

Day 5 28 March 2024: Ecological Thinking and Vuosaari Contact Zones

Objectives for today:

- Catch up on ecological thinking.
- Discussion of presentations next week
- Tour with Matti Lipponen

9.am- 9.30am Metallimiehenkuja 2 Kajuutta 112

Coffee and settling in & initial check in round

9.30 am-10-30 am

Discussion of hwk Kathryn Yusoff, and Tyson Yunkaporta
those who have managed?

Discussion of presentations next week

15 min Break

11-12-30

Lucy catch up lecture thinking ecologically

12.30-13.30 Lunch

13.45 metro platform train to Vuosaari

Meet Matti Lipponen at Vuotalo library at 2.30pm for

Sand Cement and Petroculture Tour of Vuosaari with Martti Lipponen

For your presentations next week Villa Lil Kalvik

Please do not stress this really is about a prototype, a proposal?

Some questions to think about:

How are more-than-human connections and presences, ecologies and relations experienced in the form/material/content of your storytelling proposals?

What kinds of ecological story forms are you developing?

What kinds of more than human perspectives are you drawing on?

How is your approach (implicitly or explicitly) a critique of politics of modern dualisms?

References:

How is your approach informed by artworks, texts experiences and discussions inside and outside of this this course

The call to think ecologically is a response to a specific, human-centric set of binaries, the logic of which has been analogously transferred to other dualisms

(Western) Modern Dualisms. A Recap:

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



Human / Non human

Culture/ Nature

Domesticated/wild

Mind/Body

Intellect/Sensoria

Active/Passive

Consciousness/ Matter

Male/ Female

White western/Other

Secularism/Animism

Science/Magic

Science/Arts

Theory/Practice

Arts/Craft

Linguistic/non Linguistic

Sentience/insentience

Living/non-living

++ Others?

*Discipline definition

Discipline” is the term that Michel Foucault uses to designate the way that a particular kind of power that operates or is auto integrated into the practice of individual bodies.

*Domestication is ordinarily understood as human control over other species. **That such relations might also change humans is generally ignored.***

*Moreover, domestication tends to be imagined as a hard line: You are either in the human fold or you are out in the wild. Because this dichotomisation stems from an ideological commitment to human mastery, it **supports the most outrageous fantasies of domestic control, on the one hand,**
and **wild species self-making, on the other.***

Through such fantasies, domestics are condemned to life imprisonment and genetic standardisation, while wild species are ‘preserved’ in gene banks while their multi-species landscapes are destroyed.

*Yet despite these extreme efforts, most species on both sides of the line—including humans—**live in complex relations of dependency and interdependence.** Attention to this diversity can be the beginning of an appreciation of interspecies species being. (Tsing Unruly Edges)*

And where I want to go with this today is

From critiques of dualisms,
to ecological story telling

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



On contemporary art/practice led inquiries & storytelling

The creative research practices that I am interested in are “ecological” in that they are about staying curious and open to’, noticing, making and amplifying connections: Between the sensorial and the conceptual; Between neurons and mycological networks; Between sound and shadows; Between birdsong and human language; Between humans and non human migration; Between a cup of coffee and colonialism; Between the sand under our feet and the structures of this city; Between the speed of our internet and our fingers on the keyboard and the hands attempting to remediate and cleanse the soil in Chinese landfills.

And with art/practice led inquiries, we get to make poetic and political connections and alliances that are perhaps not so permitted in streamlined modern disciplines. **We also get to play with the children our parents warned us against**

These processes are not innocent. We are also products of our cultural inheritances and our speculations and imaginings do not necessarily always lead us to emancipatory, democratic places. But I hang on to art as I feel that combination of artistic methods and critical reflexivity enables a potentially fully embodied a toolkit with which to rethink human’s place in this world

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

A Lucy Davis working definition might be:

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

Including importantly interconnections of things that are apparently out of place

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

You will likely come across many definitions of ecologies, nature/culture interconnections and politics

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 how science is and has always been cultured, how culture, even ecological culture is inextricable from politics. And how art is never innocent!**

An ever-thickening thicket of theoretical approaches & metaphors

all aiming to understand interconnected, constellations of contingent human-non-human connectivity and mutually-constitutive worlding

