



**WANDER LINES**  
**Methodological Escapism**

**MURMUR LAND STUDIOS**



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**Mythodological Escapism**

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The Murmur Land Studios curatorial collective would like to begin by acknowledging that the land on which we gather for the *Wander Lines* field school is the unceded traditional territory of the Coast Salish peoples, specifically the Snuneymuxw First Nation, a Coast Salish people who live on Vancouver Island and speak the Hul'qumi'num dialect. Newcastle Island Marine Provincial Park is part of Snuneymuxw First Nation Traditional Territory.

“Newcastle Island or Saysutshun has always had a special place in the hearts of Snuneymuxw people or mustiyuxw. It has been used as a place of healing. When someone had passed away in the community, the loved ones would go to Newcastle island to yu'thuy'thut to fix up their heart, mind and body and let go of their tears.”

As the event participants of *Wander Lines* we further acknowledge that we are visitors passing through this traditional territory, endeavouring to walk with gentle footsteps and interweave a number of cares: care for others, care for self, care for the event, and most importantly, care for the land and water.



# Elementemporal Storying: A Proposition

## WANDERLUST

Curved lines. Tempo lines. Entangled lines. Woven lines. Staccato lines. Musical lines. Dirt lines. Forgotten lines. Spiral lines. Irrational lines. Forked lines. Tree lines. Coast lines. Tide lines. Geological lines. Textured lines. Blood lines. Phantom lines. Animal lines. Posthuman lines. Blind lines. Scan lines. Reality lines. Script lines. Plot lines. Guide lines. Phone lines. Time lines.

*Wander Lines.*

Before we wander too far, perhaps a note on the subtitle of our gathering: *Mythodological Escapism*. Mythod is not so much a line, but an approach to line-making, line-taking, line-following, or line-listening—at once an intensive movement and its own processual knotting.

A mythodology proceeds in multiple directions without claiming an origin or end point. A mythod is not a building block of formulated procedures—forms upon forms upon forms—but rather a continuous movement of forces, inflections, and switchbacks. A mythodological process follows a gravitational pull of attractors. Each critical point becomes an inflection point that changes the direction of the curve or the direction of the creative path; the emergent properties, variations of intensities and critical points that change the space of the creative act.

A mythodological approach is always an untimely felt event that directs the creative act to a new horizon not yet imagined. It offers an escape route for routine procedures.

*A thought is just a line taking flight.*

## ESCAPISM

Remaking to escape the rootedness of knowledge. Imagine escape.

Imaginings are always escaping.

Slip through the cracks. Artful openings prompt new pathways.

Reconfigure regularly to avoid habituation.

How might we take account of inheritance when building anew?

This requires a topology of thought, attuning to a certain kind of (non)sense in our making.

How to escape when caught by our own nature?

Revise our conceptions of nature.

Storytelling is essential for survival.

## COMPLEMENTARITY (AN ETYMOLOGICAL APPROACH)

### **complex (adj.)**

1650s, "composed of parts," from French *complexe* "complicated, complex, intricate" (17c.), from Latin *complexus* "surrounding, encompassing," past participle of *complecti* "to encircle, embrace," in transferred use, "to hold fast, master, comprehend," from *com* "with, together" (see *com-*) + *plectere* "to weave, braid, twine, entwine," from PIE *\*plek-to-*, suffixed form of root *\*plek-* "to plait." The meaning "not easily analyzed" is first recorded 1715. *Complex sentence* is attested from 1881.

### **simple (adj.)**

c. 1200, "free from duplicity, upright, guileless; blameless, innocently harmless," also "ignorant, uneducated; unsophisticated; simple-minded, foolish," from Old French *simple* (12c.) "plain, decent; friendly, sweet; naive, foolish, stupid," hence "wretched, miserable," from Latin *simplus* from PIE compound *\*sm-plo-*, from root *\*sem-* (1) "one; as one, together with" + *\*-plo-* "-fold."

Sense of "free from pride, humble, meek" is mid-13c. As "consisting of only one substance or ingredient" (opposite of *composite* or *compounded*) it dates from late 14c.; as "easily done" (opposite of *complicated*) it dates from late 15c.

From mid-14c. as "unqualified; mere; sheer;" also "clear, straightforward; easily understood." From late 14c. as "single, individual; whole." From late 14c. of clothing, etc., "modest, plain, unadorned," and of food, "plain, not sumptuous." In medicine, of fractures, etc., "lacking complications," late 14c. As a law term, "lacking additional legal stipulations, unlimited," from mid-14c.

In Middle English with wider senses than recently, such as "inadequate, insufficient; weak, feeble; mere; few; sad, downcast; mournful; of little value; low in price; impoverished, destitute;" of hair, "straight, not curly." As noun, "an innocent or a guileless person; a humble or modest person" (late 14c.), also "an uncompounded substance." From c. 1500 as "ignorant people."

