

Day 2 7 March 2024: Dancing with Dualisms & Interspecies Sensings

Objectives for today:

Starting a conversation about western modern dualisms and stories of their rupture transcendence
And the argument that we are always already interspecies

9.am- 9.30am Metallimiehenkuja 2 Kajuutta 112 [Coffee and settling in & initial check in round](#)

9.30 am-10-30 am

Discussion of reading

Presentation of walking exercise for this afternoon

15 min Break

10.45-11.45 am Dances with Dualisms (or we have always been interspecies) Part 1

(If time deep listening exercise)

12.30 -13.30 Lunch

13.30-15.30 GET OUTSIDE! Dérive with Dualisms & Interspecies Story for discussion next week

HWK reading, walking mushrooms storytelling

[Unruly Edges: Mushrooms as Companion Species: For Donna Haraway](#)

[Anna Tsing Environmental Humanities \(2012\) 1 \(1\): 141–154.](#)

<https://doi.org/10.1215/22011919-3610012>

Responses to Naser Al Sughaiyer's essay



They are complex webs of entangled relations intimately implicating us into their processes of metabolism, decay and growth.

In this hot compost heap of bird-human remnants, my body has slowly been awakening to the existing and escalating sights, smells, and sounds of birds and bones everywhere I drive and everywhere I walk.

Not only the remnants of birds' bodies imprint themselves on our vehicles and roads, but also in our memories, senses and relations numbing them and widening further our sense of separability towards our neighbor birds.

When I am asked what I do for a "living", I prefer to trouble the question and ask myself: *What do you do for "living" and "dying"?*

My hopes of escaping my complex humanity into beauty and purity became then muddled with the disturbing sight and smell of decay, dying and death.

However, our efforts to trace problems often lead us to bypassing the work that needs to be done, and instead leaping towards solutions that reaffirm our goodness and innocence.



Response-ability gets shattered into micro response-abilities with every shattered piece of the bird's body.

To even think about responding or acknowledging a dying bird becomes a hopeless fleeting thought.

If all else fails, what might a world without birds and a neighborhood without neighbors be like?

Related material: Living Non Living and Queer Death Studies



<https://queerdeathstudies.net>

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/08164649.2020.1811952>

[Queer Death Studies Network](#) (QDSN) was officially launched in November 2016 at the G16: Swedish National Gender Research Conference in Linköping and has been vividly developing since then. The co-founders of the network are: Nina Lykke, Marietta Radomska, Tara Mehrabi, Annika Jonsson, Line Henriksen and Varpu Alasuutari.

The network constitutes a space for researchers, students, artists, activists, and other practitioners who critically and (self) reflexively investigate and challenge conventional normativities, assumptions, expectations, and regimes of truths that are brought to life and made evident by death, dying, and mourning.

The conventional engagements with the questions of death, dying and mourning are insufficient and reductive: they are often governed by the normative notions of the subject; interhuman and human/nonhuman bonds; family relations and communities; rituals; and finally, experiences of grief, mourning, and bereavement. Moreover, these engagements are often embedded in constraining beliefs in life/death divides, constructed along the lines of conventional religious and/or scientific mind/body dualisms.

Against this background, QDSN serves as a site for 'queering' traditional ways of approaching death both as a subject of study and philosophical reflection, and as a phenomenon to articulate in artistic work or practices of mourning. Here, the notion of 'queer' conveys many meanings. It refers to researching and narrating death, dying and mourning in the context of queer bonds and communities, where the subjects involved/studied/interviewed and the relations they are involved in are recognised as 'queer'. Simultaneously, the term 'queer' can also function as an adverb and a verb, referring thus to the processes of going beyond and unsettling (subverting, exceeding) binaries and given norms, normativities, and constraining conventions. In other words, 'queer' becomes both a process and a methodology that is applicable and exceeds the focus on gender and sexuality as its exclusive concerns.

If you would like to **learn more about Queer Death Studies** as a research field, we highly recommend you to check out [this article available in OPEN ACCESS](#).

E3002 Story Ecologies 2024

Dances with Dualisms
(or we have always been interspecies)
Part 1



Simryn Gill: *A Small Town At The Turn of The Century*
Image rights of the artist/ Roslyn Oxley Gallery Sydney 2000

This is where I want to lead us in next wks

From critiques of dualisms,
to ecological story telling

CRITIQUES
OF CATEGORIES, DUALISMS

HUMAN / NON-HUMAN
MALE / FEMALE
MIND / BODY
LIVING / NON-LIVING
ACTIVE / PASSIVE
INTELLECT / MATERIAL
WRITING / MAKING
SCIENCE / ART

etc etc



Objective of part one of this lecture



To show from critical stories of art history and contemporary visual culture the attempts that Western modern culture have made to maintain dualisms, as well as the ways in which **boundary transgressions have always occurred** along the way.

The argument being that **we have always been interspecies**

(This is a critical presentation. However, its OK to like artworks **even** if they are problematic.)

Dualism and Monotheism

“Human exceptionalism blinds us. Science has inherited stories about human mastery from the great monotheistic religions.” Anna Tsing
Unruly Edges

Adam’s Task*

Naming the animals and creating orders of things. A recurring trope in Judeo-Abrahamic monotheistic narratives and imaginings.

Adam Naming the Animals
from the *Northumberland Bestiary*, 1250–60, English.
Pen-and-ink drawings tinted with body color and translucent washes on parchment, 8 1/4 x 6 3/16 in. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Ms. 100, fol. 5v.
Getty Museum

*Hearn Vicki

Adam's Task: Calling Animals by Name
Skyhorse 2007



But how human is language?



A Dry Rising Main Inlet recalls a *Burung Sewab Tabu* (Asian Koel) Sun-shadow puppet of found internet bird. Photographed where the bird was last heard. Along the railtracks at Tanglin Halt. Railtrack Songmaps Lucy Davis and Kee Ya Ting, 2016



Burung Tuwu / Koel recording by Zai Tang

But how human is language?



[Talking in trees Alfan Sa'at Antennae Issue 54](#)
Migrant Ecologies Singapore Biennale 2022-3

'Vegetal references abound in Malay, an Austronesian language spoken by close to 300 million people living in Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei, and Singapore. In this essay, I examine how Malay words have been shaped by plants, namely through analysis of a selected sample of 1) numeral classifiers, 2) concrete nouns, and 3) abstract nouns and other linguistic constructions for conceptual terms. Plants creep into the lexicon, as mimetic traces, compound words, and taxonomic elements. Through the examples chosen, I intend to illustrate the decomposition of the dualism between nature and culture in the Malay language'

Adam's Task* ...already in trouble!

