

Week 4 - EJ & The City

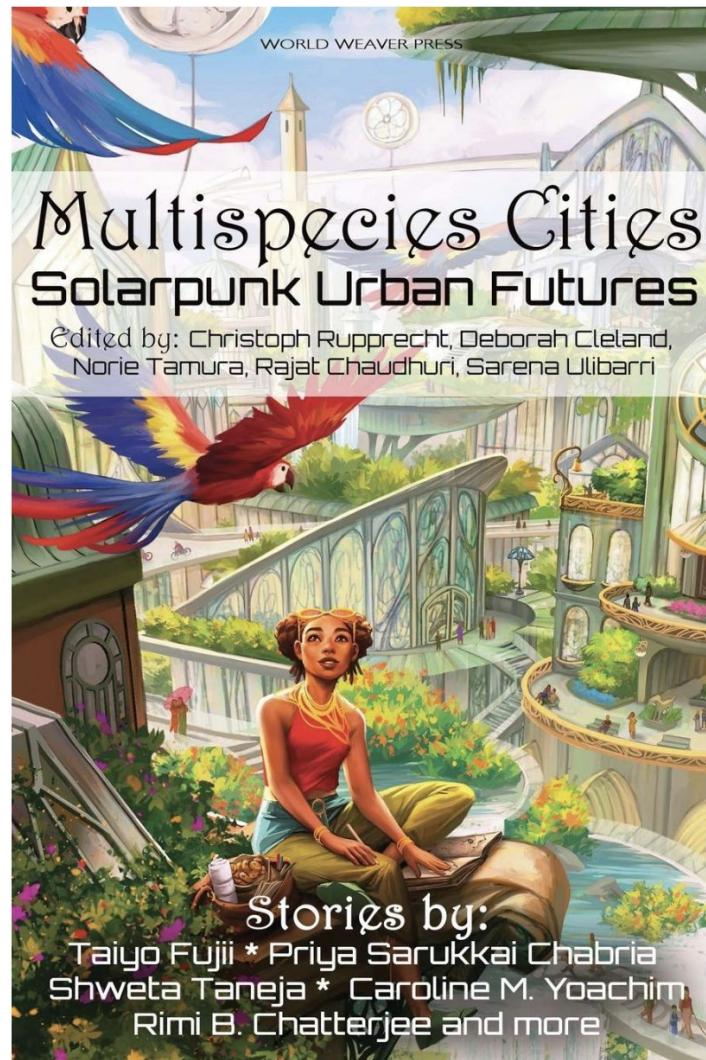
Agenda

1. Quick Recap
2. Mural
3. Class collaborative review of week's concepts
4. Group Activity

Book Rec

Multispecies Cities: Solarpunk Urban Futures, Edited by Rupprecht, Cleland, Tamura, Chaudhuri, and Ulibarri

A short stories anthology where each story imagines the future of cities in an optimistic, multispecies, eco-futurist way. Majority of writers from Asia-Pacific, with stories set in Asia-Pacific.



Major Concepts Recap

- **Wilderness**
 - Nature is separate, untouched, terrible but awe-inspiring, the sublime, a difficult but ultimately rejuvenating space and space for reinventing or rediscovering one's self.
- **Pastoral**
 - Nature as how people have curated it, farming and shepherding, not separate or untouched, transforming the land, garden paradise, returning to oneself, anti-city.

Wilderness and pastoral are two different story plots that conceptualize nature in two different ways. Wilderness (storyplot) =/= nature.

- **Toxic Storytelling/Discourse**
 - Elements of **awakening** to the reality of contamination.
 - Images of an **entire world that is polluted** and from which there is no escape.
 - **Moral passion of the injured powerless party against the powerful:** often victims, neighborhoods, communities described as rising up against political authorities and/or corporations.