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## ART AND GEOPHILOSOPHY

“When one’s ecological art practice becomes more open, more co-compositional, more about *listening as a gestural praxis* rather than domination, things literally seem to fall into place. This does not mean there is no work to be done, however, but that *all elements achieve a certain sympathy to the process of the creation-event*, or that its frictions have become greatly reduced by the listening. The task for this *practice of least resistance*, then, is to understand the relation of *time spent* with a work and its milieu, not as marker of economic value but as adequacy or appropriateness to the creation-event proper. It is not efficiency that we seek here so much as simplicity or elegance of gesture, which is to say *style*.

It is also to beg the question of a relationship between time and humility.”

(Gad Fleischwitz, *Art and Ecology*, 2014)

## SIMPLEXITY

It is tempting to make a *simple* contrast between that which is, well, simple, versus that which is complex, as if they were *simply* opposites of one another: a design of this sort often justifies the creation of rigid strata between those who are rather *simple* and those capable of more *complex* behaviour or the like, the former being decidedly more mundane and undesirable than the latter.

But of course this is not the case: both ‘simple’ and ‘complex’ are exceedingly elusive and difficult to attain with any sort of sophistication; it is nearly as easy to fashion ‘incomplete’ (rather than simple) or ‘convoluted’ (rather than complex) in our processes and techniques of generating knowledge.

Let us propose the need for simplicity! Neither-nor, the simplex cannot be contained by the monikers simple or complex, because it exists at, because of, and through an etymological bifurcation point from centuries ago: namely, *the plait or fold*.

Do we not require strategies for simplicity in an age of shortened attention spans, meme contagion patterns, and generalized information oversaturation (not to mention its accompanying anxiety)? By which we mean models of simplicity that unfold to very complex understandings?

Revisiting the etymology of the complementarity above, the terms simple and complex offer us much suggestive material to consider: *weaving*, the *one* and *multiple*, *foolishness*, *humility*, *intricacy*, *encircling*, and more. Could these help guide us in developing strategies and tactics of simplicity for a mythological praxis?

## FIGURE/GROUND REVISITED

A fabulation is not the same as an abstraction, neither in degree nor in kind. Rather, a fabulation—at least when practised ethically—makes all abstractions into serious playthings, forming a sort of 'concreteness' which in turn is rendered malleable or plastic. And in this malleability one also begins to wrest wriggle room from the shackles of orderly time. More importantly, the fabulation—at least when practised ethically—reaches right through all abstractions to fashion connections with the land, which is to say with the body, which is to say with the world. And so: *How do we begin to consider an ethical practice of fabulation?*

## THESE ARE NOT RECIPES OR ROUTINES

Priming for the conditions of joyful survival means enacting care for the self, the relation, the land, and the event: *Attune. Listen. Relate. Deviate. Pattern. Listen. Attune.*

Repeat 3x.

+ + +

**SIM** (imitation of a process or state of affairs; subscriber identity module/sim card)

**IMP** (Old English *impe*, 'young shoot, graft,' from *impian* 'to graft,' probably an early Germanic borrowing from Vulgar Latin *\*imptus*, from Late Latin *impotus* 'implanted,' from Greek *emphytos*, verbal adjective formed from *emphyein* 'implant,' from *em-* 'in' + *phyein* 'to bring forth, make grow,' from PIE root *\*bheue-* 'to be, exist, grow.' Compare Swedish *ymp*, Danish *ympe* "graft." The sense of the word has shifted from plants to people, via the meaning "child, offspring" (late 14c., now obsolete), from the notion of "newness." The current meaning "little devil" is attested from 1580s, from common pejorative phrases such as *imp of Satan*. The extension from this to "mischievous or pert child" (1640s) unconsciously turns the word back toward its Middle English sense.

**LEX** (the Latin word for "law" or "statute")

**EXIT** -----> Y?

## A NOTE ABOUT THIS TEXT

Mythodologists never reveal their process. Mythodology is never inscribed, recorded, rehearsed. It is not performed on the page but in the act of doing. Another friendly reminder: You will not find mythodology textbooks at your local university bookstore nor should you want to. No text can exist. We are alive. So use your immanent myth-making practices and invent the event of your own mythod to become-termite.

It may become the only ethical thing we can do.



April Vannini  
*Irregular Kaleidoscope*  
2015

# Notes on the Specificity of SenseLab's Research-Creation Event-Design Practice, as Distinguished from an Art Event, an Academic Meeting, or an Activist Project

(reprinted and adapted courtesy of Brian Massumi and Erin Manning, October 2013)

## ENABLING CONSTRAINT vs. FRAMEWORK OR STRUCTURE

An enabling constraint is a jumping-off point, more a springboard than a structure. The constraints create a field of relation that effectively enables and orients activity without governing how it unfolds or predetermining either its form or specific content. Example: the field of gravity is the enabling constraint for dance, but dance is not framed or structured by it. Rather, dancing converts the predictable, inescapable demands of gravity into a creative force for its own form-taking, tangential to gravity's pull. Enabling constraints put in place conditions for emergence, tangentially exceeding the frame in a self-structuring way that is one with its own unfolding movement. Observation: for enabling constraints to work, they must be taken on truly as constraints—that is, as *non-optional*, just as gravity is for dance. Challenge: setting in place constraints that truly constrain, are directly taken on by the group as such, but are just as immediately felt to be conditions of freedom (emergent, self-deciding, form-taking).

