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CRITICAL REVIEW

Landscapes of care: politics, practices, and possibilities

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ABSTRACT

Care offers a framework to shift relations with land and suggest alternative possibilities to dominant, and often extractive, landscape practices. With increasing attention to inequities in labour, histories of erasure and exclusion, ongoing harms of colonisation, and the uneven impacts of how climate change reshapes landscapes, care has come to describe hopeful ideas for how landscapes are researched, maintained, and designed. Yet, care is not a simple solution to complex problems. In reviewing landscapes of care through politics, practices, and possibilities, we assert that care situated in landscape must acknowledge the relationship between the control of land and power, and resist paternalistic modes of care which normalise social and environmental injustices manifest in landscapes. As landscape scholars increasingly engage topics of care, we urge for a more critical politics of care that is reflective of how landscape relations generated through care reveal and remake relationships to power.

KEYWORDS

Landscapes of care; care practices; relationality; landscape labour; landscape architecture

> Nothing drives Mindimooyenh more crazy than 'self-care'.
>
> 'We are self-caring our way to fascism,' they yell.
>
> I try to explain.
>
> 'That's not a thing,' they reply. 'It is just care'.
>
> (Simpson, 2020, p. 86)
>
> 'Where life is precious, life *is* precious'.
>
> (Gilmore quoted in Kushner, 2019)

Care offers a framework to shift relations with land and suggest alternative possibilities to dominant, and often extractive, landscape practices. With increasing attention to inequities in labour, histories of erasure and exclusion, ongoing harms of colonisation, and the uneven impacts of how climate change reshapes landscapes, care has come to describe hopeful possibilities for how landscapes are researched, maintained, and designed. Yet, care is not a simple solution to complex problems. Care is essential to the design and maintenance of landscapes, yet care is often systematically devalued and erased. Likewise, care can be used to legitimise and extend harmful, paternalistic relationships to land, people, and place, and categories of difference shape inequities in how care is enacted (Liboiron, 2016; Murphy, 2015).

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In this review essay, we argue for the radical politics and possibilities of care as affect, ethic, and practice in the context of landscapes. By illustrating how care alone is not a normative good thing but a way of thinking and acting shaped through and by specific relations (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017), we focus on how landscape relations generated through and by care remake relationships to power. This focus is needed as landscape scholars increasingly engage topics of care. Without a critical framing care risks becoming a tool of avoidance, overlooking the underlying systems—thick with histories of racism, sexism, ableism, and classism—embedded in material landscapes and that produce the need for care. Rather, centring care in landscape studies must address why the need for care exists, who benefits from care, and how care reflects systemic histories that produce increasingly uneven gaps in care. In this context, we build on Middleton and Samanani (2021) who suggests that without a basic understanding of what care is, who cares, and where care occurs, care is largely imagined only as a topic of study or as a normative ideal, rather than a general ethos. Yet, care is not easily defined as it is always mutually constituted: all relations involve care and all care creates and remakes relations. The relational implications of thinking and acting with care spans the material and conceptual. Care can express socio-ecological interdependencies for applied landscape practices and can materially ground thinking within the landscape humanities.

We focus on how concepts and practices of care can inform and orient landscape studies to be more contextually situated. Across four sections, we situate care within landscape studies to better understand how thinking and acting through care ruptures and cracks the systems that have too often normalised social and environmental injustices through landscape. The first section, 'Thinking with Care', introduces the complexity of care literature as it relates to landscape, positioning care as messy, life-giving, and essential. We review established literature related to ethics of care, with a focus on how ethics of care have arisen in response to gendered and racialised labour practices that have minimised care work. Second, 'Caring Relations', examines how extensive spatial and temporal relations suggested by ethics of care arise within human geography, environmental humanities, and landscape studies. The third section, 'Toward Critical Practices of Care in the Landscape' builds on the previous two sections to expand how care informs practices of landscape labour, maintenance, and design. Care always manifests differently and as a review essay, we are wary of focusing too heavily on empirical examples as our intention is not to provide exacting guidelines for landscapes of care. Rather, we offer vignettes of care practices that reflect the ideas discussed in each section. Finally, we conclude on the possibilities that caring relations create by critically re-examining community and professional obligations and opportunities within landscape studies.

Thinking with care

Reflecting on the possibilities that care suggests, we are interested in how feminist, queer, anti-racist, anti-colonial, and anti-ableist care practices create more just land futures, or what Gilmore describes as 'life-affirming relations' (Gilmore as cited in brown, 2020, p. 3). In this first section, we introduce how ideas of care have emerged in various disciplines, and trouble 'pure' ideas of care by acknowledging the socio-political structures that practices of care operate within.