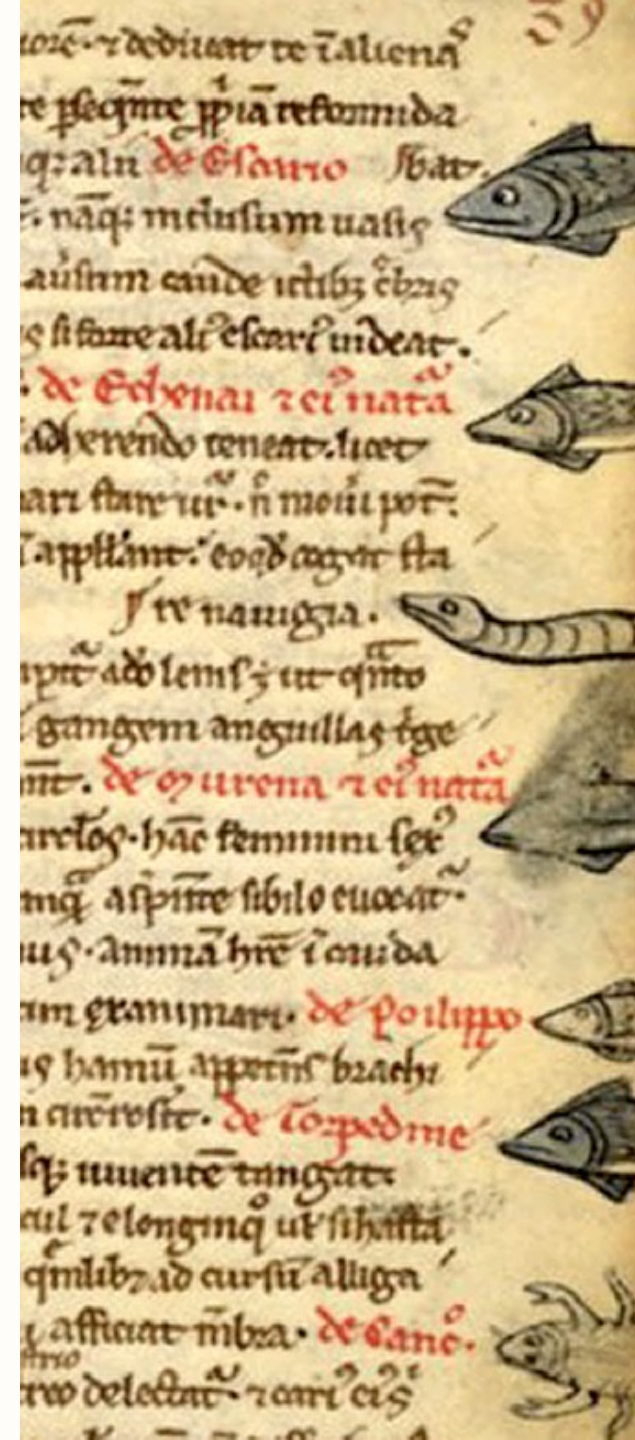
... as boundaries slip on the parchment, non-humans out-perform the artist's intentions...and bestiary critters have a life of their own



Medieval bestiary out of frame

A Variety of Fish swimming onto the manuscript page
Bestiary from Northern France C13
Copyright 2004 Biblioteque national de France
<http://bestiary.ca/beasts/beastgallery411.htm#>

England Salisbury *Harley Bestiary* 1230-1240
Copyright British Library 2004
<http://bestiary.ca/beasts/beastgallery411.htm#>



Acts of naming makes for unstable differences & equivalences

Where non-humans come too close, boundaries are maintained via (sometimes sacred) violence



Original text: **“The sheep is a defenseless, placid animal”** British Library Psalter Manuscript 14 century
<http://bestiary.ca/beasts/beast193.htm>



Jan Van Eyck The Ghent Altarpiece:
Adoration of the Lamb 1425-29
Oil on wood, 137,7 x 242,3 cm
Cathedral of St Bavo, Ghent



Original text **“Called ‘simia because it is similar to humans”**
British Library Harley Bestiary MS 4751, Folio 11r 1230-1240
<http://bestiary.ca/beasts/beast148.htm> retrieved 27 September 2010

And Monstrous Things out There!

Recurring Story: outside the garden, outside them
pastoralized orders orders of things, in the desert, in the forest... there be riots!



Detail of a miniature of Anthony being tormented by demons. France, Central and N. W. (Paris and Rouen) Related to the Coëtivy Master approx 1450 to 1485, British Library Open Source Manuscripts Retrieved October 2018



Le livre et la vraie hystoire du bon roy Alixandre 1420-
c 1425

http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Royal_MS_20_B_XX
Retrieved October 2018

'Cereals Domesticated Us': Urban-Rural Architectural & Agricultural Boundary-Maintenance

From the early modern period, human-non human dualities are increasingly ordered serve cities and agriculture. Here are two very early depictions of rural-urban boundary processes, hierarchies and increasingly-intensive government of human bodies, land and creatures including **processes of enclosure of previously common land**.



Ambrogio Lorenzetti,
Peaceful City, detail from
Effects of Good
Government in the City and
in the Country,
Sala della Pace, Palazzo
Pubblico, Siena, Italy, 1338–
1339. Fresco.

Ambrogio Lorenzetti, *Peaceful Country*,
detail from Effects of Good
Government in the City and in the
Country, Sala della Pace, Palazzo
Pubblico, Siena, Italy, 1338–1339.
Fresco.