## CONDITIONING vs. ORGANIZING

Enabling constraints set in place a rigorous field of relation orienting certain kinds of potential. What they do is best thought of as 'conditioning,' rather than 'organizing'. Organizing sets the frame, which then contains the actions within certain parameters. Conditioning triggers a self-organizing movement that *invents* its own parameters.

## ACTIVATING vs. INITIATING

Initiating carries the idea of a pre-existing subject whose intentions are carried out. Even if the subject is a group deciding collectively what its intentions are, the intentionality tends to limit what emerges to that which can be pre-thought. Activation *catalyzes* a movement that is constrained to take rigorous form by how the field of relation is conditioned. The movement thinks itself out in how it effectively unfolds. It is its own emergent subject. The arc of its unfolding is the dynamic, embodied 'thinking' of its conditions of emergence. The result, being emergent, always surprises (exceeding any initiating intention that may have contributed to the catalyzing). This is what Erin refers to as an 'emergent collectivity'—collective because what happens cannot be claimed to have been caused or organized by any one factor separable from the others, but rather has dynamically worked itself out between them.

## RELATIONAL MOVEMENT vs. PARTICIPATION OR INTERACTION

The idea of participation singles out an individual factor, and construes the relevant factors as human individuals. It sets in place a frame for interaction. This pre-subjectivizes, and pre-forms what can happen (by designing into the framework certain stimulus-response functions). By contrast, relational movement includes among the creative factors (and enabling constraints) *non-human elements* (gravity, lakes, pixels, technological apparatuses, site conditions, materials, bears ...) and does not think in terms of function or stimulus/response or action/reaction. Participatory design always comes across as task-oriented. The participants start by receiving instructions, or sussing out what is expected of them and what the functional parameters of their task is. Relational movement starts by the clinching into place of enabling constraints that immediately translate into movement. It is not task-oriented, but immediately moving (in all senses of the word). There is no need for cogitation before plunging into the action. You have already taken the plunge the moment you *cross the threshold* into the relational field (hence the importance of techniques for setting the threshold conditions).

## PROPOSITION vs. INSTRUCTIONS

This distinction is really a movement towards taking on Arakawa+Gins' idea of 'procedure'. A proposition in the sense used during earlier SenseLab events has been as a synonym for 'using enabling constraints to trigger conditions of emergence activating self-organizing potential'. This is obviously very different from giving instructions that propose an interaction. But the tricky part is that instructions can in fact be enabling constraints. Perhaps a 'procedure' could be thought of a proposition that includes instructions among its enabling constraints. Question: how to use instructions in this propositional sense, in a way that does not frame or structure an interaction, but helps trigger a relational movement? [---> Curatorial note: think 'DEPROGRAM']

## TECHNIQUE vs. ACTIVITY

A technique is born of an enabling constraint. *It opens a process to its potential.* In doing so, it invents its own duration. An activity usually comes with a duration and an arc, and is played out across that arc. *Emergent collectivities stem from activities born of techniques.* For the event-design that has been at the heart of SenseLab practice, we have always been more concerned with creating the conditions that animate the threshold of a potential activity rather than defining the breadth of the activity itself. When an activity is born from the potentializing of technique (think, for instance, of conceptual speed-dating, born out of the necessity for a technique that would allow us to move from small-group to large-group theorizing, and vice versa), it carries with it both the technique and the enabling constraint (in *potentia*), which allows it (in the best of conditions) to evolve beyond the technique (toward what we have called technicity). *By not mapping out the activity in advance, there is a larger opportunity for an emergent process to evolve.*



Gad Fleischwitz and Jaqui Barn  
*Timepiece*  
2013

## Florilegium: An Interleaving

“Amniotechnics is the art of holding and caring even while being ripped into, at the same time as being held. It is protecting water and protecting people from water. I want a generalized praxis of this, which doesn't forget the importance of holding mothers and thwarted mothers and, yes, even wannabe 'single fathers,' afloat in the juice; breathing but hydrated; well-watered but dry. I hope it is possible even for fantasists of ectogenetic progeny, like Frankenstein, who have dreamed of a birth unsullied by a womb, to become capable amniotechnicians in time. Their worldviews may not hold water, but I think they too have to be held. It is possible for any of us to learn that it is the holders—not the delusional 'authors,' self-replicators and 'patenters'—who truly people the world. 'Water management' may sound unexciting, but I suspect it contains the secrets to the kinmaking practices of the future.”

(Sophie Lewis, 'Amniotechnics', *The New Inquiry*, 2017)

“When a woman refuses to support the dry collective, she refuses to stop her wild thinking, and her actions follow accordingly. 'The Red Shoes' in essence teaches that the wild psyche must be properly protected—by unequivocally valuing it ourselves, by speaking out in its interest, by refusing to submit to psychic unhealth. We also learn that the wild, because of its energy and beauty, is *always* eyed by somebody or other, something to be reduced, altered, ruled on, murdered, redesigned, or controlled. The wild always needs a guardian at the gate, or it will be misused.”