Discussions of care re-emerged since 2020 in response to ongoing and intersecting crisis of COVID-19 and white supremacy. But, the need for care is not new, nor are overlaps of care and landscape. Harms caused from the lack of care, or the wrong kinds of care, ranging from climate change, to colonialism, to mass extinction, to militarisation, displacement, and incarceration are intimately shaped by and through landscape, pointing to care's fundamental role in social reproduction. Landscapes are also reflective of social reproduction by 'reinforc[ing] social relations of power', and we contend that care is a fundamental component of landscapes (Blomley, 2003, p. 131; Watt, 2018). Further, as a relational ethos, care exposes how landscape and power are

mutually constituted through the control of land. For landscapes of care to create life-affirming spaces aligned with movements for justice, landscape practices must take seriously the contestation of land itself. Yet, with increased references to care within landscape studies, there is a danger of 'carewashing' if the complex politics that care and land involve are avoided (Chatzidakis, Hakim, Littler, Rottenberg, & Segal, 2020).

Many care scholars are hesitant to define *a* particular idea of care, suggesting instead that care can be understood through shared concepts (Collins, 2015; Gheaus, 2009; Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017, p. 70). For some, care might most simply be described as practices of entering into and sustaining caring relations (Collins, 2015, p. 1). However, the essential work of giving and receiving care has long been reduced or dismissed as jobs, practices, and actions gendered and racialised as soft, feminised, and generally undervalued (Gilligan, 1982; Rose, 1983; Tronto, 1993; Tronto & Fisher, 1990). In response, feminist ethics of care emerged as feminist philosophers theorised how moral responsibility shaped through relationships challenged normative moral theory concerned with individual action (Gilligan, 1982). These scholars were concerned by the uneven distribution of gendered and racialised labour, where care work often reinscribed asymmetrical power relations that put care responsibilities on those with the least social power (Lawson, 2007). Held (2005) extended the idea of individual responsibility shaped through shared relations, writing that an ethic of care recognises 'persons as interdependent rather than as independent', (p. 1) while others connected care with political movements towards justice through interpersonal solidarity (Clement, 1996). Productively challenging the limitations of feminist ethics of care, which tended to focus on the lives of white women within heteronormative domestic spheres, Indigenous, Black, and queer liberatory thought have practiced care as a response to how racial and colonial capitalism fracture relationships with land through the reproduction of heteropatriarchy (Tallbear, 2019).

Observing how care historically intersects with racism, class privilege, and colonial ambitions, feminist technoscience scholar Michelle Murphy (2015) importantly explains that care practices themselves create new power relations even as they work to undo others. Murphy warns against care being equated with positive feelings akin to political goodness, calling instead for an 'unsettling' of care that is rooted in a 'better politics of care' (p. 719). By 'unsettling' care, Murphy stresses that care is as much about the building conditions for care as it is about dismantling systems of harm, or creating the conditions in which life is precious for all, as Gilmore (quoted in Kushner, 2019) notes.

The landscape impacts of harmful care practices are well established, often failing to recognise the agency of workers made invisible within structures of capitalism that demand care in response to state and institutional neglect or violence (Franco, 2022; Gilmore, 2007; Lawson, 2007). Likewise, the material legacies of colonialism, justified by violent, paternalist notions of care to guise domination and control, have objectified land and water as resources and undercut relationships to land through property (Tallbear, 2019). Material engagements with landscape through maintenance, construction, agriculture, and ecological restoration can also obscure racial and economic inequities (Cephas, 2017; Terremoto, 2021) or extend ableist ideologies of social and environmental improvement (Clare, 2017; Summers, 2021). Oppressive forms of care-taking are seen in histories of landscape architecture, from the enclosure movement (Bermingham, 1986), to the racialised production of parks, gardens, and environmental stewardship (Dümpelmann, 2022; Jacobs in Way et al., 2022), to landscape as an extension of colonial ideologies (Dang, 2021).

