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Anthropocene Philosophies

Learning tool

Vilnius

2026

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Introduction

The term „Anthropocene“ was proposed in 2000 by Paul Crutzen and Eugene Stoermer. After its career in geology and natural sciences, it found its way into the humanities. Planetary anthropogenic changes revealed by natural sciences force us to rethink human-nature and human-animal relationships on a global scale. In the history of Western culture, humans are defined as the most supreme beings owning rationality, language, religion, culture (as the end for themselves). Whereas nature and animals are treated as something lacking, something that can be only a means, a resource to an end. But the exploitative and extractivist attitude of the increased human population leads to catastrophic changes. That opens new dimensions of human beings, not through capabilities, but by their traces and consequences - sedimentation of waste, pollution, depletion of resources, extinction of species. The most *capable* being becomes the most *culpable* one. The Anthropocene marks not only natural changes on the planetary scale (climate change, global warming, etc.), but also shifts in human self-awareness. The Anthropocene proposes notions of humanity as a species and as a geological force. Can we find something new in these propositions? What evokes the shock of the Anthropocene in the humanities and social sciences?

The course starts with an overview of the narratives of the Anthropocene. A lot of various philosophical positions, starting from the second decade of the 21st century, try to explain how we got here and where we are going. Every narrative has presuppositions about human-nature relationships, a plot of the story, a value system, questions and answers about who is guilty for our predicament. Christophe Bonneuil's text will help to get a systematic understanding of this variety; Dipesh Chakrabarty's four theses propose to change our approach to humanity and the history of life. But we cannot understand the shock of the Anthropocene without going deeper, to its roots. Modernity had a goal to become the master and possessor of nature. Modernity formed an attitude towards nature and animals as *res extensa*, something beyond the community of ethical subjects, something that can be human property, ready to use and exploit. Capitalism materialized such an attitude in the endless extraction of resources, production, and consumption. Anthony Giddens' text will help to understand the logic of modernity and its ways to control place and time, society and nature. The critique of anthropocentrism paved the way for the fast spread of the term Anthropocene in the humanities. After the acknowledgment that the anthropological difference not only constitutes human beings, but also enables various forms of violence against nonhuman beings, we cannot maintain human-nature, human-animal relationships in the old anthropocentric way. What happens when nature and animals become ethical subjects? What new perspectives does this open? There is no one answer, and Matthew Calarco's overview will be the starting point in this field full of questions, but that is not so rich in answers.

Extended scales of time and space awakened human imagination and thinking about human place in the world. Dipesh Chakrabarty and Bruno Latour propose to start to interpret humanity not through the lens of modernity and written history, but through the history of life. They propose to change our understanding of our living place, milieu, and even the Earth. Chakrabarty, opposing the Globe and the Planetary, tries to find a new way to think about our

relationship with the planet. Opposing sustainability and habitability, Chakrabarty invites us to go beyond the anthropocentric worldview and value system. Latour interprets the challenge of the Anthropocene not only as an ethical or political problem, but also as an epistemological one. Opposing the Globe and Gaia, he proposes to go beyond the limits of our scientific knowledge, the hope of controlling nature, and find new ways of knowledge and being with nature and animals.

Not all philosophers are satisfied with a general and generalizing view of nature and humanity. The proponents of the Capitalocene say that the generalized notion of humanity as a geological force hides the proper culprits of our predicament. Not all *homo sapiens* affect climate change in the same way. The extractivist capitalism has formed the world-system based on cheap nature and cheap labor and enabled various forms of inequality, dividing who is the end and who is the means to that end. Jason W. Moore's text will help to understand the rise of extractivism and exploitation, how the capitalist world-system, as a new way of organizing nature, leads us to the Capitalocene. Other philosophers note that even the representations of the Anthropocene can act as a means for governing power. Nicolas Mirsoeff's text reveals how visual representations work for conquering and mastering nature, act not for mobilizing to change the situation for the better, but anaesthetizing, distracting from the proper political action.

The Anthropocene in the humanities has many faces and dimensions. This proposal of texts is the first step to get to know the complexity of this field. A very fast-rising body of literature on the Anthropocene promises a long and interesting journey through the fields of new reflections, perspectives, and images of the Anthropocene.