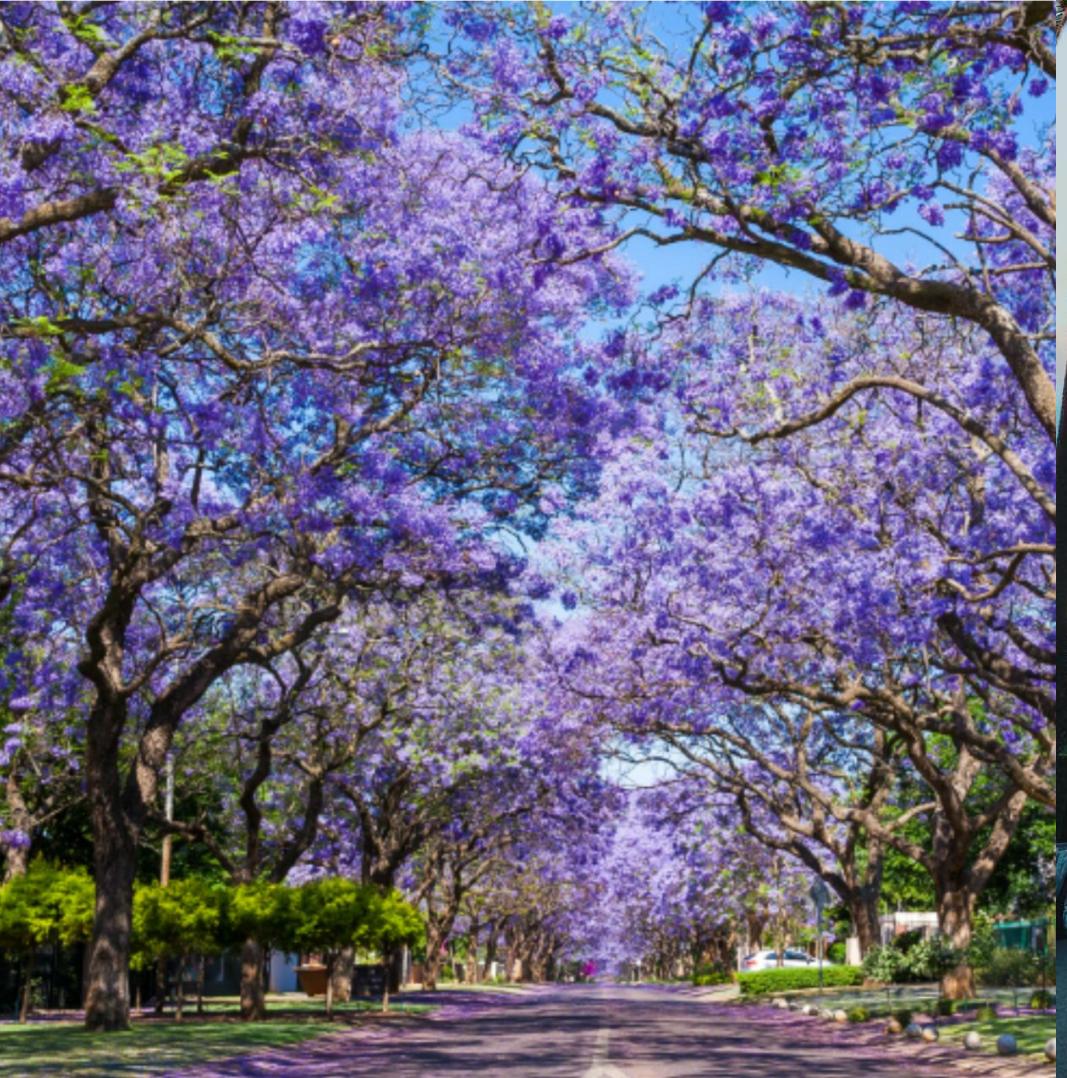
Mural made in collaboration with University of California, Berkeley's Center for Health Assessment of Mothers and Children of Salinas (CHAMACOS) and Hijos del Sol Art Production.

Nature in the city?

What does this mean to you?

When was this mindset?

Where can we see the results of this mindset in LA?





Arijit Chakraborty
Photography



Nature for the city

What does it mean to have nature *for* the city?

How is this different from nature *in* the city?





City as nature

Novel ecosystems:

