

ROUTLEDGE ADVANCES IN CLIMATE CHANGE  
RESEARCH

# Systemic Crises of Global Climate Change

Intersections of race, class and gender

Edited by Phoebe Godfrey and  
Denise Torres



# Systemic Crises of Global Climate Change

Sociological literature tends to view the social categories of race, class, and gender as distinct and has avoided discussing how multiple intersections inform and contribute to experiences of injustice and inequity. This limited focus is clearly inadequate.

*Systemic Crises of Global Climate Change* is an edited volume of 49 international, interdisciplinary contributions addressing global climate change (GCC) by intentionally engaging with the issues of race, gender, and class through an intersectional lens. The volume challenges and inspires readers to foster new theoretical and practical linkages and think beyond the traditional, and oftentimes reductionist, environmental science frame by examining issues within their turbulent political, cultural, and personal landscapes. Varied media and writing styles invite students and educators to reflexively engage different, yet complementary, approaches to GCC analysis and interpretation, mirroring the disparate voices and viewpoints within the field. The second volume, *Emergent Possibilities for Sustainability*, will take a similar approach but will examine the possibilities for solutions, as in the quest for global sustainability.

This book is a valuable resource for academics, researchers and both undergraduate and post-graduate students in the areas of Environmental Studies, Climate Change, Gender Studies, and International Studies as well as those seeking a more intersectional analysis of GCC.

**Phoebe Godfrey** is an Assistant Professor-in-Residence at UCONN in sociology. She co-founded the non-profit CLiCK dedicated to a local sustainable food system.

**Denise Torres** is a doctoral candidate at the Graduate Center, City University of New York. The unifying theme of her work and publications is the authentic inclusion of silenced and marginalized groups in the systems that affect them.

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*Linda Connor*

**Systemic Crises of Global Climate Change**

Intersections of race, class and gender

*Edited by Phoebe Godfrey and Denise Torres*



Inspiring, life affirming, poignant. This densely packed volume of wisdom from the hearts and minds of people most intimately targeted by climate change illustrates what is at stake, provides a vision of what must be done, and cogently illustrates an intersectional analysis that includes the environment. There is no other book like it.

Kari Marie Norgaard, *Associate Professor of Sociology and Environmental Studies,  
University of Oregon, USA*

At one level climate change seems so simple: too much carbon in the atmosphere. But as this provocative volume makes clear, the real truth is far more complicated and interesting. There's never been a better lens than global warming for looking at the ways that power is wielded on our planet, and these essays, poems, and images do much to bring that picture into sharp focus.

Bill McKibben, *founder of 350.org, USA*

Passionately mixing scholarly, activist, and poetic analysis of global climate change, this volume takes anti-racist and queerfeminist intersectional analysis to new levels of critical transgression and global understanding. It makes a strong case for using intersectionality to deconstruct and decolonialize borders between struggles for climate, environmental, social, and reproductive justice.

Nina Lykke, *Professor of Gender Studies and co-director of the Centre for Gender  
Excellence (GEXcel), Linköping University, Sweden*

The work offers an innovative synthesis of two key sociological approaches – “intersectionality” and “just sustainabilities”. Challenging both media denialisms and the silo methodologies of academia, Godfrey, Torres, and their community of authors are relentless in their diagnosis of exploitive social prejudices that drive the Anthropocene, globalization, climate change, food scarcity, and violence.

Ariel Salleh, *author of Ecofeminism as Politics*

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This book is dedicated to the memories of our fathers  
Leonard Edward Andrew Godfrey (1928–2015)  
and  
Peter ‘Jimmy’ Torres Gutierrez (1941–2010)



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# Contributors

## Editors

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**Parvez Babul** is a journalist, author, and human rights activist in Bangladesh. He has written about 200 articles and four books on gender equality, media, climate change, sustainable development, poverty, food security, and nutrition. He is a regular contributor to the mainstream newspapers in Bangladesh and abroad.

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**Coco Gordon**. Her Italian birth delivers through the no-time tunnel, a NYC Susan B. Anthony Award. As SuperSkyWoman, 200+ books or Sustainable



Futures Commission exploring all-species rights, letting go is as important as getting things done. Permaculture observation mode transforms reversals found or pursued. Experiencing 53 Nature senses, learning = teaching. Forget Dominance!