The complexity of care is also well considered in a range of disciplines that overlap with landscape studies. Feminist science scholars have shown how care shifts scientific inquiry from abstract study to a reflection of social relations (Haraway, 1988; Harding, 1991; Mol, 2008). Similarly, human geographers have considered the spatial relations produced through and by care by focusing on those who are cared for and those who give care (Lawson, 2007; Massey, 2005, Middleton & Samanani, 2021; Till, 2012). Within the environmental humanities, scholars

have illustrated how thinking through care disrupts human exceptionalism and foregrounds multispecies entanglements (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2012; Tsing, Swanson, Gan, & Bubandt, 2017). Critical queer, race, and disability theorists have argued for care in shaping solidarity, mutual aid, and resistance to dominant systems that have either neglected to care or perpetuated harmful forms of care (Clare, 2017; hooks, 2008; Liboiron, 2016; Spade, 2020). Similarly, re-emergent interests in care, accompanied by narratives of 'self-care', expose the extent to which neoliberal politics have eroded the radical and political foundations of the care movement with individualist narratives (Kim & Schalk, 2021; Lorde, 1988). Across these disciplines, scholars have grappled with the ways unjust forms of care have been used as a method of control, assimilation, and erasure, along with the possibilities care suggests for life-sustaining relations outside these harmful systems (Clement, 1996, p. 2; Gómez-Barris, 2017; Singh, 2017; Tsing, 2015).

Despite the radical foundations of care, landscape scholarship has often engaged more simple, positive acts of care. Care within landscape practices have tended to focus on specific acts of maintenance (Clément, Morris, & Tiberghien, 2015; Geffel, 2021; Raxworthy, 2018), ecological stewardship and conservation (Leopold, 1949; Musacchio, 2013; Nassauer, 1995), urbanisation and social justice (Morrow & Parker, 2020; Williams, 2017), cultural heritage (Lin, Martin, & Chen, 2022; Milligan & Wiles, 2010), and care facilities, care-taking, and therapeutic gardens (Butterfield & Martin, 2016; Tsai, 2022). Others have attempted to bridge landscape studies with the environmental humanities, or with care as a way of doing historical scholarship (Davis, 2021; Jacobs, 2019; Meyer, 2015). These landscape-grounded discussions of care—while identifying essential aspects of landscape research—have largely focused on care as a specific topic rather than a socio-political ethos through which landscapes are shaped and in which care responds.

More than a mode of thought, care ethicists emphasise how caring, similar to other liberatory-oriented movements such as abolition, is an active, ongoing practice guided by specific obligations (Gilmore, 2022). As philosopher Joan Tronto (1993) writes, care is a 'practice rather than a set of rules or principles' (p. 126), while psychologist Carol Gilligan (1982) notes that ethics of care reduce the gap between ideas and doing. Care as both an action and political affect suggests how landscape is engaged in intersecting caring relations, whether it is through the landscape architect as participant (Franco, 2022; Peña et al., 2017) or landscape ecologists considering the ethics embedded in ecological fieldwork (Woelfle-Hazard, 2022).

The Providence Seed Library, a community-based project began by Fatema Maswood in Providence, Rhode Island is a small example of how thinking through care translates into action. Begun at the height of COVID-19 restrictions, the seed library works with existing community libraries to distribute open pollinated seeds—seeds that can be saved from one season to the next—that are culturally and ecologically resonate. Unlike commonly found commercial seeds, such as those sold in grocery stores and which emphasise uniformity, the seed library distributes seeds linked to culturally significant foodways or family traditions, and ones that can be planted and harvested year after year. For Maswood, a community member with deep personal and familial ties to the area, the seed library is an unglamourous but essential form of care that is inseparable from their sociopolitical self.

As a project that is meant to be shared, the library reflects several notions of care through mutuality, interdependence, and slowness. Seeds are packaged by hand, in small glassine envelopes to retain vitality (Figure 1). The slow and repetitive act of packaging seeds is a communal activity that calls upon narrative and memory, while the sharing of knowledge between new growers learning about seeds for the first time and immigrant communities with deep plant knowledge illustrates the abundance of people who can steward and hold the project. Maswood describes the project as a little attempt to create a life affirming space: to seed a body of knowledge, and to understand seeds as living technology where the planting and growth of seeds create a seed bank for future generations of growers, plants, and pollinators (F. Maswood, personal communication, July 11, 2023) (Figure 2).

Figure 1. Fatema Maswood, 2021, Packaged seeds. Courtesy of Providence Seed Library/Fatema Maswood.

