

LUCABOT

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The Scale of Things

Synthetic representations, composed of multiple arrangements of pixels – micro-dots invisible to the naked eye – coexist with images whose very real materiality has been captured by the recording of light output rendered visible by a microscope. The non-fortuitous encounter between two diametrically opposed iconographic sources – one speculatively constructed, the other captured from the tangible world, yet both in their initial stages beyond the threshold of human visibility – tells the story of the origin and fantasizes the future of a world that could very well do without this gaze.

I saw these little translucent bodies; they seemed fragile to me, hanging by a thread, struggling to sustain their existence, seeming to merely survive themselves. Yet, beneath their frail exterior, this vast cohort of tiny living beings functions, works, toils, unbeknownst to me, utterly

indifferent to my presence. Although I think that I move through the world keenly aware of how it is organized – of what, between the visible and the invisible, is visible – that's not so. I grew up with the idea that human presence gives meaning to things and events, but that's not so either. The living world does not demand to be seen, named, or interpreted to manifest itself or to be liberated. Living things do not care about the partitioning of reality. Water evaporates and falls back as droplets without intention. Seeds germinate and grow without validation. Roots exchange sap like brief love letters. Moulds develop complex communication networks to test alliances of an exemplary geopolitics.

Heedless of territories or borders, without the impulse to conquer or the desire to rule the world, subtle equilibriums form and dissolve in a narrative that is not mine, in the sense that I am in no way its instigator or any kind of starting or ending point, and even less its focus point. I am but one variation among many, the result of an unpredictable arrangement in constant flux. What the living world whispers to me is that what isolates itself exhausts itself, and what stays is in motion finds its anchors. Sooner or later, that which exceeds limits, that overflows, is contained or reassigned.

Very quickly, therefore, the idea that nothing stands alone asserts itself. What a relief – I am in no way necessary to any kind of balance. For within the living world, risks, resources,

time itself, energy, even skills, are shared. How dismaying that humankind, so certain of its consciousness and intelligence, has not yet grasped that the living world has a political agenda that is strikingly more equitable and convergent than our own truncated, short-sighted attempts? And here, in this line of thought, even harder to admit, I must recognize that I cannot independently – any more than can the smallest part of me taken in isolation – be self-sufficient. I must also concede that the guarantee of my freedom is not absolute independence but my determination to overcome upheavals, to transform myself without losing myself. To accept that what flows through me is beyond me, and yet, what is beyond me forms me. Realizing that – as it is for these tiny creatures – interdependence is not a moral concession but an ontological and structural condition is unsettling. And it feeds the nagging anxiety that sometimes gnaws at me, or at least haunts me: the fear of being dependent. It takes a rather radical humility, even an exercise in extreme lucidity, to admit that nothing exists alone, that everything is reciprocal, that by breaking a bond, I am not distancing or isolating myself from the world but weakening myself. In fact, it is soothing, even liberating, to think that solitude might be only an error of perspective, a misinterpretation sustained by the vacuity of placing oneself at the centre of everything.

My only privilege, my sole singularity, would thus be to know that I am alive. It is not much, and it is everything.

My uniqueness would be limited to attempting to understand, anticipate, or imagine. From this, likely, stems the illusion that everything converges toward us, that the world is in our hands. What a pretense; one cannot be present to that which one possesses. Besides, how can I measure myself against something for which I am the measure? The world is not on a human scale. My life is but a fleeting moment inscribed in a universe that defies my imagination. What is most unsettling, deep down, is the relevance of the world without us, the dizzying thought that each of my cells contributes more to the continuity of the world than I ever could. Because, I tell myself, what most disturbs humankind is that things can happen without us. FOMO.

— France Choinière

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