1. Event of the Anthropocene

1.1. Christophe Bonneuil: Narratives of the Anthropocene

Christophe Bonneuil "The Geological Turn. Narratives of the Anthropocene" in, Clive Hamilton, Christophe Bonneuil, and François Gemenne (eds.). *The Anthropocene and the Global Environmental Crisis. Rethinking Modernity in a New Epoch*. London: Routledge, 2015, p. 17–30.

An increasing number of literature on the Anthropocene makes it challenging to orient for those who want to get to know this topic. And it is always helpful to find new attempts to systematize and classify this vast discourse. This text proposes the classification based on the premise that every theoretical position is a narrative that has a value system, presuppositions about human-nature relationships, and the plot of the story – how we got here and where we

are going. Christophe Bonneuil groups the narratives into four types – naturalist, post-nature, eco-catastrophist, and eco-Marxist – narratives. The number of narratives is not limited, and we can always find another one. But Bonneuil's proposition is important as an attempt to systematize what is impossible to put into one system. So, taking into account this proposition, we must be attentive to the multidimensionality of narratives and understand their specificity. Here, we have to pay attention to the different notions of nature and humanity, what is identified in each narrative as actor and culprit, and what is proposed as a solution to our predicament.

Reading questions:

1. What does Bonneuil take as the principles of systematization for different scientific positions on the Anthropocene? What are the main aspects of each narrative, each story? (p. 17-18)
2. What are the presuppositions of the naturalist narrative? What problems does this narrative identify? How does it interpret human-nature relationships and changes in geology and eco-awareness? (p. 18-23)
3. What presupposes the new notions of humanity as a species and a geological force? What changes evoke the emergence of such notions? How is the history of humanity and the whole Earth system framed? What are the key points in this history? (p. 18-20)
4. What aspects of the naturalists' narrative are identified as weaknesses? Why are Bonneuil and other theorists not content with the notion of humanity as a geological force? What is problematic with this holistic point of view? (p. 20-21)
5. What characterizes the new environmental consciousness in the naturalistic framework? What changes in the attitude towards nature and what politics are needed according to naturalists? (p. 21-23)
6. What are the main characteristics of a post-nature narrative? Why do they oppose modernity, and what are the main arguments against it? (p. 24-25)
7. How do you understand what it means to go beyond the difference between nature and culture? What does it mean to live with hybrids? (p. 25-26)
8. What are the weaknesses of the post-nature narrative? (p. 26)
9. What are the characteristics of an eco-catastrophist narrative? On what problems does this narrative focus? How is the getaway of the catastrophic predicament understood? (p. 26-27)
10. What are the characteristics of an eco-Marxist narrative? Why is there discontent with the term the Anthropocene, and what are the main arguments advocating for the Capitalocene? What problems does this narrative focus on? What ways of life are proposed for more environmental justice? (p. 28-29)

1.2. Dipesh Chakrabarty: Conjoined Histories

Dipesh Chakrabarty. *The Climate of History in a Planetary Age*. Chicago: Chicago University Press. 2021. P. 23-48.

Chakrabarty's four thesis prompted a discussion about the importance of geological time to human history. He convincingly shows how the Western attitude to history didn't pay attention to geological time, revealing the roots of that. The roots are in the human/nature distinction. The human world was treated as a dynamic, fast-changing world, whereas nature is stable and cyclical, and its changes are unimportant to history. Such an attitude, focusing on human freedom, dignity, and well-being, has a geological background. Human freedom is based on the resourcisation of nature, and human well-being – on extractivist and exploitative capitalism. Contemporary crisis forces us to join written human history with deep time (geological history) to understand who we are and what we can do in the Anthropocene. Analyzing this text, we have to understand the principles of human history as the history of freedom, why this history was so blind to the dimension of nature, what questions on human collectivity the Anthropocene poses, and how we can understand past, present, and future from the point of view of conjoined histories.