The seed library expands on Maria Puig de la Bellacasa (2012) claim that care is unavoidable; that it is always present and 'concomitant to life'. In this sense, care is implicit to landscape as all relationships create care and all landscapes involve relationships. But, not all relationships can be defined as caring. As Puig de la Bellacasa explains, 'even when caring is not assured by the people or things … in order for them to merely subsist somebody/something has (had) to be taking care somewhere or at some time'. Thinking with care is thus inseparable from action. But care is also about imagining possibilities, without idealising positive or good feelings, for life beyond 'merely survivalist or instrumental' practices (p. 198).

Caring relations

Relationality is a central idea of care that describes how the socio-ecological dimensions of landscape are understood through vast spatial and temporal extents (Glissant, 1997; Massey, 2005). The scholarship of Joan Tronto and Maria Puig de la Bellacasa in particular suggests how thinking through care is a relational practice, with landscape implications. Since the 1980s, Tronto has theorised a feminist ethics of care to challenge normative ethics centring the individual within moral responsibility. By examining the ways gendered labour is reproduced within domestic spheres, Tronto builds a robust understanding of care as a relational ethic that extends beyond individual agency. In their often-cited definition of care, Tronto, with Bernice Fisher, write,

> we suggest that caring be viewed as a species activity that includes everything we do to maintain, continue, and repair our "world" so that we can live in it as well as possible. That world includes our bodies, ourselves, and our environment, all of which we seek to interweave in a complex, life-sustaining web. (Tronto & Fisher, 1990, p. 40)

Figure 2. Fatema Maswood, 2022, New plant growth from library seeds. Courtesy of Providence Seed Library/Fatema Maswood.

Central to this idea of 'we' is the relational self who is connected to and shaped by other subjects, spaces, and processes related to almost every aspect of life. The openness of this definition also suggests that care is reciprocal between people and other-than-human relations, an idea that Tronto more recently describes as 'caring with' (Tronto, 2019, p. 29). The notion of 'caring with' explains how landscapes are co-constituted and in reciprocity with land, water, and other-than-human species (Haraway, 2008, 2016; Puig de la Bellacasa, 2012, 2017). The implication that knowing is intimately connected to a relational self suggests how care is an ongoing set of actions that exists alongside other-than-human material entanglements.

Puig de la Bellacasa broadens Tronto's notion of care, challenging the anthropomorphising of ethical obligations and urging care thinkers to practice situated and embodied attending, a method Anna Tsing (2015) refers to as 'arts of noticing' or what Donna Haraway (2016) might call 'staying with the trouble'. Puig de La Bellacasa (2015) illustrates through soil, for instance, expansive and entangled stories beyond human agency. By applying a 'care-time' approach, Puig

de la Bellacasa illustrates how soil refuses technoscientific logic, or solutions-based interventions that treat landscape as merely productive or useful, noting instead that soil is living and full of overlapping ecological, political, and cultural timelines that defy linear progress narratives. Puig de la Bellacasa explains, the 'importance of care time means drawing attention to, and making time for, a range of vital practices and experiences that are discounted, or crushed, by the productionist ethos' (2015, p. 708). By foregrounding the work of sustaining care through material relations, Puig de la Bellacasa directly challenges solution-driven landscape practices that have relied on often-used ecological metaphors such as resiliency, novelty, or integrity to anticipate expected environmental outcomes.

Critiques of relying too heavily on ideals of landscape resiliency, for instance, note how resiliency efforts rarely ask who gains from, pays for, and ultimately benefits from actions that necessitate the need for resiliency, often focusing instead on how landscapes recover from—or sustain—uncertain ecological disturbances (Baker, 2019; Fleming, 2016; Pellow, 2007). But, as geographer Stephanie Wakefield (2020) notes, the reality of creating new ecological relationships requires extensive amounts of work and labour—and care—by both humans and other-than-humans. Likewise, design projects about landscape novelty or ecological integrity often treat dynamic ecosystems as spaces of indeterminacy, whereby ecological processes are expected to reclaim or recover disturbed landscapes outside human agency. This attitude—akin to letting nature take over—contributes to the misrepresentation of ecosystems as 'whole' when human interventions are absent (Jacobs, 2019; Rohwer & Marris, 2021). In contrast, care challenges neoliberal narratives of indeterminacy that abdicate ongoing responsibility for how colonial and racial capitalism have created current climate crisis and species extinction. This is not to say that humans should assert dominance over ecological systems, a view that perpetuates a false duality of humans and nature, but instead advocates for staying accountable to ongoing environmental entanglements. Caring-with situates humans as part of nature while also acknowledging the need to radically change the systems that unevenly and increasingly cause human-led environmental crisis.

