
How to carry a landscape; Or, a crystalline gaze into the boundless wild

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Sum up your body. Yawn. Yaaaawn. Note that your Yawn is autonomous from your body. Note that your Yawn has a body that is not your own. Note that this body has weight.

Picture an uncountable number of strings in space: cotton, unbleached, soft to the touch and casually fuzzed, in the way that only natural fibres can be. Taut: coming from and receding to distances beyond your field of vision. The strings, shooting in every possible direction, create a delicate network that, were it to have edges, might resemble the hazy blowball of a dandelion in bloom. These strings, their networked connections, the structure that they compose have no knowable borders, for their plane of experience bounds outwards with an appetite that exceeds time's will to march forward.

You are within this uncountable number of strings, lacking coordinates. But, "you" are a(n impossibly) suspended "you," an invisible "you," a "you" without agency. You are a vector, a "you" of convenience, set to expire the instant "you" is/are no longer required. Don't worry; "you" will continue to be reconstituted with new qualifications for some time, iterations echoing forward and behind, the terminus of this journey of you-ness only known by the stillness of its arrival. The end of the line. [1]

Continuing: A number (x) of these strings quietly present themselves, nearing the foreground of your attention. [2] Coming from somewhere off in the distance to your left and disappearing somewhere over to your right, they maintain a directional tendency but retain an independence from each other; these string-things are following the course of their string-ness from and into imperceptible depths. There is no sound here, but the space resembles an aural field, full of reverberation, events far out of sight creating vibrations in the lattice of your immediate surrounds.

These strings are not still. They don't perceptively move, but on singular occasions their trajectories shift, to align, caress, run abreast of each other, in a choreography of being both together and separate. Had these strings not selected themselves out, you would not have noted their gambol—their here and there, the resonance of their fluctuation between concrescence and form-taking. After a moment, they separate—split - fray - bound off in unknowable directions. "You" reconstitutes itself again for its next sojourn.

It may seem like "you" is/are witnessing the birth and death of an undetermined event, the one-step-after-the-next, the fourth note after a third. Were it left here, this taking-account-of would be an accountancy of taking, a connecting A(x)-to-Be-to-Seeing all the way down the line, becoming predictable through force of habit, the lassitude [3] of actions repeated again and again to the point where they become familiar, family, exploitable, expendable...

Slow the moment down. Pause. Feel the line slack, cut; let out the line, line by line, remember that these cotton lines with their sumptuous tactility are just a proposition that you have been entangled by, a wild nest that 'you' is/are trapped within, iteration upon iteration of the illusion of choice, a becoming anything-but-*other*. Imagine that gorgeous, dandelion-like nest of lines of unrealized and realized potentials, and recall: in the network-making, border-linking, searching for- of family resemblances, these logical connections which are so highly prized are the trip-line of something else. [4]

Let go of “you.” Let the strings let go of you. Let go of the strings.

Instead, imagine a ribbon that has more than two planes. It maintains its thin and thick, its coming-to and going-away. But it also adds the capacity to carry, to turn sideways and hide, to catch, present a face, to slice. A ribbon offers an affordance of rest, layer, and surface. Imagine this ribbon has the capacity to be as wide or as invisible as its evasion of capture requires, carrying imaginary homelands across linear perimeters of time and space. Side-step the line.

It is not possible to see all facets of a ribbon at once. Invariably, one side is hiding. One side of a ribbon may display an effect, where the other contains a cause. Logic is hidden, unavailable for inspection. Progression loses its coherency, its narrative disjunctive, misaligned.

Return to this spider’s web of cotton lines zipping to and fro, and substitute with ribbons careening this way and that, ripping past one another, turning on themselves into complex crystalline forms, presenting fragments of truth and untruth. Ribbons fold in on themselves like origami, creating faces adjoined to faces in both space and time. The perspectival force of progression has folded itself into an unknowable knot.

What if we step back from our perceptive world, before connecting ground to gravity, walls to barriers, bodies to wounds, before we accept the truth of one step requesting another. What if one step calls for a second, and a step responds to this call by presenting a pot of mums where a foot used to be?

