

ART & /IN ECOLOGY

Human-Non Human Interconnections in Art, Visual Culture & Everyday Life.
Site specific theory in practice in Vuosaari two-period module Jan-April 2021

Wk 5: Political Ecologies of & in Space (Part 1) Intersecting processes of power/resistance and possibility

Source: Google Maps

Questions for the Haraway chapter

Haraway begins with

“Sympoiesis is a simple word; it means “making-with.” The whole chapter develops this theme in different ways and with a lot lot of examples. Which were the most vivid for you? Which other definitions were helpful?

What is a holobiont? How do you understand the significance of Lynn Margulis research and the example of ‘ M. paradoxa
“M. paradoxa and their ilk have been my companions in writing and thinking for decades”p 62

And this?

“bounded units (code fragments, genes, cells, organisms, populations, species, ecosystems)
and relations described mathematically in competition equations are virtually the only actors and story formats of the Modern Synthesis. Evolutionary momentum, always verging on modernist notions of progress, is a constant theme, although teleology in the strict sense is not. Even as these sciences lay the groundwork for scientific conceptualization of the Anthropocene, they are undone in the very thinking of Anthropocene systems that require enfolded autopoietic and sympoietic analysis.” p 62

How is Haraway arguing the significance of

“(1) a choanoflagellate-bacteria model for the invention of animal multicellularity,
and (2) a squid-bacteria model for the elaboration of developmental symbioses between and among critters necessary to each other’s becoming.” p64

What do you make of xkcd's. bee-orchid cartoon? Pp69-70

And

“Coral, along with lichens, are also the earliest instances of symbiosis recognized by biologists; these are the critters that taught biologists to understand the parochialism of their own ideas of individuals and collectives. These critters taught people like me that we are all lichens, all coral”. P 72

What do you make of the Resurgence in Four Parts final section of the chapter and the four examples Haraway gives of

The Crochet Coral Reef

The Madagascar Ako Project

The Never Alone (Kisima Ingitchuna) World Game

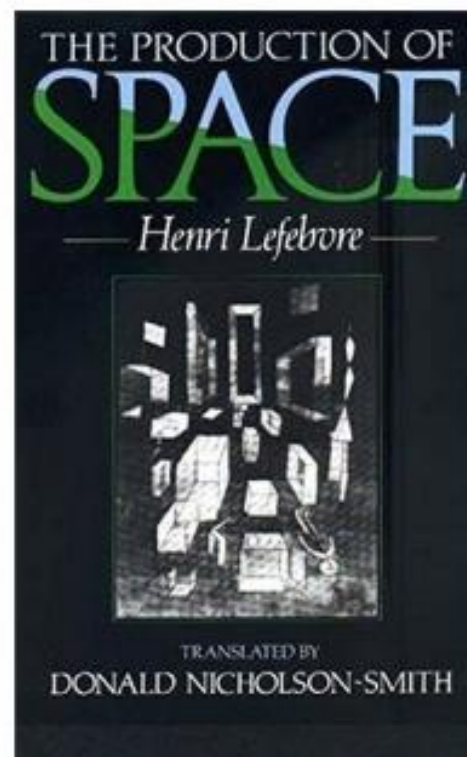
And what Haraway calls

Navajo Weaving: Cosmological Performance, Mathematical Rhythm, Navajo-Churro Sheep, Hózhó

Political Ecologies of & in Space (Part 1)

Intersecting processes of power/resistance and possibility

What are politics of space about and how might they link to urban ecologies in Vuosaari



For Lefebvre, Space is a social construction. A multiplicity of, competing and socially constructed processes, conscious and unconscious assumptions impact our perceptions of space and the ways in which we inhabit it.

A political ecological development of this would be to think of spaces as co-constructed by humans and non humans

