

# The Anti-Anthropocene Library

*Respectfully submitted by Laura Florence ~  
invited resident librarian for the Summer Library at  
Street Road Artists' Space in August of 2021*



“We must say of the universe that it is a communion  
of subjects, not a collection of objects.”  
—Thomas Berry

“I’m not alone  
and we’re all the same  
and the world won’t end  
it will just change its name.”

—David Byrne

“What do you love too much to lose?”

—Robin Wall Kimmerer

## Welcome to the Anti-Anthropocene Library

What is a Library? What is Anthropocene? What is Anti-Anthropocene? Here are some definitions:

**Library** *noun* 1.a. A place in which literacy and artistic materials, such as books, periodicals, newspapers, pamphlets, and prints, are kept for reading or reference. b. A collection of such materials, esp. when systematically arranged for reference. c. An institution or foundation maintaining such a collection. 2. A commercial establishment that lends books for a fee. 3. A series or set of books issued by a publisher. 4. An organized collection of recorded data arranged for ease of use. (OED)

**Library** *noun* 1.a. A form of gifting. b. A manifestation/action of sharing 2. A troubling of notions of ownership, a challenge to the impulse/desire to own, covet, claim (often disguised as “preserving, protecting, establishing, saving for future use/education/posterity/profit) 3. A physical presentation which confounds ideas of choice, order, control, authorship, viewpoint, premise, tradition. 4. An invitation to become deeply curious and to find questions without expectation of finding answers. (LF)

**Librarian** *noun* A person who is a specialist in library work. (OED)

**Librarian** *noun* 1. A human and/or non-human person/being who presents materials for consideration and may or may not disrupt order and may or may not contaminate a collection by the very action of collecting. 2. An implicated arbiter of stuff. (LF)

**Collection** *verb/noun* 1. The act or process of collecting 2. A group of objects or works to be seen, studied, or kept together. 3. An accumulation; deposit. (OED)

**Collection** *noun* 1.a. An assemblage of items intended to catalyze thought and reflection. b. a gathering of materials in which, by association and proximity, may prompt or provoke response, change and action. (LF)

**Gift** *noun* 1. Something that is bestowed voluntarily and without compensation. 2. The act, right, or power of giving. (OED)

**Gift** *noun* Earth. (LF)

**Anthropo** *prefix* Human being (OED)

**Anthropocentric** *adjective* 1. Regarding man as the central fact or final aim of the universe. 2. Interpreting reality exclusively in terms of human values and experience. (OED)

**Anthropocene** *adjective* Relating to or denoting the current geological age, viewed as the period during which human activity has been the dominant influence on climate and the environment. (OED)

**Anthropocene** *noun* The current geological age, viewed as the period during which human activity has been the dominant influence on climate and the environment. (OED)

**Anthropocene** *adjective/noun* 1.a. Relating to or denoting the human as primary to all other life. b. the egotistical assumption that all life revolves around and is in service to the human species. c. A questionable naming of an indeterminate period in time. (LF)

**Anti-** *preposition/adjective* Opposed to; against. (OED)

**Anti-Anthropocene** *noun* 1.a. A countering to the anthropocentrism of human beings. b. A de-centering of the human in the universe esp. as it relates to Earth. c. An invitation for the human to join with, reconnect, reposition within and among life on Earth. d. An attempt to de-other the human. (LF)

## A Guide to the Anti-Anthropocene Library

This collection of items attempts to represent Earth's gifting to and for human consideration. All items presented here were freely given without demand or extraction or expectation of any reciprocity. All that was required (of me) was to remain ever-vigilant and accepting of what I came upon and to recognize the gift. This collection is, in turn, being offered now to you.

Please feel free to "check out" any of the items from the library. "Checking out" an item from the Anti-Anthropocene Library is easy! It does not require a special card or externally authorized membership. You are invited to regard the items presented, to touch, handle and explore using any of the senses available to you as you prefer. You may remove, carry, keep, pass on, share, drop, forget, treasure, leave in place, photograph, rearrange and/or add to. You may re-gift to Earth—some suggested methods are to bury, burn, or compost. (There is an Anti-Anthropocene Compost on site—please ask for information).

You are encouraged to consider the ordinariness and the utter miracle of the existence of each item. Each contains the entire history of the Earth. Each item effortlessly holds infinite stories, art, poetry, music, science, and boundless wonder.

The Anti-Anthropocene Library is a generative generous project which encourages giving without directives, conditions, hitches, caveats, bargains or strings. Everyone is enjoined and relational to all of the items.

The library attempts to be innocent, guileless, honest, and unabashed, as well as to present an indictment of the term and concept and consequence of Anthropocene.

The Anti-Anthropocene eschews sectioning time as past, present, future. It denies any/all cene-isms. It tangles the notion of linear

time. It envelopes, accepts, absorbs all time. It assumes freedom from the binary of positive/negative. It does not recognize difference between this or that, us and them, nature and non-nature, human and animal, human and nature.

To deny, pretend to dismantle or refute the implicit Anthropo (human) cene-ness (time/now) of this library/collection is futile and I do not resist it. However, I do propose the Anti-Anthropocene Library essentially asks that we de-centralize our Anthro-selves and question the assumed essentiality of human existence and our presumed necessary/inevitable/rightful survival/continuance. It hopefully prompts you to trouble the idea that success of life on Earth is synonymous with the success of human life on Earth. Earth, in sum, exists quite naturally in an anti-anti-realm—all life being wholly and inherently ordered, inter-connected, and gifted.

## Some quotes: a sort of bibliography

**Robin Wall Kimmerer** — *Braiding Sweetgrass*

"...If gifts and responsibilities are one, then asking 'What is our responsibility?' is the same as asking 'What is our gift?' It is said only humans have the capacity for gratitude. This is among our gifts."

"A gift comes to you through no action of your own, free, having moved toward you without your beckoning. It is not a reward; you cannot earn it, or call it to you, or even deserve it. And yet it appears. Your only role is to be open-eyed and present."

**Lewis Hyde** — *The Gift*

"The only essential is this: the gift must always move...the gift that is not used will be lost, while the one that is passed along remains abundant..."

**Donna Haraway** — *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*

"...staying with the trouble requires learning to be truly present, not as a vanishing pivot between awful or edenic past and apocalyptic or salvific futures, but as mortal critters entwined in myriad unfinished configurations of places, times, matter, meanings...learning to stay with the trouble of living and dying in response-ability on a damaged earth."

**Merlin Sheldrake** — *Entangled Life*

"The study of relationships can be confusing. Almost all are ambiguous."



*PLEASE COMPOST*