Contact Zones; Processes of sympoietic Becoming-With Donna Haraway
<http://www.multispecies-salon.org/becomings/>
<https://read.dukeupress.edu/environmental-humanities/article/5/1/277/8177/Becoming-with>

Philippe Descola
Beyond Nature and Culture
Amerindian perspectivism
<https://antropologia360.files.wordpress.com/2017/09/philippe-descola-beyond-nature-and-culture-2013.pdf>

Edouardo Kohn *How Forests Think*
<https://www.anth.ucsb.edu/sites/secure.lsit.ucsb.edu/anth.d7/files/sitefiles/Kohn%20-%20How%20Forests%20Think%20-%20Introduction.pdf>

Affect, Becoming, Rhizome & Assemblage: Deleuze and Guattari
<https://www.makingworlds.net/rhizome>
<https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199874002/obo-9780199874002-0114.xml>
<https://www.makingworlds.net/rhizome>



Worldings (Haraway following Hiedegger)
<http://newmaterialism.eu/almanac/w/worlding>
http://www.internationaleonline.org/opinions/81_fiction_is_worlding_post_1

New Materialisms
Assemblages of Vibrant Matter
/Political Ecology of Things Jane Bennet
<https://www.dukeupress.edu/vibrant-matter>

Isabelle Stengers *Cosmopolitics*
https://edisciplinas.usp.br/pluginfile.php/4108142/mod_resource/content/1/2%20-%20the%20cosmopolitical%20proposal%20Stengers.pdf

Entanglements Tim Ingold
<https://www.makingworlds.net/entanglement>
http://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/1306/1/0510_creative_entanglements.pdf

Meshes Ecology without nature
Tim Morton
<https://lab.cccb.org/en/tim-morton-ecology-without-nature/>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R-mWCPa9y3c>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NS8b87jnqnw>

ANT Actor Network Theory
Bruno Latour et al
<https://www.learning-theories.com/actor-network-theory-ant.html>
<http://www.bruno-latour.fr/sites/default/files/P-67%20ACTOR-NETWORK.pdf>

Karen Barad *Meeting the Universe Halfway*
<https://smartrightreadingroom.files.wordpress.com/2013/05/meeting-the-universe-halfway.pdf>

Gilles Deleuze on Affect

Non formulated, embodied non-linguistic process of becoming, a shared energy across species

For Deleuze, affect can produce a sensory or abstract result and is physically and temporally produced. It is determined by chance and organisation and it consists of a variety of factors that include geography, biology, meteorology, astronomy, ecology and culture. Reaction is a vital part of the Deleuzian concept of affective change. For instance, describing Spinoza's study of the transformation of a body, a thing, or a group of things over a period of space and time, Deleuze (with Guattari) writes in *A Thousand Plateaus*:

'Affects are becomings' (DG 1987: 256). Affect expresses the modification of experiences as independent things of existence, when one produces or recognises the consequences of movement and time for (corporeal, spiritual, animal, mineral, vegetable, and, or conceptual) bodies.

Affect is an experiential force or a power source, which, through encounters and mixes with other bodies (organic or inorganic), the affect becomes enveloped by affection, becoming an idea, and as such, as Deleuze describes, it can compel systems of knowledge, history, memory, and circuits of power.

...Deleuze's conception of affect exposed the limits of semiotics that tends to structure emotional responses to aesthetic and physical experiences.

by Felicity J. Colman

<https://deleuze.enacademic.com/6/affect>



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

Donna Haraway

“Becoming with” and companion species relations



In *When Species Meet*, Haraway distinguishes an always-in-process, co-producing *companion species relationship* from the historically-located, non processual “companion animal.”

For companion species relations, [and here Haraway strongly critiques and also develops Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari’s conception of affectively, *becoming animal* as well as D&G’s *assemblage theory*] we are always already interconnected, moving through different intensities of connection

“the partners do not precede their relating; all that is, is the fruit of becoming with.” Haraway’s *when species meet* is a key inspiration for Anna Tsing’s work on mushrooms)

Haraway, D.J. *When Species Meet*,

Minneapolis,

University of Minnesota Press, 2008,

pp.16–17.