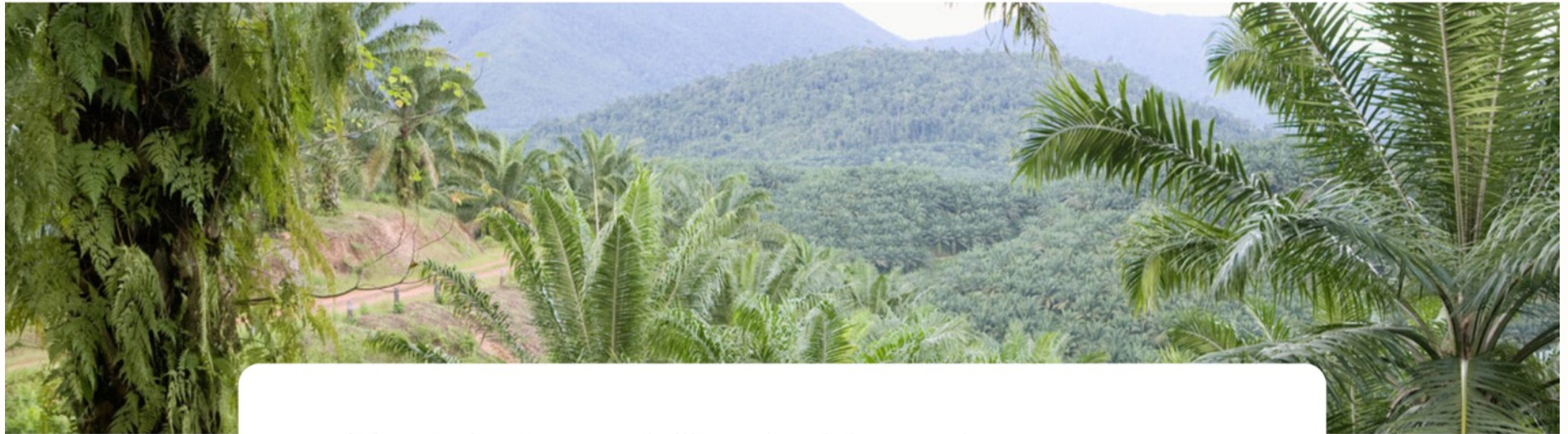
Colonialism/neo-colonialism Contemporary, Dualisms & Boundary-Maintenance

But these resources were not enough to fuel the constant growth, particularly after industrialization, hence settler colonial exploits and the establishment of plantation economies across the globe.

Peaceful Palm Oil or Effects of Good Governance 2018 Once upon a time ... in an anonymous country “over there”

This is Finland’s Neste Oil’s internet-mediatised route to proving well maintained “sustainable” plantations in Malaysia and Indonesia. An orderly clean vision of humanized nature

A **vision without a human presence** at a time when all of us by virtue of the food we eat, the household products we use “becoming palm”

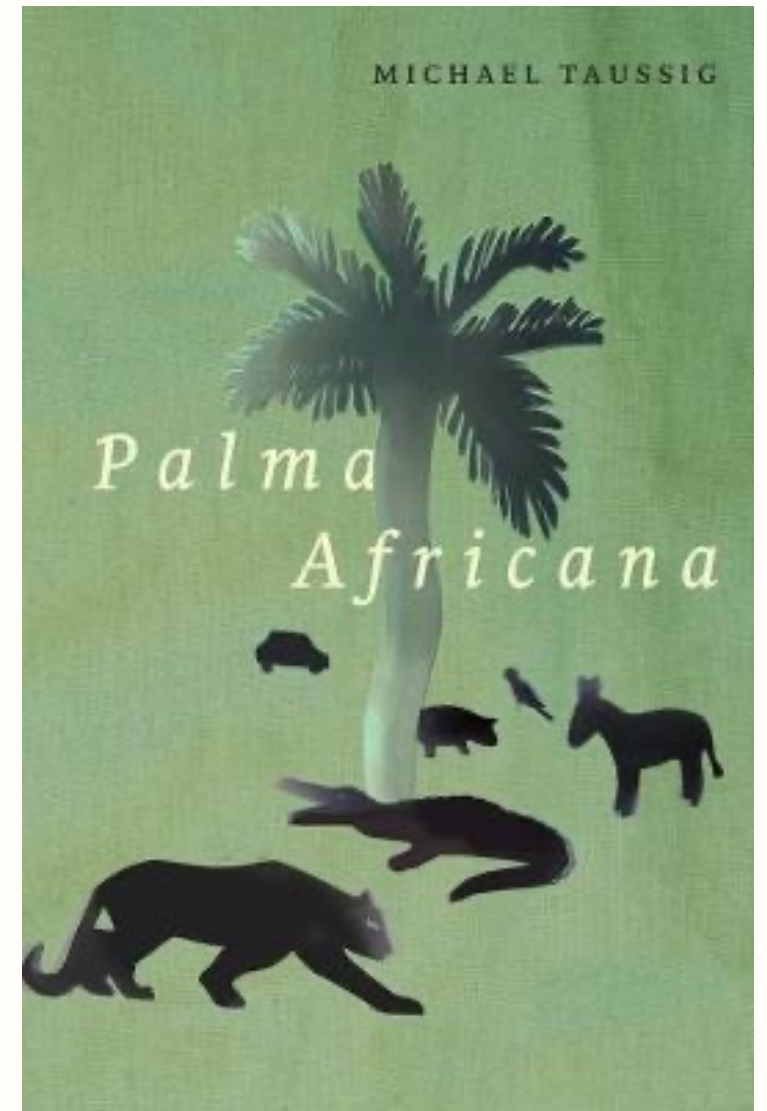
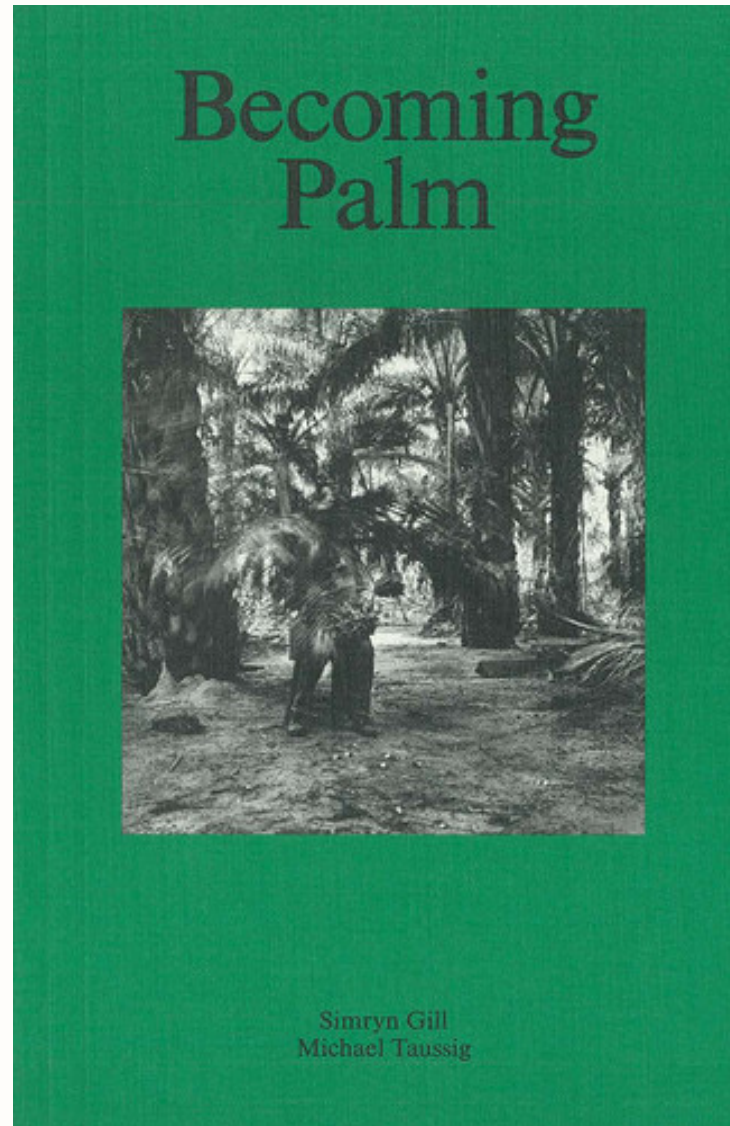