(Clarissa Pinkola Estes, *Women Who Run With the Wolves*, 1992)

“The word 'imagination' is reminiscent of the psychology of the faculties. However, it is valuable in that it assumes mental images come from a certain power, express an activity that forms them, and perhaps presuppose the existence of a function that employs them. On the other hand, the term "imagination" can be misleading because it assigns images to the subject that produces them, and tends to exclude the hypothesis of a primitive exteriority of images in relation to the subject. This is the current attitude of contemporary thinkers for whom the image is attributed to an 'imagizing consciousness,' to use Sartre's phrase. But why exclude as illusory the characters by which an image resists free will, refuses to allow itself to be directed by the will of the subject, and presents itself by way of its own forces, inhabiting consciousness as an intruder that disturbs the order of the house where it is not invited?”

...

“...The symbol...maintains an analytic relation with the symbolized. Symbols go in pairs, which is to say that a symbol is a fragment of a primordial whole which was divided by way of an accidental line. When reconciled, the two symbols, which are complementary, reconstitute the primitive unity. Each symbol tends toward the other symbol, deriving meaning from the reunion with its complement. Initially, symbols were two fragments of a single split object, as in the rite of hospitality relations in which a stone was broken, each family preserved and passed on to their descendants the received fragment, and the reunion of the fragments authenticated the relation. The rapport that exists between the key and the lock is the same kind of relation. A key without a lock, or a lock without a key, isn't a complete reality. The two become meaningful by being reunited....This primitive meaning, which is also the strong sense, is found when a symbolic word is a rallying cry, permitting the authentication of all those belonging to a group.”

(Gilbert Simondon, *Imagination et Invention [1965-1966]*, 2008)

“After the waterthrush there was only silence.

Understand from the first this certainty. Butterflies don't write books, neither do lilies or violets. Which doesn't mean they don't know, in their own way, what they are. That they don't know they are alive—that they don't feel, that action upon which all consciousness sits, lightly or heavily. Humility is the prize of the leaf-world. Vain-glory is the bane of us, the humans. Sometimes the desire to be lost again, as long ago, comes over we like a vapor. With growth into adulthood, responsibilities claimed me, so many heavy coats. I didn't choose them, I don't fault them, but it took time to reject them. Now in the spring I kneel, I put my face into the packets of violets, the dampness, the freshness, the sense of ever-ness. Something is wrong, I know it, if I don't keep my attention to eternity. May I be the tiniest nail in the house of the universe, tiny but useful. May I stay forever in the stream. May I look down upon the windflower and the bull thistle and the coreopsis with the greatest respect.”

(Mary Oliver, *Upstream*, 2016)

“Bicycling and walking offer unique entry into exploration itself. Landscape, the built environment, ordinary space that surrounds the adult explorer, is something not meant to be interpreted, to be read, to be understood. It is neither a museum gallery nor a television show. Unlike almost everything else to which adults turn their attention, the concatenation of natural and built form surrounding the explorer is fundamentally mysterious and often maddeningly complex. Exploring it first awakens the dormant resiliency of youth, the easy willingness to



admit making a wrong turn and going back a block, the comfortable understanding that some explorations take more than an afternoon, the certain knowledge that lots of things in the wide world just down the street make no immediate sense. But exploring not only awakens attitudes and skills made dormant by programmed education, jobs, and the hectic dash from dry cleaner to grocery store to dentist. It sharpens the skills and makes explorers realize that all the skills acquired in probing and poking at ordinary space, everything from noticing nuances in house paint to seeing great geographical patterns from a hilltop almost no one bothers to climb, are cross-training for dealing the vicissitudes of life. Exploring ordinary landscape sharpens all the skills of exploration.”

(John Stillgoe, *Outside Lies Magic: Regaining History and Awareness in Everyday Places*, 1998)

“I’ve been dedicated to what I call ‘the mythic news,’ that mythology is suffusing the secular and animating it. ...let’s say myth is a metaphoric animation of the intrinsic intelligence of nature... And metaphor is the incarnational garb whereby power enters the world. It’s the kind of invitation, the frame being that ‘co-operators are standing by, but they require an invitation.’ ...the function... of the artist within us... is to invite in.

In the astrological language, Venus says we don’t have to source everything. We don’t have to even know what to do, or to be wise or perfect, but instead to invite it in, going, ‘Come on in!’

The dedication that says, ‘Live as though the desirable story were true,’ and our assignment, really, to animate, magnetize, and spiral forth into the memosphere... the most irresistibly all-inclusive story, going ‘Come! ...We need everybody’s awakened imagination!’ and to frolic in the realm of culture, to insist that the healing of humans’ relationship to nature be the center conversation in what passes for public discourse.

...our dedication magnetizes opportunity, we humans have unleashed such horrific rudeness on this beautiful planet that we, by ourselves, cannot resolve it—indeed, it’s by ourselves that we got into this pickle. It’s the collaborative model.