1. Why does Chakrabarty start his considerations with Weisman's thought experiment? What relation to the future does it illustrate? What is the "traditional" sense of past-present-future relationship? How is this relationship questioned by this experiment? (p. 23-24)
2. How does Chakrabarty articulate his position? What questions are essential for him? How does he localize himself between natural and social sciences? (p. 24-26)
3. How was the distinction between culture and nature, human and animal, formed in modern sciences? What arguments for separating natural history from human history are provided by Collingwood, Stalin, and other historians of the mid-twentieth century? What notion of nature and agency of the humans do they presuppose? (p. 26-29)
4. What is the difference between notions of humans as historical, biological, and geological agents? What are the main reasons for the emergence of notions of humans as biological and geological agents? (p. 29-31)
5. What shape of development does human history acquire if human freedom is taken as a keystone? What is the progress and collapse in such history? (p. 31-32)
6. What does Chakrabarty's thesis mean: "The mansion of modern freedoms stands on an ever-expanding foundation of fossil-fuel use"? What was ignored in the history of humanity? What does the history of the Anthropocene reveal? (p. 32-34)
7. What relation to the future and the present does the Anthropocene require? How can we interpret Chakrabarty's thesis, "The geologic now of the Anthropocene has become entangled with the now of human history"? How are recorded human history and deep time connected and divided as well? What is the difference in interpreting human behavior from these two points of view? (p. 35-37)
8. Why are the narratives of globalization and capitalism insufficient to understand the changes of the Anthropocene? What new dimensions does the history of the human species reveal? What does this history reveal about the development of capitalism? How is the history of freedom and capitalism dependent on the climate conditions of the Holocene? (p. 37-42)

9. What questions about human collectivity does the Anthropocene pose? Why does Chakrabarty think that we cannot experience ourselves as a species? What counterarguments does he receive, and how does he answer against them? (p. 43-45)
10. How do you understand “the negative universal history”? Why can the history of the Anthropocene not be the new “positive universal history”? (p. 46-48)

2. Roots of the Anthropocene

2.1. Anthony Giddens: Logics of Modernity

Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity. Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*. Polity Press, 1991, p. 1-35.

If we want to understand the changes in the spiritual atmosphere of the Anthropocene and why we think about changes in terms of loss, crisis, and even the end of the world, we have to turn back to the roots – modernity. Modernity has formed our institutions and our relation to space and time. The keystones of modernity – reflexivity, normativity, control, disembedding, colonization of the future, and expert systems became the principles of thinking and decision-making in political, institutional, and even personal dimensions. In analyzing this text, we have to grasp these principles and the logic of modernity and attempt to recognize them in our social order, personal everyday life, and institutions. Although our time is marked as the Anthropocene and scientists tend to forget modernity, many principles are alive today and function in the silent mode. We have to pull them out into the daylight.

In the introduction, Giddens proposes a conceptual framework. In the first chapter, “The Contours of High Modernity”, he explains key concepts. So, reading the introduction, we have to grasp his point of view, method, and a list of concepts. After reading the first part, we can go into the detailed analysis. We have to explain each concept and find examples in our social order and everyday life.

Reading questions:

1. How does Giddens explain his theoretical position, focus, and method? How do you understand Giddens's thesis that “modernity must be understood on an institutional level”? (p. 1-2)
2. What key concepts and phenomena forming the order of modernity are distinguished? (p. 2-10)
3. How does the scientific principle of doubt affect knowledge at personal and institutional levels? (p. 3)
4. Why does Giddens think that the late modern world is apocalyptic? (p. 4)
5. How can the claim “In the post-traditional order of modernity, self-identity becomes a reflexively organized endeavour” be understood?(p. 5)

6. How does reflexivity of the self form a relation to the body, existential questions, and lifestyle? (p. 5-8)
7. How do you understand: "The body is less and less an extrinsic 'given', functioning outside the internally referential systems of modernity, but becomes itself reflexively mobilized"? (p. 9)
8. How do you understand "sequestration of experience"? What role does it play in our social order? (p. 8)
9. What is the difference between the traditional and the post-traditional order when answering the question "How shall I live?". (p. 10-14)
10. Why does Giddens associate modernity with industrialism? What dimensions, according to Giddens, does "the industrialized world" have? (p. 15-16)
11. How does modernity separate time from space? What is meant by "the emptying out of time and space"? What is the difference in relation to time and space in premodern and modern societies? Why "disembedding" is an essential feature of modern social institutions? (16-18)
12. What are the abstract systems in the modern social world? How does money participate in emptying space and time? (p. 18)
13. What is the difference between trust in modern societies and belief in pre-modern ones? (p. 18-20)
14. What is peculiar to the reflexivity of modernity? What role does the scientific methodological principle of doubt play here? (p. 20)
15. What does it mean "the dialectic of the local and global" in modern everyday life? What role does it play "the abstract systems" here? (p. 21-22)
16. How does the mediation of experience correlate with modernity? How does "the intrusion of distant events into everyday consciousness" affect our relation with the global and local? (p. 23-27)
17. What is "the collage effect"? How does it affect our knowledge about the world, global and local events? (p. 26)
18. Why is modern society "a risk society"? What is the difference between fate and risk? How do they shape relations to the future? (p. 28-29)
19. Why does Giddens associate modernity not so much with orientation to the future but more with the "contemplation of counterfactuals"? What role do expert systems play in counterfactual thought? (p. 30-32)
20. What challenges to personal identity does modernity create? Why, in modernity, does the self become "a reflexive project"? (p. 32-34)

