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Introduction: 'Street-Fighters and Philosophers': Traversing Ecofeminisms

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Feminist Ecologies: Changing Environments in the Anthropocene emerges at the intersection of two progressive twentieth-century political movements: one concerned with the fight for women's rights and the other with ecological sustainability within the environment. The book celebrates the ongoing philosophical and activist advocacy of feminist ecologies as it traces the ecofeminist movement's roots and alignment with recent social, cultural and artistic developments. It proposes the broad term 'feminist ecologies' to capture the diversity of the movement over the last 45 years and the range of possible ways in which feminist and ecological concerns can speak to one another in the era of the Anthropocene.

The capacity of feminist ecologies to reveal the interconnectedness of environmental and social injustices makes it an urgent and timely field of inquiry for the current moment. This collection arises out of the need to address the challenges of climate change, land degradation, species

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extinction and the disproportionate effects of these changes upon particular communities of women and their livelihoods. *Feminist Ecologies* shows why ecofeminist thought, as it has become known, remains pertinent today by demonstrating how its key actions, writings and thinking underpin twenty-first-century feminist perspectives on ecological debates. The book demonstrates the progressive development of this thinking and its activism.

This collection grounds its historical moment in the Anthropocene. Atmospheric scientist Paul J. Crutzen theorized the Anthropocene as a new geological epoch shaped by the actions of humankind (2002: 23). The concept has been taken up and responded to by numerous environmental philosophers, humanities scholars as well as activists and it provides a useful starting point for the ecofeminist critiques that appear in *Feminist Ecologies*. It neatly evokes the contradiction between the human causes of environmental destruction and the human capacity to protect and care for the biosphere. For Crutzen, the Anthropocene marks a historical period that can be linked to the atmospheric effects of the industrial revolution after the eighteenth century.[1] The expansion of capitalism with the industrial revolution connects: technological advancement; the attendant change in political economy; the realization of many of the ambitions of Enlightenment science; and the enabling of unprecedented exploitation of the natural world. Accordingly ecofeminism critiques global capitalism, because of its accompanying exploitation of the 'others': women, the poor, the colonized and the nonhuman.

But even with this advancement in naming the Anthropocene, the inherent social inequity of such drastic and rapid environmental change is not illuminated and the idea of the Anthropocene might even imply that all humanity is equally responsible. *Feminist Ecologies* reminds readers of the established field of ecofeminist knowledge: about how environmental injustice is linked to social injustice, particularly gendered social injustice. The overarching question of the book is: how do contemporary feminist and ecological scholarship, activism and artistic practice progress ecofeminist thinking in response to environmental problems?

Ecofeminism, like feminism, has always been concerned with challenging and changing the oppressive structures that imbue the lives of women and men. The predominance of female scholars in this field and

in this book is a historical legacy. Feminist thought is vital if we are to redress the near universal neglect of women by cultures around the world, including academic ones. This book shows how feminism and ecofeminism continue to evolve in social practice.[2]

Despite the escalating challenges of climate and rapid environmental change, and the persistence of widespread abuse and exploitation of women all over the world, ecofeminism is rarely discussed in public debate and is overlooked in much recent academic discourse. From the early 1980s, subjects on ecofeminism were offered in Western universities. Yet it cannot be taken for granted what exactly ecofeminism is or does, either historically or today. This book offers a range of perspectives on what ecofeminism is, does or can do. For example, Ariel Salleh calls ecofeminism 'a strategy for social action', stressing that it is not a static ontological claim about 'the nature of women' (1993: 231). Freya Mathews writes that: 'ecofeminism is by no means a position or a theory, but simply a wide open field of enquiry' (1994: 62). Misconceptions about ecofeminism also pose challenges to its varied movements as, like many women-led causes, it sometimes has to fight to be recognized and treated seriously by other environmental, political and social activists. As Kate Rigby notes, ecofeminism has to work hard to show it is more than 'simply a naïve form of feminine nature worship' (1998: 168).

By the 1990s there were multiple feminisms, which accordingly impacted ecofeminism and expanded it in new and varied directions. As with most feminist movements or waves, there remains no singular and agreed upon definition of ecofeminism. Carolyn Merchant lists some of the different types of ecofeminism: liberal ecofeminism, radical ecofeminism, cultural ecofeminism, social ecofeminism, socialist ecofeminism, ecological ecofeminism, deep-ecology ecofeminism, transformative ecofeminism, aboriginal ecofeminism and developing world ecofeminism (1996: 207). This book follows in this interdisciplinary tradition with contributors from a broad range of scholarly backgrounds—from philosophy to theatre and performance studies, political economy to gender studies, history to religious studies. These diverse perspectives mean that it addresses the junctures between masculinist political and cultural attitudes and behaviours, and their effects on the natural world in a variety of contexts.