Neste's traceability dashboard

<http://nestetraceabilitydashboard.com>

Retrieved October 2018

Cultures of
the Plantationocene
And Palm Oil



Interspecies becomings within monotheistic imaginings*

Saint Francis' hands flutter and he leans in
Or perhaps how non-humans out-perform artist's intentions and
Giotto's Saint Francis gets drawn into a bird zone

Giotto di Bondone: *Saint Francis Preaching to the Birds*
1297 – 1299 Fresco section
Basilica of Saint Francis of Assisi, Assisi, Italy
270 x 200 cm

* Haraway, Donna: *When Species Meet* Minnesota 2008 p. 35



Strategic immersions, animated landscapes

St F. again
An extended zone of cosmic/energetic interconnections?

Giovanni Bellini
St Francis in Ecstasy 1480-85 Oil on
panel,
120 x 137 cm
Frick Collection, New York



What was humanism about?

Renaissance Humanism: Distance & Proximity: Difference and Equivalence



A re-reading/”rebirth” of Greco-Roman humanism*
Re-situates humans, not gods as the centre of all
knowledge as Pythagorean *man measure of all things*
or as here Leonardo’s version of *Vitruvian Man* or the
architect Vitruvius’ ideal man as measure of
geometry.

Man viewed the centre of all experience and man as
creator of own destiny. Capacity of human
understanding of everything in the world comes
about through learning.

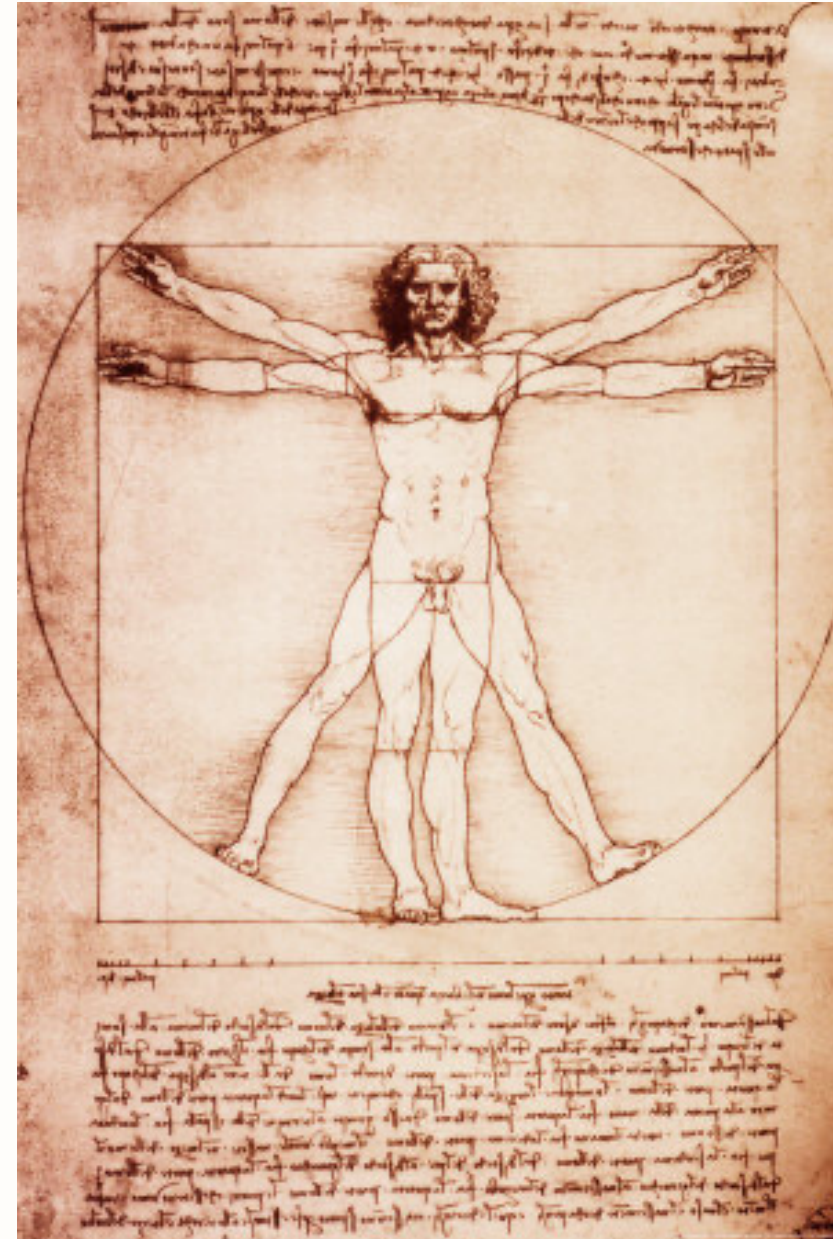
Humanism *also* about human solidarity, fraternity
and eventually democracy.. All humans have this
capacity for learning and self-knowledge

*See also

Lenn Evan Goodman (2003), *Islamic Humanism*, p. 155, Oxford University Press,
Zygon Journal of Religion and Science (non-Greco-Roman humanist
routes http://www.zygonjournal.org//issue2009_3.html