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the Second World War. She now lives near one of the largest man-made lakes in Europe, Rutland Water, with some chickens, quails, and tortoises and an unparalleled view over the English countryside. She has worked to protect the natural environment since collecting caterpillars as a child on her way home from school.

**Cara Murray** earned a BA from Brown University and a MA in Marine Policy from the University of Rhode Island. Her poetry and prose have appeared in various journals, including *Platte Valley Review*, and aired on Rhode Island's NPR station.

**Julianne Norton** is a 22-two-year-old Connecticut-based painter and illustrator. Her work focuses on the long-term effects of genocide, cultural trauma, and environmental destruction on post-memory (trans-generational cultural memory following trauma). She is currently working on a graphic novel about Holocaust post-memory.

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**Carmen Rowe** is currently a PhD student in Sociology at Boston University. She completed her BA degree in Sociology at Florida Atlantic University in 2011. Her research interests include gender, sexuality, race and ethnicity, and environmental, economic, and cultural sociology. In the future, she plans to examine the rise of female farm operators in the USA.

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# Foreword

As someone who has become steeped in the climate justice movement through its myriad intersections with other areas of work I have engaged in over time, I am honored to be asked by the editors to write this Foreword. My life's work has been as a researcher, policy analyst, program manager, activist, etc. on public health, women's rights, economic justice, racial justice, disability rights, housing rights, environmental justice, and so on throughout the USA, as well as in Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, and beyond. Particularly in my work as a women's rights advocate in Sub-Saharan Africa, the intersection with gender justice was clear as I worked with women who experienced sexual assault in the course of climate-forced migration when they found their home countries unlivable due to drought stripping their livelihoods, or as the result of resource wars. I worked with girls who could no longer go to school because their days were consumed with walking twice as far to perform their duty of retrieving water for the household. Therefore, by force of intersectionality, I have increasingly become engaged in addressing climate change progressively up until now, when it has become the frame of a continued focus on all of these interconnected issues.

I extend warm and hearty congratulations to the editors of this volume for their vision in conceptualizing a book that weaves a narrative of the linkages between societal norms, political dynamics, communities, populations, institutions, and movements, but with an undercurrent of the spirit and soul of the collective climate justice movement and all of its actors and nodes. All hail to the authors who combine to form a robust tapestry of activists, community organizers, culture workers, academics, policy analysts, and more, bringing rich perspectives, experiences, analyses, and reflections on this critical topic of how intersecting 'isms' both contribute to, and are exacerbated by, climate change.

Climate change, as a crisis of our time, is a manifestation of the convergence of historic global patterns of domination, extraction, and oppression. The predicament in which we find ourselves in terms of this, the unfettered slide toward catastrophic climate change, is rooted in our commoditization of labor and natural resources toward the end of amassing wealth by a powerful few. Colonization had the central aim of the acquisition of natural resources (spices, minerals, gold, etc.), land, and people, and those patterns of racism, sexism, and



classism have persisted over time and become institutionalized in systematic oppression.

As an illustrative example, burning coal is the number one culprit in advancing climate change, being the top contributor to carbon dioxide emissions. The average coal company CEO earns compensation of 289 times the average wage of the company's workers. The inextricable link between policies, policy makers, and corporations means that the 'rules' are written by corporations in such a way as to ensure that the wealth remains heavily concentrated among the rule makers. For example, just 1 percent of the US population has 35.6 percent of all private wealth, which is more than all of the people in the bottom 95 percent combined. We see how this has fatal consequences for our planet and its people in the fact that, for decades, the coalmining industry has focused millions of dollars in antiregulatory lobbying against measures that can protect workers' health. As a result, 76,000 coalminers had died of black lung disease since 1968 until the first-ever regulation on coal dust finally went into effect on August 1, 2014. Meanwhile, coal-based energy production erodes the Earth's natural balance that maintains stable temperatures and climate. The extreme subsidization of the fossil fuel industry, with an average \$550 billion in subsidies per year, and the lack of regulations governing its practices that are destroying the environment and violating human rights, is a self-propelling cycle.

Entities such as the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) and Americans for Prosperity (Koch Brothers), which are mostly invested in the fossil fuel industry, spend millions of dollars annually to influence research produced by academic institutions and think tanks, as well as to influence elected offices and those who preside over the courts and the decisions they make. The Koch brothers alone spent \$61 million between 1997 and 2010 to support climate change-denying institutions who lobby against clean air and clean energy legislation. They have already signaled the intention to pump \$889 million into the 2016 elections to maintain the status quo of decisions and rule making that holds wealth and power within a privileged few. While pushing for policies that repeal voting rights, the decisions they drive include blocking climate-saving regulations protecting air, water, and land, legislation on energy efficiency and clean energy, as well as furthering the disenfranchisement of those who would advance systems changes, such as low-income communities and communities of color.

