Lumpy Coalitions

In the spaces we care about, we have encountered unusual constellations – lumpy coalitions of individuals, objects, ideas, communities, beings, matters, temporalities, modes of care... lumped together, making shapes, permeating rigid boundaries.

Lumpy coalitions make messy landscapes that arise out of multiple desires, overlapping but divergent, to produce certain kinds of environments: shared spaces for techno-artistic making, decolonial food forests, “wilder” multispecies landscapes.

Messy landscapes withdraw themselves from colonial / capitalist ethics of productive land, claimed to be put to work to make sellable produce. Yet, messy landscapes can also be highly productive in of themselves: Riverine beaverscapes make a mess of “cared for” farm land but they also create an abundance of possibilities for life and for growth beyond quantifiable value.
Not all messy landscapes make sense of the kind we are looking at. The ones we are talking about are cared for against enclosures. Sometimes, enclosures built the historical path through which lumpy coalitions now walk, as it is the case of rewilding projects in Scotland and agroforestry mutual aid activities in Brazil. But enclosures can have its place in the immediate future: gentrification, for instance, might emerge as a result of a reflorished neighborhood, which is something makerspace activists in Liverpool-UK are caring for. Realities are more complex than simple binaries account for. However, as we came to conclude in our rough relating, the coalitions we are caring with have common enemies: whether dealing with haunted enclosures from the past or from the future, these coalitions are cautious about how capitalism and colonialism continuously shape borders by controlling living beings, blocking their movements and modes of relation. Enclosures may be as stiff as iron. But, when we look for the shape of different mediations in various contexts, spatial and temporal conjunctures, we will make sense of how these coalitions are building refuges for people, knowledge, plants, animals, and thus caring for the flourishing of transformed and enriched ecologies.
Geological time is slow production, deep temporality. Closer to soil that humans are in care-full relations with is also a sedimentary production but faster: where lithosphere meets pedosphere and biosphere. And in the biosphere the techno-semiotic-legal-sphere; these are different but interacting strata, history leaves its trace in space, but also time. Temporality is not gradual, there is sudden change. ‘Productivity’ drove with violence; colonial, racialised; then reproduced the great enclosures and expropriations of common land, molecular and molar exploitative scrambles. Property and land relations get sedimented and, like features in the landscape, look immoveable, immutable and natural.

Caring-with collective care is also productive – for human and non-human, from soil, forest to server and social reproduction, it works around and inside these strata asynchronously and simultaneously. Productive care has the potential to violently disrupt and unmake what seems natural: to fracture the sediments, to cry out ‘Our Land!’
In Scotland, a native tree species is commonly thought of as one that has existed there for millennia, rooted in the environments that developed soon after the last ice age. Having existed in the country this long, Scottish native trees have coevolved with other local species and are adapted to the local landscapes. In Brazil, a native tree species is one that grew there before European colonizers first arrived in the year 1500. Ecological timelines are tied to colonial times, which divide history into “before” and “since.” These temporal reference points have far-reaching consequences, as they determine in part who is seen as “naturally” belonging to the land, and who is therefore to be subjected to / excluded from conservation care.
Futuregazing

These faces, gaze across a landscape of temporality. It’s an active gaze, a joyful gaze an anxious analytic gaze, looking for food for refuge.

What is in-the-field right here, right now? What we are doing in the endless now. Beyond right-here-now, the goals, tactics and desires of the immediate future, the adjacent possibles, the next season.

Just ahead across the valley of these close futures, a year or cycle ahead it needs more desire more strategy.

Look across a landscape of temporality, in the foggy distance, the ultimate horizon of the Futuregazers. What do they want and how to get there?