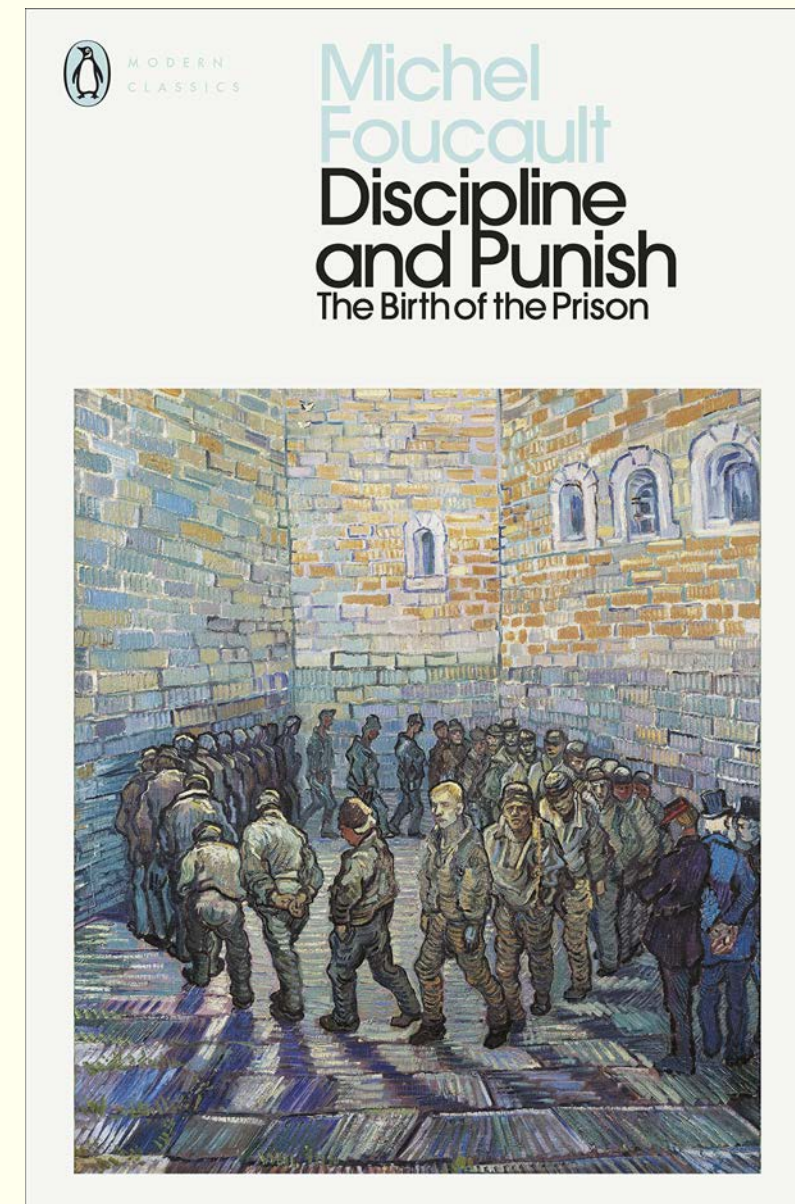
Michel Foucault's Contributions to thinking politics of spaces