All we have to do is pick up a newspaper and read the latest headlines to find real-time evidence of this worldwide dynamic of groups of people and nations that have been commoditized, criminalized, disenfranchised, and otherwise oppressed while the system is designed to protect the profits and power building of a select elite. The Black Lives Matter Movement, aided by the digital age, has brought to light what African American communities have been experiencing for decades in terms of racial profiling, police brutality, and mass incarceration. The Arab Spring illuminated the discontent with the authoritarian regimes that advance systematic violation of human rights, while Global North nations prop up these governments to maintain their oil supplies. The Greek

Austerity crisis revealed practices that have been going on for decades in Global South nations where international finance institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund impose measures to restrict government spending toward the end of mandating debt servicing. This is usually at the expense of the well-being of the citizenry of focal nations, as services and systems that support basic human needs shrink. La Via Campesina highlights the intersection between global trade policies governed by the world trade organizations and the dissolution of national and local food systems while corporate agribusiness bloats and thrives. The Occupy Movement highlighted the fact that capitalism and corporate domination of our political systems is stealing our democracy and rendering the voice of the masses unheard, irrelevant, and powerless.

Trade policies which effectively prohibit some countries from manufacturing or restrict their ability to hold patents; predatory agribusinesses which develop seeds that do not regenerate and act as a poison that spreads to neighboring farms; energy production processes which pollute in order to maintain profits; national and global policy-making structures which exclude communities and countries from decision making that most impacts their lives while power is held by a select few; individuals, population groups, communities, and nations which experience grinding poverty amidst abundance while others enjoy extreme wealth through exploitation – all of these circumstances are connected to each other and linked to the proliferation of climate change. It is not possible to effectively reform one aspect without addressing the whole, given the inextricable connections.

Yet measures to address these global challenges, including climate change, fail to comprehensively tackle the fundamental systemic racism, sexism, classism, and xenophobia – all bolstered by capitalism – that maintains, and even strengthens, the status quo. Research, philanthropy, policy making, and programming all suffer from the fragmentation of siloes that only allow for a focus on one or two variables/issues/interventions. This keeps us in an endless cycle of ineffective band-aids while domination, extraction, and oppression persist.

As such, this book starts with an acknowledgment of the increasing state of chaos, and then, using a frame of the elements of air, water, fire, and earth, goes deep into exploring the myriad connections between climate change and the very fabric of our existence, including the systems that govern society. Several authors explore an analysis of gender, including population discourse, from a personal reflection perspective, as well as examining societal trends, incorporating intersections with race and class. Relatedly, unpacking power, privilege, and capitalism in the context of climate change politics is an important foundational analysis that this book delivers. Some authors examine public perceptions and attitudes that accept or deny climate change, including media and messaging and strategies for educating different populations about climate change. One chapter explores climate adaptation planning to build resilience, including the complexity of these interventions in urban contexts where gentrification resulting in displacement is a risk that can have counter-productive results for communities. Given the relationship between how we produce food as a driver of

climate change and the impact of climate change on the food supply, there are several authors who examine farming and food security. As previously noted, climate-forced migration brings the issue of climate change into conjunction with immigrant rights issues that catalyzes/compounds situations ranging from the Syrian refugee crisis to displaced Haitians in the Dominican Republic and beyond. Disasters, from hurricanes to wildfires to oil spills to extreme heat, and how race and social class are overlaid with these situations to exacerbate impact, are another major topic of this volume. The vast majority of people worldwide hold some form of faith, and, in fact, the moral movement of faith leaders on climate is growing in volume and impact, so it is fitting that this volume also includes content on spirituality.

Interspersed throughout the chapters of the book there are moving and grounding reflections through culture work – such as poems, photos, and paintings – a critical component of movement building. Examples include “Dear Future Generations,” an ode and an apology to future generations; visual arts such as “Small Extinction,” a representation of an all-too-common disaster that defiles our waterways, and “El Agua es La Vida” (Water is Life), which affirms a precious resource that is threatened by poverty and privatization, by polluting practices, and by climate-driven drought; and poems such as “Crude,” which depicts the effects of oil reliance.

