

when a tiger travels to other planets...

Under what circumstances does a tiger pounce? What possesses this cat to swim? To eat a child? To climb a tree? Wait: is a tiger's -esqueness sufficiently feline to inspire it to climb? To be determined. To be invented. When does a tiger travel to other planets? What makes a tiger fly? [...]. [The child playing tiger] departs from dynamic situations, extending the animal's -esqueness beyond all known territory.

Brian Massumi, 2014: 84

In *What Animals Teach Us About Politics* (2014) Massumi describes how a child playing tiger becomes tiger in an intensive becoming of tigritude. Rather than imitating and thus resembling a tiger in any sense, the child becomes tiger in its intensive movements with a *processual faithfulness* that creates a new variation of tiger (xx). Massumi writes

One look at a tiger, however fleeting and incomplete, whether it be in the zoo or in a book or in a film or video, and presto! the child is tigerized. Transformation-in-place. The perception itself is a vital gesture. The child immediately sets about, not imitating the tiger's substantial form as he saw it, but rather giving it life—giving it more life. The child plays the tiger in situations in which the child has never seen a tiger. More than that, it plays the tiger in situations no tiger has ever seen, in which no earthly tiger has ever set paw.

The child caught a glimpse of “the dynamism of the tiger, as a form of life.” (xx) It moves through this, with this, across this, and becomes tiger in a mutual inclusion that adds to tiger as much as it adds to child. “This is what the child saw—all of it, in a glimpse; all in a flash. Not just a generic animal shape: a singular vital movement sweepingly immanent to the visible form. What children see: *the immanence of a life*.” (xx; my emphasis) The child does not see a tiger; it sees *tigritude*. There is no separating out of this moment of this movement to compare it to any other movements of a tiger, an actual tiger or whatever else in the form of a tiger; on the contrary, everything is **swooped** up into this moment creating in itself this differing variation of a tiger in its tigersqueness. It launches “into the improvisational movement of a lived cartography that is one with its own activity.” (xx)

All earthly restraints lose grounds and the event opens to different dimensions: “*When does a tiger travel to other planets? What makes a tiger fly?*” (xx; my emphasis) The child in tigritude takes on a cosmic bodying that far exceeds any planetary limitations, or any physical limitations for that matter. It launches off beyond space as it creates wholly new spaces, other planets. In the mutual inclusion of this event the tiger itself cannot but become different as its

movements carries on to different potentials, new variations. As Massumi says, “Enthusiasm of the body doesn’t sweep up one without sweeping up at least two. It marks an instantaneous transformation-in-place that is immediately transindividual in nature.” (42) It is trans in the sense that it is not between two, the child and the tiger, it is trans because it is the middle that creates the two, that gives space to each in their new variation. The trans of transformation is immediate, crossing the universe in an instant.

There is something fully fabulatory about the event, that moment of exploration when a body in becoming is no longer tied to the earth, when it is swept up launching into cosmic adventure. It is not so much that it takes place on some far away planet relative to the planet of departure, but rather that between the earth and that planet a between emerges which is constitutive of the adventure itself. This means the adventure does not take place there or there, the adventure is the creation of another, co-extensive space itself; adventure is the middle that makes possible the two same yet different planets. That moment that in human eyes can look so insignificant carries with it the force of a completely novel cosmos. But little do humans know...

The child has spent the whole afternoon fabricating this immense constellation in the living room, a cosmos in its own right. The mother comes home and in a sweep of all too humanly habit she clears out all the things and makes the living room ‘habitable’, again. The child cries “but didn’t you see!?” to which the mother with the least concern replies “see what?” (xx)

play

Massumi shows that play can be seen as a new image of thought, a ludic one. What Massumi means by that is that perhaps play conceptualized in this manner could create the conditions that themselves create new thought thinking. The image of thought that is play attunes to immanence moved by what Massumi calls “mutual inclusion.” (xx) In contrast to prior images of thought – perhaps those characterized by Deleuze and Guattari as the different eras of thought philosophy has created, the eidetic, reflective, and communicative (xx) – play is fully ludic and gay in its foregrounding of continuous joy. Play is immanent in that it resists universalization in always taking in more than one without any exclusion or separation, which in the end lead to some sort of idealization. It does not succumb to idealization by ways of thinking thought as tending to the Good form, making of thought itself an act of transcendence; nor does it succumb to thinking thought as representation in merely reflecting upon a constructed world in its own light, making of thought itself some sort of emanation; and certainly does it not succumb to thought thinking that it came into being by means of its own grounds, making of thought yet another mediation. The continuous foregrounding of joy in play means that thought is in the act, that it falls together with being into infinity – this is

Deleuze and Guattari's beautiful way of saying that thought cannot be separated out from the act, that it comes always in the shape of the act (xx).