2.2. Matthew Calarco: Contesting the Anthropocentrism

Matthew Calarco, *Thinking through Animals. Identity, Difference, Indistinction*. Stanford. 2015. P. 6-27, 48-69.

Calarco is one of the most active representatives of the critique of anthropocentrism. He shows that it is not enough to take a pro-animal position to criticize anthropocentrism;

because struggles for animal rights can become only one variation of anthropocentrism. The humanization of some species is not a solution. A very reflective and self-critical philosophy is needed. Trying to take an overview of different positions in the critique of anthropocentrism, Calarco distinguishes three philosophical approaches: identity, difference, and indistinction. The first position tries to solve the problems of violence and exploitation by identifying what we have in common with animals and, on the grounds of that (interests, sentience, subject-of-a-life, intentionality, agency) to build new ethics and politics. The second position, criticizing the first one (humanization of animals), reflects a variety of differences between humans and animals and what ethical and ontological positions towards animals we can take. But this position Calarco qualifies as insufficient for political action. So, he prefers the third position of indistinction, which does not humanize animals, does not drown in the abyss of differences, and tries to build new relationships with animals. We propose to analyze the short history of anthropocentrism and positions of identity and indistinction because these positions are more applicable in practice. So, we have to get to know the main points in the history of anthropocentrism, how the theories of identity try to solve the problem, and what proposes the indistinction approach.

1. What are the breakdown signs of the human/animal distinction? (p. 6-7)
2. How did Aristotle treat animals? What place do they have in the hierarchy of living beings? What do animals lack? How does this lack ground the human/animal distinction? How does the teleological schema of the hierarchy of living beings justify using plants and animals? (p. 8)
3. How did Descartes draw the difference between humans and animals? How did Descartes “solve” the problem of cruelty towards animals? (p. 8-9)
4. How did Kant treat animals? What did Aristotle, Descartes, and Kant have in common? What is the difference between Descartes and Kant? (p. 10-11)
5. How did Darwin interpret the difference between humans and animals? Why is the Darwinian approach important for pro-animal philosophers? (p. 11-13)
6. What changes in human-animal relationship can bring “the equal consideration of interest”? Are all interests and similarities important, or only some of them? (p. 13-14)
7. What are the key points of Singer’s position? How does Singer combine the “ontology of sentient human-animal continuity” with “the ethical principle of the equal considerations of interests”? (p. 14-16)
8. What are the key points of Regan’s position? What are the differences between Singer’s and Regan’s positions? Why the principle of the sentience is not sufficient, but the principle of subject-of-a-life is? (p. 16-18)
9. What does Cavalieri propose? What are the advantages (and disadvantages) of the approach based on the commonality of intentionality and agency? (p. 18-19)
10. What is important for Calarco in the identity approach? What politics and practices with animals does it call to? What changes does the Great Apes Project show? (p. 19-22)
11. What is logocentrism? How does logocentrism appear in the traditional forms of anthropocentrism and reappear in the identity approach? Why do the theorists of the identity approach try to avoid sentimentalism and stand on reason alone? (p. 22-24)