Ecofeminism continues to be important because of its interdisciplinarity and therefore its usefulness in addressing the complexity of environmental and social crises today. As Salleh notes:

> Ecofeminism is the only political framework I know of that can spell out the historical links between neoliberal capital, militarism, corporate science, worker alienation, domestic violence, reproductive technologies, sex tourism, child molestation, neocolonialism, Islamophobia, extractivism, nuclear weapons, industrial toxics, land and water grabs, deforestation, genetic engineering, climate change and the myth of modern progress. (2014: ix)

The chapters in this collection address pertinent public questions around misogyny, gender equality, justice, democratic ethics, environmental protection and sustainability. The ecofeminism coming out of the northern hemisphere today is particularly focused on exploring the silences around race, species and sexuality. *Feminist Ecologies* recognizes these areas and directly considers the question of race with regards to Indigeneity and Indigenous women. There is, however, more work to be done in investigating the work of southern hemisphere ecofeminists and their engagement with issues of animal and plant life as well as human sexuality in the era of the posthuman (Braidotti 2013).

In the wider context of this field, *Feminist Ecologies* raises a number of questions: why have women environmental activists and thinkers played such a pioneering role in expanding ecological thought? And how has their work influenced global ecological and feminist activist movements? What is productive about bringing the terms feminism and ecology together? Our collection does not exhaustively or definitively answer these questions. Instead, it considers the dialectical relationship between environmental and feminist causes; the relational identities of feminists and ecofeminists; the possibility of framing ecofeminism as another wave of feminism gaining momentum; and the value of thinking about identity politics, activist histories and feminist movements over time. In exploring these points of tension, *Feminist Ecologies* helps situate contemporary ecofeminism as a complex, controversial, layered, varied and multidisciplinary project.

Feminist Ecological Theory

The volume looks to the future by recalling the momentum of the past. It brings pioneering texts, written in the 1980s and 1990s by preeminent ecofeminist thinkers, into dialogue with new research in the 2010s. The book is organized into two parts.[3] Part I: Foundational Ecofeminisms, includes four previously published articles, and one unpublished paper by key scholars in the field. Part II: Ecofeminist Currents, consists of eight chapters of recent ecofeminist scholarship that draw on the foundational texts as well as contemporary philosophy, and ecocritical and feminist thought. It charts a history of women's recent activism in order to contextualize it, and to reveal its legacies and continuities.

The theoretical advances in this book challenge the dominant historical ways that humans have related to, conceptualized, sympathized and interacted with the planet and biosphere. Its unique combination of historical and contemporary work on the intersections between gender and ecology has significant implications for global environmental concerns. *Feminist Ecologies* sets out to better understand present and future challenges for feminism and the environment by situating them in relation to earlier ecofeminist writings. As such it maps an ongoing dialogue between women's issues and rapid ecological change within the Anthropocene.

Much of the best-known ecofeminist scholarship emerged in the early 1990s with key texts such as Val Plumwood's *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* (1993); Greta Gaard's *Ecofeminism: Women, Animals, Nature* (1993a); Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva's *Ecofeminism* 1993/2014; Carol J. Adams' *The Sexual Politics of Meat* (1992); Carolyn Merchant's *Earthcare: Women and the Environment* (1996); as well as important ecofeminist collections such as Karen Warren and Barbara Wells-Howe's *Ecological Feminism* (1994). As Gaard summarizes, ecofeminist approaches consider 'the fundamental interconnectedness of all life' and resist all forms of oppression including the oppression of nonhuman species (1993b: 2–3).

Early ecofeminist thinking was interdisciplinary and it developed its unique thought through a diverse range of scholarly fields including analytic and continental philosophy (e.g., Mathews 1991; Plumwood 1993); political economy and sociology (e.g., Eckersley 1992; Salleh 1997); anthropology, ethnography, ethics, law and Indigenous land rights (e.g., Rose

1992, 1996; Moreton-Robinson 2013); religious studies and poetics (e.g., Mews and Rigby 1999); and cultural, literary and performance studies (e.g., Adams 1992; Chaudhuri 1994). New volumes and essays expand on this interdisciplinary vein in cultural and performance studies (e.g., Arons and May 2012; Gaard et al. 2013; Varney 2015; Stevens 2015; Tait 2015), and social ethics, history and animal studies (e.g., Tait 2012; Chaudhuri 2017).