Buried in its folds and facets, its corners tuck in on themselves. Hidden deep in these pockets and folds rests an uneasy fugitivity, a wildness whose logic is incommensurate with the logic of capture. [5] The rendering of an actual world loses its sensibility. The world begins to deterritorialize, borders unhinge. Experience drives the account, but the account is odd, queer, other. Smoke clears from a war-torn sky and two moons come into focus. [6]

On a plane adjacent to these two moons, other ribbon-surfaces depict landscapes. These landscapes are larger than a single plane might hold, but many ribbons folding in on themselves, creating structures of dodge and weave start to do the work of holding it aloft. Each landscape is not contained on one surface, but pours over the fold, continuing out of sight, to the interior or the opposite side of its crystalline form. [7] Borders lose their cohesion. A single face of landscape belies but does not hold its entirety. Imagined continuity takes the place of the whole, the virtual supplanting the real, while the real is tucked away for safekeeping. A landscape can now be carried in the mind's eye. A border can be traversed from the centre, meaning made by the juxtaposition of one moon to the next, one homeland to another. A homeland, its scale hidden by the deceptively simple operation of tucking the real into the virtual, carried on a fold no larger than a postage stamp. Tucked into the cuff of your pants for safekeeping.

Notes

[1] On a different life-plane as a becoming-architect, I was tasked with the same initiation of many in the field: learn the daunting, seemingly impenetrable task of mastering AutoCAD. As with other vector-based software, all points in its virtual reality are relative: placing your cursor in the software's black void is imprecise, its confluence of x, y and z vectors difficult to locate, let alone conceive of. Adjusting to this reality is like learning to trust the placement of your foot in the next step in a pitch black room; time, and an awareness that the distance between points is a leap of faith towards the speculative and conceptual.

[2] It is impossible to overstate this significance of Erin Manning's work on neurotypical and neurodiverse perception on my understanding of myself and the world, in its in-formation. Neurotypical observation is never passive: in fact, it is violent, a wrenching of a desired object from its surrounds. "The separating out of the object backgrounds the intrinsic relationality of the field's coming to expression, clearing the stage for an overshadowing human subject to cast his presence in its place, in order to take personal credit for the field's

environmentally emergent accounting for itself.” (Manning and Massumi 2014: 7)

[3] Each Methodology has its own life history. It starts as a dodge facilitating the accomplishment of some nascent urge of life. In its prime, it represents some wide coordination of thought and action whereby this urge expresses itself as a major satisfaction of existence. Finally, it enters upon the lassitude of old age, its second childhood. The larger contrasts attainable within the scope of the method have been explored and familiarized. The satisfaction from repetition has faded away. Life then faces the last alternatives in which its fate depends [...] When any methodology of life has exhausted the novelties within its scope and played upon them up to the incoming of fatigue, one final decision determines the fate of the species. It can stabilize itself, and relapse so as to live; or it can shake itself free, and enter upon the adventure of living better (Whitehead 1929: 18-19).

[4] How to do Research-Creation? At the SenseLab, our research location resides in the hyphen; but that hyphen represents a territory *in and of itself*, an important locality underexplored by current thinking on the subject. Sawchuk and Chapman start in this direction with their research category “Creation-as-Research”, hinting at its radical potential to upend knowledge production - “It is in this sense that such creative work can be understood as a strong form of intervention, contributing to knowledge in a profoundly different way from the academic norm.” But why do we shy away from a total radicalization of this form of knowledge production, buffering this hybridity by mimicking creation-as-research work within more established “theoretical articulations? (Sawchuck and Chapman: 2012)

[5] I want to deliberately gesture here to two key concepts: The emergent field of ‘Wildness’, an ecological approach to subject formation, a subfield of queer theory in development by Tavia Nyong’o, Jack Halberstam and the late José Esteban Muñoz; and the fugitivity, articulated by Stefano Harney and Fred Moten in *The Undercommons*. Emerging scholarly work on the topic of queer subjecthood points to an integration of imminent becoming and Affect Theory,

reconfiguring ecologies through an understanding of the processes by which they emerge and shape subjectivity. Fugitivity speaks to modes of being that escape capture by the (capitalist) structures that drive our society's institutions. The work of putting these concepts in conversation needs to be done.

[6] In Samuel L. Delany's *Dhalgren*, the aspiration-less drifters in the fictional, post-apocalyptic American city of Bellona are startled one evening to find that there are not one, but *two* moons hanging largely in the sky. Two moons become a signifier for a landscape in flux, vibration, motion. The narrative of the text functions as a Möbius strip, the "beginning" of the text folding into its "end", the landscape reconstituting itself (but different) as a locale unfixed in normative functionings of time and space. Most of the characters in this narrative are black, queer, female, or immigrants to this city out of time. A Möbius strip, of course, is a ribbon riddled with improbability, its facets only ever virtual. Wildness knows no bounds.

[7] In the crystalline, you can never see all images at once. "Crystalline narration will fracture the complementarity of lived hodological and a represented Euclidean space. Having lost its sensory-motor connections, concrete space ceases to be organized according to tensions and resolutions to tension, according to goals, obstacles, means or even detours." How would a landscape versed only in the crystalline perform? What fugitivities would it support, wildness would it let in? How might it fold back on itself, in clever concealment? (Deleuze 2005: 128)

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