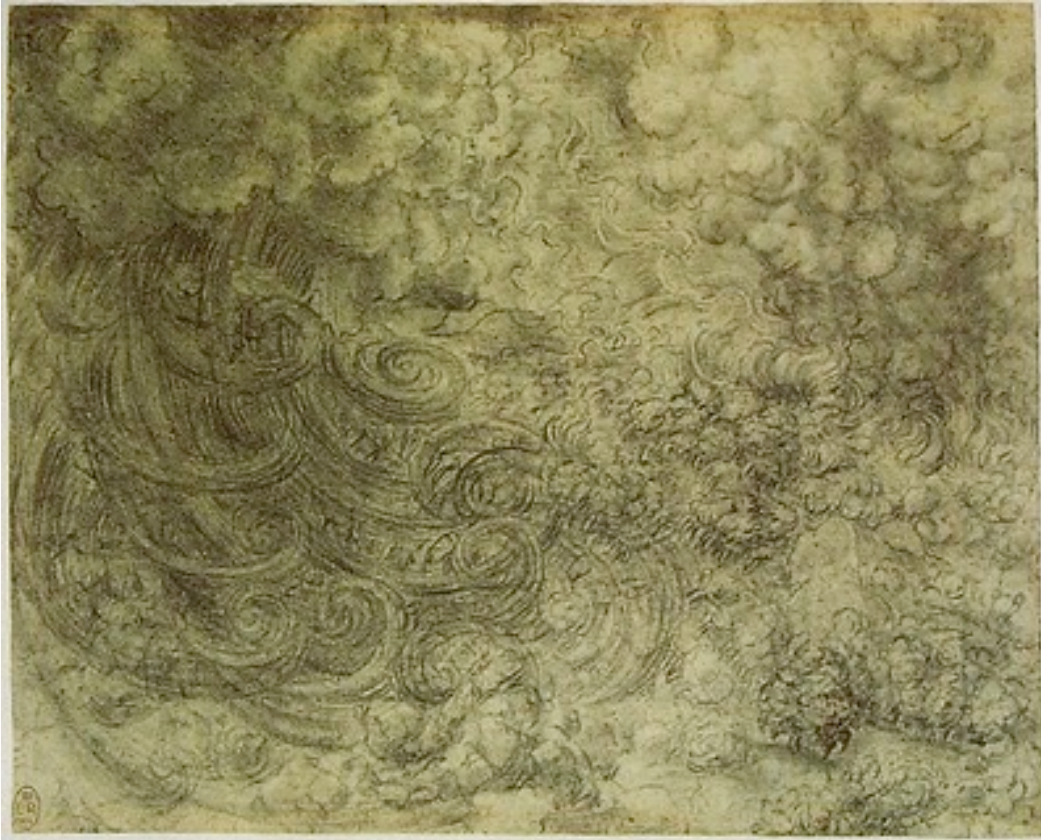
*See also

Tu Wei Ming & Dausaku Ikeda
New Horizons in **Eastern Humanism. Buddhism, Confucianism and a Quest for**
Global Peace IB Tauris 2011



However: desire for cosmic-ecologies, connectivity and equivalence persists.

For example in LDV's deluge drawings and aesthetic equivalences between humans and non-humans which take him elsewhere... as art practice tends to do!



Leonardo Da Vinci *Deluge & Deluge over a city* 1517-18
Black chalk on paper, 163 x 210 mm Royal Library, Windsor

Distance, Difference & The Enlightenment: Rene Descartes & “Cartesian” Dualism and early automata.

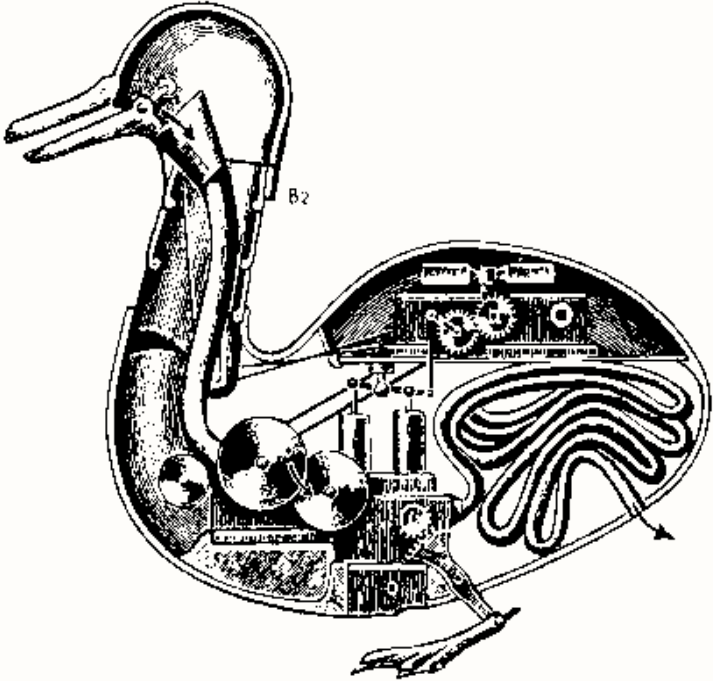


Animals as machines without souls

It seems reasonable since art copies nature and men can make various automata which move without thought that nature should also produce its own automata, much more splendid than artificial ones

From the Letters of Rene Descartes 1646 and 1649.
Letter to Henry More.

Kalof & Fitzgerald eds. *The Animals Reader* Berg 2007 page 61



Jacques de Vaucanson (1709-82)
Mechanical Digesting Duck (Automata)

Stories of Scientific Genius: Enlightenment men of science act (on non-humans)

Biopower, gender dualities are also on display here ... as well as a certain Romance?



Joseph Wright of Derby *Experiment with the Air Pump* c 1768
Oil on canvas, 183 x 244 cm National Gallery, London

18 Century, Industrialised Agricultural Cultivation: Capital & Propriety and dualisms in/and/as Painting

Cf Anna Tsing on the white woman as *plantationocene*-induced maintainer of boundaries; of territory, of hygiene, including race and class hygiene



Thomas Gainsborough *Mr & Mrs Andrews* c 1750 Oil on Canvas 69.8 x 119.4cm

Paintings of orderly colonial landscapes

Colonial technologies dreams of domestication to serve industrializing economies
And painted “Effects of good governance” (before after or during times of pillage) of colonies “over there”.



