

Fig. 1—The *cynefin* graphs feature a 2x2 matrix with a soft core featuring the whole A (left) and its parts B (right)—A+B as a mereological boundary object (Star & Griesemer). X features the (environmental) *other* that traverses the mereological compound (explored in the text below (handout)). The collection of footprints and handouts are from Norman Potter.

In *Inclusions—aesthetics of the capitalocene* (2023), curator and philosopher [Nicolas Bourriaud](#) comments on an interesting turn: in the wake of environmental crisis and current states of exception, *artists* will be the anthropologists of the future. He argues that the grammar of how things connect will change, and the sense of our understanding of what a *field* is changes, from **a)** this is *my* field; **b)** perceptions of emergent field-*properties*; to **c)** the field is a public space characterised by the agglomeration of multiple environmental interceptions/tendencies in art.

He writes (2023 p. 191): “In other words, it is when we understand nothing that we begin to understand something, and the presence of an otherness represents the very condition of anthropological thought. This other that the anthropologist interrogates is not simply there to be deciphered like a riddle, but to contribute to our knowledge of being human in his environment. To put it like Maniglier, ‘otherness is therefore not the object of anthropology, it is its instrument.’” As an anthropologist working in an art-school, I am led to think of *otherness* as key to publicness.

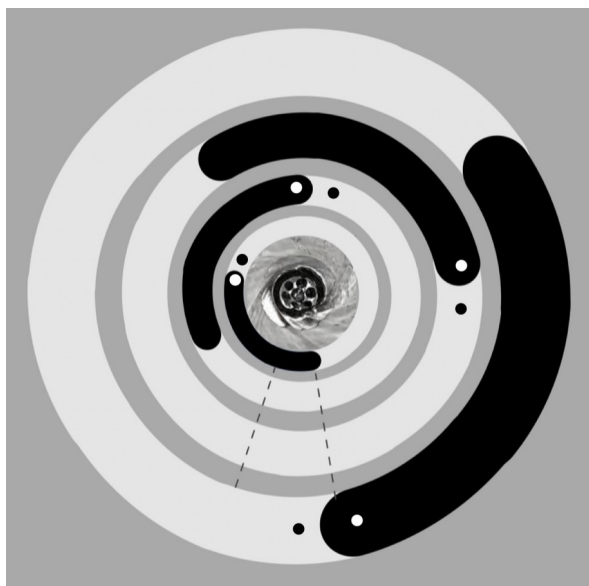


Fig. 2—in this *snakes-and-ladders* variant, the snakes feature typical predicates of a search: same, similar, different and other. Could it be a high-level model of an archive? Maybe. In this diagram, all the snakes are in chase of the other (indicated by black dots). In sum from periphery to centre: the same in chase of the other the similar in chase of the other, the different in chase of the other and the other in chase of the other. The drain featuring the *other*, as it were, *in itself*.

That is, under the present circumstances. But, of course the above ideas have been around for a while. They apply to the archive in the sense that the word *intelligence*—when attached to field-search—migrates from our knowledge of *facts*, the tracery of other people and their *knowledges*, to the development of the *archive's* own intelligence in the movement of people-to-people relations, that likely develop over time. What I would like to focus on here, is Kant's idea (in his geography lessons) that *drawing* maps as a way to *study* maps, provided a foundation for his courses in philosophy.

Transposition: what would happen if we applied this *cartographic* notion of search-and-find in an archive? That interacting with a GUI we are not only looking up particular items, we are also *mapping* the archive (in Kant's sense of drawing a map to build understanding of what is already mapped in the archive), as a take on what Bateson called *deutero-*

learning: first-time learning, or learning-to-learn in an archive etc. A participatory form of learning – as in anthropological fieldwork – with the archive as the *other*: where moving from a search muddle, via perception to publicness is based on otherness (in relations explored in Fig. 2).

This possibility—to my mind—reverberates with Kant’s notion of the *thing in itself* (the other): as the same kind of argument that Kant applies to *objects*, but here applies to the *field*. Whether applied to the archive, or more extensively to *environments*. Here, otherness constitutes a synthetic *a priori*, that conditions the *possibility*, not of experience (as in Kant) but of *intelligence* (as subject to screening, interception and framing). Here, transcendentalism is environmental: with the cohesive *affordance* of a field, that may allow us to work with fields in new ways. Doing *fieldwork*.