<http://photography.nationalgeographic.com/photography>

/photo-of-the-day/mahout-elephant-underwater/
Mahout and Elephant

Photograph by Cesare Naldi

Nazroo, a mahout (elephant driver), poses for a portrait while taking his elephant, Rajan, out for a swim at Radha Nagar Beach in Havelock, Andaman Islands. Retrieved Feb 2013

Haraway's "becoming with" is to be distinguished from Deleuze and Guattari's "becoming-animal" as it is a grounded, everyday experience of actual species "making each other up in the flesh," **"full of the patterns of their sometimes-joined, sometimes-separate heritages."**

Donna J Haraway, *When Species Meet* University of Minnesota Press 2007 pp16-17

Affect, Sound & Image in Film: Cemetery by Carlos Casas

Screening Friday 10 May Morning

<https://mubi.com/films/cemetery>

<https://mubi.com/notebook/posts/reimagining-an-elephant-discussing-cemetery-with-carlos-casas>



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3YMjygdPJG4>

15 min Break

Post humanism (both an experiment & an acknowledgement)

An experiment to break down the humanist dualisms between humans and non humans

An acknowledgement that the world is not just “about us”

An acknowledgement that we are less bounded than we thought.

An acknowledgement and an attempt to reveal non humans as active, world making agents or actants rather than objects

Post humanism also involves perspectives of extra-human cyber cultures; another arena of agency beyond the human.

Can you think of any problems with claiming to be *post*?

A good definition

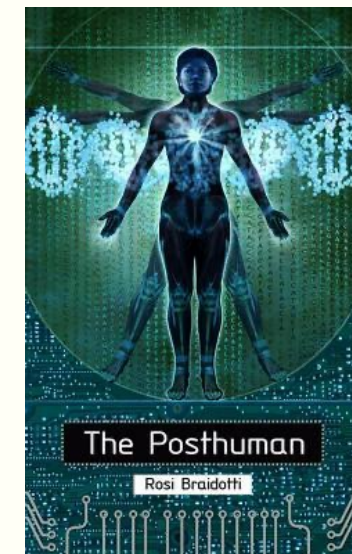
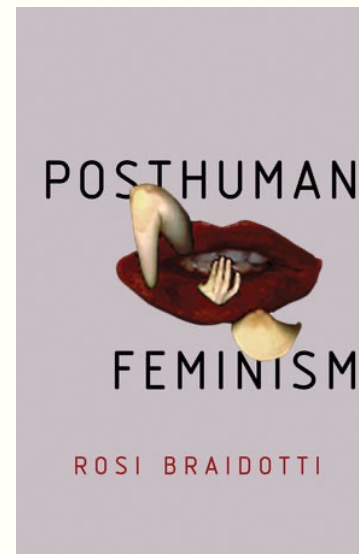
<https://criticalposthumanism.net/critical-posthumanism/>

Retrieved Jan 2021

Key thinker who stays with this term is Rosi Braidotti

<https://rosibraidotti.com/publications/the-posthuman-2/>

<https://rosibraidotti.com/publications/2239/>



More than human

Viruses, Urban Ecologies, Contagion: & Cats

SARS (corona virus part 1 2003) women and street cats in Singapore

Singapore street cat feeders (often but not exclusively female) becoming cat, initiated by their charges.. Operating at nights in drains, feeding cats, using their reproductive capacities in a way not favoured by the government.

Contagion as biological, material and metaphorical in civil society. Projections like the SARS virus keep jumping the species barriers.. SARS becomes a viral moment of contagion for civil society. ... solidarity with cats infects solidarity with others. Communications run wild via the feral (and at the time less-govt controlled) media of SMS



‘ Indeed it would be hard to find an animal find an animal so antithetical to PAP [Singapore government] ideology as the Singapore street cat. It doesn’t follow the grid of the city. It does not walk on a leash and cannot be trained. It is unpredictable, nocturnal, transgressive, temperamental, it has sex very loudly and reproduces out of control ... ‘

Cartoon by Cheng Puay Koon

Article by Neil Humphreys

TODAY Newspaper July 2003

'Notes for a Singapore Bestiary: Sexuality, and Interspecies Exchanges in the City-State'.