Scholars and activists within critical queer and disability studies have similarly challenged productionist ideas of purity within landscape restoration. Eli Clare (2017), for example, questions how ecological restoration often seeks to 'heal' or 'fix' landscapes to a so-called 'natural' state. Clare argues this attitude operates within an 'ideology of cure' that assumes cure is both possible and desirable. Distinguishing 'care' from 'cure' illustrates how a reliance on metaphors from the biophysical sciences can extend ableist ideologies of social and ecological improvement, and how landscape studies continue these systems of harm through design, management, and planning. Distinguishing care from cure creates possibilities—ruptures in the status quo—to imagine 'relationships, institutions, and actions that enhance mutuality and well-being' beyond ideologies of purity and normative notions of resiliency, which too often attempt to restore false binaries of natural/unnatural and ignore the socio-political dimensions of environmental change. (Lawson, 2007, p. 1)

The Copley Community Orchard in Vancouver, British Columbia exhibits a care-time approach through an organic urban orchard that connects people to food, land, and each other. Planted in 2012 on the unceded territories of the xʷməθkʷəy'əm (Musqueam), Sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish), and səlilwətaɬ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations, the one-acre orchard is filled with more than 200 edible, native, and pollinator plants to redefine productivity in the context of community, education, and shared, multispecies space (Figure 3). A high sewer line runs under the land, preventing it from being developed as real estate. Due to this condition, the Orchard is a unique example of land itself becoming a space of mutual aid, and in a city with some of the highest property prices in the world, the Orchard's social value counters a productionist ethos that treats land as speculation. Unlike many community gardens or urban food spaces that are restricted to members or volunteers, the Orchard is open to all. Visitors are encouraged to pick from and give back to the orchard, and an extensive multi-generational and multi-lingual group of volunteers

Figure 3. Sara Jacobs, 2023, Multispecies care at Copley Community Orchard.

water, prune, plant, and organise neighbourhood gatherings at the Orchard. While the Orchard features a native wildflower meadow and various domesticated fruit trees, the space is neither solely about ecological remediation or agricultural productivity. Rather, the Orchard suggests how landscapes of care might emerge by attending to the care-time of community, vegetal, soil, and animal entanglements.

Similar to the care-time of soil and other materials, infrastructural care is an emerging idea that foregrounds the relational aspects of infrastructural building and breakdown, and importantly, how infrastructures of harm—upon breakdown—might make for something more akin to care (Frichot, Carbonell, Frykholm, & Karami, 2022). Geographer Brandi T. Summers (2021) considers the relationship between care, infrastructure, and racialisation through urban development. Studying the afterlives of parking lots as spaces of 'clearance and control', Summers show how infrastructure inscribes racial capitalism in the destruction and erasure of Black communities. Landscape architect Jane Hutton (2019) has likewise noted how the movement of materials to construct urban public space in North America creates reciprocal relationships with the lands and communities from which they are from, highlighting how production of the built environment operates within extractive economies. Geographer Kathryn Yusoff (2018) further challenges how care informs histories of infrastructure by examining how geological science is shaped by racialised discourses that materialise extractive economies of colonialism and enslavement.

Through the vast and messy relations that care creates, Summers, Hutton, and Yussoff highlight the relational entanglements of care between people, water, land, and other-than-human life that refuse the ordering logic of extractive capitalism. By engaging in what sound geographer Anja Kanngieser and anthropologist Zoe Todd (Kanngieser & Todd, 2020) call 'kin studies', these examples suggest how care literature discussed in the first half this paper can work towards stories of care that are 'more embedded, expansive, material, and [in] respectful

relations to people and land' (p. 385). The care of land as a relational practice, where people and nature are extended ecological kin, is foundational to many Indigenous worldviews (Salmón, 2000). Drawing on these ideas of kinship, Kanngieser and Todd offer an alternative to case studies, which often depend on being abstraction from place, by rather interpreting care as specific obligations situated in land and community. Robin Wall Kimmerer (2013) suggests similar methods for understanding ecological relations through contextual, relational, and situated stories, while Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (2017) understands land itself as a teacher and storyteller. In the second half of this paper, we expand these ideas to focus on relations of landscape maintenance, labour, and the material possibilities of care.