In play, what is thus foregrounded is the shape of enthusiasm. The shape of enthusiasm, Massumi says, resists first of all a separation based on logic: play effectively mixes two logics, as do the monkeys Bateson sees in the zoo when they are both in combat and in play at the same time. But, Massumi adds, play also resists a confusing of the two logics, that is, they mix but remain "logically distinct" (xx). In other words, play resists an inclusion (mixing) that is effectively excluding by annulling their difference and thus sterilizing the situation – Massumi is clear on this point, the necessity of mutual inclusion lies in avoiding the path of the excluded middle and the sterile paradox for it merely mixes in confusion to re-found the given (xx). "What are suspended in that case are not normative functions, as in play, but difference itself. Furthermore, the suspension is not enactive but merely logical." (67) The play of the monkeys is not either combat or play, it is both combat and play at the same time. Massumi writes

The mode of abstraction produced in play does not respect the law of the excluded middle. Its logic is that of mutual inclusion. Two different logics are packed into the situation. Both remain present in their difference and cross-participate in their performative zone of indiscernibility. Combat and play come together—and their coming-together makes three. There is one, and the other—and the included middle of their mutual influence. The zone of indiscernibility that is the included middle does not observe the sanctity of the separation of categories, nor respect the rigid segregation of arenas of activity. (6)

Unlike other images of thought that in some way or another instil transcendence into immanence (everywhere thought is separated out it will ultimately succumb to a universalization) – be it by contemplation (which makes of contemplations things itself "as seen in the creation of their specific concepts"), reflection (which makes of thought something that reflects on something else, as if other practices need philosophy), or communication (which foregrounds nothing but opinions and a regressive search for consensus) – a ludic image of thought does not limit thought thinking in any relative way; there are still limits, but these are virtual limits as poles of the tendential movements that mix in (xx). The ludic image of thought moves with an absolute survey, "this immediate dynamic straddling of disparate perspectives without the vantage point of a supplementary dimension [...]" (36) The event of launch or the launch of the event, the sweeping up of one another does not hold a vantage point for its exploration, *it is absolute in its eventness*. This means that this event emerges in its self-enjoyment, not on the account of one or another (child, tiger, spectator, and especially not the philosopher's). It also means the event informs whatever shapes are participating in the process, which is a way to ask, in regards to what an event does, "what do things do when they

shape each other?” (Manning x) In total, the mutual inclusion of the events concrescence plays the *and and and, ad infinitum*.

In its eventness, the ludic image of thought that is play resists any origin or destination. Rather, play informs what an origin could have been and what a destination could become, both in the sense of not-yet but ready to become either. “The ludic element in play, -esqueness, comes with a transindividual transformation-in-place launching a movement of potential evolution that is fundamentally self-driven, in an autonomy of inventive expression.” 37) If we can speak of a “play drive” this is only insofar as the drive is one towards intensification:

Whitehead defines the appetitive direction of life’s movement as an aim toward intensification, which he in turn defines in terms of the capacity of a becoming to hold a maximum of contrastive terms in itself without imposing the law of the excluded middle on them. He equates this aim toward intensification (here, the supernormal tendency) as the aesthetic process of appetite, which he further equates with ethical “progress.”” (xx)

Play is thus brimming with aesthetic concern in the sense of a body’s “capacity to feel.” (xx) There is an intuition to play, or what Massumi, by ways of reclaiming, calls instinct. (xx) This ludic image of thought is a long cry removed from a thought thinking that thrives on universals in any sense – as a matter of fact, play does not know universals as of the universe insofar as it creates new universes time and time again.

fabrication

As the event extends “beyond all known territory” it is outside inside exploring the event. Fabulous exploration extends the event in this sense, in the sense of a “becoming of continuity.” (Whitehead xx) That is to say, as the child departs “from dynamic situations” it will drift in the unfolding of the event simultaneously infolding new qualities, new contrasts.

