolitics of imperialism through her analysis of two texts with the same title, *The Last Days of Shishmaref*, a book by Dana Lixenberg and a documentary film by Jan Louter, both made in 2008. Peck analyses the book and film through the lenses of anthropology, geopolitics and from a decolonising perspective. Drawing on Ariella Aïsha Azoulay’s *Potential History*, she argues that decolonising and anti-imperial discourses express concern for the different cultural ideas of “world”, but that the structures of imperialism contain, limit, and destroy these worlds, while simultaneously trying to rescue them for intellectual discourse. The dilemma is that photography and critical interpretations of representation are intrinsically part of this imperialist discourse. Peck is aware of the risks in conducting this discussion from the perspective of Western academia, but, nonetheless, attempts to engage with the film and book, precisely because both have been made for Western audiences. Part of this analysis ac-

knowledges the violence of European colonialism (the Eurocene) by drawing upon the scholarship of Jairus Victor Grove and Kathryn Yusoff, both of whom have understood colonial and imperial activities to be “world destroying” and grossly unequal in terms of their consequences. The film and the book argue for the continued existence of an Iñupiat community that is affected by climate change and the broader contexts of US policy, and for funding to support relocation, and both challenge the ongoing global avoidance of acting to mitigate climate change.

Peck’s analysis of the film notes an apparent similarity between salvage ethnography and the type of narrative that emerges from *The Last Days of Shishmaref*, particularly in the documentary film. The film produces a strong sense of elegy and mourning. Ursula Heise argues that elegies are important (2016: 23) and often involve narratives of regret for modernisation and colonisation, producing a sense of loss in response to a “narrowing of culture.” Indeed, as noted by Ashlee Cunsolo, many Inuit communities also experience anticipatory grieving, yet this is not represented in the wider media. Mourning is therefore an important cultural activity, and she claims: “Mourning provides the opportunities to learn from deaths, or the potential deaths, of bodies beyond our own, and beyond our species to unite in individual and global action and response” (2017: 172). This “anticipatory grieving” as an awareness of “potential deaths” has echoes of Sørli’s argument about those testimonies “that serve to make the future present”. Here, Peck argues that in the expression of mourning, both for what has been lost so far and in anticipation of further losses, the Iñupiat are expressing their activism, refusing marginalisation, and finding ways of recognising and giving voice to the violence of climate change.

Lixenberg’s portraits both connect to the themes explored in the film (cultural continuity, the impact of climate change and worry for the future), but the structure of the book is different and more optimistic, the portraits offering opportunities to reflect on kinship relationships. Both film and book enable representations of the Iñupiat to circulate as part of a global economy, and both are entangled with Indigenous activism, the expression of which occurs *through* these texts, not as depictions *within* them. In highlighting the precarity of Shishmaref and the desire for cultural continuity and self-determination, the Iñupiat are seen as *important* in relation to extinction: Louter and Lixenberg are advocating for appreciation of this specific group of people, their lives, and their culture. Peck emphasises that even while this witnessing occurs within the discursive frame of imperialism it is also part of worldly caring.

A concern for the importance of hearing the voices of Indigenous communities is also considered in other chapters, which are revealing of some of the ways in which photography and related media are being actively utilised for this purpose. Wells explores the contradictions within the geopolitics of the northern landscape in her essay, focusing on historic and contemporary photographic representations of the Arctic, and Svalbard specifically. Wells draws on the example of Finnish pho-

tographer, Jorma Puranen, whose work “explores the contribution of art within the geographic imagination, critiques historical anthropology, references colonialism and power relations, draws attention to the marginalisation of indigenous peoples”, and – importantly for this discussion – “offers Sami people opportunities to articulate their own history”. Wells recognises that the geopolitics of the Arctic is complex and multi-layered, that histories have been left unseen except as discarded elements within a landscape, while photography has been crucial in the creation and maintenance of dominant imaginaries composed of fantasies and historical projection. Historically, the Arctic and its people have been represented from outside, through the Western imaginary – “Arctic paintings, drawings, and photographs have been of people, place, and phenomena, not *by* indigenous Arctic dwellers” – but recent exhibitions have included the work of Indigenous artists, recognising their intimate connection to place and allowing for the exploration of the “contemporary experience of place and identity”.