City as nature

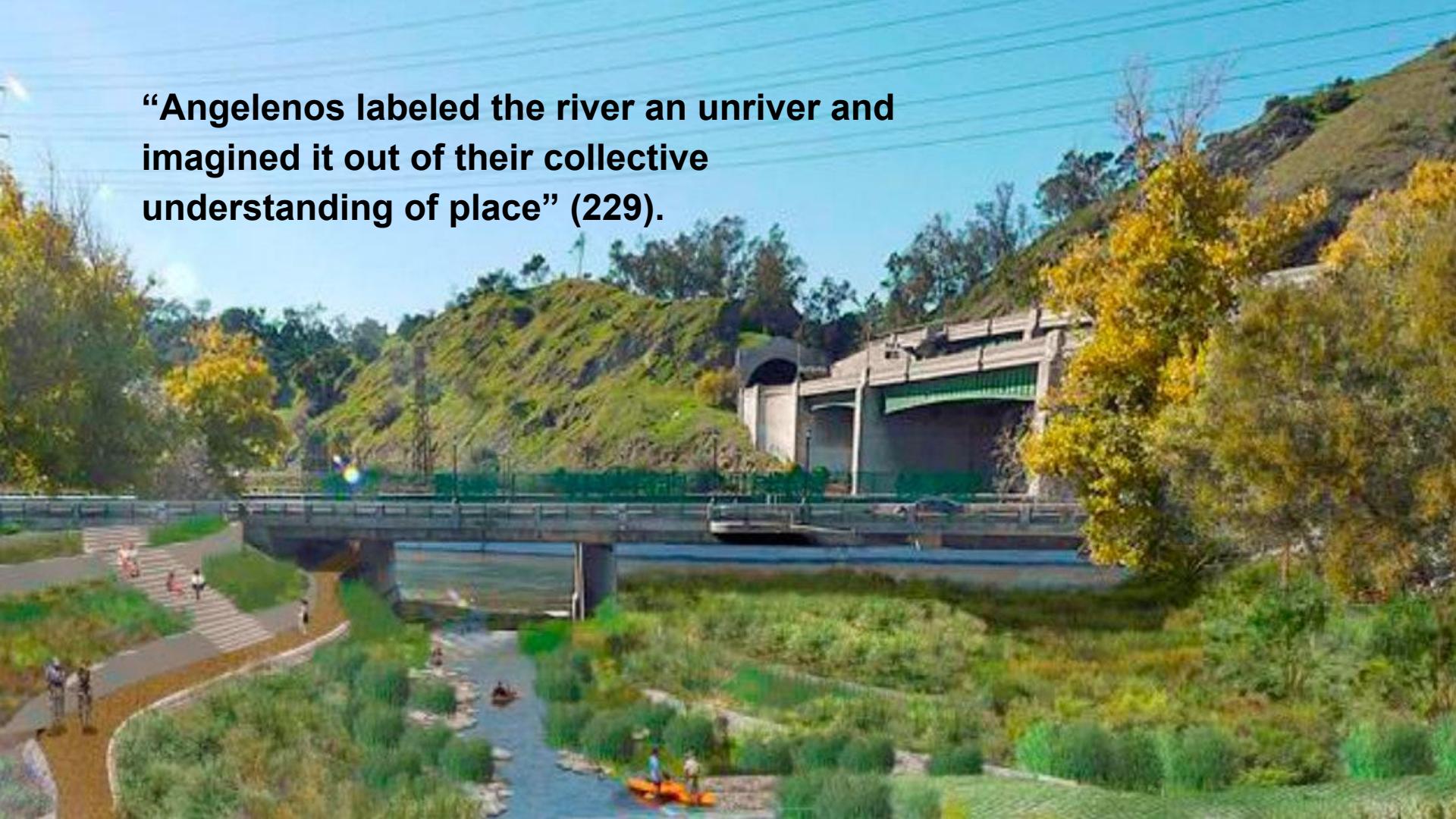
Novel ecosystems:

“A novel ecosystem is a system of abiotic, biotic and social components that, by virtue of human influence, differ from those that prevailed historically, having a tendency to self-organize and manifest novel qualities without intensive human management” (Hobbs, Higgs, & Hall, 2013)

PARTNER DISCUSSION Q:

What does Jennifer Price ultimately say about nature & nature writing in LA?
How is this different from other works that put nature in, for, and apart from the city?

“Angelenos labeled the river an unriver and imagined it out of their collective understanding of place” (229).



Environmental Justice

- **Distributive justice:** allocation of resources, goods, opportunity in a society.
- **Participatory justice (and veto power):** the direct participation of those affected most by a particular decision, in the decision-making process itself.

The environmental justice perspective on nature:

- Challenged/challenges the prevalence of the wilderness masterplot.
- People & nature are not separate, but interdependent.
- Brings the focus away from “wilderness” locations, towards where social struggles are happening (mainly the city).

Urban Gardening: Ron Finley

'This is no damn hobby': the 'gangsta gardener' transforming Los Angeles



‘We did it in LA and we can do it all over the world.’ Ron Finley tends his plot in South Central Los Angeles. All photographs courtesy of the Ron Finley Project. Photograph: Courtesy of The Ron Finley Project



Group Questions

In small groups, discuss these 2 questions and share a quote from Price on the google doc

- 1) What Price have to say about the American Dream and nature? What do you think this says about environmental narratives and identity in the city?
 - a) Consider how we talked about identity in wilderness and pastoral storyplots. How can we connect this to what Price is saying?
- 2) Is what Ron Finley doing environmental justice? Is the LA river restoration? Why or why not?
 - a) Think of what issues they tackle and how they choose to address them. Who or what is being centered in their efforts?