The editors of *Feminist Ecologies* employ a transhistorical methodology to locate the significant (but also under-circulated and under-recognized) work of key ecofeminist thinkers. The writers who appear in 'Foundational Ecofeminisms' have made long-standing and significant contributions to ecological and ecofeminist thought throughout their careers. Pioneering ecofeminist scholars and activists—Ariel Salleh, Freya Mathews, Kate Rigby, Deborah Bird Rose and Val Plumwood—are recognized and celebrated internationally for their contribution to ecofeminist scholarship. At the forefront of an ecofeminist movement that expanded from the 1970s, their work, both then and now, informs and underpins debates about environmental adaptation and sustainability as well as intersecting debates about women's rights, and race and class inequalities under the conditions of global capitalism.

Plumwood's groundbreaking book *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* (1993) earned her a place within the male-dominated international canon of environmental philosophers. Rose's *Dingo Makes Us Human: Life and Land in an Australian Aboriginal Culture* (1992) won the Stanner Prize for a work on Aboriginal issues and became so popular that it is currently in its third edition. Salleh consolidated her comprehensive thinking in the landmark book *Ecofeminism as Politics: Nature, Marx and the Postmodern* (1997/2017), which brought together the shared interests of ecology, feminism, socialist and colonial resistance. Mathews is a leading figure in ecological philosophy (eco-philosophy or ecosophy), persistently arguing for a different approach to the way humans perceive and position themselves within the biosphere by connecting with Aboriginal Australian philosophy. She is particularly well known for her Spinoza-inspired work on panpsychism that first appeared in *The Ecological Self* (1991). As a world leader in the study of ecopoetics and environmental studies in the humanities, Rigby has made a significant contribution to advancing understanding of the links between ecologies and spirituality, particularly in *Ecology, Gender and the Sacred* (1999),

co-edited with Constant Mews. We have chosen to represent a piece of each of these writers' early work to demonstrate their originality and foresightedness, and to show the influence and progressive development of their radical thinking.

The emergent field of the Environmental Humanities replicates multidisciplinary ecofeminism as it too encompasses the fields of anthropology, history, philosophy, cultural studies, religious studies, animal studies, Indigenous studies, poetry, law and social and ecological justice. For the women whose work appears in 'Foundational Ecofeminisms', ecofeminism is not simply an abstract theoretical project or scholarly exercise. Rather, it is firmly integrated into their ways of living. Salleh notes that '[e]cological feminists are both street-fighters and philosophers' (2014: ix) and this is true for all the pioneering thinkers represented in *Feminist Ecologies*.[4] The women featured in this collection are also active on behalf of environmental causes and practice the ecofeminist theory they champion through their political advocacy for feminist causes.

Glocal Australia

In keeping with ecofeminist principles, *Feminist Ecologies* demonstrates how the global relies on the local, that is, on place. Most of the scholars and activists whose work appears in the book were born and raised in Australia and New Zealand. Rose, who was born in the United States, has spent much of her life living and working in Australia, particularly in remote Aboriginal communities. The editors were concerned that the contributions to this volume belong to a particular place but its ecologies reflect both the local and the global. The effort of communities to enact sustainable practices and/or protect threatened ecosystems is happening at a grass-roots level across the globe in the twenty-first century. Paradoxically, giving attention to sustainable practices at a local level might be what constitutes the shared experience of humanity in the twenty-first century. Whether it involves maintaining a garden for food, involvement in an anti-pollution campaign, or marching to raise awareness about rape, the most powerful global responses to ecofeminist issues today are happening at a local level—at the level of the glocal. The politics of the glocal is foundational

to ecofeminist thinking and is made more powerful by the expansion of social media networks and the speed of information sharing in the twenty-first century via the Internet and mobile phone capacities.

The capacity of national governments to implement policy and regulation for ecological sustainability varies enormously. This is nowhere more apparent than in the United Nations' efforts to grapple with divergent political difference in the struggle to reach an agreement on carbon reduction to slow the global rates of climate change. At the local level, however, individual households and communities everywhere implementing sustainable practices and this common approach is strongly women-centred in the area of food production. People who are faced with environmental problems that threaten their survival are mobilizing powerful local movements, often led by women from impoverished communities, fighting large corporate interests and political inertia (see Klein (2015) for examples of where this grass-roots activism is effective). The local versus the global power imbalance is an ongoing feature of ecofeminist analysis in the Anthropocene because women and children are particularly vulnerable.