...a working definition of magic is simply a willingness to cooperate with everything! ...what I call ‘democratic animism’ ...the willingness to cooperate with everything, the coyotes, the wolves, the quality of intelligence that we reach as a species, the quality of playful humility, and to draw upon the rich resources of mythology and also all actual animals and plants, going, ‘Two drops of coyote medicine and one of raven.’

...what metabolizes poison on every level, is certainly what we want to call into play.

...to react to anything is to carry around a portable prison for one’s self and for others. To cultivate an ever-larger repertoire of responses is to ally ourselves with nature’s ingenious evolutionary drive, which, in astrology, we call ‘Uranus, the Trickster.’

Start with the desirable vision, the story that could engage everyone, rather than... 'realism,' the realm of the Reality Police that... patrols the borders of imagination... If we start with the desirable vision, then avenues of ingenious synchronicity open up.

Righteous indignation is a fuel that serves empire, and so, regardless of what we call ourselves, if we're finger-wagging righteous, we're serving empire, and we're serving the finite game of the Reality Police.

...we're in a storytelling creation... everything is talking to us all the time by its shape, its color, its song, its rhythm. And if we humans just approach the world with informed, reverent curiosity, we'd be back in the cahooting, cavorting dance.

We live in a symbolic creation, everything is real, and everything is symbolic... That's part of our dynamic: to wed what has been falsely estranged...Pragmatism and mysticism love each other! Science and mythology and reverie and spirituality love each other! These are false divorces."

(Excerpts from transcribed interview of Caroline Casey  
by Tami Simon of *Sounds True*, July 2011)

"All life, regardless of its form, classification or reputation, will respond to genuine interest, respect, appreciation, admiration, affection, gentleness, courtesy, good manners."

(J. Allen Boone, *Kinship With All Life*, 1976/1954)

"The act of crossing space stems from the natural necessity to move to find the food and information required for survival. But once these basic needs have been satisfied, waling takes on a symbolic form that has enabled man to dwell in the world. By modifying the sense of the space crossed, walking becomes man's first aesthetic act, penetrating the territories of chaos, constructing an order on which to develop the architecture of *situated objects*. Walking is an art from whose loins spring the menhir, sculpture, architecture, landscape. This simple action has given rise to the most important relationships man has established with the land, the territory."

(Francesco Careri, *Walkscapes: Walking as an Aesthetic Practice*, 2004)

“4000 A.D.

When science and art are entirely  
melted together to something new  
When the people will have lost their  
remembrance and thus will have  
no past, only future.  
When they will have to discover everything  
every moment again and again  
When they will have lost their need for contact with others ...  
Then they will live in a world of only colour, light, space, time, sounds and movement  
Then colour light space time  
sounds and movement will be free

No music  
No theatre  
No art  
No  
There will be sound  
    Colour  
    Light  
    Space  
    Time  
    Movement.”

(Stanley Brouwn, *A Short Manifesto*, 1964)

“Dreaming of islands—whether with joy or in fear, it doesn’t matter—is dreaming of pulling away, of being already separate, far from any continent, of being lost and alone—or it is dreaming of starting from scratch, recreating, beginning anew. Some islands drifted away from the continent, but the island is also that toward which one drifts; other islands originated in the ocean, but the island is also the origin, radical and absolute.”

(Gilles Deleuze, ‘Desert Islands’,  
in *Desert Islands and Other Texts, 1953-1974*, 2004)

“Could it then be that animals only move me because that's how I know it from the movies? Show me animations with animals that talk, act, cry, argue, dance, laugh or die and I'll be captivated and moved to laughter or tears; it works in an instant. But why would animations work so well if it wasn't for the fact that they tap into the intuitive knowledge and emotional

capacities that constitute the animist approach to the world: our readiness to see the reality of our surroundings imbued with an anima, a soul, that is, to perceive it fully literally as animated (in German I would write "beseelt": besouled). If animism still remains present as a substratum of our experience of the world, then maybe this is because it really testifies to something fundamental: a sense of connectedness to our surroundings, an awareness of being in a state of overall animation together with what there is beyond ourselves: An exuberant sea sponge in shorts, a buccaneer mouse with philosophical views, or a resourceful band of penguins, as silly as they may be, then represent the surviving ambassadors of a capacity to experience the world spiritually."

(Jan Verwoert, 'Animalisms', in *ART&RESEARCH: A Journal of Ideas, Contexts and Methods*. Vol. 4. No. 1, Summer 2011)

"There are many worlds to experience beyond socially accepted versions of reality. When a person is tapped into the multi dimensional nature of our existence and our own creative power, miracles are ordinary, and the ordinary is a miracle. We can decide what we wish to experience and assign it our own meaning or value. The way we envision the world in our inner space manifests in the malleable energy of the outer world. Many of us are shifting our beliefs to a new vision of a world where all beings live in harmonious connection with each other and the magic of communication with all life is the norm. Let it be so."