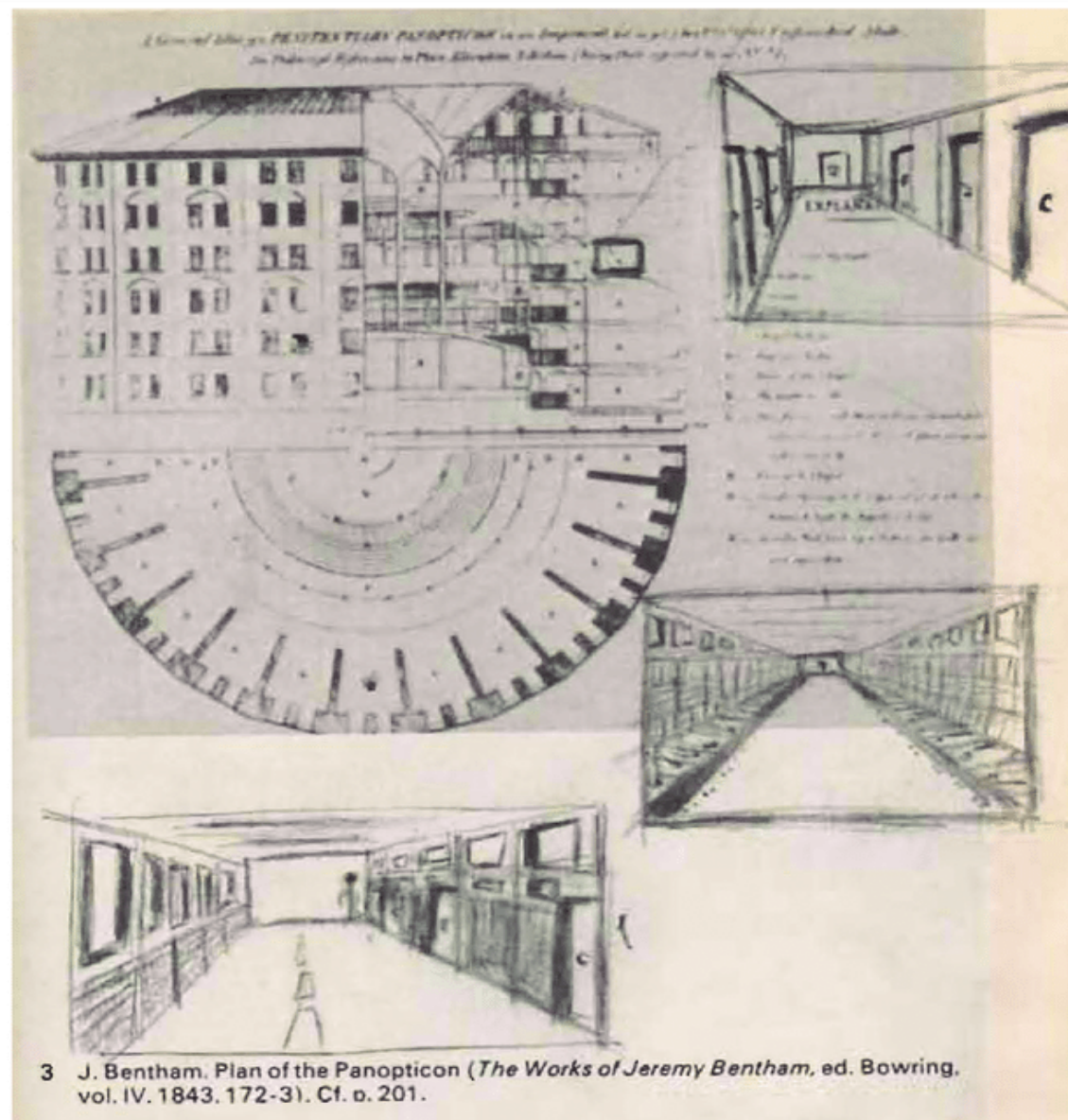
1) Disciplinary Power

According to Foucault, in the time of monarchical or sovereign power, it was the monarch only who was in full public view, while the mass of the population remained largely undifferentiated and “unseen” and kept in place via violence

However with developments in post renaissance/ enlightenment human sciences, “the people” became more and more “in focus”

This focus manifest through cartographic technologies such as the census and through practices of *bio-power*, public health, population control, the determining of the sick body, the healthy body, the normal body, the deviant body, the sane, the insane. For Foucault this biopower was an enabler of modern capitalism