The decision to centre this collection on Australian ecofeminists builds on and enlarges existing international perspectives (e.g., Gaard et al. 2013). The Australian focus, however, comes at the expense of an in-depth engagement with the extraordinary ecofeminist work that has come out of, for example, India, and parts of Asia, Africa, South America, North America and Europe over the last half century. To put together a truly representative international collection is a project that deserves attention, but it is beyond the scope of this book. The editors hope that *Feminist Ecologies* will set a precedent for further volumes coming out of these other particular glocal environments.

In the meantime, there is much to be learnt from the Australian focus. Merchant writes that 'women in Australia are providing leadership in reversing ecological damage and in developing an ecofeminist ethic of earthcare' and notes that in the 1990s they were 'leading an ecological revolution' (1996: 186). The vibrancy of the field in Australia and the kinds of work coming out of this nation prompt the editors to ask: what is unique about the Australian context that has inspired such prolific and pioneering work in this field? The kinds of research presented in Ecofeminist Currents suggest that Australia's colonial history combined

with its high agricultural and resource extractive capitalist economy, which has caused severe environmental degradation since settlement in 1788, might go some way to explaining the strong ecofeminist response.

Modern Australia has active industries in coal and other mining, forestry, sheep and cattle farming, which have led to issues of soil and sand erosion, high salinity levels, over-use of toxic pesticides polluting the soil and water as well as declining air quality. Yet Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have historically viewed the land as having intrinsic value and thus have tended to practise an ethic of care and respect towards the flora and fauna, as well as the land's seasons and ecological systems. While colonization in Australia has meant that Aboriginal Australians are rarely given a voice, particularly one that might threaten to contradict capitalist profiteering, environmentalists and especially ecofeminists have demonstrated a far greater interest in Aboriginal knowledge and care for 'country'. Aboriginal philosophies, stories and specialized knowledge of the Australian land have been of great interest to the foundational ecofeminists featured in this collection, who have listened, adopted and advocated these ideas, and woven them into their unique forms of ecofeminist thought and ecoactivism. In some local Australian contexts, such as Martu country in the Western Desert and the Mardoowarra River in the Kimberley, where Anne Poelina advocates for 'traditional ecological knowledge', Aboriginal ideas of guardianship over country are already being put into practice.[5]

Despite Australia's legacy of environmental activism, innovative thinking in deep ecology and formative ecofeminism it has, more recently, experienced the rise of conservative governments with strong electoral mandates that have resisted and overturned action on policies promoting sustainability and greenhouse gas reduction. While the background to this book is recognition of activism in one national context, political battles in Australia are indicative of what has occurred in other developed countries. Social conservatism aligned with neoliberalism's prioritization of corporate interests has fuelled regressive strategies that intensify the struggle in all areas of activism and reinforce the need for strong theoretical analysis.

Despite the collection's emphasis on Australian ecofeminist thinkers, the local Australian environmental and feminist movements have always been

strongly global. All the ecofeminist scholars in 'Foundational Ecofeminisms' have worked in universities in Europe, America and Australia and have been advocates for environmental and feminist causes that have implications well beyond the borders of their homeland. This collection's representation of important Australian ecofeminist thinkers is, however, far from exhaustive and there are many important Australian ecofeminists, some of whom worked collaboratively with Salleh, Mathews, Rigby, Rose and Plumwood.[6]

The local-global nexus that figures strongly in the collection is particularly important given the intersecting nature of climate and/or rapid environmental change and feminist concerns. The effects of environmental change often have their strongest impact on people at a local level but, as we know, global consensus and commitment to change is required to mitigate problems such as global warming.

Ecofeminism and New Materialisms

There has been a significant increase in scholarship that addresses ecological questions over the last decade. The relatively new field of the Environmental Humanities is growing in universities in the United States, the United Kingdom, Europe and Australia. As the Environmental Humanities and the broader fields of ecology and sustainability gain traction around the world, this collection offers a timely contribution in its consideration of how ecofeminism informs and expands on the debates that are central to these multidisciplinary areas of research.