“To change everything, we need everyone” was a very apt slogan for the People’s Climate March, and it is a key theme that is foundational in the connections illustrated throughout this book. It makes the compelling case for the transformation we must collectively manifest, each of us playing our respective, essential roles. In this rich volume, we have a guidebook that provokes visionary analysis and demonstrates models of how we can organize ourselves as we advance the movement for climate justice. We cannot just tweak an existing system that is so deeply flawed and fundamentally built on principles and practices of domination and extraction with devastating impact. We must be individually and universally transformational to restructure relationships, institutions, and the threads and pathways that tie systems together. A fundamental shift, to a society that values all of its members and the earth upon which we rely for our existence, is necessary. The collective voices gathered here are clearly telling us that we must have “systems change, not climate change” for the survival of the planet and for the well-being of all living beings within it. Throughout this transformation, the authors implore us to keep in mind that we must be just as deliberative about cherishing and treasuring the heart, soul, and cultures of the movement, and its individuals, communities, and nations, as we are about strategies and tactics. *A Luta Continua.*

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# Preface

## **A Zen story: accommodating the water**

A Taoist story tells of an old man who accidentally fell into river rapids that led to a high and dangerous waterfall. Onlookers feared for his life. Miraculously, he came out alive and unharmed, downstream at the bottom of the falls. People asked him how he managed to survive. “I accommodated myself to the water, not the water to me. Without thinking, I allowed myself to be shaped by it. Plunging into the swirl, I came out with the swirl. This is how I survived.”

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# Introduction

## Locating ourselves within the Anthropocene: applying intersectionality to anthropogenic climate change

*Phoebe Godfrey and Denise Torres*

A human being is a part of the whole, called by us “Universe,” a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings as something separated from the rest – a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness.

(Einstein, 1951, in Caprice, 2005)

Earth my body,  
Water my blood,  
Air my breath and  
Fire my spirit.

(Chant, author unknown)

This volume is born out of our realization that, as our species enters the Anthropocene (denoting the present time in which many geologically significant conditions and processes are being shaped by human activities), we can no longer continue to destructively enact Western ‘white’ patriarchal capitalist society’s (henceforth society, unless otherwise denoted) conceptualization of a clear boundary between the ideological and the material, the social and the environmental, the human and the non-human, the observer and the observed, the word and the flesh. Within these perceived oppositions there are no clear divides other than what our distorted thinking has divined. With the advent of anthropogenic Global Climate Change (GCC) and the concurring acts of ecological-social destruction, the vast conceptual veil perpetuating society’s ultimate illusion that the fate of the human species is somehow separate from the fate of the Earth is finally tearing. Binaries and fossilized, immutable categories belie the fact that, as Einstein noted, we are part of a whole – one that is alive (Lovelock, 2000), permeable (Tuana, 2008), and continually co-constructed with and through space-time (Barad, 2007). Such a realization is, of course, not new; indigenous peoples, and non- and pre-Western cultures have long recognized the intra-action between the material and spiritual, the seen and unseen, and the felt and formulated long before Western physicists have come to ‘discover’ and ‘confirm’ it. Still, we maintain the ‘optical delusion’ even as the price of living in denial is paid by the least empowered, across all realms.

The indisputable existence of GCC (IPPC, 2007) “changes everything” (Klein, 2014), demanding that *we* change everything if we as a species desire, hence choose, to survive.

In an ongoing effort to project and protect the mistaken notion of human separation from, superiority to, and ownership of all life, society sacrifices a livable planet, and ultimately itself, echoing Freud’s *Todestrieb* or death drive (also called *Thanatos*). *Todestrieb*, however, is in opposition to *Eros*, not just in the sense proposed by Freud as that of a survival instinct, but as conceived by Jung, in terms of being intrinsically bound by a “psychic relatedness” (Jung, 1982, p. 65). The transformative potential of the *Thanatos*–*Eros* tension is exemplified by the metamorphosis of the caterpillar into the butterfly. When the caterpillar creates the chrysalis, previously dormant imaginal cells begin to appear and multiply even as the caterpillar perceives these as foreign, a threat. Nevertheless, the imaginal cells persist and connect with each other, overwhelming the immune response of the caterpillar, ultimately dissolving it into fuel which they use to create a new form – completely different from the old one – a butterfly. While others have used this metaphor to describe the cultural changes underway and the forces of resistance (see Slater, 2008), we extend this further and emphasize that these two are intimately entangled (Barad, 2007), even when they appear as separate. The birth of the butterfly requires the death of the caterpillar.