Towards critical practices of care in the landscape

Care is incomplete without a material, relational practice. However, material landscape practices alone do not constitute a critical practice of care, and material engagements with landscape can remain dependent on the extractive labour of vulnerable groups. Maintenance is central to landscape practices and can take many different forms from ubiquitous 'mow and blow' practices to gardening, controlled burning, resurfacing roads, or particular harvesting methods. Many forms of maintenance done for landscape care—including common 'mow and blow' management practices using fossil fuels and precarious labour to maintain ecologically bereft monocrops of fescue—are not caring practices in an ethical or relational sense. While concepts of care apply to a multitude of material engagements with landscapes from agricultural practices (Di Giminiani, 2022; Pettersson & Tillmar, 2022; Salazar, Granjou, Kearnes, Krzywoszynska, & Tironi, 2020), forestry (Grignon & Kimmerer, 2017; Hummel & Smith, 2017; Tsing, 2015), and ecological restoration and repair (Almassi, 2017; Clare, 2017; Papadopoulos, Bellacasa, & Tacchetti, 2022), we focus on the intersection of landscape maintenance and design to show how critical care can address the ways landscape maintenance reproduces existing power asymmetries. Attending to who has the power to care and who or what tends to get designated proper or improper objects of care can distinguish harmful or extractive landscape labour and maintenance practices from situated and relational landscape practices (Martin, Myers, & Viseu, 2015).

Thinking through care about landscape labour and maintenance is a direct extension of feminist care ethics responding to the erasure of domestic work, with artist Mierle Ukeles (1969) manifesto for maintenance art titled 'CARE' highlighting this relationship. Landscape labourers face similar issues as domestic care work, such as invisibility and unequal working conditions within an industry that structurally devalues labour to turn a profit (Terremoto, 2021). In landscape design, valuing maintenance and repair pushes against uncaring practices of capitalist development that reduce land to discrete and disparate sites of construction. As media anthropologist Shannon Mattern (2018) notes, 'maintenance at any particular site, or on any particular body or object, requires the maintenance of an entire ecology' meaning that maintenance also includes all the support infrastructures that enable specific maintenance practices. Interest in reintegrating maintenance with the practice of landscape design suggests an attempt to understand how landscapes are shaped temporally within larger systems—an entire ecology—and can be understood as a response to the separation of the 'professional' from the 'labourer' within the professionalisation of landscape architecture (Davis & Oles, 2014; Dümpelmann, 2022; Franco, 2022). At the same time, the economic and practical barriers that prevent integrating landscape maintenance and design highlights how infrastructures that prioritise construction and development for capitalist agendas often don't support moving beyond disciplinary boundaries. While landscape scholars and practitioners can't solve this integration individually, a more critical engagement with the political context of maintenance practices would enrich the scholarship and practice in this area.

A framework of care has the potential to expand landscape maintenance beyond disciplinary boundaries, but scholars of these topics too often conflate a critical practice of care with the isolated physical acts of landscape maintenance. Whether described as maintenance, stewardship, or gardening, authors Raxworthy (2018), Geffel (2021), Clément, et. al, (2015), and Sutton (2022) prioritise responsive landscape maintenance that extends beyond construction and centres the designer as labourer, or designer as choreographer of labour. In these instances, creative or responsive re-imaginings of physical maintenance processes with landscape ecosystems on its own is an incomplete mode of care without an affective relational and ethico-political obligation (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017; Martin et al., 2015). Discussions around landscape maintenance and landscape design, which is still grappling with a lineage of landscape stewardship as a mechanism for colonial control, would be enriched by embedding the politics of care into questions of how best to physically intervene in landscapes over time.

The political conditions that enable control of land—and in North America, where we write from, stolen land—is both a necessary precondition to designing maintenance regimes and simultaneously disregarded in discussions of landscape maintenance. For instance, the basis of Joan Nassauer's (1995) widely cited discussion of 'care' in the context of ecological restoration and landscape design is that healthy ecosystem functions should fit into cultural expectations of nature in order to be successful. In acknowledging but not critiquing the ways people 'use landscape to express power or wealth', Nassauer claims care as the simple physical practice of making the landscape 'neat' or attractive to a normative, white, middle-upper class, settler-colonial society (p. 163). In doing so, Nassauer conflates fitting into the dominant culture with affect but disregards the ethico-political dimension of the claims. The phrase coined by Nassauer of 'cues to care' could just as easily be reframed as 'codes for class belonging' (p. 167). Designing an 'orderly frame', as Nassauer suggests, is by itself not a critical practice of care without also attending to the economic and ecological relations embedded within its maintenance practices. Unfortunately, many landscape scholars continue to cite this work uncritically and use it to advance problematic ideas of designing landscape maintenance that flatten care to an aesthetic exercise steeped in classist and racialised values.