One important strand in the Environmental Humanities is what has become known as 'new materialisms' with its connected theories of 'agential realism' (Barad 2007), 'vibrant matter' (Bennett 2010) and 'object-oriented-ontology' (Harman 2002), to name a few. The works of new materialist thinkers demand attention be paid not only to the interconnectedness of the human and nonhuman but also to the agency of nonliving matter and its effects on living organisms (Coole and Frost 2010).[7] For many ecofeminists, such views of the natural world are not necessarily 'new'. As Merchant wrote in 1996, ecofeminists see that 'nature is an active subject, not a passive object to be dominated' (in Rigby 1998: 155). The challenge of women's agency, which has always been at the heart of feminist advocacy, is complicated by the 'agency' of nonhuman

life, even seemingly inert or non-living matter. But the risk that human inequities might become displaced encourages an ecofeminist interpretation of new materialisms.

In recognizing the 'material turn' in the humanities, this collection also notes the fundamental tension between ecological politics and historical feminism and a contradiction in bringing these terms together under the name 'feminist ecologies'. Ecology demands that we pay attention to nonhuman matter, what phenomenological approaches call the 'more-than-human' world (Abram 1996), and situate the human within a wider web of interrelations. Yet, feminist movements have historically confronted the hierarchies of power; recognized different levels of privilege and agency afforded to women of different ages, races, sexual orientation and ability; and attended to the rights and freedoms of women. Feminism has thus necessarily been anthropocentric in orientation and some feminists might reject the repositioning of women within a new set of interrelations that is so attuned to the nonhuman. It might be seen as merely another excuse for women's needs and desires to be subsumed, this time under the greater good of a healthy biosphere, where women are left to clean up the mess of scientific rationalism and the industrial revolution.

This raises a potential tension between historic feminist goals and those of ecofeminism. Bearing this tension in mind, we nevertheless argue that the frictions between feminism's anthropocentrism (or as Mathews describes, its individualism) and ecofeminism's attentiveness to the nonhuman might also provide productive sites for critically rethinking patriarchal relations and attitudes to women and the natural world. It achieves this by showing how different forms of patriarchy not only determine hierarchical social structures but also, necessarily, instrumentalize and exploit the nonhuman world. It demonstrates how patriarchal attitudes towards the woman-nature nexus have been historically intertwined and the variety of ways in which these associations and stereotypes persist in contemporary attitudes and practices.

Rigby notes that 'a reactionary reinscription of the woman-nature connection is forever hovering menacingly over the ecofeminist project' (1998: 145). She sees ecofeminist scholars who want to affirm women's difference as a model of alternative knowledge and practices as performing a 'tricky tightrope act' between essentialism and poststructuralism's views on difference (Rigby 1998: 167). By asking if ecofeminism is femi-

nist, Victoria Davion finds that the fight against patriarchy and the fight to save the environment are 'inextricably interconnected' at a conceptual level (Davion 1994: 11). Some ecofeminists fear talk of embodiment as a form of biological determinism that feminists have worked so long and hard to resist. Yet for many ecofeminists the conceptual and the embodied experience of the woman-nature connection are equally indivisible. They see humans as nature-in-embodied-form and use women's historically different experiences to deconstruct the man over woman, humanity over nature, mind over body, production over reproduction dualisms of Ancient Greek philosophy, scientific rationalism, or contemporary capitalist patriarchalism.

Salleh as a sociologist researches the conditions of the global majority of women engaged in reproductive labour and is among a number of ecofeminist scholars who view women as privileged agents of ecorevolution because culturally and socially they have been placed in closer proximity to the natural world. Their epistemic advantage does not derive from their biology, yet their actions of nurturing in the contexts of childrearing, as much as environmental advocacy, provide potential models for a non-instrumental ethic of care towards the biosphere. As Salleh writes:

> Women are certainly embracing ecological responsibility, so much so, that it has even been remarked that it looks like they are being used all over again in their traditional housekeeping role as unpaid keepers of oikos at large. (1993: 237)

Salleh sees that sustainability cannot be adequately addressed until the relations between production and reproduction are rearranged between men, women and nature (1993: 239). Her work has emphasized that women worldwide labour as an often invisible class who can skillfully integrate head, hand, heart, and womb to grow life and protect the conditions of life. While women traditionally have been forced to labour on terms defined by men and in institutions controlled by men, she offers examples of labours that generate unique ecological knowledges for dealing with natural relations and processes. She describes this kind of knowing as 'an embodied materialism'—a concept that

reaches beyond a 'greener future with gender equity' and even beyond eco-socialism.