12. How does Calarco define the term anthropocentrism? Why does Calarco, contesting speciesism and anthropocentrism, think that we have to focus not on the problems of speciesism but on anthropocentrism? What weaknesses of the identity approach does Calarco reveal? (p. 24-27)
13. What are the differences between identity and indistinction approaches? What weaknesses does Calarco identify in the identity approach? What are the differences between identity and difference approaches? What weaknesses does Calarco identify in the difference approach? (p. 48-51)
14. What do Calarco and Haraway propose? Why is biology so important for building new ethical relationships? (p. 51-53)
15. What is the anthropological machine? How does it produce the human essence? How separation and subordination of the animal life to human life are connected with anthropogenesis? (p. 53-55)
16. How does Calarco define the indistinction approach? What is its chief task? (p. 56-57)
17. What does it mean - Deleuzian “becoming-animal,” and why is it so important to Calarco? How do you understand: “every man who suffers is a piece of meat. Meat is the common zone of man and the beast”. (p. 57-59)
18. What new perspective on a human-animal relationship do Plumwood’s example of “being pray” and other examples propose? (p. 59-62)
19. How does Calarco imagine the contesting of the anthropocentrism? What are the key concerns of pro-animal theorists? (p. 63-65)
20. What is the connection between contemporary capitalism and anthropocentrism? How can animal activists and theorists compete against capitalism? (p. 65-67)
21. What are the chief points and challenges for “living otherwise”? Where can we find examples of “living otherwise”? How is it possible in the contemporary world? (p. 67-69)

3. Modernity *versus* the Anthropocene

3.1. Dipesh Chakrabarty: the Globe vs. the Planetary

Dipesh Chakrabarty. *The Climate of History in a Planetary Age*. Chicago: Chicago University Press. 2021. P. 68-92.

The Anthropocene means not only wider scales of time and space but it is a shift in worldview, values, and politics. It challenges our imagination because we need to find a new paradigm on how to build new relationships with the planet and other living beings. In this text, Chakrabarty proposes planetary thinking and the notion of the planetary, which will guide us toward non-anthropocentric thinking. First, we must understand why the planet's dimension was not significant and how our being in the world was rooted in dwelling in place. Chakrabarty

opposes the globe of globalization and the globe of global warming, sustainability, and habitability. The latter would be a new guide to new being in the world and new ethics and politics. We must understand what gives this opposition, why the popular term – sustainability – remains anthropocentric, and what proposes the notion of habitability.

1. What three histories does Chakrabarty distinguish? What timescales do they have, and how do these scales shape the content of each history? (p. 68)
2. How does the planet emerge as a topic important for philosophy? Why did previous philosophers underestimate planetary thinking? How do you understand earth/world and earth/planet distinctions? (p. 68-71)
3. What is the difference between the globe of globalization and the globe of global warming? How are they connected, and how do they diverge? (p. 72-81)
4. How did the notion of the globe of globalization develop in Western thinking? What dynamics (and changes) of relationships with nature and land represent Schmitt's schema appropriation-distribution-production? How did Schmitt understand dwelling? According to this notion of dwelling, can the globe be a home for humans? How do the relationships with the land change the emerging planetary image of the world? (p. 72-74)
5. What does the comparison of Earth and other planets give for interpreting the planetary, life in the Earth, and human place there? What role do Earth System Sciences play there? What about the globe of global warming, do these sciences say? (p. 75-80)
6. What is the difference between sustainability and habitability? What human–nature relationship is implied in the definition of sustainable development? Why is sustainability the anthropocentric term? (p. 81-83)
7. How does Chakrabarty define habitability? Why does he need this term? What is at the center of habitability? How can we explain: "Humans are not central to the problem of habitability, but habitability is central to human existence"? (p. 83-85)
8. What different timescales, kinds of knowledge, and values do the globe and the planetary approaches have? (p. 86-87)
9. What new ethics, politics, and human-nature relationship requires planetary thinking? (p. 87-92)

3.2. Bruno Latour: the Globe *versus* Gaia

Bruno Latour, *Facing Gaia. Eight Lectures on the New Climatic Regime*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2017, p. 75-146.

In his famous lectures, Latour tries to elaborate a new approach to modernity, the Anthropocene, the Earth, and the network of life in the critical zones. Interpreting the Anthropocene, Latour focuses not so much on geological processes, but on the processes of the critical zone – a few kilometers on the Earth's surface – where we can find the endangered life. Life on Earth is more complex than it is represented in the images of modernity. We have to solve the epistemological problem – how to interpret relationships of life in the critical

zone? The Globe – the child of modernity – provides a unified image of the Earth formed by sciences and based on the hope of control. But global warming and new nature challenge all images of modernity, and we need a new approach. Latour proposes to oppose the Globe and Gaia. Imagining the Earth as Gaia, as a living being, as a superorganism promises to grasp the complexity of life and find a different order than that provided by modernity (the Globe). But it is not easy; it is a challenge to our imagination, knowledge, and science. To grasp what Gaia is is the main task of the seminar. We have to understand what images of the Earth provide the Globe and Gaia, why Latour opposes the Globe (and modernity) to Gaia, why he proposes to go to a Gaian approach, and what challenges to our imagination and knowledge it poses.