View of Singapore Town from Government Hill. Photograph of a coloured lithograph of a painting by John Turnbull Thomson c 1856.
National Museum of Singapore

The Romantic Episteme flips some binaries but dualisms remain



Colonial endeavours are complicated as visions of ordered, enlightenment progress are at the same time coloured by dreams of freedom and 'natural man'

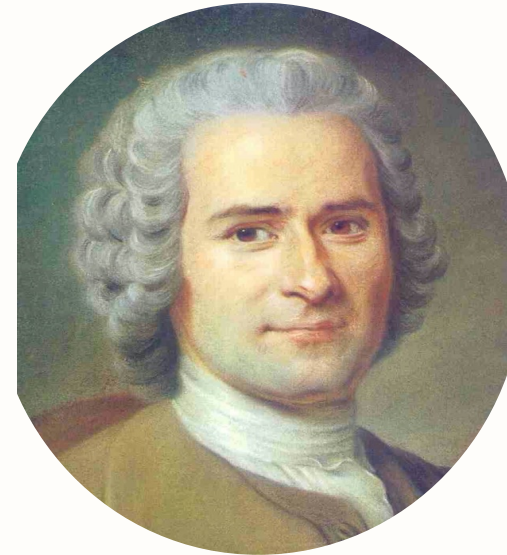
This Freedom is tied to dreams of a 'return' to nature projected onto country-folk at home and 'noble savages' over there.

Dualisms therefore continue but the binary is flipped and the other is deemed positive, original, more true etc

"The barbarous man does not bow his head for the yoke that the civilized man wears without a murmur" (pg 60)

"Nothing is so gentle as man in his primitive state" (pg 44)

Jean Jacques Rousseau
Discourse on the Origin of Inequality
Filiquarian Publishing 2007



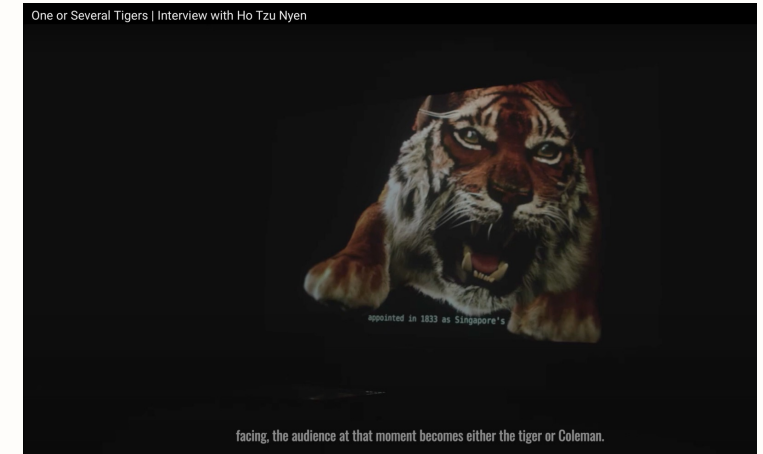
Jean Jacques Rousseau 1712 –1778
Portrait by Maurice Quentin de la Tour

And Colonial Dreams:

Enlightenment rationality meets romantic fantasy on a lost road outside Singapore city



George Coleman's *Road Surveying interrupted in Singapore*. Wood Engraving after Heinrich Leuteman (1824-1905).
Property of National Museum of Singapore



One or Several Tigers | Interview with Ho Tzu Nyen
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0J9JEAMFYHE>

The man-eating tiger
as a border-spectre of
colonial



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http://infopedia.nl.sg/articles/SIP_1081_2007-01-17.html retrieved 11 July 2011