In using ‘born’ to describe how and why this volume has come into being, we see the coming together of seemingly disparate ideas into a tangible whole that is greater than the sum of its constituent parts. As critical feminists, we seek to de-gender the term by recognizing that birth is the essence of creativity and thereby defines the universe. While we draw from Karen Barad’s (2007) more recent insights that all ‘things’ “intra-act” and are “entangled,” making it “impossible to differentiate in any absolute sense between creation and renewal, beginning and returning, continuity and discontinuity, here and there, past and future” (p. ix), other physicists have historically made these connections (Capra, 1976). Barad elaborates: “The world is an open process of mattering through which mattering itself acquires meaning and form through the realization of different agential possibilities” (2007, p. 141). In other words, things do not exist in and of themselves but constantly gain form and meaning, hence ‘mattering,’ in direct and dynamic intra-action with one another and that this process does not in fact have a designated beginning or end. As such, “there is no ‘I’ that is separate from the intra-active becoming of the world” (Barad, 2007, p. 394) and therefore “We are of the universe – there is no inside, no outside. There is only intra-acting from within as part of the world in its becoming” (p. 396). Such an intimate recognition where the essence of subjectivity is inseparable from that which forms the subject consequently makes our intra-actions more bound to the totality and therefore more responsible for the “world’s vitality” and all “that might help us and it flourish” (p. 396).

Thus, like the imaginal cells in the chrysalis, we and contributors to this volume are attempting to build a model completely structurally different from

the previous one, connecting to the many individuals globally who are working toward a new, more related form (Hawken, 2007). Indeed, a primary goal in birthing this volume is to add much-needed diversity in voices and views to the expanding social science research on GCC (Dunlap and Bullard, 2015), to highlight how our systemic social ideologies and their corresponding oppressive practices are in conflict with and continue to resist transformation. We conceptualize the existing Systemic Crisis of GCC herein addressed as the liquefying, indefensible caterpillar. In our second volume, *Emergent Possibilities for Global Sustainability* (Godfrey and Torres, 2016), we present the practices emerging from the goop of the current crisis, myriad unfolding butterflies.

### **Locating ourselves: intersectionality as holography**

In holography, interacting beams of light create an “interference pattern,” reflecting the information to be recorded on a plate, known as the hologram (Morgan, 1997, p. 75), with the object beam directed to the subject and the reference beam directed to the recording medium. The recording is then an encoding of these patterns of light – seemingly random variations in density and intensity on the surface of the medium. Remarkably, the hologram provides a more three-dimensional representation of the matter under consideration and any portion may be used to view and reconstruct the whole. That is, splitting the portraiture in half will give you two whole scenes of the hologram, although in smaller versions. This distributed nature of holograms has been used, therefore, as a metaphor to communicate the complexity and simultaneity of the brain and organizations (Morgan, 1997) as well as individual identity (Holvino, 2012).

Holograms, however, are snapshots in time and place, an interference pattern that is situated within a particular context and is only indistinguishable from the original when lit similarly. As rapidly shifting social constructions, we must find the correct key matched to the original light source to recapture its unique nature, to ‘see.’ We offer that intersectionality is *the* holographic process. As Vivian May states, it is “heuristic in nature,” enabling users to gain insight into that which was previously obscured, one-dimensional, or nebulous (May, 2015, p. 19). From this perspective the emphasis is on what intersectionality “does or can do, not simply towards its definitional status as a noun” (May, 2015, p. 19). For us, *doing* intersectionality means embracing the dual foci of theory and praxis as mutually constitutive and necessary to creating the interference pattern required to both render a deeper, more complete image and revisit the scene that has been frozen in time and place. While similar terms have been used, such as Crenshaw’s description of intersectionality as a “prism” (May, 2015, p. 19), or Collins’ “matrix of domination,” here hologram is most appropriate as we have attempted to engage intersectionality heuristically, throughout all aspects of the book.