1. What role does Galileo and Lovelock play in Latour's narrative? What images of the Earth do they propose? Why and how are they important for decentering the human? What "traumas" in the history of human self-awareness represent Freud's "Narcissistic wounds"? (p. 75-81)
2. What features of the mythological Gaia are important for the secular notion of Gaia – the planet? (p. 81-87)
3. What is Lovelock's problem? (p. 86)
4. What suggestion for Latour does Lovelock's parallelism with Pasteur give? (p. 87-91)
5. What relation is there between life on Earth and cycles (and chemical composition) in the critical zone? (p. 91-94)
6. Why does Latour emphasize that Gaia is an anti-system? What is the relation between Gaia and Earth System Sciences? What does the notion of Gaia as a superorganism propose? Why is it important for Latour to emphasize that Gaia is not one whole and not a part as well? (p. 94-98)
7. Why was Lovelock against Darwinists? Why is the principle of adaptation not sufficient? What relationships between organisms and the environment does Lovelock define? How can we identify and calculate the interests of organisms? What does the example of oxygen show? (p. 98-105)
8. How do you understand Latour's summarizing of the image of Gaia: "Gaia is not an organism, and we cannot apply to it any technological or religious model. It may have an order, but it has no hierarchy; it is not ordered by levels; it is not disordered, either"; "Gaia is a creature no more of chance than of necessity"? (p. 106-107)
9. What changes in humans' relationship with nature does the Gaia theory suggest? (p. 107-110)
10. What paradoxes and ironies of the Anthropocene proposal does Latour identify and explain? (p. 111-121)
11. Why does Latour think that there cannot be a unified notion of humanity in the Anthropocene? How do you understand: "The Anthropos of the Anthropocene? It is Babel after the fall of the huge tower. Finally, humans are not universifiable."? (p. 122)
12. What scheme, features, structure, and order does the Globe have? What role does Sloterdijk's spherology, Christian theology, and Earth system sciences play in the formation of the notion of the Globe? (p. 123-136)

13. What problems does Latour identify in our attitude towards the changes of the Anthropocene? What does the example of smoking show? (p. 136-140)
14. What does it mean to live in the Anthropocene? (p. 141)
15. What are the main points of Latour's summary that Gaia is not the Globe? How do we have to imagine the order of Gaia? (p. 140-142)
16. What challenges for sciences does Gaia pose? (p. 142-145)
17. How do you understand: "we have entered irreversibly into an epoch that is at once post-natural, post-human, and post-epistemological"? (p. 144)

4. The Critique of the Anthropocene

4.1. Jason W. Moore: Capitalocene vs. Anthropocene

Jason W. Moore, „The Rise of Cheap Nature“, *Anthropocene or Capitalocene? Nature, History, and the Crisis of Capitalism*. Oakland: Kairos PM, 2016, P. 78-115.

The proponents of the Capitalocene say that the term – the Anthropocene – is not relevant to name our predicament. Generalizing humanity as one entity, this term hides and obscures inequalities and those who are really guilty of climate change, global pollution, and the degradation of nature. Taking eco-Marxist account, the proponents of Capitalocene focus not so much on global consequences but ask what ontology and ideology enables profound exploitation and devastation of nature. They treat human/nature and human/animal dualisms as ideological tools that justify these relations not only as differences in reality but as differences in values. Humanity is an end, nature – a means. They reveal that capitalism is not only the world system of economics and politics but also a new way of organizing nature based on extractivism, exploitation, and accumulation of capital. Because this way of organizing has become global, they propose "an ugly word for an ugly system" – the Capitalocene. Reading this text, we have to understand how the capitalism uses Humanity/Nature dualism as an ideological tool, what forms of inequalities it produces, why capitalism needs cheap nature, labor, energy, and materials, why the beginning of the Capitalocene we have to associate not with industrialism, but colonialism.

