





and now, the sky is below me



Clouds are contradictory bodies:  
full yet empty, dense yet thin.  
They are clusters of mass in  
an otherwise spacious environment.  
Clouds are molecules clinging  
to each other, full of potential  
to relate, associate, dissipate.  
A cloud is a space that is full  
and yet not full. Clouds pass,  
around me, or by me, moved by  
the divinatory and intangible  
presence of the wind.

Similarly, data is something we  
cannot see but passes over us,  
through us, and is extracted from us.



where I grew up, on the outskirts of Silicon Valley, fog would often descend upon the Redwood mountains and get trapped in the crevices between. I imagine the feeling of the air in these moments is similar to the inside of a cloud: a change in temperature and in moisture. As the cloud passes around me, I feel the shift, but I cannot comprehend the whole.

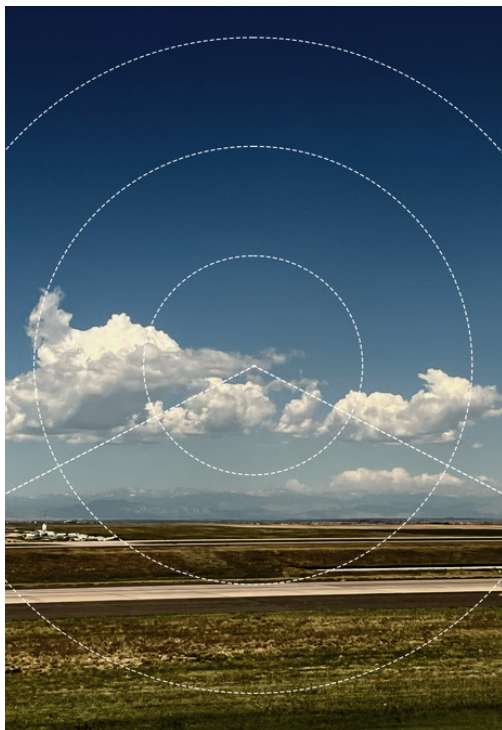
Clouds are felt through other indicators. And they are large.

Drops of the cloud appear on my skin and clothes. And it changes me - makes me damp - momentarily. And then it is gone.





The Internet is often called the cloud. Despite the inaccurate and illusory nature of this metaphor, “the cloud” has become synonymous with digital data storage and access - which is the basis of the contemporary web. Clouds, as metaphor for data and as themselves, shape the colloquial understanding of the intangibly large and ephemerally affective. And further-



Alongside the metaphor of the cloud is a history of networks. And technologies of networks have a history of military use.

Within this insidious cannon are technologies of identification<sup>1</sup>, communication<sup>2</sup>, and infrastructure<sup>3</sup>, but also technologies of strategy<sup>4</sup>. Their use echoes not only to the past, but to the present as well.<sup>5</sup>

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1 Edwin Black, *IBM and the Holocaust: The Strategic Alliance between Nazi Germany and America's Most Powerful Corporation*, 2001; "BBC NEWS | World | Americas | Major Cyber Spy Network Uncovered," BBC, March 2009.

2 William Rattle Plum, *The Military Telegraph During the Civil War in the United States: With an Exposition of Ancient and Modern Means of Communication, and of the Federal and Confederate Cipher Systems*, 2012.

3 Massimo Guarnieri, "The Conquest of the Atlantic [Historical]," *IEEE Industrial Electronics Magazine* 8, no. 1 (March 1, 2014): 53-67.

4 Daniel Immerwahr, *How to Hide an Empire: A History of the Greater United States*, 2019.

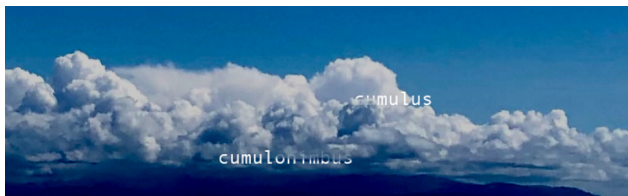
5 Ben Reiff, "'A Mass Assassination Factory': Inside Israel's Calculated Bombing of Gaza," +972 Magazine, December 3, 2023.



But networks are not only violent. It is worth asking what revolutionary lessons they hold. There are networks of care. There are sensors (people) dear to me (near to me) that believe revolution is coming. I am not so sure. Am I an indicator of a larger and pervasive dullness in the network?



Distrust, violence, and disorganization do well to dampen revolutionary potential & spirit. The lesson, perhaps, is, simply, that we are all connected. And, as much as a network can be attacked, a network acts as defense as well.





Regardless of their insidious,  
revolutionary, or innocuous na-  
ture, I am Spellbound.



Spellbound  
Emily Brontë

*The night is darkening round me,  
The wild winds coldly blow;  
But a tyrant spell has bound me  
And I cannot, cannot go.*

*The giant trees are bending  
Their bare boughs weighed with snow.  
And the storm is fast descending,  
And yet I cannot go.*

*Clouds beyond clouds above me,  
Wastes beyond wastes below;  
But nothing drear can move me;  
I will not, cannot go.*

emrys brandt c. 2024  
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