As with the case studies by Bartlett, Peck and Wells already discussed, several chapters recognise the importance of local, insider, accounts of the impacts of “disturbed ecologies” – Indigenous and otherwise – and question the external perspectives and interpretations that, in general, dominate these discourses. In her chapter “On getting “in the way of the world”...”, Darcy White focuses on the risks attached to Eurocentric ways of seeing – arguing that it is profoundly important that the perspectives created by the habits of the Western gaze are confronted through the consideration of wider perspectives. White draws on the work of economic anthropologist Jason Hickel to challenge the reputation of the Nordic region on issues of sustainability, to bring to bear the wider impacts of the region’s industries. Going further, White invites the reader to take seriously Achille Mbembe’s call for “planetary” thinking, and considers the “entanglements” of the coloniser and the colonised in relation to the ways in which the environmental and social crises are approached (2021a, 2020). Moreover, following the work of Mark Sealy, White argues that, for those of us concerned with the ways in which visual culture is embroiled in these matters, it is essential that we understand how the camera is implicated in creating “Eurocentric and violent visual regimes” (2019: 1).

White considers these arguments through an analysis of an example of recent environmental landscape photography – Swedish photographer Helene Schmitz’s *Thinking Like a Mountain*, (2018), undertaken in Sweden and Iceland to explore examples of resource extraction. White examines this work alongside the written and spoken narratives that frame it, to challenge the claim that it seriously engages with environmental catastrophe. White argues that this large-scale, high production value landscape photography inhabits the world of the gallery, and, with its use of the aesthetic language of the sublime (see also Hartle), remains within the ambit of Western art historical discourse. The discussion draws on arguments made by John Roberts to suggest that Schmitz’s work, despite its “violent” subject matter, never-the-less

privileges the aesthetic qualities typical of the “pensive, modernist-classicist” mode identified by Roberts as the condition of photography in the current era (2014: 167). White interrogates the “temperate, becalmed state” of *Thinking Like a Mountain* (ibid), and argues for an activist, mobilising of photography capable of decolonising the Western gaze and of addressing these times of planetary “dread” (Mbembe 2021b: S60).

Indeed, several essays in this collection address the phenomenon of extractivism, a concept linking the processes of capital accumulation occurring at a global scale to the political forms of colonialism, imperialism, and territorial dispossession. The concept of extractivism signifies not just the technical procedures of mineral extraction but frames it as a mode of exploitation and dispossession, as well as encompassing imperialism’s repertoire of discursive strategies within the cultural field: extractivism can, thus, be conceived as economic activity in the form of material extraction; a mode of exploitation; domination based on territorial dispossession; and an imaginary.

The intrinsic connection between geopolitics and extraction is addressed by Wells in her references to photographer Tyrone Martinsson’s visual and archival research, through which he explores accelerated glacier melt in the Svalbard region, a consequence of global warming, which contributes to rising sea levels, facilitating new shipping routes and thus the prospect of new sites for mineral and fossil fuel extraction, and further economic exploitation by governments and global corporations. These are real threats, Wells argues, to both human and animal survival and a challenge to Arctic Peoples and their vulnerable communities.

Goldie explores the concept of extractivism for its potential value in theorising the inherently complex, multi-layered, contradictory, and unstable phenomena underlying the colonial project. Through examples from photography, film, and television – in the Canadian context – it is argued that the contradictions of colonial territoriality have become more pronounced, revealing the latter’s interconnection with extraction, the historic and continual dispossession of Indigenous peoples, climate crisis, and the geopolitics of energy. The discussion considers accounts of these examples through their deployment of terms such as “regimes of extraction” and “energy regimes”, which, it is argued, carry many of the implications of the concept of extractivism. Extractivism specifies the territorial as the sphere within which economic exploitation, colonial dispossession, the erasure of Indigenous histories and ways of existing through strategies ranging from state violence to liberal pluralism, and a pervasive cultural discourse of nation, are all interconnected.

Several contributions explore the connections between landscapes of mineral extraction and nation-building as colonial projects. Goldie argues that extraction of mineral resources is, historically, the heroic ambition as well as the “dirty secret” of Canada’s quest for a sense of its nationhood, animating imaginary as well as material exploration of its northern periphery, investing northern landscape images

with deep significance. For the Canadian settler-state, territory is the point at which the manifold and overlapping contradictions of the colonial project coalesce and become manifest, encompassing the social, economic, political, geopolitical, and cultural spheres. From the late 19th century, extraction and the North as frontier were intimately connected, an historic situation paralleled in the notion of a New Frontier discussed by Frenzel in relation to Norway.