Lucy Davis, In Georg Schoellhammer ed. *The DOCUMENTA # 12 Reader*. TASCHEN Books, Germany. 2007. ISBN 978-382-28-2530-3

<http://files.cargocollective.com/486840/Notes-for-a-Singapor-Bestiary-Documenta-Reader.pdf>



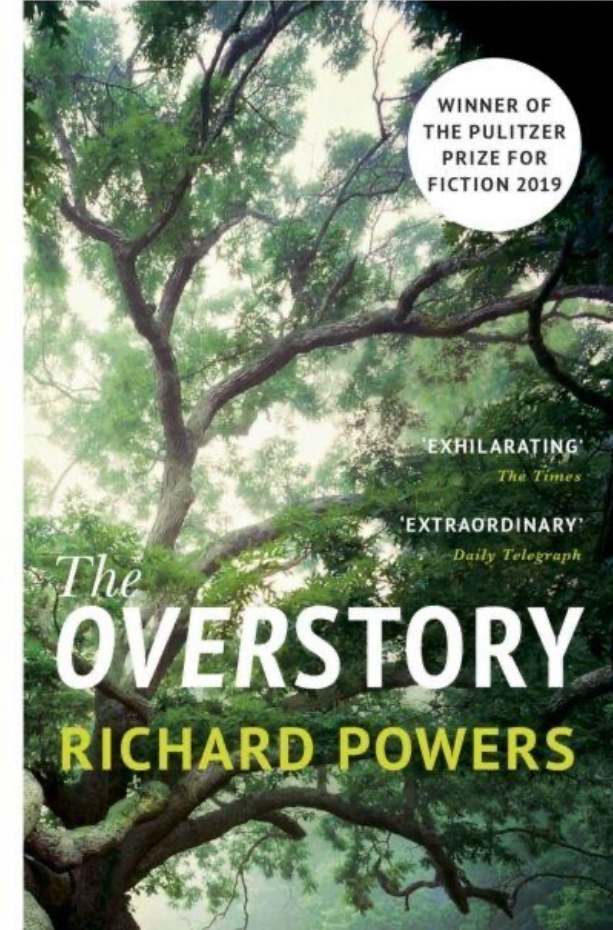
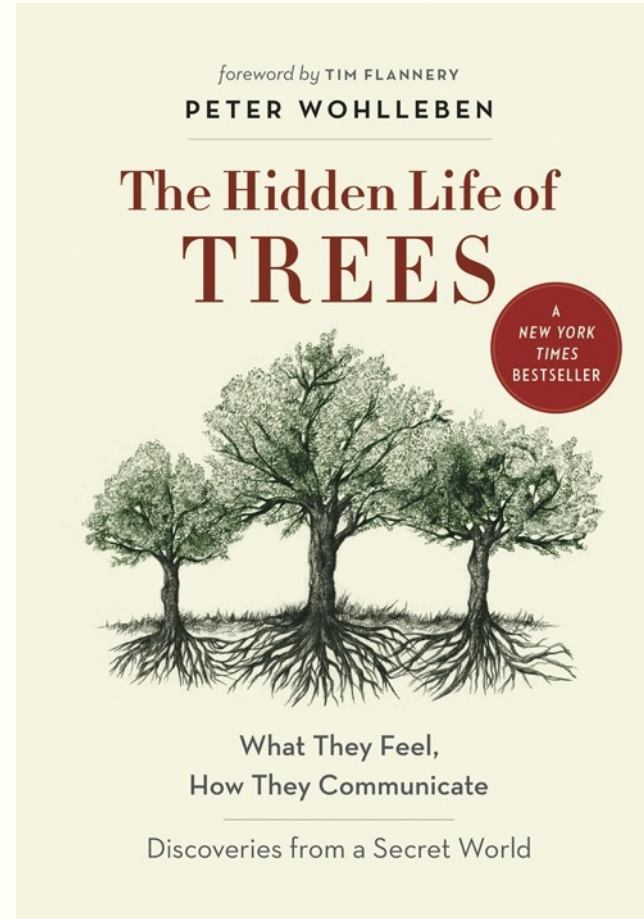
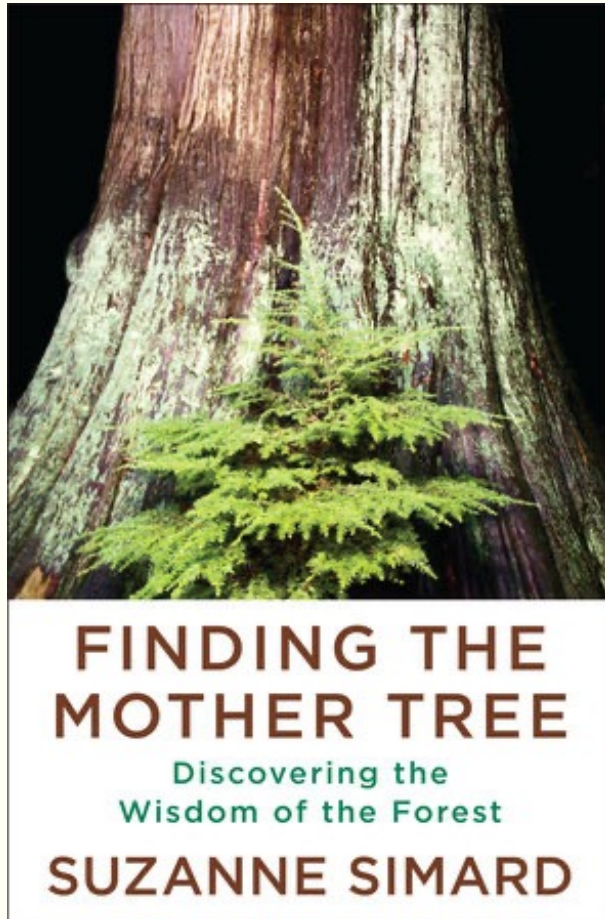
DECODED