## Intersectionality theory: locating ourselves in the Anthropocene

Through our use of intersectional theory and analysis we have sought to not only engage with the core social constructions of identity represented by race, ethnicity, social class, gender, sexuality, and nationality; we also extend it to the imagined divide between the material and the social worlds as manifested by the continual emergence and creation of GCC. Taking our cue from Carbado (2013), we recognize that as a theory, intersectionality “Is never done, nor exhausted by its prior articulations and movement; it’s always already an analysis-in-progress” (p. 304). Therefore, like others before us, we seek to move intersectionality “to engage an ever-widening range of experiences and structures of power,” including calling for matter “to matter” (Barad, 2008, p. 120).

Given that intersectionality is not committed to particular “subjects nor to identities” but “to marking and mapping the production and contingency of both” (Carbado, 2013, p. 815) and to recognizing the act of doing so from given perspectives, we believe the application of intersectionality theory to GCC is essential in order to begin to fully conceptualize the complexity of how the social and natural worlds intersect. For us, intersectionality theory is the object or illumination beam focused on the systemic ideologies and the corresponding structural inequalities and oppressive practices undergirding GCC. Exposing and illuminating them to “reveal how power works in diffuse and differentiated ways through the creation and deployment of overlapping identity categories” (Cho et al., 2013, p. 797), both in relation to and intersecting with GCC.

More specifically, in building upon Barad (2007) and applying intersectionality theory to the social–material divide so that we explicitly include matter – in terms of the climate, environment, our physical bodies, and other beings – we recognize it as inseparable to experiential reality, and hence of any intersectional analysis. While Anna Kaijser and Annica Kronsell (2014) in their pioneering work on intersectionality and GCC propose that “questions such as ‘How is nature represented?’” or “How are relations between humans and the environment portrayed?” [should] be addressed in any intersectional analysis of climate change” (p. 426), we argue that, regardless of the topic under examination, humans *are* nature and are inseparable from the environment and therefore such an intersection should ideally always be taken into account.

Lykke (2009) also makes a link between Barad’s work and intersectionality in her call for greater attention to be given to the “human/nature’ or earth–other axis” (p. 39). In fact she goes so far as to state that the “human/earth–other axis has been suspiciously neglected in current feminist debates on intersectionality” (p. 39), representing “a problematic anthropocentrism” (p. 40). Ultimately, we recognize that all aspects of the social and the material are always intersecting regardless of what term is used with the options being many as in “entangled” (Barad, 2007), “porosity” (Tuana, 2008), “cosynthesis” (Kwan, 1997), “interconnectivity” (Valdes, 1995, p. 26), “multidimensionality” (Mutua, 2006, p. 370),

and “assemblages” (Puar, 2007) (see Carbado, 2013, pp. 815–816) although, for us, intersectionality more than suffices.

Illuminating the intra-action between the social and material is vital given that the human body in particular, and the material world in general, has been so theoretically deconstructed to the point of apparent invisibility and forgetting. This is alarmingly ironic given that at no other time in human history has the body’s welfare and the welfare of all life been in a more precarious state. Obviously, the two issues – the theoretical erasure of matter and the ecological state of the planet – are not separate in that the seduction of technology and the ‘cyborg-self’ allows for the illusionary dissolution of the material by blurring the lines between where technology can take our minds and where our bodies physically remain with their ineradicable need for air, water, and food. It is also for this reason that we assert the primacy of intersectionality in analyzing the complexity of GCC and the concurring acts of ecological-social destruction (Godfrey, 2012; Kaijser and Kronsell, 2014).

Indeed, our physical bodies serve not just as cultural canvasses upon which are writ identity categories, but have tangible physical responses to all that is around us. Other social theorists, feminists in particular, are conceptually engaging anew with matter, with nature, with physical bodies, even though it has apparently become necessary to assert that “Women *have* bodies; these bodies have pain as well as pleasure” (Alaimo and Hekman, 2008, p. 4, italics in original). Of course, from an intersectional perspective such a statement is essentially meaningless without unpacking all the ways in which ‘women’ are socially constructed and all the corresponding ways in which identity categories such as race, ethnicity, social class, gender, and sexual orientation imbue a body with differential meanings, hence experiences including those of pain and pleasure.

We are mindful of the ways in which theories and their desired corresponding praxes can lose their original intention as they evolve and travel (Said, 1983; see also Carbado, 2013) or just become a

buzzword ... reified into a formula merely to be mentioned, being largely stripped of the baggage of concretion, of context and history.... By just mentioning other “differences” besides “gender”, the work to be done continues to be delegated to the respective “others.”

