

Dead-Reckoning As A Methodology Of Emancipation Through Navigation In Times Of Struggle

Inspired by Johanna Hedva's 'Sick Woman Theory'

I take a big breath, slowly and steady. I breath in and out, deep into every fiber of my body. I take another breath, only focusing on the air that travels through me, from my head to my toes. Than slowly I lift my foot and place it carefully in front of me, thoughtfully searching for my balance, before letting my weight sink with it towards the ground in front of me. I can't recognize the ground in front of me. Every step I take is a risk and has to be weight carefully and thoughtfully. There is no space to think about a future, just that one step in front of me, placed in the here and now, not knowing how the one after will find it's balance.

There are these days when nothing is as it is suppose to, as I know it, and body and mind refuse to function, lose the ability to be sold for labor. Under Neocapitalism we call this state of being 'dysfunctional'. But who says to function the expected, the known way is the only way of functioning? Would we ever try otherwise, as in those moments of 'dysfunctioning', where we have no other choice as to abandon the expected and the known, to look for different and new approaches of being?

When body and mind refuse to function, we can't know anymore how much we are able to do or achieve before we try. There is no direction or method sure to be taken towards a specific goal. Nothing that we can usually expect of our Self is certain and reliable anymore. We've lost control and can't gain it back, no matter how hard we try. There is only the estimation of a position and based on that the choice of a movement or task to try on. These days, when we struggle to recognize ourselves, we rely on a sort of dead reckoning to get through.

This unplanned and unexpected situation where our being refuses to be 'normal' – the norm we are used to, of our Self's – makes us very aware of everything around and inside us. All the senses have to be sharpened and have to turn to the

right now, the immediate, because it's the only thing we can be sure of. We notice our body shifting around these new limitations, trying to adjust to them, breath by breath. And like a child we have to attempt again and again, fall down and get up, several times, till we understand how something works under this new condition of not-functioning-as-we're-used-to / as is-to-be-expected-of-us.

These are moments that ask for radical honesty towards our Self and the world we perceive around us, a moment of total merging with the situation at hand, that nevertheless can become a choice for emancipation. Emancipation as a tool to question the norm, the ratio, it's use in statistics and how it defines the rules of the society we part-take.

These rules that never consider us as being human, being flawed, unpredictable and vulnerable and try to standardize us by posing limits that are no given limitations, but demand from us a specific way of being / acting / thinking / navigating under the pretext of regulation and politics. Dead-reckoning is a way to navigate around this demands while focusing on the here and now, the circumstances that are given to us, that skim us while we try to steer our Self's trough life.

When we forget what we are supposed to be able to do and just perceive what we can do, our way of navigating the space around us changes radically. We stop doing for the sake of doing and start doing for the sake of being able to do it. The appreciation towards every move we can take will never be bigger, as well as the chances of (re-)discovering ways of being freed from restrictions and expectation that are not real limitations, but rules that are supposed to understand and regulate us, our life's, our geographies, our thoughts and affections. I want to introduce dead reckoning as a methodology of emancipation through navigation for times of struggle and insecurity.

Dead Reckoning – Yael Wicki
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