Changing Environments

Part: Foundational Ecofeminisms, opens with a republication of Ariel Salleh's major early work, 'Deeper Than Deep Ecology: The Eco-Feminist Connection' (1984), an article which became widely known and sparked heated academic debate over the next decade. In it, Salleh questions whether deep ecology is a 'sociologically coherent position' and attacks the gendered blind spots of the work of two of the founders of the movement; Arne Naess and Bill Devall. In particular, she is critical of deep ecology's attempt to replace anthropocentrism with ecocentrism in such a way that it ends up glossing over the link between the exploitation of nature and the exploitation of women. As such, she accuses the deep ecologist position of being 'politically and historically static' (341). She is further troubled by the deep ecologist's advocacy for birth control programmes which she describes as 'another grab at women's special potency' (340).

In 'Relating to Nature: Ecofeminism and Deep Ecology' (1994), renowned philosopher Freya Mathews demonstrates her thoughtful way of probing contradictions and reconciling philosophical complexities with great clarity for the reader. This piece offers an important analysis of the intersections between movements in ecofeminism and deep ecology. She offers a philosophical account of the problems of deep ecology which advocates for the human and nonhuman merging into 'undifferentiated oneness' (162). She writes that '[e]cofeminists, in contrast, tend to portray the natural world as a community of beings, related, in the manner of a family, but nevertheless distinct' (159). Despite this difference, she shows how both movements share a desire to break down the binary thinking that has set nature in opposition to culture and resist the hostility to nature that is built into patriarchal ideology. Mathews argues that the human impetus to 'save' the world might in fact come out of our human capacity to destroy it.

In 'Women and Nature Revisited: Ecofeminist Reconfigurations Of An Old Association' (1998), Kate Rigby offers a comprehensive survey of ecofeminism to show how it became a well-established interdisciplinary field

of scholarship by the end of the twentieth century. Rigby succinctly and carefully evaluates and compares major publications in the mid-1990s, particularly the work of Carolyn Merchant, Mary Mellor and Ariel Salleh. She explores how these ecofeminists engage theoretically with marxism, socialism, and social ecology and their shared critique of the capitalist patriarchal enforcement of women's role as 'reproductive labour'. She shows how ecofeminist thinking offers a variety of possible approaches to address our present ecological predicament. Rigby's accompanying critique of spiritualist thinking and its dilemmas remain particularly pertinent.

Deborah Bird Rose writes in 'Women and Land Claims' (1995) about the gender bias in the uptake of land rights by Aboriginal Australians following the Mabo High Court decision in 1992, and the passing of the Native Title Act in 1993. These legal landmark cases gave Aboriginal Australians a chance to exercise rights over the land for the first time since colonization, albeit within a Western legal system. Rose explains that this historic moment, in which Aboriginal people could take advantage of economic, political and social opportunity, was often denied to Aboriginal women. This was due to a legal system in the early 1990s in Australia, which was dominated by male judges, legal counsel and anthropologists and thus privileged male Indigenous plaintiffs. Rose argues that, particularly in the Northern Territory land claims, Aboriginal women were often not granted the right to speak their knowledge and status as land owners. She also investigates exceptions to this trend where judges made special arrangements for Aboriginal women to reveal secret/sacred knowledge as evidence under conditions that were acceptable to those women. The ongoing effects of this gender bias continue to affect Aboriginal Australian women today as Ambelin Kwaymullina and Maryse Helbert show in the 'Feminist Currents' section of the book.

The final chapter in 'Foundational Ecofeminisms' presents an unpublished paper, 'Ecofeminist Analysis and the Culture of Ecological Denial' (2003), by Val Plumwood, one of the world's best-known and respected ecofeminist scholars. In her writing at the beginning of the twenty-first century, Plumwood expanded her philosophical critique to examine the failures of liberal democracy, in particular its separation of the public and private spheres, its hostility to collective action, its privileging of upper income groups, its racism and its masculinist conception of citizenship, which discounts the private sphere and thus women's labour. In this chapter, Plumwood emphasizes philosophical thinking as

she elaborates on the 'hyper-separation' of human and nature that sees environmental degradation as a matter of overwhelming concern for the long-term sustainability of life. She argues that the separation of the human and the nonhuman leads to the denial of ecological life, an act that perpetuates environmental destruction.