Extractivism is central to Frenzel's chapter, "Data Rush: How 'Green' Computing is Opening Up a New Frontier in Arctic Norway". Frenzel examines the visual components in the architectural plans and corporate promotion materials for the Kolos data centre in northern Scandinavia, exploring how visual representations of nature, energy, and climate play into the imaginary of 'green' computing. Such materials function to promote the Kolos data centre – at the time of planning, the largest in the world – by envisioning a building rooted in the surrounding landscape, where its functionality is intertwined with the cooling climatic elements necessary for efficient operation; the visual projection shows it nestling within the fjord as if it were an organic component of the local ecosystem. Frenzel discusses this procedure as one of place-making and argues that "places are not only passive or static entities" but "relational configurations". This process is understood by the author as explicable through the concept of extractivism, arguing that "data-driven economic operations in general and cryptocurrency 'mining' in particular can be understood as a new form of extraction, an analytical category previously reserved for the literal mining of natural resources". Furthermore, conceiving of data processing as a form of mining is not metaphorical, and as a material process it is comparable to the extractive procedures central to the long historical trajectory of colonialism and imperialism, wherein extraction from human bodies was as significant as mineral extraction. Other parallels involve the dependence of both mineral extraction and cryptocurrency mining on a broad range of resources and communication infrastructure, bundling together "natural resources, human bodies, and energy". The necessity of such extensive transformations invest the "Norwegian state's overarching data centre strategy" with an infrastructural dimension within which the politics of place-making is significant. Locations such as the Arctic needed to be "rendered extractible" prior to the establishment of extractive infrastructure, and while such a process involves the combining of various climatic, legal and political frameworks in order to facilitate a project, the role of the imagination is a crucial factor; the promotion of the Kolos data centre as desirable involved imaginary aspects, intrinsically connected to conceptions of the northern landscape, both reinforcing and transforming these representations.

In "Mapping the Anthropocene: Beautiful Destruction and Dark Ecology", Inge Panneels explores Louis Helbig's *Beautiful Destruction* (2014) and *Nikel Materiality* (2015) by Tatjana Gorbachewskaja and Katya Larina, analysing the complex material and economic factors at play in landscapes of extraction in the boreal and

Arctic north. Panneels develops an analysis that acknowledges a contradiction at the heart of government policy: the express intent of the countries in these regions to mitigate climate change while continuing to pursue fossil fuel extraction. *Beautiful Destruction* utilises aerial photography, producing “sky-situated knowledge” that addresses the Anthropocene as a “boundary event”.

Panneels, using Donna Haraway’s conception of the boundary event, claims that the Anthropocene is not simply a geological transformation but a moment of “unprecedented global change”, eradicating the distinction between culture and nature, following which life on earth will be completely altered. Helbig’s beautiful photographs, published with sixteen essays reflecting a diversity of opinions, produces – according to Panneels’ argument – a dissensus that makes “visible what the dominant consensus tends to obscure and obliterate”.

Panneels contrasts Helbig’s sky-situated knowledge with “a ground level perspective” of Nikel, in Russia, close to the Norwegian border. Gorbachewskaja and Larina’s *Nikel Materiality*, is a series of maps, photographs and texts that captures “the material vibrancy of the city; of the slag dust blown across the landscape, embedded in the lungs, buildings and streets of the city” which treats “the city as a living organism”. Underpinning their work are Timothy Morton’s ideas of “enmeshment and unintended consequences” which emerged in his book *Dark Ecology* (Morton, 2016) and Jane Bennett’s agential materiality which emerged in *Vibrant Matter* (2010). This enabled the artists to tell the story of this city, which grew up around a nickel mine, and which has experienced layers of development and neglect from both Russian and Finnish states. Gorbachewskaja and Larina, however, also pay “attention” to “material artefacts” and the “evolution of each material, and how it had been affected by the climate and the internal activity of the city.” The maps the duo produced visualise different aspects of the infrastructure, history and materiality of Nikel, which “offers an earthbound perspective of the material fabric of the city”, “that dislocates the human from the centre of world”. Importantly, analysing the unintended consequences of human activity and the enmeshment of nature and culture, enables new ontological understandings of the Tar Sands and Nikel to emerge.