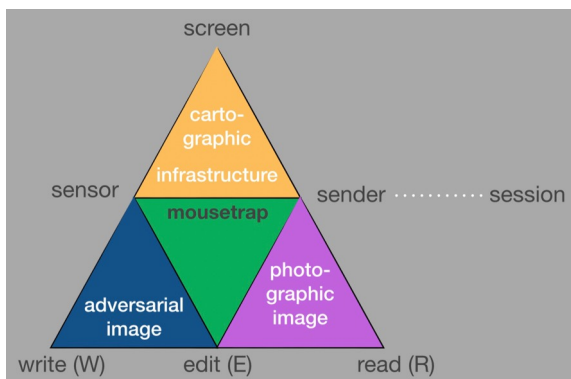
Expanding fieldwork to encompass archive-work is worthy to be called an *experiment*, since the outcome of the experiment is likely to be *applicable* elsewhere: to other expanded fields (e.g., as in [Rosalind Krauss, 1979](#)). If applied to variously *produced* photographs, the bi-modal connect between image-and-text could be an interesting material to work with a *cartographic* approach to *search-and-find* in an archive (as suggested above). That is, each *session* corresponds with a view, connecting to a cartographic puzzle-piece: that is a pictorial category of visual metadata.

Is it possible to transform the *assumption* of a bi-modal connect between image-and-text, to an *assignment* (available both to students of systems, developers and users)? In their specific connection to text, images come with a certain *provenance*: not only linked to the history of re/producing images, but specifically to text—as an antagonist, a critic, a witness etc. That is, a history ranging from the iconoclasts of yore, to the role of the image in the history of journalism. A way of routing the text-image problem (in the history of ideas) might be to closer at *editing*.

That is, an activity-field located *between* writing and reading: relating to text in its visual aspect—that is, an image in the linguistic/semiotic contrastive sense—as well as to images in the photographic sense of *something* recorded and replayed. The image narrative and provenance differs in these two senses of the visual, but with the haptic dimension of *touch* and *making*, inherent in the *cartographic* approach take on search-and-find in the bimodal: a known historic case where the two senses of image are combined, is the *mousetrap* is a device used in Shakespeare’s [Hamlet](#).

A plot on a smaller stage is used by Hamlet to unveil *a plot on the larger stage*, involving the king and queen. The larger plot may have been known to other actors, but as it is staged and shown in the royal court it becomes a public matter. So, what is known in muffled/muted ways, is crafted to form a collective perception, to become public knowledge (as the king and queen react to it). In the setting of the bimodal archive the image could be seen as a mousetrap: a play within the play, a game within the game, a knowledge within knowledge. Adversarial, critical, testimonial.

Indeed the digital access—defined in the triangle *screen*, *sensor* and *sender*—could be modelled as a *mousetrap*: as it is *docked* to a physical place, it is dedicated and designed to navigate the operations we understand as ‘archive-research’. The docked computer will today link up with other screen-sensor-sender joineries: as the *archival* infrastructure—in its digital aspects (e.g. the [DH-lab](#) at NLN)—and the *field*. Here, the field is conceived as the puzzle-piecemeal contributions to a research and development project; in the sense of field developing from the research-area, via larger fields of corresponding *perceptions*, to the swarming field of *agglomerates*.



An invented (AI) triangle. Here the community of practice is the activity system made up by researchers, users and archivists.

The latter refers to the archive itself as a [motional process](#) with a cultural history of its own: the *oecumene* of intelligence into which a novice becomes immersed as s/he begins her research in the archive. For the time being, I am this novice. Caught between the whole A as an assumed whole integrating the puzzle pieces at game, and the parts B assigned to the whole through clustering, categorisation and reframing of *tasks* and *occasions*, through the *encounter* with materials and people, progressing by irradiation of the other X, towards the tightness of fit required to act and publish.

Scholium: cartographic = infographic + ethnographic