

AMY CUTLER has recently completed a PhD in Cultural Geography at Royal Holloway, University of London, called 'Language disembarked', which focused on historical and political spaces of coastlines and forests in the work of modern British poets. She runs Passengerfilms (www.passengerfilms.wordpress.com), and the online publication *Land Diagrams* (www.lanndiagrams.wordpress.com), as well as independently curating events. She is currently co-editing *Peter Riley: Critical Essays* with Alex Latter for Gylphi. Her first chapbook is *Nostalgia Forest* (Oystercatcher Press, 2013) and her second chapbook, *GLOSS*, is forthcoming in 2014.

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Poetry

Suckers

Amy Cutler



SUCKERS IS A SERIES IN WHICH I RE-CAPTION ARCHIVED FORESTRY DIAGRAMS, re-inserting lyric, allegorical or philosophical thought about the forest. It concerns managerial attitudes towards forestry, often from old Forestry Commission figures, but tests these visual modes of knowledge by bringing in un-reconciled literary voices. This piece of work responds to contemporary arguments about the visual modelling of the forest and how to quantify its social and cultural data.

Suckers was written in 2012 as part of the Lex-ICON international text and image project. It came during a period of research into interdisciplinary approaches and histories of diagrammatic thought. I was concerned with intersections across geography, philosophy, anthropology, cartography, semiology, and information graphics. These studies of the ontology of visual forms and its correlation with forms of thinking was addressed by Gillian Rose, in *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to Interpreting Visual Materials* (2012), and by Nicholas Gansterer, in *Drawing a Hypothesis: Figures of Thought* (2011), a five-year exchange with theoreticians, scientists, and artists who responded to his drawings.

The analysis of spatial abstractions used to understand man-environment complexes is vital to geographers, because these abstractions are 'the true kernels of

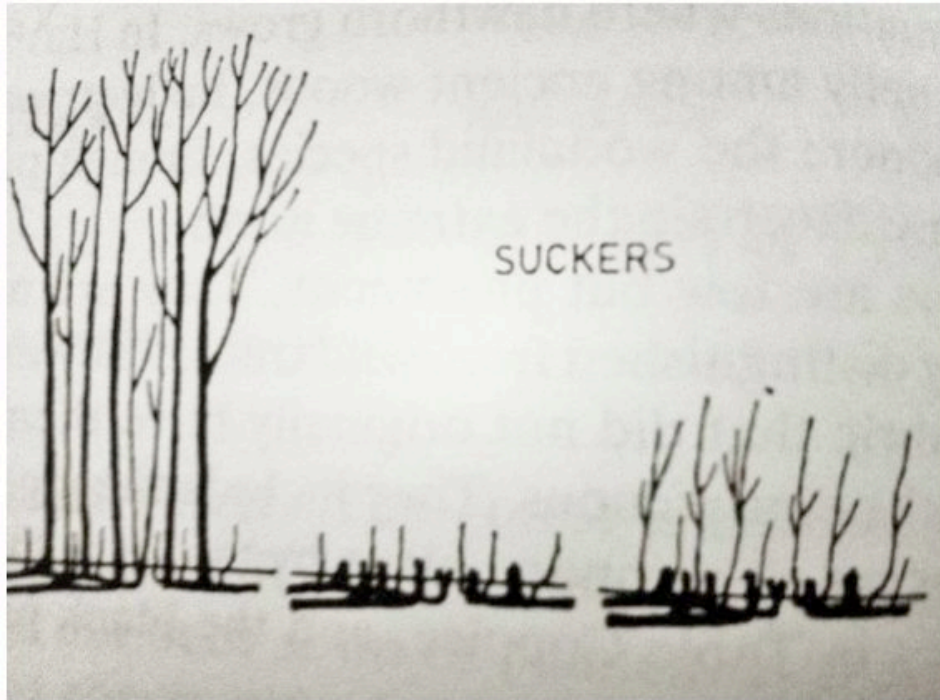
the discipline', whether approached by practitioners or theoreticians.¹ There are common properties to the ways geographers arrange and read these notational devices as indexes to the spatial world, for geography is a genre of thought partly based on an 'archaeology' of diagrams.² However, diagrams are also 'machines of translation', offering ways of transmitting and prompting thought between disciplines.³ Diagrams are not just pedagogical, closed loops of knowledge: their iconic attributes facilitate their migration into other discourses, as with the diverging cultural inscriptions in *Suckers*.