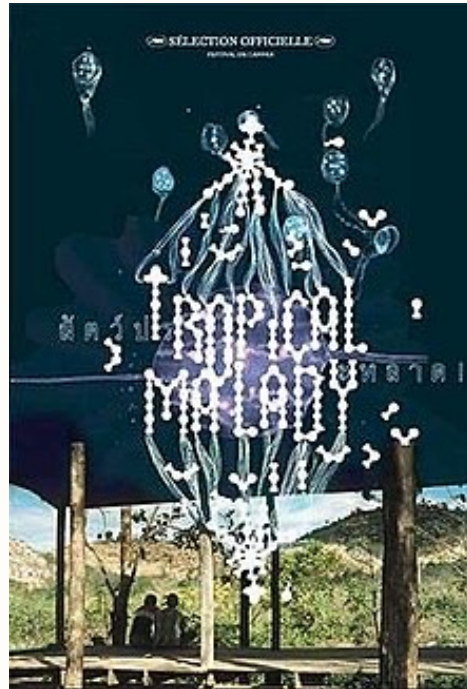
& postcolonial capital



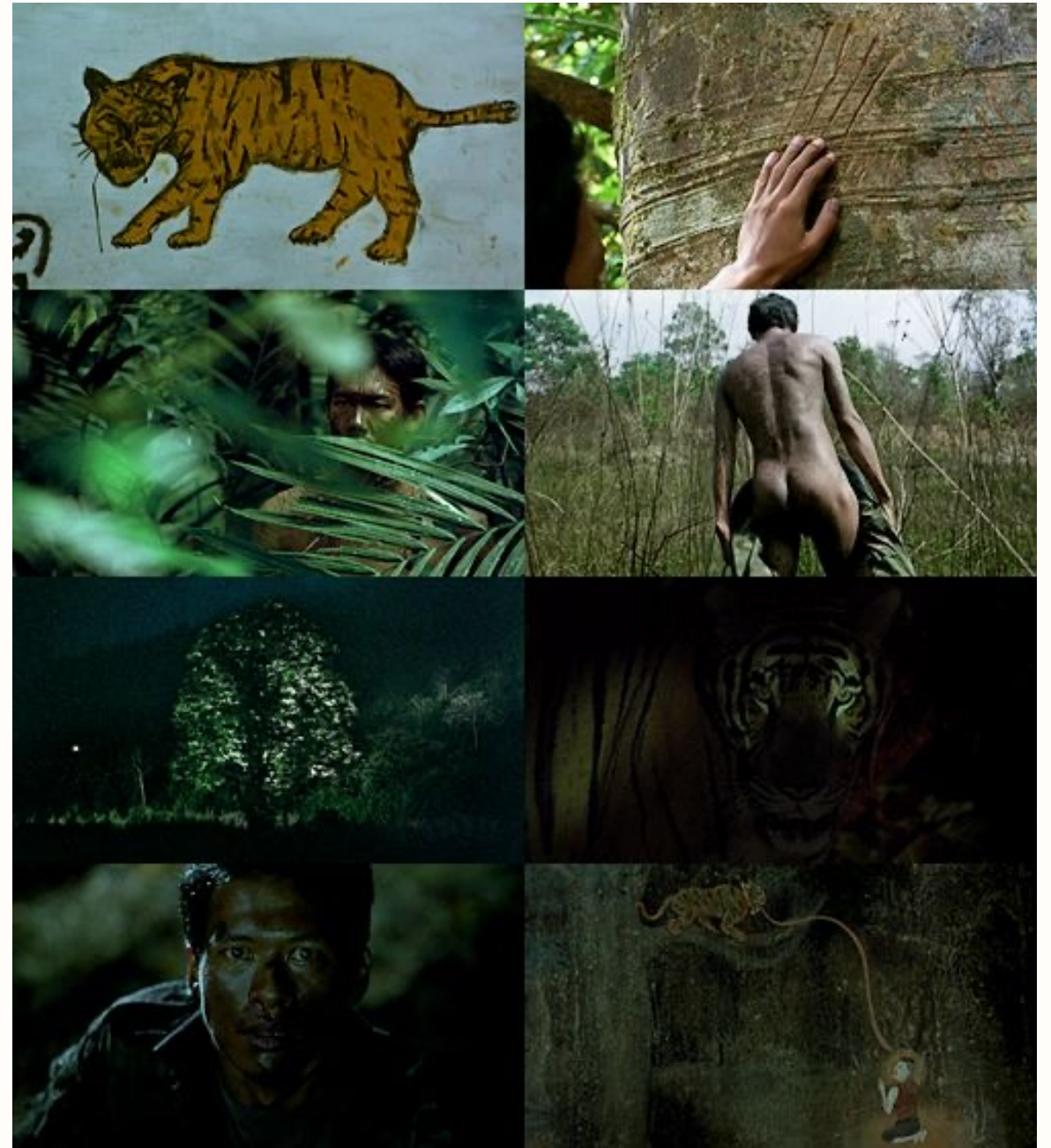
— WWF —
<http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSJAK417952>
<http://cempaka-nature.blogspot.com/2009/02/endangered-tiger-kills-2-loggers-in.html> retrieved 15 September 2010

And resistance in
the form of the
weretiger

Recommended!!
Apichatpong
Weerasethakul's *Tropical
Malady* (2004)



Tropical Malady trailer
<https://www.imdb.com/video/vi286311193/>



Other boundary spectres and accompanying stories

capital incursions, wolf extinctions, folk tales, and nation building





...To be continued

(Western) Modern Dualisms. A Recap:

Compartmentalization and ‘disciplining*’ of binaries (and implicitly hierarchies) between, for example:



Human / Non human

Culture/ Nature

Mind/Body

Intellect/Sensoria

Consciousness/ Matter

Male/ Female

Secularism/Spirit Worlds

Science/Magic

Linguistic/non Linguistic

Sentience/insentience

Living/non-living

Theory/Practice

Science/Arts

Arts/Craft

++ Others?

*Discipline definition

Discipline” is the term that Michel Foucault uses to designate a particular kind of power that operates directly on individual bodies and that may be used as an anchoring point for other types of power.

DEFINITIONS: if this is dualism, what then are ecologies? And what stories do they tell?

More on this next week but a Lucy Davis working definition might be:

Situated, contextual, always in process relations and interconnections and interdependencies of human and non-human environments, natures cultures and politics.

Including ecologies of things apparently out of place

Ernst Haeckel Kunstformen der Natur (1904), plate 93:
Mycetozoa public domain

We will likely come across many definitions of ecologies, *nature-culture* interconnections and politics thereof in this course.

However, as contested* a story to start as any, is Ernst Haeckel as, as many of you will already know, the term **oekologie** was first applied by the 19th century art/scientist and philosopher as a way of thinking about living being's relationships both to organic and inorganic environments.

Of relevance to this course, on urban ecology term has a particular relationship to **placemaking** as it derives etymologically (as does indeed the eco in economy from the **Greek oikos, meaning the basic unit of society, the "household," "home," or "place to live."**)

Haeckel of course is also known for his sublime drawings and paintings of microscopic creatures.

* Haeckel was also like many contemporary artists fond of speculation. Many of his wilder theories have been resoundingly rejected, for example **Haeckel's theories on race, which were were selectively taken up by Nazi ideologues**, even as the Nazi state rejected other aspects of Haeckel practice. **Thus a good reminder before we start how science is and has always been cultured, how culture is inextricable from politics. And how art is never innocent!**

Exercise: Walking while Thawing, Dérive with Dualisms & Interspecies Story

Either this afternoon or in your own time before next week take a walking exercises of around 40 min in a location of your choice



‘The Situationists famously describe the **dérive** as a means of walking meant to break capitalism’s monotony by introducing new experiences. Although traditionally an individual act, this practice is not limited to personal experience as it encourages conscientious and public interaction. The dérive is meant here as a radical intervention against individuation or insular living and as a means of analyzing how we perceive the built environment. This active and participatory experience lends from psychogeography, a practice of exploring the specific effects of a geographical environment on the body. As Guy Debord notes, psycho- geography is to movement, what psychoanalysis is to language. In other words, just as walking reveals the impact on behavior, emotion, connection, and belonging, the influences on thoughts, feelings, and actions are revealed through talking as well.’

[Dérive: Place-making Practices on Foot Adolfo Lagomasino](#)
[Liminalities: A Journal of Performance Studies Vol. 16, No. 4 \(2020\)](#)

To this one might add
that walking is also a practice of multisensorial
multispecies engagement

LD

Exercise: Walking while Thawing, Dérive with Dualisms & Interspecies Story

Imagine this walk as a kind of cautious, thawing-out exercise, as things warm very slightly but may yet turn cold again, the first plants put out the first shoots and buds, things begin to open and notice after a winter sleep.

I will be asking you to conduct an approx. 40 minute walk in this exercise When you return inside I will ask you to trace or map out your journey and experiences in any manner media you chose

On Drifting

The **dérive** involves a strategy of intentionally getting lost in an area you may be very familiar with already.

Sometimes in order to do this you may need to set games for yourself: to follow the direction of the wind, to trace the drainage network of a city or follow the path of a non human, or be drawn by patches of sunlight or a certain call colour or smell.

Go slow and take time to experience and sense things, listen to sounds, sense the direction of wind, the way your footsteps and the weight of your body connects with the earth on different surfaces . DO NOT WALK ON THE SEA ICE. Even if other people are doing so!