1) Disciplinary Power & Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon

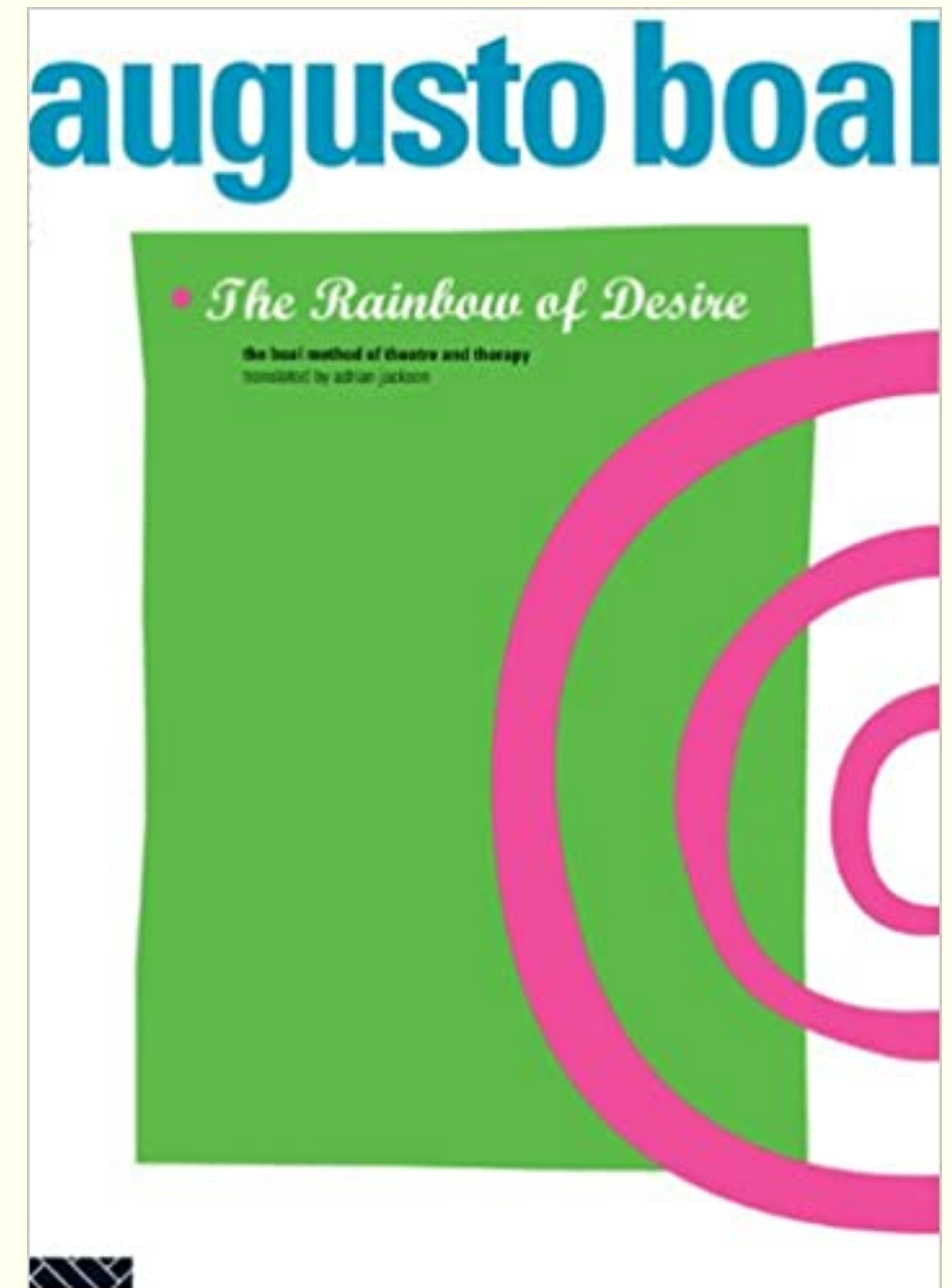
Foucault argues that a corresponding shift occurred in technologies of punishment and control. Whereas previously raw violence was necessary to control the bodies of largely-invisible masses. Increasingly more subtle forces of discipline and self-discipline, meant that people would police themselves and behave as good cultured, gendered, classed *subjects*

The metaphor that Foucault uses to describe this process is, significantly for our course, a *spatial-visual* one--Jeremy Bentham's design for the *panopticon* prison

Bentham's prison design was never completed during his lifetime. Although perhaps the Nordic Art School models are getting there!

<https://kunstkritikk.com/the-end-of-art-education-as-we-know-it/>

Parallel thinking in political theatre:
Augusto Boal's move from
Theatre of the (Visibly) Oppressed
to
"Cops in the Head"





Barbara Kruger
 Untitled (*Your body is a battleground*), 1989
 Photographic silkscreen on vinyl
 112 × 112 in
 284.5 × 284.5 cm

Michel Foucault's Contributions to thinking politics of spaces 2) Discipline- Discourse

Discourse-analysis, influenced by Foucauldian thinking is a way of tracing the conscious and unconscious, often common sense rules that discipline society, understanding their histories, how these rules came about.

Discourse importantly for our purpose is not just about language—although language is a part of this. Discourse is also about the translation of language, images, imaginings beliefs into the body, into everyday performance and signifying practices.

Thinking of human behaviour as an intersection of discourses suggests an arena of jostling contesting, conscious and unconscious assumptions influencing behaviour.

The *genealogies* of such discourses involve historical and contemporary *experts, authorities*, (the doctor, the lawyer, the psychiatrist, the geneticist, the pedagogue) and their putting into action by *practices* which allow for the disciplinary *governing* of the bodies of subjects .

And importantly for us, these discourses also play out in spaces, in schools, in hospitals, in playgrounds, in cafes, in supermarkets, in metro stations, in nature parks.