Julian Raxworthy's (2018) publication *Overgrown* unapologetically foregrounds the importance of time, labour, and plant growth in landscape design, protesting with careful case studies against the separation of 'the gardener' and 'the landscape architect'. While Raxworthy briefly addresses the role of professionalisation in racialised labour inequities, *Overgrown* largely focuses on the work of landowner-gardeners on private property rather than marginalised gardener labourers, or even managers of public landscapes through government-supported or volunteer labour (pp. 22–23). Raxworthy acknowledges this gap,

> I am focusing on the garden because it is less easily hijacked by other issues than public landscapes are. The garden allows a specific focus on plants. In doing so though, I acknowledge that having a garden is a privilege acquired through economic advantage and is not available to everyone, a fact that does potentially undermine some of my claims about gardening as a trade. (p. 24)

The 'gardener' with power to make creative decisions in response to a private landscape is often not the same 'gardener' who labours in public landscapes. French landscape architect Gilles Clément et al. (2015) similarly advocates for responsive gardening-based landscape practices, but his ideas are also arranged around the figure of an individual (male) landowner 'gardener'. Clément's attempt to scale the idea of a 'planetary garden' loses impact in not acknowledging how capitalist and colonial access to land shapes the ability to garden for Clément's vision of ecological health. This way of thinking individually about land obscures what has generated ecological crisis and disruption of landscape processes—the need for care—to begin with.

Landscape designer Michael Geffel (2021) combines Nassauer's 'cues to care' with ideas from Raxworthy and Clément, lamenting how landscape maintenance is often misunderstood as

'mechanistic repetition of the same operation over and over to suppress change in the landscape' (p. 3). Geffel champions creative, responsive preservation of landscape processes rather than landscape forms as maintenance. Geffel goes so far as to claim that 'taking care' and 'maintaining' can be used interchangeably, which would seem to expand an idea of what landscape maintenance can be, but ultimately conflates care as physical maintenance. Geffel is most convincing when deepening the relationship between labourer, machine, and the biodiversity found in site-specificity. Here, learning from the larger network of relations involved, combined with deep and local site knowledge, could strengthen processes of landscape maintenance beyond the single designer-labourer-landowner.

While literature focused on the designer as maintainer has often overlooked how maintenance practices uphold existing labour practices, scholarship can best uplift these efforts by taking on the ethico-political implications of maintenance work in landscapes. Landscape architect Michelle Franco (2022) argues emphatically for this approach, that an ethic of care for labourers is intrinsic to an ethic of care for the landscape, and through a genealogy of Latinx representation in landscape shows how the co-constitution of land and labour generates life-affirming care practices. Test Plot, a collective based on California, is another example of how maintenance can be situated and relational, where designers, community members, and labourers work within a complex network of relations. Test Plot supports localised ecologically and culturally relevant land stewardship at eight 'plots' across state and city parks that have suffered from deferred maintenance. The Test Plot at San Bruno Mountain in the San Francisco Bay Area highlights how maintenance and care align across personal, political, and ecological realms. Guided by two community members, Yoni Carnice and Chris Chou, the group organises around maintenance work such as planting, staking, weeding, and mulching, along with workshops on seed collection, botany, local history, and story sharing about the mountain and surrounding community (Figure 4).

For Carnice, landscape care bridges the personal and the political, a practice of resistance against the non-situated, impersonal way of thinking he has encountered in the landscape architecture profession. Carnice is from the local community and much of his extended diasporic

Figure 4. Test Plot, 2022, Workday at San Bruno Mountain, Courtesy of Test Plot.

Figure 5. Test Plot, 2022, Workday at San Bruno Mountain, Courtesy of Test Plot.

Filipino family still lives there. Stories of the cultural and ecological significance of the mountain fill his memories; he recalls being told that the ever-present fog at the foot of San Bruno Mountain was steam from thousands of nearby rice cookers. The fog that is woven into the stories of the residents also feeds a particular ecotone as it condenses at the base of the mountain. Working with the understory of an established canopy of eucalyptus trees near a neighbourhood park entrance, the 'plot' has two purposes: first to enhance community accessibility at a non-vehicular entrance to the park that is most accessible to the low-income, immigrant, and diverse neighbourhood at the foot of the mountain, and second to experiment with what ecologically valuable plants can grow under the shade and allopathic condition of a eucalyptus grove (Figure 5). The project offers an alternative to standard ecological restoration which is more concerned with ideas of purity (and often doesn't value areas like non-native eucalyptus), and which usually treats ecological care as a non-social or non-cultural task. The experimental and temporal intentions of the project are about establishing integrated and responsive landscape care through ongoing attention, informed by co-constituted biotic and abiotic conditions, which in turn feeds and deepens relationships to land (Y. Carnice, personal communication, June 30, 2023).