(Knapp, 2005, p. 255)

This is especially concerning as the initial intention to create progressive social change through a commitment to the ideals of democratic social justice, to take up “the social problems that most affected those most harmed by inequalities – poverty, poor education, substandard healthcare, inadequate housing, and violence – all became rethought through a lens of intersecting power relations of race, class, and gender” (Collins, 2009, p. viii), has instead “been systematically depoliticized” (Bilge, 2013, p. 405), made “colorblind” and “whitened” (Carbado, 2013).

We do not wish to flatten identity, nor intersectionality itself. Neither do we seek to take away from the importance of intersectionality’s genealogy as we

recognize Crenshaw's (1989, 1991) initial articulation of the term to demonstrate how the founding social categories of race, gender, and social class intersect, are consequently transformed, and are, therefore, in fact, inseparable. We wish to honor intersectionality's lenses as being ground by the struggle in body and mind of a "broader women's movement where Chicanas and other Latinas, native women and Asian women ... [were] at the forefront of raising claims about the interconnectedness of race, class, gender and sexuality in their everyday lived experience" (Collins, 2011, p. 91) by including the physical places and spaces their bodies inhabit as salient for analysis.

By including our environments as a 'category' or 'phenomena' for consideration – in calling for matter to matter – and explicitly linking to GCC works, we seek to add to intersectionality's interdisciplinary application and push "the theoretical boundaries" (Carbado, 2013, p. 841). We are, as Carbado (2013) proposed in building off Said's work, encouraging "movement [that] might radicalize and reinvigorate" while maintaining connection to the "initial articulation" (p. 812). The disparities, disproportionalities, and vulnerabilities we experience – those seemingly random variations between and among us – are, we offer, the holographic imprints and encoding generated by macro-systemic forces that include the physical world. Nevertheless, as with any theoretical lens, what is looked at is always partial, situated from a particular social position, hence perspective. These perspectives, as Peter Grzanka (2014) says of Haraway's situated knowledges (Haraway, 1988), "are not disinterested: they are knowledges made for doing something-truths with a purpose" (Grzanka, 2014, p. xxiii). Our purpose here is to address the creation and maintenance of inequalities as they intersect with the production and perpetuation of GCC.

### **Intersectionality praxis: recording the systemic crisis**

This volume and its companion are acts of political intervention and intersectional praxis. Carbado (2013) describes intersectionality as "a method and a disposition, a heuristic and analytic tool" and that most fundamentally "intersectionality is what intersectionality does" (p. 312). Alternately stated, intersectionality is not just a theory, it is praxis: at once "*a practice* and a *political intervention*" (Luft and Ward, 2009, p. 10, italics in original). In a loosely holographic manner, we have attempted to be 'what intersectionality does' by bringing the most compelling issue humanity has ever created and resultantly encountered into the heart of intersectional analysis: global climate change.

There is no longer any doubt that the global climate is changing and that this change is as a result of human activity, and that the warming of the planet is occurring at a much faster rate than has previously been predicted or than what has naturally occurred over the last 1000 years (Bauer and Beckman, 2015). From the Pope, to the United Nations, to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), to world leaders, to new scientific studies, to news headlines, to citizen movements, there is a growing global awareness and discussion that GCC, as well as all the destructive activities that contribute to and

result from its creation such as the burning of fossil fuel, deforestation, industrial agriculture, ocean pollution, ecosystem destruction, species extinction, and high rates of consumption unevenly distributed, must be addressed (McNall, 2011).

Yet, other than mostly talk, the only apparent changes are those that are increasingly criminalizing dissent by attempting to “silence any who resist” (Hedges, 2014, p. 2) society’s profit-driven agenda, whether that resistance be directed specifically at GCC as in the action taken by environmentalist Tim deChristopher, founder of Peaceful Uprising, or whether it be directed at structural racism and police brutality as in #BlackLivesMatter. These examples are emblematic of the systemic crisis of the Anthropocene. We recognize that progressive change will not happen without a struggle that is in essence a “battle for ideas as well as a battle for power” (Hedges, 2014, p. 2). As Marx observed, the production of ideas is inseparable from the economic means of production that manifests as social power and control. Society’s narrative separation between the social and natural worlds – what Klein (2014) refers to as our “cognitive dissonance” (p. 2) and Einstein called our “delusion of consciousness” – persists despite mounting evidence. Indeed, we as a society not only continue in the same manner but are doing so with increased gusto given that a capitalist economy demands ever-increasing growth.