How Rats Are Overturning Decades of Military Norms

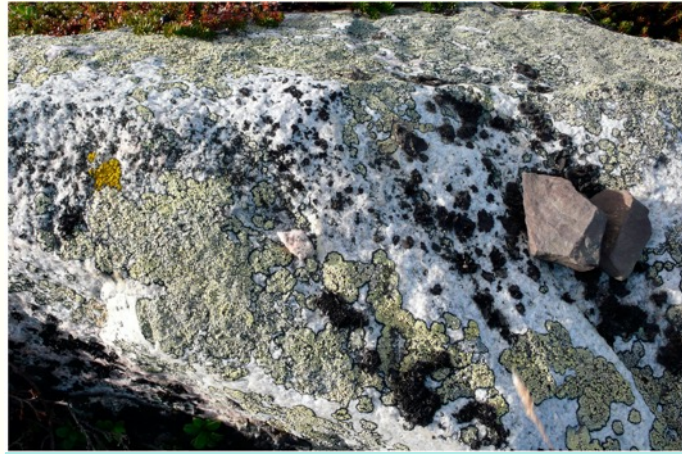
An anthropologist explores how the use of rats to clear ordnance in Cambodia is changing the culture of mine clearance.

Plant tree and fungal led turns

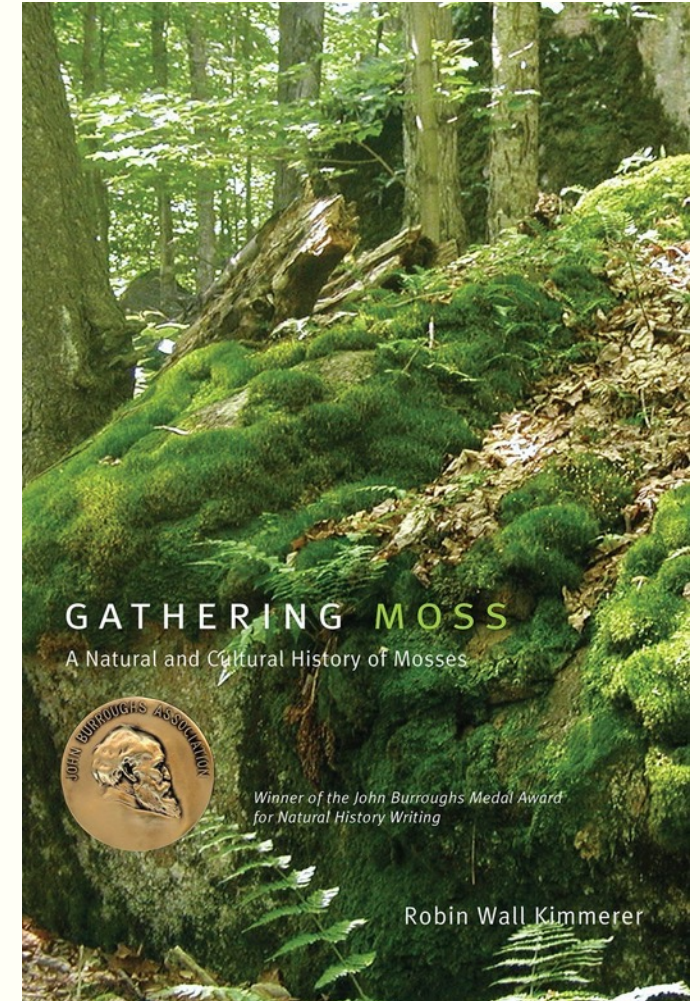
Discoveries of tree-root fungi mycorrhizal networks and interspecies communication



Plant tree and fungal led turns



Sensing Lichens
From Ecological Microcosms to
Environmental Subjects
Jennifer Gabrys
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/10.1080/09528822.2018.1483884>
i/pdf



From Ants Author to Acacia Seeds to Lichen