(Penelope Smith, *Species Link* magazine, Winter 2002)

"Clouds pass, thin or thick, with some disturbance of the colour of the grads beneath. The sundial registers the hour in its usual cryptic way. One's mind begins tossing up a question or two, idly, vainly, about this same life. Life, it sings, or croons rather, like a kettle on a hob. Life, life, what art thou? Light or darkness, the baize apron of the under footman or the shadow of the starling on the grass?"

(Virginia Woolf, *Orlando: A Biography*, 1928)

"The question of pastoral cuts to the core of craft's potential as a cultural instrument. To what extent does craft constitute an opportunity for real creative freedom, in which critique, perspective and individualism can flourish? And, conversely, to what extent is it simply a Utopian prop, a story we tell ourselves to assuage our anxieties in an increasingly fluid, technological society? This dilemma cuts across all cultural contexts for craft. A commune emphasizes process and experience over product and aesthetics; a museum, the reverse. But

how should craft be grounded at these two sites economically, geographically, and spiritually? On what grounds should it be encouraged, by what standards judged?"

(Glenn Adamson, *Thinking Through Craft*, 2007)

"DURING THE 1960S AND EARLY 1970s a zealous countercultural back-to-the-land movement emerged in North America. As environmental concerns captured the interests of more and more Americans, the counter-culturalists who ventured back to the land identified with traditional environmental activists and their concurrent efforts to preserve and protect the natural world. In reality, their turn to pastoral mythos and practices revealed the complicated nature of postwar environmental thought. Those who voluntarily went back to the land created a reciprocal relationship with the natural world, where living a self-reliant rural existence might have as much of an influence on the naturally attuned individual as the sole environmental activist could on preserving and protecting nature.

While environmental activists held common ground in rethinking human interactions with the natural world, the growing American environmental consciousness approached those concerns through a variety of historical lenses. The back-to-the-land movement turned to a distinctly American process of pastoral mythmaking that held the simple and virtuous rural farmer as the antithesis to the metropolitan-industrial order. For back-to-the-landers, a deep-rooted pastoral ideal, often re-cast in popular forms, legitimized the conception of rural life as contrary to the modern urban existence. Importantly, austere labor within countercultural communes became a tool to cleanse the body of the physical and mental woes found in the economic and cultural routines of a city livelihood."

(Ryan Edgington, "Be Receptive to the Good Earth': Health, Nature, and Labor in Countercultural Back-to-the-Land Settlements," *Agricultural History*, Vol. 82, No. 3, 2008)

"Let us repeat that, in order to grasp phenomenal existence, we must above all avoid conceiving of the phenomenon as a phenomenon of something or for someone. That is the aspect the phenomenon assume when, having begun to consider existence by way of some other modality, we encounter it after the fact, for example, in its role as manifestation; or rather, when, having taken it as our point of departure, we attempt (as do the phenomenologists) to bring about a shift toward other existences by referring ontological thought and experience to morphematic relations, which are in solidarity with the phenomenon, and which lead from it toward other modes. We only truly conceive of the phenomenon in its own existential tenor when we feel it to be maintaining and positing all that can be supported and consolidated in it, with it, and through it to itself along. And it is in this capacity that it appears as a model and a standard of existence.... Now, what does it become when it is put in relation with other modes? Does it retain its proper essence? Does this

essence remain unchanged when it serves as the referential term and final confirmation for a being installed in another mode? ... Can we conceive of beings without any relation whatsoever to the phenomenon? So many problems to be considered presently.”

...

“Without a doubt, the body holds a privileged role as a necessary intermediary between ourselves and the world. But what exactly are the reasons for this privilege? They stem from the fact that it is possible to deduce the body starting from the basis of the phenomenon.... The existence of the body itself is not in fact purely corporeal and physical: it is above all the expression of the obligation of a psychical existence, perpetually constrained to follow a body on its terrestrial adventures.... Our body is not a *fata morgana*. In order to perceive, we are obliged to place ourselves in its point of view. It is firmly embedded as a physical thing in the cosmos of such things. But we have fictive bodies in dreams and reveries, bodies incorporated in illusory cosmicities. This world of imaginaries has for a long time—traditionally in philosophy—held a position of strategic importance for the existential problem.”

(Étienne Souriau, *The Different Modes of Existence*, 2015)

“Affect is the commonplace, labor-intensive process of sensing modes of living as they come into being. It hums with the background noise of obstinacies and promises, ruts and disorientations, intensities and resting points. It stretches across real and imaginary social fields and sediments, linking some kind of everything. This is why there is nothing dead or inconsequential in even the flightiest of lifestyles or the starkest of circumstances. The lived spaces and temporalities of home, work, school, blame, adventure, illness, rumination, pleasure, downtime, and release are the rhythms of the present as a compositional event—one already weighted with the buzz of atmospheric fill.