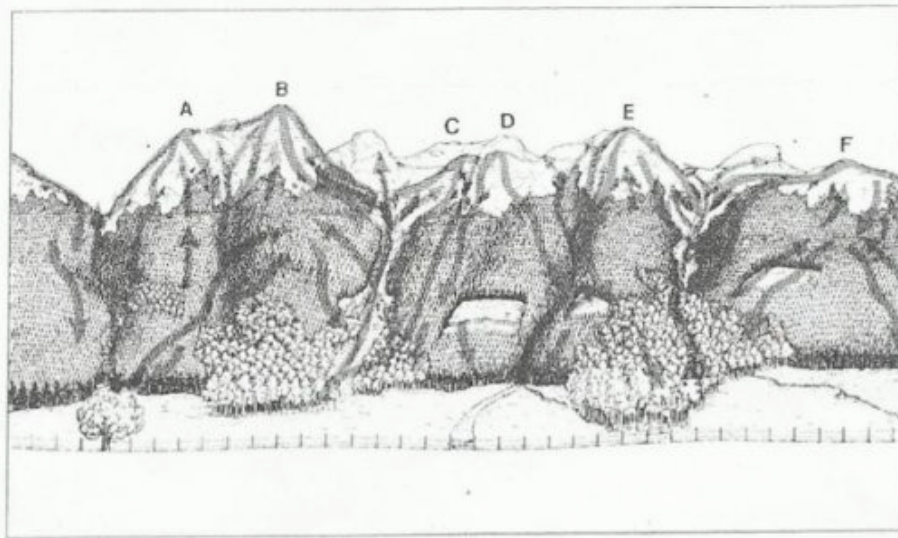
In poetry, this is part of a more particular extra-disciplinary tradition (see David Kennedy's new book, *The Ekphrastic Encounter in Contemporary British Poetry and Elsewhere*, 2012). In recent poetry, Claire Potter's 'diagrammatised' poems are of interest, available in the second issue of *VLAK: Contemporary Poetics and the Arts*, whilst a recent interview she gave on the topic for *Black Rider* explicitly refers to the poem-infograph as participatory, 'as though the filaments linking the poem and the reader were displayed as such'. Shearsman have recently published David Greenslade's *Lyrical Diagrams*, and have a sample of the PDF online. Greenslade has also written a piece for *Junction Box*, 'Diagrams – A Mythic Proposition', touching on Hephaestus, the diagram engineer of the gods, as well as making comparison to the net-like infrastructures of assembled complex objects such as wiring systems, plumbing systems, space stations, and air conditioning. Also of interest are book designer Colin Sackett's small press re-workings of pedagogical and geographical texts such as *Nature in Downland*, the Beaufort Scale of Wind Force, *The Land of Britain*, etc., and his collections of marginalia and diagrams, like the little paperback *The True Line: The Landscape Diagrams of Geoffrey Hutchings*. Sackett's reworking of *Map and Photo Reading Answer Book* is particularly visually apt, with its use of the relics of earlier notations of landscape. Douglas Oliver's *The Diagram Poems* is another series of 'maps or raids' which abducts diagrams from their original geographical intentions, and which I have briefly written about on *Intercapillary Space*.

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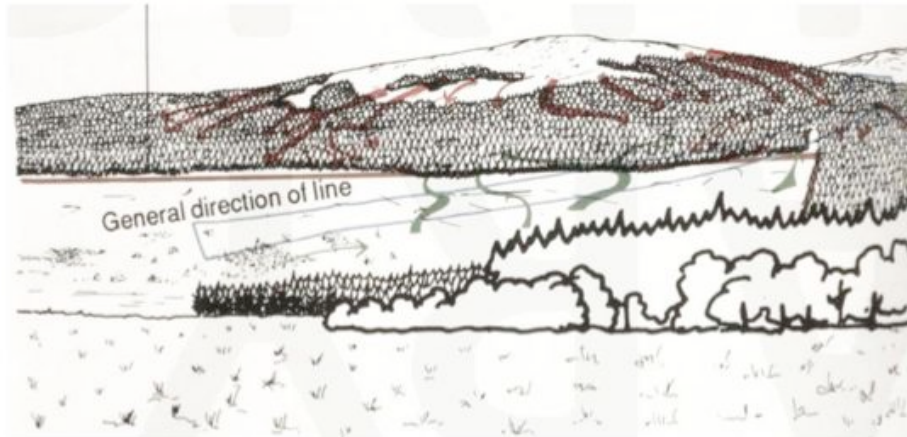
Notes

- ¹ Ronald Abler, John S. Adams and Peter Gould, *Spatial Organisation: The Geographer's View of the World* (Detroit, MI: Prentice-Hall, 1971), p. xiv.
- ² Kenneth J. Knoespel, 'Diagrams as Piloting Devices in the Philosophy of Gilles Deleuze', in *Théorie – Littérature – Enseignement: Deleuze-Chantier* (Saint-Denis: Presses Universitaires de Vincennes, 2001), pp. 145–65.
- ³ Sybille Krämer, 'Epistemology of the Line: Reflections on the Diagrammatical Mind', in *Studies in Diagrammatology and Diagram Praxis*, ed. by Olga Pombo and Alexander Gerner (London: College Publications, 2010), p. 30.





a) *I dreamed of forest alleys fair*



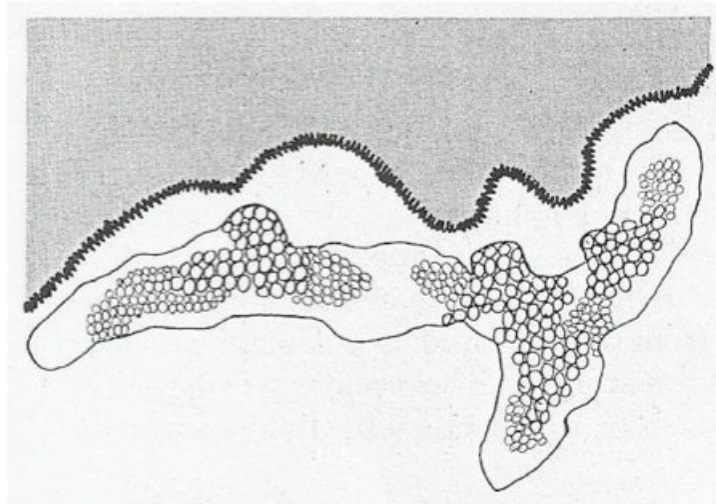
63.b Love is in the greenwood building him a house



(Fig 6) the heart of another is a dark forest



(e) This oak has no companion!



3. slouching in the undergrowth, where linties sang



c. The refuge of the narrow-minded misanthrope