[The Author of the Acacia Seeds. And Other Extracts from the Journal of the Association of Therolinguistics](#)
[Ursula K. Le Guin](#)
MS. Found in an Anthill
This was written in
1974

AAURA AAURHUS UNIVERSITY

Arts of Living on a Damaged Planet with Keynote speech by Ursula K. Le Guin

[UC Santa Cruz Arts, Lectures, and Entertainment](#)

Ursula K. Le Guin, Keynote 5/8/14

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6BW8YmRAoW4>

More on becoming plants

with philosopher Michael Marder

How we might consider “Occupy” to be a vegetal movement



Michael Marder, On Vegetal Movements in Politics

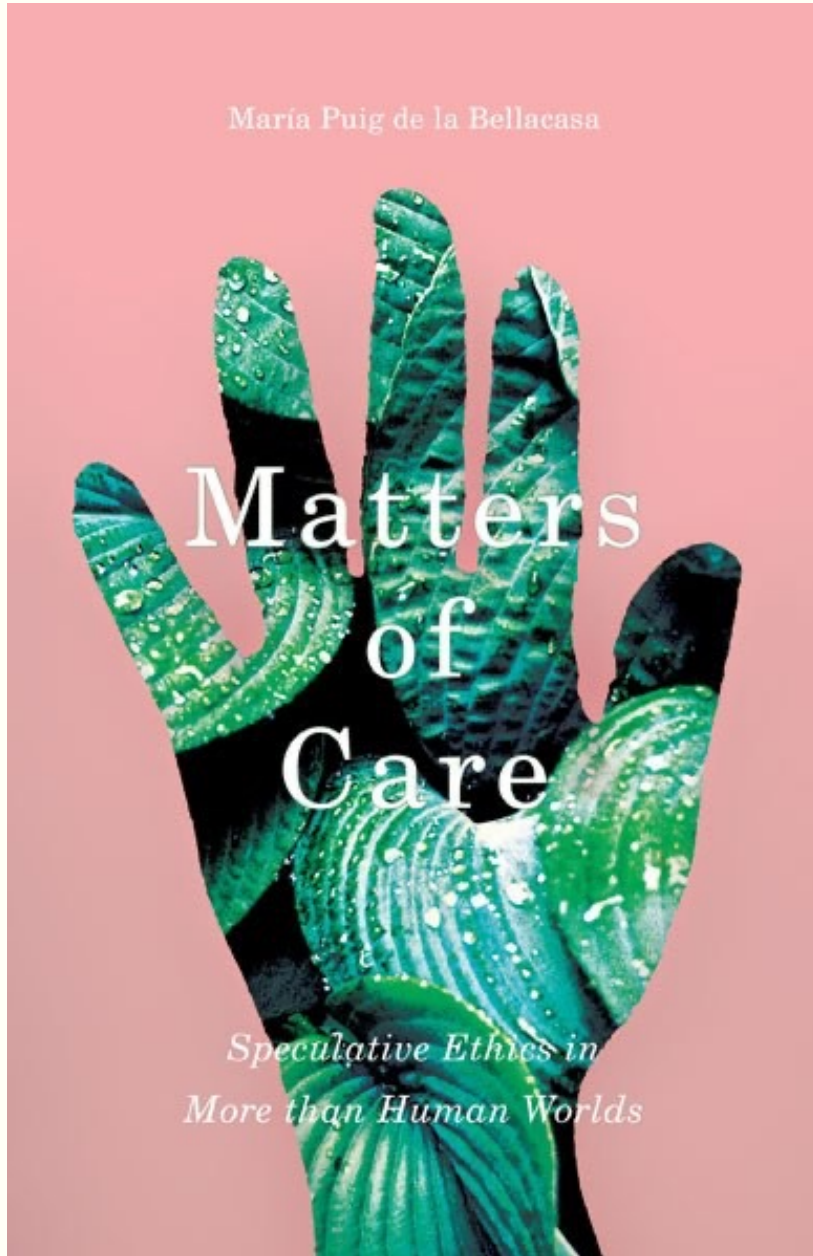
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pPenwLLacls>