Under what circumstances does a tiger pounce? What possesses this cat to swim? To eat a child? To climb a tree? Wait: is a tiger’s -esqueness sufficiently feline to inspire it to climb? To be determined. To be invented. When does a tiger travel to other planets? (xx)

All forms that are encountered, no matter to what degree they are abstract, equally make a chance to fold into the unfolding event as they only differ in degree of intensity. The child becomes seer – or it is perhaps always already the seer. In the event, it sees what otherwise goes unseen only on account of what normally diverges. In this mode, things do not diverge

because they are logically incongruent, making them impossible. Rather things mix without making them confused. This is what it means to let impossibles into the same world – the inclusive disjunctions hold two things possible at the same time that normally would not be possible at all, Deleuze refers to this as the Nietzschean “powers of the false” (xx).

The child tiger in its tigritude makes possible the impossible, it even *generates the impossible*. What occurs in the following is not determined by any sorts of will of the child, though it certainly figures into it; what follows is simply a matter of whatever affects the dynamic situation in ways that make it move, that make the body shift in intensity. This is how the tigersque child can climb, can fly, can travel into space to other planets. All forms, abstract and the like, can affect the fabricated tiger and the moving tigritude. It adheres to a whole new, other logic.

“This other logic is nothing if not performed, nothing if not lived out. The form of abstraction staged in play is a lived abstraction.” (Massumi 9) It is lived abstraction precisely in that it tends to forms informing, and forms intercessing in the processes that form. This is the process of fabulation, of fabricating other worlds necessary to cut open, to schizz the risk inherent to the excluded middle or the included exclusion, where “enthusiasm of the body comes to be emotionally contained, it becomes pressurized by the containment.” (Massumi 80)

Play cannot help but tend to fabulation as it affirms lived abstractions: the glimpse of the tiger activates whatever idea of the tiger is alive in its movement, as *tendency*. It does not hold to some ideal tiger be it as a pre-existing form that only needs to be recollected (Plato’s solution), nor to play as an accord of the transcendental categories where a *sensus communis* generates the ideal (Kant’s solution), nor is it the mere product of one’s perspective or the composite of one’s intentions as a mediated ideal (Husserl’s solution). The idea is fully real insofar as it plays on its own terms between two virtual poles:

movements from a starting point that was never occupied, because in point of actual fact there has never been anything other than mixtures in nature; and movements to a destination point that is never reached, because tendencies never end, so that mixings never cease. (52)

Whatever other idea is activated, it is real in its tendency. What emerges is ideal only insofar as the singularity the event generates is *ideal and real*, mixing whatever transcendental ideas are participating while altering them at the same time in a moment that explodes intentionality and is itself the emergence of consciousness as the event informs subject and object. By virtue of the lived abstraction as intercessor the habitual tendency is swept up and away and brought beyond itself. Two terms are one as three in the singularity that is the event.

This happens only sideways: in fabulation it is not the thought thinking that makes something real, it is real in what it does ecologically. This means that something becomes real sideways to the act – thought thinking does not contemplate it, reflect upon it, or intent towards it; it grasps it sideways, brushes up to it in being swept up; it emerges co-extensively by doing something else, *by composing with it* — becoming is always becoming-with, which is the mutual inclusion in the event (xx).

“Intercessors are essential. Creation is all about intercessors. Without them, there is no work.” (Deleuze in Manning 7) Sideways, whatever plays intercessors is fully real, but also in that relation there is infinite shifting in the absolute survey: the child is as much intercessor for the tiger as the tiger for the child, and the lake in which the tiger might swim also, as is the tree it might climb, and the planet it might travel to.¹ Each allow the child to be swept up to commence a cosmic adventure. The creation in fabrication resists precisely in that it does not belong to one or the other nor does it confuse and sterilize, it thus resists a difference that can only be raised between two things. It is rather the inverse, the difference that raises two things, two different worlds both equally real. The child, in play, fabulating, holds two thoughts at the same time.

Fabrication is a far cry removed from representational imagination that projects one onto the other; it is even further removed from the self perpetuating production of a novel appearance that turns out to never really be novel at all. In holding two worlds, or more and more as fabulation tends to unfold in the event, there is a surge of vital breath that emerges between. This is *a life* in its full force, the immanence of a life in its cosmic informing shattering any image of thought that still rests in the illusion of transcendence.

There is still so much to learn from how easily children enter these different universes, from what they see all the time.

To think without principles, in the absence of God and in the absence of man him-self, has become the perilous task of a child-player who topples the old Master of play, and who makes impossibles enter into the same world, shattered.

Friedrich Nietzsche,

¹ When conceptualizing fabulation, Deleuze will say that fabulation always goes by way of an intercessor. As Côme Lédésart affirms, in this process the filmmaker is as much an intercessor for the people as the people for the filmmaker, and equally the spectator becomes an intercessor as much as the filmmaker is (xx).