Everything depends on the feel of an atmosphere and the angle or arrival. Anything can feel like something you’re in, fully or partially, comfortably or aspirationally, for good or not for long. A condition, a pacing, a scene of absorption, a dream, a being abandoned by the world, a serial immersion in some little world you never knew was there until you got cancer, a dog, a child, a hankering ... and then the next thing—another little world is suddenly there and possible. Everything depends on the dense entanglement of affect, attention, the senses, and matter. All the world is a bloom space now.”

(Kathleen Stewart, “Afterword: Worlding Refrains”,  
in Gregg, M., & Seigworth, G. J. (Eds). *The Affect Theory Reader*, 2010)

"The most promising of interferences, however, appears at the very end of *What Is Philosophy?* Here we meet the indiscernible and *non-localized interference* personified by a chaos people to come. 'Revolution is absolute deterritorialization,' we are told, 'even to the point where this calls for a new earth, a new people.' For this revolution to occur, though, a complex philosophical maneuver needs to take place. 'The philosopher must become nonphilosopher.' So what is non-philosophy? Is it, as Stengers argues, a philosophy that 'designates the need for an encounter that does not explain, but produces'? Perhaps it is a philosophy that does not think at all, that only acts. It is only then, when nonphilosophy becomes the earth and people of philosophy, that a new shadow appears—one that seems to overlap all other shadows. At this point, there is indeed a potential shadow of a doubt over the distinctness of the three planes. To be sure, although scientists, philosophers, and artists (standing under their respective torn umbrellas) may well think in distinct ways, they are nevertheless indistinct with regard to the chaos into which they all plunge. Like this, then, the chaotic submersions of the ocean brain become a point of exchange, or a series of traversing lines, through which experimentation can emerge in a nonlocation. This exchange does not necessarily bring about a unifying force between the three planes but rather a junction through which each plane passes on its way, to and fro, chaos."

(Tony Sampson, *The Assemblage Brain: Sense Making in Neuroculture*, 2017)

"While it's true that cephalopods use their ink to escape potential predators, so too do humans use their voices to elude danger when they scream; such behavior does not preclude the fluid's use for more complex communication. In his treatise on the vampire squid, philosopher Vilém Flusser discusses this phenomenon while examining the cultural realities of cephalopods as a whole:

*According to popular opinion, octopuses deploy this floating cloud of ink, which they shape into their own image, simply to mislead their enemies, but there is more to the story. Closer observation... has revealed that the act of sculpting the sepia cloud has nothing to do with the enemies, and that, beyond self-portraits, they fabricate countless other forms that are indecipherable to us.*

In other words, there is evidence for a more sophisticated form of octopus language, despite scientific fixation on their liquid howls.

Dr. Scipio Roberts at the University of Chicago has been attempting to decode this hypothetical octopus grammar for many years, and has discussed his work in an interview with the Chicago Entropy Journal (a scandalous matter which resulted in his banishment from ever being published in *Nature* again):

*Imagine having the intellect to solve an entire crossword puzzle in only a handful of seconds. You couldn't accomplish this with a pen; you would need some form of spray nozzle, with sophisticated tools to quickly guide it into well over one hundred separate*

*compartments. Now, imagine that crossword puzzle is not merely two-dimensional, but three-dimensional, and every combination of letters traced from left-to-right, backward-to-forward, and top-to-bottom spells out a grammatically and lexicographically correct word or phrase. Now, imagine seeing this crossword puzzle solved before your eyes, then memorizing that solution in only a handful of seconds, as it will immediately dissolve after being produced.*

*This is the nature of octopus language: sudden, profound, extraordinary bursts of interrelated information. Hundreds, if not thousands of words are written in mere seconds as a solitary black firework, read in an equally short amount of time, then lost to the currents of the sea. Every member of their species has their own sophisticated personality and cosmology, expressed in a handful of sudden and beautiful eruptions, all of which are punctuated by an early death. The art of their language is beyond our comprehension, for we can only understand them by disassembling the very geometries that give their words meaning.*

Beyond Dr. Roberts' pessimistic analysis, there is yet another matter which Flusser points out which may very well make a human-octopus cipher impossible: from observation in the wild, they do not seem to communicate in good faith; whenever an octopus speaks, they do so with the intention to lie or deceive. If this turns out to be correct, no translation, no matter how thorough it may be, can ever be fully validated."

(Uel Aramchek, 'Octopus Language', *North of Reality*, December 2016)

## "RAPTURE OF INCORRUPTIBLE SEA

Into the sea (you) are returned, to live your loneliness. And ten years, without weariness, you took pleasure (jouis) in your spirit. The sea used to carry you, but in no way troubled your fortune. You sought to become a child again, to climb ashore and drag your man's body once more.

Why leave the sea? To carry a gift—of life. But it is to the earth that you preach fidelity. And forgetfulness of your birth. Not knowing if you descend from a monkey or a worm or if you might even be some cross between plant and ghost.

Anxious to resolve this discord, you teach the superman: the meaning of the earth. But do you come from earth or sea to announce this news? Is it fluid depths or solid volume that engendered you?

Are you fish or eagle, swimmer or dancer, when you announce the decline of man? Do you seek to sink or climb? Flow out or fly up? And in your entire will for the sea are you so very afraid that you must always stay up so high?