1. How does Moore articulate his position? Which questions are the most important to him? How does he interpret ecology? What is the difference between "world-ecological" and "ecology of the world"? What change in attitude is articulated: "nature moves from noun ("the environment") to verb ("environment-making")? (p. 78-80)
2. What weak points of the narratives of the Anthropocene does Moore identify (from the point of view of the Capitalocene)? How do the Anthropocene narratives regard humanity? What do they obscure? What role does Cartesian dualism play here? (p. 80-83)
3. How do you understand: the narratives of the Anthropocene "are responses, not explanations", the Anthropocene "describes a lot but explains very little"? (p. 83-84)

4. What does it mean: capitalism is “a new way of organizing nature”, and “a new way of organizing the relations between work, reproduction, and the conditions of life”. What role do human/nature, *res cogitans/res extensa* dualisms play here? What role does science, economics, and state play here? (p. 84-86)
5. Why does capitalism need the Humanity/Nature division as its condition? What does it mean: “To turn work into labor-power and land into private property was to transform nature into Nature”? (p. 87-88)
6. Why does Moore propose that the significant changes in the development of capitalism must be associated not with industrialization but much earlier – with colonialism after 1450? How does capitalism incorporate work/energy into its reproduction of wealth, life, and power? (p. 89-109)
7. How does Moore understand Cheap Nature and Cheap Labor? Why are the conditions of “the Age of Capital” (and capitalism as well) cheap nature, labor, energy, food, and raw materials? How do you understand: “a transition from control of land as a direct relation of surplus appropriation to control of land as a condition for rising labor productivity within commodity production”? (p. 97-101)
8. Why is capitalism, for Moore, “a new way of organizing nature”? How does nature “work” for capitalism, and what “unpaid work” does nature do? (p. 109-111)
9. What are the signs of the end of cheap nature and cheap labor? How is the end of the Capitalocene possible? (p. 112-114)

4.2. Nicolas Mirzoeff: Visualizing the Anthropocene

Nicolas Mirzoeff, “Visualizing the Anthropocene”, *Public Culture* 26 (2) 73, 2014, p. 213-232

How do we get knowledge about the Anthropocene? It comes to us through many scales, texts, and visual representations. The latter are the most impressive because aerial photos can show the vastness of mines, clear-cut forests, pollution places, and fields of agriculture at a glance (for example, Edward Burtynsky’s photos and film). But, as Mirzoeff points out, visualisation is not a neutral depiction of the world; it provides means to conquer and master social processes, societies, and nature. The visual representations of the Anthropocene have such a function, but appear very ambiguous. On the one hand, they provide means to grasp the vastness of the Anthropocene processes causing climate change, bring it to our senses (*aesthesis*), create a possibility to feel, not only to think about it. But at the same time, they can be anaesthetising, because by drawing our attention to the affective, beautiful, and sublime, they hide what is really dangerous, bad, and threatening. In the seminar, we have to understand this ambiguous anaesthetization through aesthetics. We will come to it by analysing how visibility is related to power and conquering the world, how nature was conquered by visualisation, how anaesthetization through visualisation works, and why countervisuality is so important to Mirzoeff.

1. How does Mirzoeff formulate the problem? How is aesthetics connected to politics? What problems does the visual representation of the Anthropocene hide? (p. 213-216)

2. How is the visualisation related to power and governing? How do you understand: “Visualizing was and is a hierarchical, indeed autocratic, means of imagining the social”? (p. 216-217)
3. How was the conquest of nature made through visualisation? What role did nature play in the imagination of the order of society in the 17th and 18th centuries? What role did the art play there? How does G. F. Hegel’s notion of art (“the task of the work of art is to grasp the object in its universality”) enable us to conquer nature through visualisation? (p. 217-220)
4. How do you understand: “the conquest of nature, having been aestheticised, leads to a loss of perception (*aesthesis*), which is to say, it becomes an anaesthetics”. (p. 220)
5. What ways of anaesthetising does the interpretation of three works of art show? To what do they draw the attention of spectators? How do they hide the real problems of pollution? (p. 220-226)
6. What in inter-human relationships cannot be visualised and represented? (p. 226-228)
7. What kind of inequality does the Lancet’s map show? Why are the strategies of countervisuality so significant for democracy, and Mirzoeff? Why is the experience of indigenous people important there?