Part II of the book, Ecofeminist Currents, provides some of the most recent scholarship in ecofeminism. These chapters document a history of recent activism as they explore environmental and women's movements and look to contemporary examples of ecofeminist thinking, writing and creating. Chapter 7, 'From *The Female Eunuch* to *White Beech*: Germaine Greer and Ecological Feminism' by Lara Stevens reveals how an ecological consciousness has been intrinsic to the thinking of globally renowned feminists such as Germaine Greer. Connecting present and past feminisms, Stevens rereads Greer's 1970s book *The Female Eunuch* to find it was not only a radical and groundbreaking exposé of patriarchal oppression of women, but its systemic critique can be better understood through the subsequent work of ecofeminists Plumwood, Mathews, Rigby, Salleh and Rose. Further, she reveals how Greer's proto-ecofeminist thinking is developed and expanded in *White Beech* (2013), a book which describes Greer's current project of protecting and rejuvenating 60 hectares of Australian rainforest.

Denise Varney's 'Climate Guardian Angels: Feminist Ecology and the Activist Tradition' considers the Australian activist ensemble, the Climate Guardians, whose all female members dress as angels in long white gowns adorned with large swooping organza wings. She describes how these secular modern angels appear, perform visitations, gather and manifest en masse in public spaces, including in Paris for COP 21 in November 2015. She argues that this fascinating ensemble draws on angel iconography, not to re-activate tradition, but to dissolve the divisions between the human and nonhuman world, to reject dualisms even as they evoke them and to appropriate and radicalize spectacular iconography to contest inaction on climate change in the public arena.

In Chapter 9, 'Thinking–Feminism–Place: Situating the 1980s Australian Women's Peace Camps', Alison Bartlett links ecology and epistemology in what she terms 'epistecology'. She considers how situated knowledge is a legacy of 1980s feminist and peace activism. Drawing specifically on the women's peace movement at Greenham Common in the United Kingdom and at Pine Gap in Australia, which protested war, mas-

culinity, militarism and its continuum with violence against women and environmental destruction, she argues they both reveal the potency of place and embodiment, and were foundational to ecofeminist activism.

'Performing Ghosts, Emotion and Sensory Environments' by Peta Tait draws together ideas of ecofeminism and eco-phenomenology as it asks: what can performance and art that reflects feminist values with an ecological emphasis contribute to a political understanding of the human and the nonhuman? The performance artist Jill Orr, and Aboriginal Australian multimedia artist r e a, create performances that present transhistorical gender ambiguous figures framed by dystopic environments. These works evoke the ecofeminist concerns of forced migration, colonial occupation, climate change and the loss of land for human and nonhuman species. Tait discerns that the bodily responses and emotional disturbances that such artworks provoke in human spectators encourage phenomenological comprehension of the impact of bodies within shared environments.

In Chapter 11, 'You are on Indigenous Land: Ecofeminism, Indigenous Peoples and Land Justice', Ambelin Kwaymullina insightfully explains how the environments that are contested in mining, forestry, climate change and other environmental accords and negotiations are those to which Indigenous peoples belong. She explains that the relationships of Indigenous women to their homelands are grounded in narratives that practise a way of knowing that pre-dates Western conceptions of feminism and ecofeminism. In this sense, Indigenous women's knowledge is a rich source of land-based epistemologies, ontologies and axiologies. But the engagement of Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing with those of the West is fraught by colonial complications, including the long-standing privileging of Western ways of knowing and exploitative research practices that have appropriated the knowledge and denied the power of Indigenous women. In this context, shifts within Western knowledge disciplines to more holistic and inclusive ways of knowing—such as ecofeminism—present both a challenge and an opportunity.

Anne Elvey's 'Feminist Ecologies in Religious Interpretation: Australian Influences' charts the recent history of feminist interpretation of biblical religion and the evolving, but uneven, relationship between feminist and ecological thinking in biblical studies. While it describes how ecological feminism did not appear explicitly in biblical interpretation until the 1990s with the Earth Bible project in Australia, and it remains marginal-

ized, the chapter explores theological scholar Elaine Wainwright's writings for their important contribution. Elvey argues that Wainwright's organizational leadership and publications, encompassing the postcolonial contexts of Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific region, reveal complex intersections of religion, race and ecological thought.

In Chapter 13, 'Australian Women in Mining: Still a Harsh Reality', Maryse Helbert argues that Australia's economic growth, which has been heavily dependent on its capacity to dig and extract natural resources for the world market, produces environmental and social injustice. In this chapter, Helbert uses an ecofeminist approach to connect different oppressive structures in order to understand the uneven distribution of the costs and benefits for men and women in mining projects and towns such as the Bowen Basin, the Cooper Basin and the Western Cape York regions in Queensland. She proposes that an ecofeminist ethics can help locate alternatives to correct the unequal gendered distribution of the risks and benefits of mining projects in Australian communities.

