

The Natural Basis of Human Life

— It can be ignored, but it is
always present

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Reality of Struggle Against Nature ... and against a bunch of other things

(Eero Järnefelt, "Kaski", 1893)



Dreams of Escape from Nature

(Tesla & "Starman")



The Contradiction of Modernity

- 1) New and deeper knowledge of the connections and the continuities of human and non-human
 - Evolutionary thought, ecology
 - Medicine, hygiene, microbiology
 - Meteorology, climatology, environmental history...
- 2) Scientific schisms, divided worldview
 - Natural sciences vs. Human sciences
 - Antagonistic attitudes *within the sciences* (see Rachel Carson)

The Myth of Dualism

- 1) On the one hand, there are clear and important examples of strong division into Nature and Culture (often with some people being pushed into Nature)
 - NOTE: Nature both as denigrated and as edified! (Natural romanticism can be very dualistic.)
- 2) On the other hand, "We Have Never Been Modern" (Bruno Latour): connections with non-human have never been totally ignored *in practice* – working with the world would be impossible!
 - This is only problematic if you approach the world with strong conceptual assumptions or beliefs!!

Multiplicity of Nature, and multiplicity of relations to nature

- Nature is not one but many.
- "Everything is connected to everything else", but in the end this is trivial. (Because "we" do not live on a spaceship.)
- Life creates its own environment, and the world is packed full of environments. This is a basic feature of all life, including human.
- Thus it is *in practice* impossible to have only one relationship to Nature. → "Nature" is constituted in relationships.
 - Totalizing Nature is possible only conceptually...

..or by looking at a picture of Earth for a while. (Spaceship Earth)



Illusion of Independence from Nature

- Interplay with non-human world is inescapable.
- Still, the illusion of "Independence from Nature" (post-scarcity, end of work, Acceleration, transhuman) is strong.
 - Economics: "black-boxing" nature, assumption of substitutability of any resources, efficiency calculations based on exchange
 - Material facilitators: fossil fuel economy, "shrinking the world", Green Revolution
- Fossil capitalism has created a world with *very specific*, globally shares dependencies. → And *vulnerabilities*.

But even when ignored, nature can
"return" (Hurricane Katrina, 2005)



”Bugs are vital to the decomposition that keeps nutrients cycling, soil healthy, plants growing and ecosystems running. This role is mostly invisible, until suddenly it’s not.” (Brooke Jarvis, NYT)

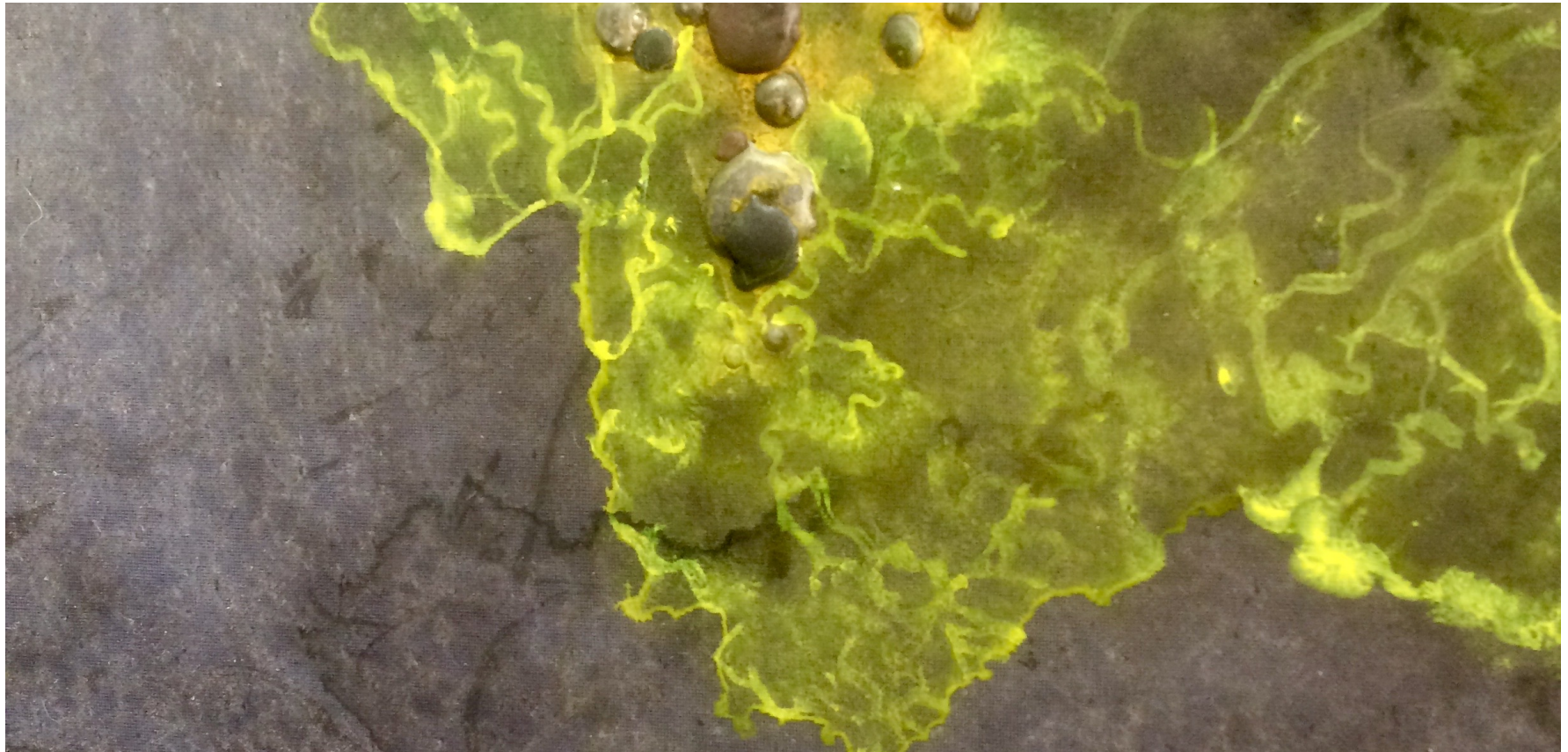


”Independence” is selective dependence

- The conditions of existence for ”backgrounding” nature were very time-specific, depending:
 - abundant energy & material resources
 - seemingly abundant ecological sinks
- ”Sink scarcity” is the defining feature of present world.
- What is needed? Not only ”environmental awareness”, but practical reorganisation of relationships with the non-human world. New kinds of dependencies, new kinds of vulnerabilities, new possibilities of coexistence.

How Nature Speaks? By its Presence.

(Alma Heikkilä, ” } maa ~ mineraalit yhtyvät elävään”, yksityiskohta)



Kiitos, ota yhteyttä

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