Michael Marder: How to Breathe and Feel with Plants

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iSgepDOWw3g>

And then of course soil



Back at the human.. Learning about care in and with practices of soil remediation

Sympoiesis & Compost as Eco-political practice and research-philosophical method

“We relate, know, think, world, and tell stories through and with other stories, worlds, knowledges, thinkings, yearnings. So do all the other critters of Terra, in all our bumptious diversity and category-breaking speciations and knottings.

Other words for this might be materialism, evolution, ecology, **sympoiesis**, history, situated knowledges, cosmological performance, science art worldings, or animism, complete with all the contaminations and infections conjured by each of these terms.

Critters are at stake in each other in every mixing and turning of the terran compost pile. We are compost, not posthuman; we inhabit the humusities, not the humanities. Philosophically and materially, I am a compostist, not a posthumanist. Critters—human and not—become-with each other, compose and decompose each other, in every scale and register of time and stuff in **sympoietic tangling**, in ecological evolutionary developmental earthly worlding and unworlding.

Donna Haraway. Pg 97 ‘Sympoiesis Symbiogenesis and the Lively Arts of Staying with the Trouble’ Chapter Three of *Staying With The Trouble. Making Kin in the Chtulucene* Duke 2016

“..collect up the trash of the Anthropocene, the exterminism of the Capitalocene, and chipping and shredding and layering like a mad gardener, make a much hotter compost pile for still possible pasts, presents, and futures.”



<https://www.e-flux.com/journal/75/67125/tentacular-thinking-anthropocene-capitalocene-chtulucene/>

Vuosaari:

An interspecies Contact Zone



Ecologies & Contact Zones

*In your walking journeys from the last weekS its very likely that you have walked into and through a series of **contact zones***

Mary-Louise Pratt originally defined contact-zones as [sites where] “cultures, meet, clash and grapple with each other, often in contexts of asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today”.

Donna Haraway: in where species meet refers to interspecies contact zones/ecological intersections which she also calls **ecotones** “edge effects [...] **where assemblages of biological species form outside their comfort zones**” This can refer to, for example border zones between one ecological system and another, or describe ways that native and ‘non-native’ species constitute each other or between dominant and marginal beings.

Indeed one could argue that most cities and most beings are one big interspecies *contact zone* but there are also micro differences

[Link to Source Haraway When Species Meet p216](#)

[Link to Source Mary-Louise Pratt](#)

Questions for Art & Media Studio

How might we trace stories through **interconnecting contact zones, ecotones and stories** : biological; geological; historical; technological; sociological; economic; cultural ...?

... and most importantly how might these contact zones manifest through **your own preferred medium of creative story telling** practice/inquiry, whatever that might be?

First off: **Urban Materialities, Cement & Petroculture tour of Vuosaari**
with local historian Martti Lipponen