'In the interest of all mankind': Women and the Environmental Protection of Antarctica' by Emma Shortis explores the role of women activists in the successful World Park Antarctica campaign of the 1980s, which culminated in one of the most significant international environmental agreements in existence today: the indefinite ban on Antarctic mining and the comprehensive environmental protection of an entire continent. The very few studies of the history and development of this agreement almost invariably privilege the role of diplomats and political leaders who were (and still are) almost overwhelmingly white men. Shortis argues that knowledge of the central role of women in Antarctic history and politics within the broader field of feminist and gender-based approaches to environmental protection is crucial to understanding the past, present and future of the continent.

As environmental issues increasingly demand urgent attention and gender inequalities persist in the twenty-first century, this collection offers a timely examination of how ecofeminist thought, its histories and its activism intersect with global debates about environmental catastrophe as a product of global corporate capitalism and neoliberalism. Further, it redresses the frequent erasure of ecofeminist scholars from the contemporary ecological field as it seeks to give gender prominence in the environmental and social challenges of today. To find solutions to ecological and feminist issues we need new modes of theory and praxis,

activism and philosophizing as well as radical rethinking of policy, law, spirituality and education. *Feminist Ecologies* sets us on this path. It challenges us to take control over the Anthropocene and shift our environments towards new and more sustainable directions.

Notes

1. The Anthropocene is a controversial periodizing term even without the inclusion of its gender implications (Rose 2008; Baskin 2015; Haraway 2015). Disagreements ensued over whether the new geological moment of the Anthropocene should commence with the beginning of agriculture or the early nineteenth-century industrial age or around 1950, when atomic bombs left radioactive traces on the earth's surface. Despite this, the term Anthropocene has been widely adopted in the Environmental Humanities where it is usually considered to begin with the industrial age.
2. The language of feminism and ecofeminism also changes over time. For example, in some contexts in the 1980s, the word 'men' was sometimes used but this was predominantly replaced by 'patriarchy' by the 1990s in order to emphasize the way structural forces manifest in the lives of everyone.
3. The impetus and ideas for this book came out of the 'Feminist Ecologies' conference held at the University of Melbourne on 13–14 November 2014; Germaine Greer gave the keynote lecture ironically titled 'Mother? Nature?' in which she spoke about her current land conservation project at Cave Creek rainforest in Queensland.
4. Plumwood was well known in environmental and social activist circles throughout her life, particularly for her struggle to save Australia's old growth forests as well as for her advocacy for Aboriginal women's rights, abortion rights and refugee rights. Salleh has a long personal history of grass-roots activism, including being active in the Movement Against Uranium Mining, the Franklin Dam Blockade, the Australian Greens Party, the Women in Science Enquiry Network, the Society for Social Responsibility in Engineering, the Australian Government's Gene Technology Ethics Committee and the International Sociological Association Research Committee for Environment & Society. Mathews has a long-time involvement in land restoration and currently

manages a biodiversity reserve on a rocky outcrop in semi-arid northern Victoria. Together with two new co-owners, she has recently established a private Conservation Trust to protect the property in perpetuity. Rose lived for many years in remote Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory of Australia and has served as a consultant anthropologist for the Aboriginal Land Commissioner, Northern Land Council, Central Land Council, NSW Parks and Wildlife Service and the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority. In her attendance at science-dominated international gatherings on the environment, Rigby has championed the importance of humanities scholarship. Her work questions the way that fundamental Christian beliefs support the human dominance of nature and has been a prominent figure in the development of ecotheology.

5. Dr Anne Poelina is a Nyikina Traditional Custodian of the Fitzroy River in the West Kimberley region of Western Australia. http://majala.com.au/our-people/Custodian. See also the Martu Living Deserts project which combines modern science with Indigenous ecological knowledge in a partnership between the Martu people of the Western Desert, the Nature Conservancy and BHP Billiton http://www.natureaustralia.org.au/our-work/lands/martu-living-deserts/. (Accessed 21/5/2017).
6. These include, for example, Annette Greenall Gough, Jo Vallentine, Janis Birkeland, Patsy Hallen and numerous others.
7. This might include Manuel DeLanda, Rosi Braidotti, Timothy Morton, Bruno Latour, Diana Coole, Samantha Frost and Richard Grusin.

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