In the midst of the metamorphic goop and the battle between the dying caterpillar and awakening imaginal cells of the butterfly, we birth this volume. We focus on the ‘systemic crisis of GCC’ and the intersectional ways in which GCC is being caused, addressed, denied, understood, and experienced on the macro levels, as well as on the micro levels, and how such ‘situated knowledges’ can ultimately be applied to the proliferation of imaginal cells. From its very conception, our purpose has been to increase knowledge, understanding, and insight into the topics at hand as well as to inspire awareness of, engagement with, and commitment to social justice projects and practices around the world in particular as they intersect with issues of GCC.

Patricia Hill Collins, social theorist and contributing developer of intersectionality, observes that intersectional analysis “is both staunchly interdisciplinary and committed to claiming the much-neglected space of praxis” (Collins, 2009, p. vii). Thus, a core concern for us as editors was to gather voices from across countries, disciplines, ideologies, cosmologies, and myriad socially constructed identities in what has been termed “anthology-making” (Keating, 2002, p. 9) and “spiritual activism” (p. 19), seeing the volumes as simultaneously “an alliance making tool” (p. 16) and mechanisms for building a “transformative, coalitional consciousness” (p. 6) among dispersed imaginal cells.

As the recording medium upon which we have captured the subject, these volumes intentionally link the ideological, hence the socially constructed worlds, with the material. The elemental segmentation of this volume into Chaos, Air, Earth, Fire, and Water represents this connection, echoed by the Pagan chant “Earth my body, Water my blood, Air my breath, and Fire my Spirit.” Furthermore, rather than place ideas or contributions in hierarchal relationship to one another and create chapter ‘ghettos’ segregating people of color,

the disabled/unwell, the poor or other ‘vulnerable groups’ into special sections, these are distributed throughout. It is an explicit choice to demonstrate the material world’s intra-action with the social world, and to confront and confound the taxonomic dichotomies typically used to grapple with GCC. Drawing from our holographic metaphor, we have explicitly attempted to capture the interference patterns we experience in a manner that problematizes statuses and their relationship to each other. As a political intervention we embrace the fact that “there is no hierarchy of oppressions” (Lorde, 1983, p. 9) and our use of the elements may be said to reflect an anti-categorical approach to intersectionality (McCall, 2005).

Similarly, our desire to inspire social justice action and intervention meant employing an “intracategorical” approach whereby contributors attempted to illuminate the experiences and perspectives of “a single category at a neglected point of intersection” (McCall, 2005, p. 1780). Our decision to include voices and perspectives not normally seen in either a social science volume nor in works addressing GCC reflects our recognition that it is through a more holistic, embodied engagement with ourselves, each other, and our world that we will see more clearly how our actions defy both democratic social justice and a livable planet. As well, such inclusion better positions us to imagine what we might do collectively and in solidarity to create authentic radical change.

As a truly interdisciplinary work, contributors approach GCC from various standpoints – as artists, activists, cartoonists, dancers, educators, journalists, playwrights, poets, researchers, and survivors – and contributors necessarily had varying comfort with explicating climate injustice intersectionally. This variability re-creates tensions inherent in *doing* intersectionality: how many categories should one examine and does increasing the number to the point of using ‘et cetera’ diminish the efficacy of the theory or the ability to engage in a coherent analysis (Cho et al., 2013, p. 787; Chang and Culp, 2002)? It has been noted that engaging multiple categories simultaneously is complex (McCall, 2005) and must reflect the issues under consideration, including their potential prominence in our individual lives and our potential ‘blindness’ (Carbado, 2013). While there are differences within and across the contributions in terms of how each has chosen to apply intersectionality and how intricately the matrices of oppression and privilege have been unpacked and thickly described, our goal as editors has been to ensure that all pieces are in dynamic relationship with the elements as an indication of their presence.

In addition, we wanted to include topics that were not only important but that have been given inadequate attention elsewhere or that had been given attention in a way that was not as accessible as it could have been. Hence, an explicit criterion for inclusion was whether an intersectional analysis was directly engaged or at least engaged in ways that we would both want to teach and that we felt students and others would want to read. Indeed, as the project developed, our mantra to contributors who wrote pieces became ‘tell a story,’ as in ‘take your reader by the hand’ in terms of ‘intersecting with them’ as opposed to ‘writing at them.’ This emphasis sought to further invite contributors to