Perched on any mountain peak, hermit, tightrope walker or bird, you never dwell in the great depths. And as companion you never choose a sea creature. Camel, snake, lion, eagle, and doves, monkey and ass, and . . . Yes. But no to anything that moves in the water. Why this persistent wish for legs, or wings? And never gills?

And when you say that the superman is the sea in whom your contempt is lost, that's fine. That is a will wider than man's own. But you never say: the superman has lived in the sea. That is how he survives.

It is always hot, dry, and hard in your world. And to excel for you always requires a bridge. Are you truly afraid of falling back into man? Or into the sea?"

(Luce Irigaray, *Marine Lover of Friedrich Nietzsche*, 1991)

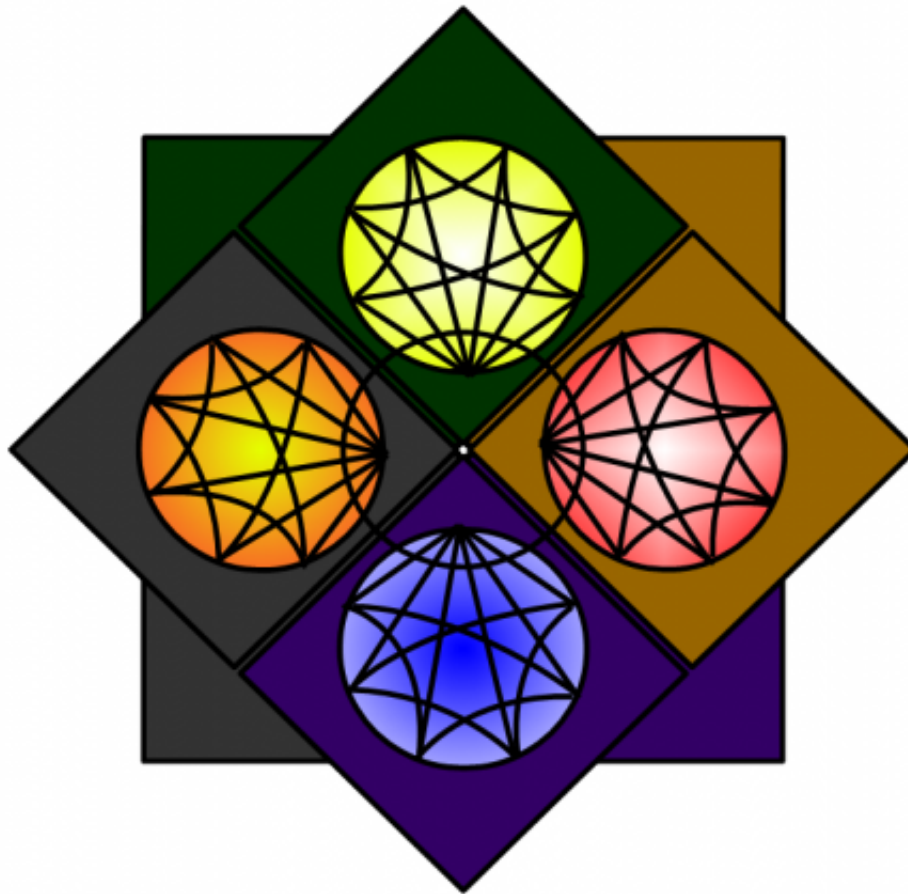
"But it must be stressed that the movement of the tides is not exactly cyclical. What makes the concept of tidalectics fascinating is that, although the ocean appears to be engaged in an endless repetition of the same back and forth movement at every moment, the tide is, in fact, never exactly the same nor does it retreat or return to the same spot of 'origin.' The movement of the tides to be experienced everyday on a given coast (low and high tides) is determined by several forces, themselves in constant movement and change: primarily, the gravitational effects of the moon and the sun in combination with the movement of the earth (these astral bodies do not rotate in a circular pattern but rather in an elliptical one); but also the constitution and shape of the particular coast one is concerned with (which is, itself, and at the same time, also produced by the tides themselves); and the pattern of tide movement in the deep ocean, which resonates, so to speak, all the way to the coast. The fundamental differences in the movement of tides are exceedingly subtle and the more evident variations may take countless years to coalesce, but that is precisely the point: tidalectics signals a special attention to the constant and ever-changing production of the coast-space in a time much slower than that of capitalist coloniality. In contrast to the dialectic, the tides, furthermore, signal a type of change that, spatially, is not forward-oriented or perpendicularly constituted."

(Carmen Beatriz Llenín-Figueroa, *Imagined Islands: A Caribbean Tidalectics*, doctoral dissertation, 2012)

"All it takes,' said Crake, 'is the elimination of one generation. One generation of anything. Beetles, trees, microbes, scientists, speakers of French, whatever. Break the link in time between one generation and the next, and it's game over forever.'"

(Margaret Atwood, *Oryx and Crake*, 2003)





*IGNEOUS ~ AQUEOUS ~ MORPHEUS*



2017