Taking a contrasting approach to the ‘aerial view’, Harvard and Hyvönen discuss how professional photographers engage with environmental issues, their perception of the role of photography in relation to climate change, and how they conceptualise the north in their work. In order to explore these questions, the authors employ a framework emerging from risk research, which is useful in terms of understanding whether audiences will respond to the images that are shown to them by taking climate-ameliorating action. The twin concepts of presencing and absencing, in this instance, are linked to the ability to take immediate action (presencing), yet the misperception of risk, which can occur if the issues become minimised and disregarded, produces absencing. Aerial images can provide context and perspective, the authors argue, but the physical distance from their subject diminishes their “affective vi-

sual potential". The study was based on interviews with a range of photographers working in both photojournalistic and creative visual arts contexts. A series of questions designed to elicit responses to the presencing-absencing framework were put to their subjects and then analysed. The value of this approach is that it allowed the study to "systematize the views expressed by [a wide range of] the photographers" through an "interpretative framework". Their analysis demonstrates that photographers are acutely aware of the demands created by the commercial environment, and the need for finding a market for their work. Additionally, photographers were aware that the Arctic offers clear visual opportunities to visualise climate change, but that the physical distance of the Arctic north produces absencing. In contrast, more subtle, reflective responses risk only speaking to elite audiences in specific contexts, but also offer paradoxical opportunities to engage viewers through the absence of specific messages, sparking presencing through curiosity and engagement with broader climate and environmental debates. Harvard and Hyvönen conclude that their research subjects were able to negotiate and produce "effective visual interventions" that "break through message overload". Indeed, the question of how to reach audiences beyond the elite, is arguably an issue faced by all art practitioners motivated by the desire to make a difference through their work, and is discussed by several authors (Peck, Wells, White, Hartle and Harvey) – a question of how photography and related practices can be mobilised in relation to environmental and social crises.

Stephanie Hartle analyses the practice of Sheffield-based artist Victoria Lucas, specifically the images, objects and performance work featured in *Platform 20: Heavy Water*, an exhibition at Site Gallery, Sheffield, UK (July-August 2021) – another example of work concerned with the impacts of mineral extraction. Hartle situates Lucas's transmedial practice as an entanglement of technology with female subjectivity and the materiality of the landscape. This technology-human-materiality-of-landscape analysis of Lucas's practice is conducted through theories of ontology and posthumanism to argue that "Lucas utilises a range of photographic and visualising technologies and materials to re-imagine the relationship between body and strata".

Drawing upon the work of Bernd Happauf and Christoph Wulf (2009), Hartle discusses the place of the image, imagination, and the iconic turn in the context of the digital to propose that we need to reconsider how technological shifts have an impact on how images are defined. Happauf and Wulf describe the way developing technologies have pushed the limits of representation and have imparted new types of relationships between images, their producers and their receivers, suggesting that "the productive power of advanced technologies makes images hover on the threshold between the visible and the invisible". The ability to bear witness ethically and accurately, Hartle claims, continues to dominate contemporary photographic approaches. In the context of the Anthropocene and the increasingly precarious state of the environmental crisis, there is a seemingly urgent need to probe

the mobilising possibilities of photography. Hartle further utilizes critiques of the documentary, large-scale, spectacular practices of photographers such as Louis Helbig and Edward Burtytsky to note how these images naturalise the disasters of the Anthropocene through sublime aesthetics and a lack of political grounding, as expressed through “God’s eye view” frequently used in their images. Indeed, the privileging of conventional photographic seeing has proven problematic in terms of asserting a detached and distanced aesthetic, itself posing a gendered dimension to the visualising of the ecological crisis. However, in similarity to many authors in this volume, Hartle turns to critiques of the Anthropocene, as conducted by Joanna Zylin-ska, T.J. Demos and Karan Barad to note its human-centric bias and its limitations as a force for understanding environmental devastation. Authors such as Donna Haraway, Zylinska and Barad are utilized as a means of noticing the situated, contingent and permeable frameworks and practices that constitute different modes of being and subjectivity, resulting in a discussion of Lucas’ work as enacting a series of ‘entanglements’.

Hartle argues that through an embodied and haptic approach of transmedi-ality (photography, video, performance, sculpture, immersive installation), Lucas challenges the cultural logic of realism which photography has traditionally asserted. Through a critical reflection, Lucas confronts the nature of the relationship between human sight and technological sight – and the contingent spaces that exists within these, through the interspersing, rupturing and play between different types of surfaces and screen. Lucas’ work is therefore positioned as a re-coupling of human agency and bodily experience with nonhuman visualising technologies, or what Zylinska proposes is a “technology of life” (2014: 4).

In “The Experimental Darkroom: case studies in northern landscape through the material ecology of photographs”, Harvey surveys contemporary art practices that interrogate the physical methods of making photographs in order to engage with ecological crisis and the landscapes in which it unfolds. The chapter considers alternative, experimental and revived photographic techniques as expressive methodologies that enable various interactions between process, image and context. These art-works raise questions about photographic materiality and method and engage with the fungibility of photographic artefacts and their entanglement with the world. The questions raised in this discussion are not concerned with addressing the environmental impact of photography, rather they consider how a critical practice might be intentionally disruptive in order to unravel entrenched ways of seeing landscapes – and there are parallels here with White’s chapter. Harvey analyses how the material ecology of a photographic practice might work against received, dominant, and problematic modes of conceiving of the northern landscape.

