The Anthropocene

Key terms

Hyperobject: "entities whose physical and temporal scale and complexity overwhelm both traditional conceptions of what a thing is and what 'understanding' it could mean" (Clark 7)

Imaginary, or social imaginary: "the values, institutions, laws, and symbols common to a particular society"

1) Problems of definition: the first 3 pages of Clark's "The Anthropocene" give what is effectively a review of literature, or a review of term. Summarise the key points of 2 of the critics Clark references, for example, Tom Cohen (2011), Timothy Morton (2013), Tobias Menely and Margaret Ronda (2013), Ulrich Bech (1999), Slavoj Žižek (2010), Dipesh Chakravarty (2009).

   Finally, what are Clark's views on the term and how will this article use it?

2) Think through the implications of the change from perceiving "action" as coming from "man as an individual or subject" or even from "groups…assemblies, parties, nations" to "action" generated by "enormous and dense tectonic plates of humanity." (4)

   Briefly, trace the motivation of "action" in *Word for World is Forest*. This is especially proactive considering "But I like to see things in perspective, from the top down" (Le Guin 14) and Serres' "seen from above" (qtd. in Clark 4). Draw on the continued discussion of the "whole Earth image" (pp 5 and 6) and "thinking or acting as a species" (pp 16 -

3) Consider Allenby and Sarewitz's "three levels of complexity in the relation of our species to technics," as presented by Clark (6).

What are the benefits of three level of complexity? Hint: "The Anthropocene blurs and even scrambles some crucial categories by which people have made sense of the world…" (Clark 9) and "the most prominent feature of the Anthropocene, it is perhaps because there is no simple or unitary object directly to confront, or delimit, let alone to 'fix' or to 'tackle'" (Clark 10).
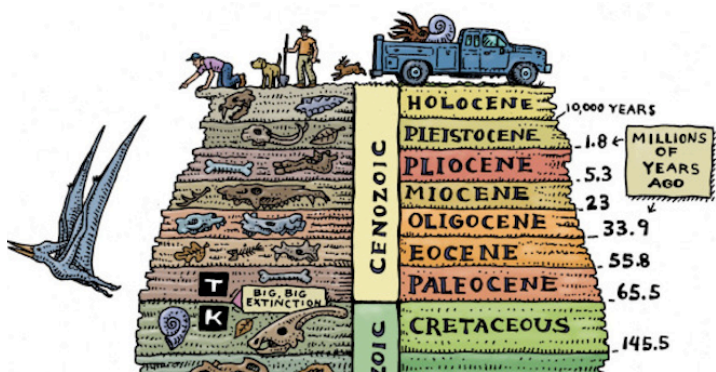
What are the drawbacks, for example, "Level III paralysis" (11)? Does *Word for World* relate to this model of complexity?

4) If the work of an ecocritic is to "reimagine" "the imaginary of his or her culture," is The Word for World is Forest an ecocritical text? If so, how? If not, why not?