Care as a practice of possibility

Throughout this essay we have not defined *a* 'landscape of care' but shown how a deeper understanding of the conditions that produce the need for care allows for the possibilities of care to emerge through a constant, situated, and collaborative process. Through surveying existing care literature and practices, we have shown how care is a practice of possibility (Hartman, 2019) situated within the tension, messiness, and plurality of landscape relations. In focusing on the ways landscapes of care remake relations to power, we have challenged much of the ways care has been undertaken in landscape studies. In this brief conclusion, we consider how care might further inform landscape practices. The intention here is not to trivialise the urgency or tensions of care but to reflect on care as a practice of possibility, and to begin a conversation around how a radical politics of care might further guide landscape studies. That is, how does care create possibilities that dream and build others worlds, and that create different ways of living together in refusal of systems that perpetuate social and ecological injustices?

Caring as slowing down, making room for pleasure, love, affect and opening oneself to the possibility of being changed. The slowness and specificity of caring-with suggests how research practices might be informed by 'acts of noticing' (Tsing, 2015). To listen with care, to learn with care, to teach with care, to grow with care, shifts and dissolves dominant landscape narratives. The specificity of telling more full landscape histories (Way, 2020), designing landscapes through pleasure and slowness (Meyer, 2010), or the possibility created through landscape memories (Hartman, 2019) are acts of repair that allow for changed understandings of landscape. Care requires situated ways of knowing, creating space for reparative stories and revisionist histories.

Caring practices occur in nested scales from individual action to communities, institutions, and political bodies that allow for or withhold care. A critical practice of care requires an awareness of and attention to scale, including how care can or cannot scale, as caring-well involves the specificity of being embedded in the relations of particular places over time (Tsing, 2012). That care does not scale evenly is an aspect of the messiness of care. Yet, the non-scalability of care—its refusal to become abstracted or universalized—often limits the ability of landscape designers and scholars to translate their work across scales while also working from deep relations rooted in land and place that caring-with requires. Acts of un-building or de-designing harmful infrastructure, such as designing processes of dam removal, illustrate how landscapes of care might engage larger scales without erasing site-specific interrelationships and reproducing unjust human-environment relations (Bélanger, 2020; Cephas, Marjanović, & Miljački, 2022; Orff, 2020), while the anti-colonial alliances and solidarities suggested by Dang (2021) are another example of how care might work outside the urgency of scale.

Care can allow different ways of relating. As interests in care grow, so does the commodification of care, such as quantifying environmental services or carbon neutrality (Green & Lawson, 2011). Landscapes of care allow for different ways of relating outside the commodification of care, from kinship as an 'alliance with reciprocal responsibilities to one another and to our other-than-human relatives with whose land, water, and animal bodies we are co-constituted', (Tallbear, 2019, p. 36) to abolition ecologies which seek to 'recreate nature free from white supremacist logics' (Heynen, 2016, p. 842). Movements for Indigenous self-determination of life and land (Tuck & Yang, 2012), to Black Freedom Farms and other alternatives to private property (McCutcheon, 2019), to mutual aid (as opposed to self-care that extends neoliberalism) (Spade, 2020) suggest how care works as a liberatory practice to allow for systems of care rooted in generosity and abundance.

An ethos of care asks for accountability and response-ability. As Martin et al. (2015) notes, care is about 'a willingness to respond', and care without intention does not necessarily create more caring relations (p. 634). The communities that care creates should attend to how spatial networks of interdependence are built, how historical relationships have produced the need for care, and how socio-ecological accountability informs professional lives. Working from a place of accountability and response-ability suggests how landscape designers, students, and scholars can embody an ethos of *care as a critical practice* and *critique as a careful practice*.

Care is messy, but so are landscapes. Care challenges and fractures hegemonic ways of knowing landscape, meaning that the spaces and ways of living that emerge through an ethos of care remake power relations upon which existing structures of white supremacy, patriarchy, and exploitative capitalism depend. Invoking care without pushing against these structures merely remakes and maintains them. In contrast, our future depends on the removal of these intersecting structures of oppression, making radical approaches to care necessary and urgent for bringing futures of mutual flourishing into existence.

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