Before you set out

make sure you are unencumbered by too much baggage.

You can bring your sketchbook and your phone to take photos or record sound but make a rule for yourself not to connect or respond to any non-urgent media.

You might want to do a round of breathing and activating the body before you go outside in order to prepare yourself to listen, smell and sense the world.

If you already have more than human partners in your practice, you might want to ask them to join you on this walk (either in spirit or for real)

Things to Notice

Dualisms in the landscape and in our bodies.

What kinds of dualistic human thinking, planning actions are visible in the landscape you are walking through? What kinds of hierarchies are also at stake in the way these dualisms play out in time and space?

Where and how do (visible and invisible) boundaries between, human and non human, intellect and matter, living and non living persist?

How are areas divided demarcated? How are boundaries maintained?

Which beings are insiders? Which beings are included? Which beings are excluded or unable to pass from one area to another?

What/how do these stories of dualisms look sound smell feel to touch? Where/if do these stories resound in your body? Where do you sense them?

Inter-connections breaks, transitions and transformations in the landscape and in our bodies.

Where does one system, micro-climate, ecological state appear to end and another begin?

Which beings can be found on the borders?

Which living/non living beings transgress boundaries and borders or intervene in or rupture the orders of others?

Where are there confluences of energies? Where do there appear to be tensions, contests, competing claims on space and place?

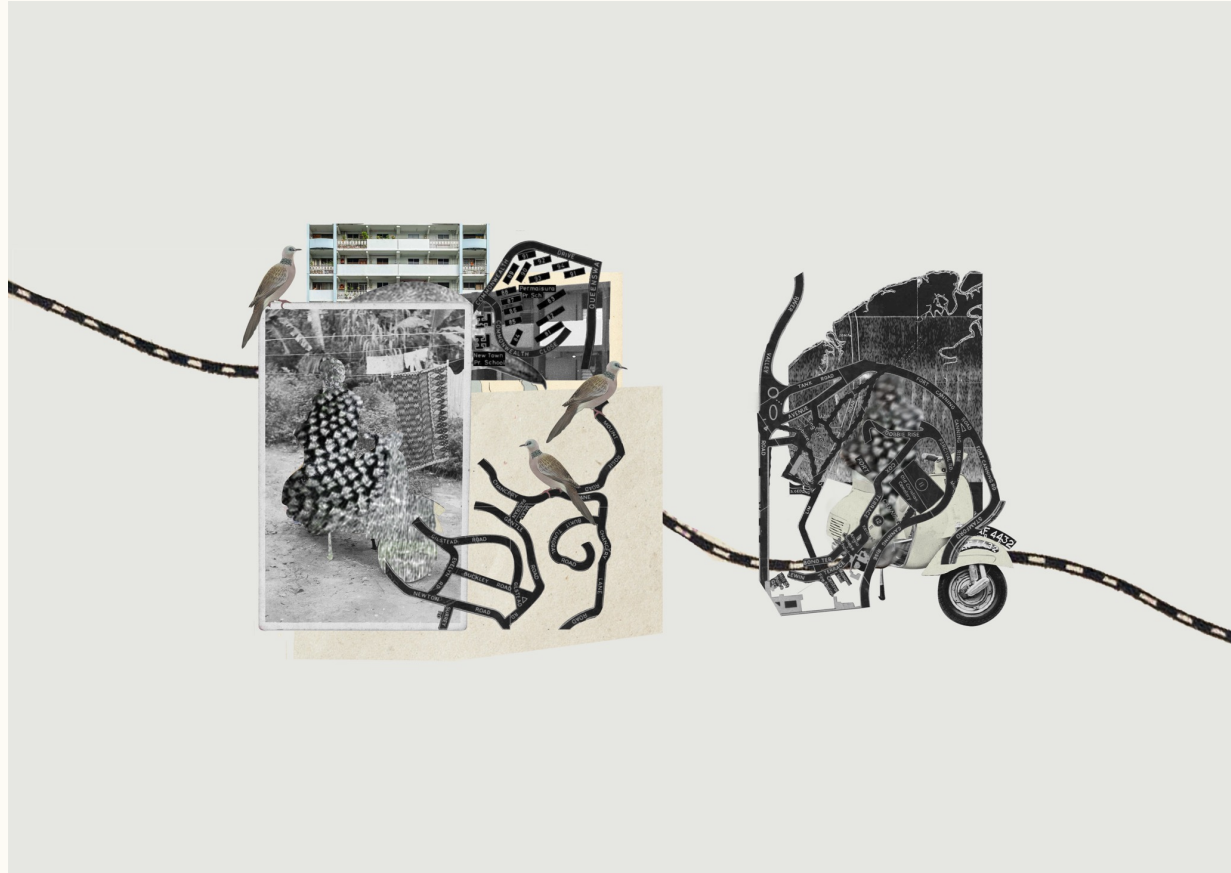
What/how do these stories look sound smell feel to touch? Where/if do these stories resound in your body? Where do you sense them?

Becomings-With

How are different human, and non-human, living and non-living beings altering their behaviour as they come into contact with each other? How do you find your own body interacting with various non-human living and non-living beings, energies on your walk? How might you think of your own body moving through a series of evolving becomings with as you walk? What/how do these stories of becomings look sound smell feel to touch? Where/if do these stories resound in your body? Where do you sense them?

Tracing Mapping, Retelling

When you return, trace sketch or map out a story of your journey, the encounters that you had and their relationships between these, your body, other beings in any manner media you chose. We will be discussing these next week but you can choose what and what not to share



Songmap *Burung Tekukur*
Dedicated to Hamwal Kassim,
alias Rahim
Migrant Ecologies Projects
Lucy Davis & Zach Chan
Part of [Railtrack Songmaps](#)
Roosting Post 2 Jendela The
Esplanade Singapore 2020



HWK reading, on walking mushrooms storytelling

Unruly Edges: Mushrooms as Companion Species: For Donna Haraway

Anna Tsing Environmental Humanities (2012) 1 (1): 141–154.

<https://doi.org/10.1215/22011919-3610012>

Supplementary sources:

Book: Rebecca Solnit, *Wanderlust* A history of walking, 2002

Blog: (the infamous and wondrous) ☺ Eeva Berglund

<https://eevabee.wordpress.com/category/walking/>

Website and publication: Stephanie Springgay & Sarah E. Truman <https://walkinglab.org>