Several chapters in the anthology reflect upon the notion of the Arctic north, and the more remote areas of the Nordic region, as rich in available resources often prospected by companies originating from outside of the region – see White,

Wells, Goldie, Frenzel, and Panneels – while doing so from different perspectives and through different visual imaginaries. Harvey explores this through considering the Arctic as a place for the “violent reorganisation of land and life-forms”, within which “extractivism” is laid bare. This is first explored through the work of Simon Starling, where the pulling of the photographic process itself into “the visual and interpretative frame” causes the image to reveal “its own conditions of making”. Aster Reem David’s makes images that “unfold as a set of experiments”, the effect of which is to “elide ways of seeing with ways of altering landscapes; they suggest human effects on them”, and, furthermore, they appear to be shaped by geo-processes, but also by selection, framing and photographic processes. The geological, she then argues, is a logic of dispossession. Harvey draws on the ideas of Kathryn Yusoff and the work of Amanda Couch to suggest that “photography is one strand in an expanse of activities – performance, text, video, woven objects – that explore” and question the “colonial mindscape”. She proposes an approach to landscape as entanglement and “inter-species kinship”, citing Sayako Sugawara’s *Redwood Magdalene*, “a series of photographs tracing the artist’s relationship with a redwood tree”. She cites Jane Bennett to argue that “material things” have “their own lively capacities” and that humans can be understood as “material things, composite things”, their intermingling a means through which “habits of placing matter in hierarchies” can be “disturbed”. This sense of enmeshing informs and animates the practice of Hannah Fletcher. Indeed, all the examples of practice discussed in this chapter “treats the photograph as matter implicated in the world”; they all “re-imagine landscapes in ways that understand humans as continuous with the world, sharing in its processes and events, its precariousness”.

Saunders, Waade and Souch, through their discussion of the Nordic noir serial drama, address many of the aforementioned themes, arguing that this drama is a productive space for storytelling about ecological catastrophe in northern Europe. Employing the concept of the “Anthropocenic imaginary” the chapter considers the ways in which television series such as *Thin Ice*, *Trapped*, and *Twin* (re)imagine the landscapes of the European (near-)Arctic as they become irrevocably transformed by ongoing environmental degradation and by neoliberal geopolitical relationships. The chapter explores how, in the three TV series, the ecological crisis of the ‘North’ maps on to ongoing crises of national identity, local community and family among northern Nordic nations. In doing so, they problematise the use of the (near-)Arctic imagery as a mirror of contemporary national identities, identifying how the visual consumption of a ‘pristine’ landscape obfuscates past abuses of nature and its (more-than) human inhabitants, producing instead an “Anthropocene sublime”. Indeed, the authors demonstrate that “more than just providing aesthetic value, representations of the land” in Nordic Noir TV series “are integral to the storytelling process, with specific northerly landscapes serving as the canvas for events to play out and ideologies to be brought into focus.”

Thin Ice tackles political relationships between Greenland, Denmark and the US, whilst also considering the economic interests at play in extractivism. *Trapped* conveys the dissolution of a community following the 2008 economic crash against aesthetically spectacular and polluted Icelandic scenery and *Twin* “uses the pristine Arctic coast of northern Norway to frame a family drama which lays bare the contemporary value-extractive relationship between those who live in the North and the bounty of nature, particularly in an era of global tourism”. All three series combine themes of social collapse, global capitalism and environmental crisis. The landscape, in each instance, becomes a marker of a new sublime: the Anthropocene sublime, a landscape that is commodified, extracted and socially transformed.

The geopolitics of the north and the northern landscape is not homogenous, as is demonstrated by the scope of essays contained within this volume, offering a range of different perspectives and positionalities, employing wide-ranging methodologies, approaches, and arguments. The variety of the selected contributions is in accord with the aims of the anthology, which is to facilitate critical debate around the problems, as well as the potential, of northern landscape images in the era of environmental crisis. While contrasting approaches are evident throughout, there are thematic affinities between many essays. Photography’s materialities is one such theme, as is extractivism, the frame within which the interconnections and contradictions of the political, economic and cultural dimensions of exploitation and dispossession becomes manifest. That northern landscape images are intrinsically connected to the history and ongoing effects of imperialism and colonialism informs the anthology, as does the challenge of alternative conceptions and practices able to articulate different ways of life, histories, and temporalities otherwise subordinated to the singularity of the Western imaginary.

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