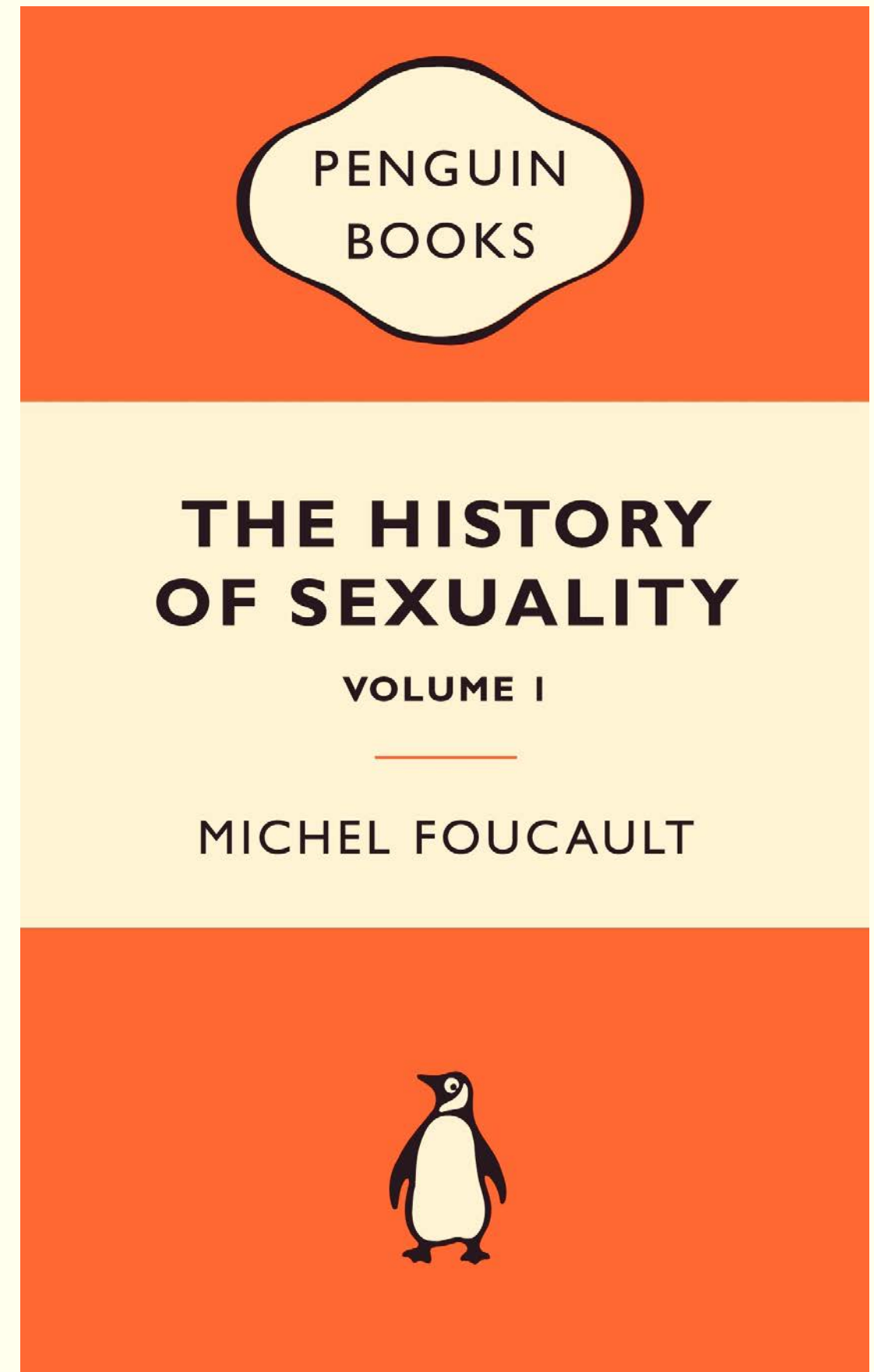
Michel Foucault's Contributions to thinking politics of space 3) Power/Resistance

“Where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power”.

Michel Foucault *The History of Sexuality Volume 1* p.95

Discourses are is always open to interpretation and productive -misinterpretation. Behaviours are as Haraway might put it, “remade” via conscious and unconscious action

—and also for the purposes of this course (although this was not at all Foucaults' interest) in relation with and/or under the influence of non-human agents





Processes of power/resistances are not always articulated and conscious. Arguably these processes are also not an exceptionally human. The ways that spaces are disciplined are resisted, spaces are remade by bodies of humans, insects, bacteria, viruses, wind, snow, salinity. Just as human and non-human bodies are remade by these spaces. How might we trace these in Vuosaari?

For further reflection:

What kinds of human and non human politics of space are at stake in Vuosaari and how might these link to Haraway's symposium chapter?

How are spaces being co-constructed by humans and non humans in Vuosaari?

What conscious and unconscious assumptions, discourses may be disciplining the movements of humans through spaces in Vuosaari?

How does the urban architecture enable or disable these?

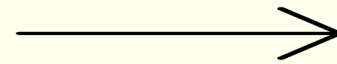
And how might these conscious and unconscious assumptions be at the same time reinterpreted, negotiated and transformed?

What roles might non humans have in these processes?

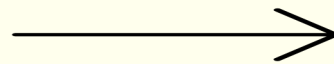
How are human and non human others (to use a Haraway word) "remaking" these disciplinary imperatives?

17 February:
Approaches to Writing

24 February:
Exam Week



Prepare research
questions/methods
ideas to share with
group as a whole



Plus readings and a podcast at
the end of these slides

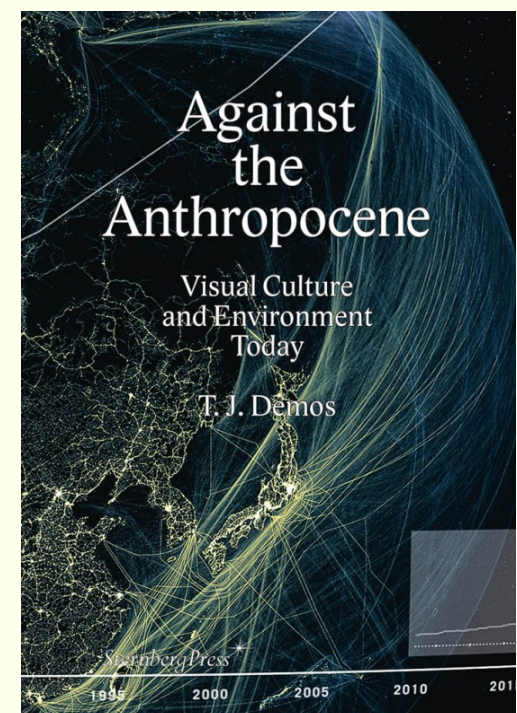
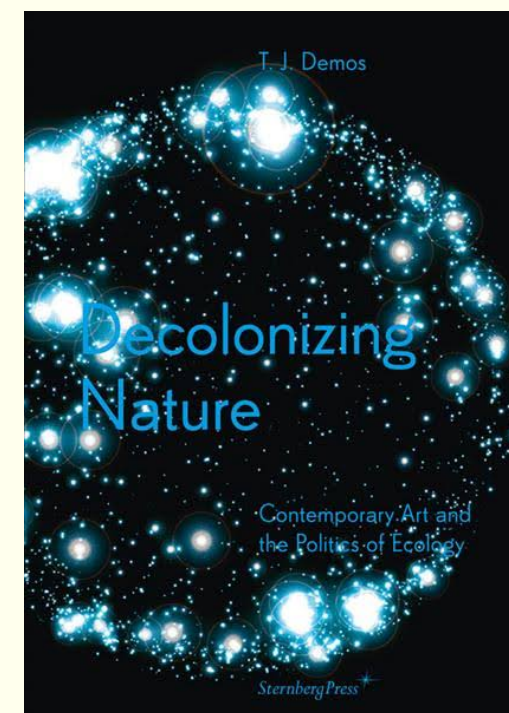
More ways of thinking about a political will come 3 March when we discuss Geopolitics & Materialities.

The readings this week can be seen as a seque to this

“Intersectional thinking refuses to divide systems of oppression (such as those tied to race, class, gender, sexuality, and ability) that overlap, and thereby challenges the essentialization of one or another term in isolation.

Similarly its radical versions oppose the separatism of identity politics, in favour of solidarity across difference.

While ecology isn’t generally considered within the framework of intersectionality, its political version demands it.”



Extinction Rebellion, mural in London (2019). Photograph: Henry Nicholls/Reuters in TJ Demos essay for Screen City Biennial
http://journal.screencitybiennial.org/2019/10/08/screen_ecologies/

Read: Stephanie Springgay Sarah E. Truman “A Transmaterial Approach to Walking”
Methodologies: Embodiment, Affect, and a Sonic Art Performance (PDF)

Read: TJ Demos “Screen Ecologies” (very short PDF)

Listen: Kathryn Yusoff interview *A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None*

<https://podcasts.apple.com/ie/podcast/175-kathryn-yusoff/id1073817284?i=1000437095005>

(NB this series of podcasts is amazing! I’m a big fan. Do check out the others!)