

# A Goat Track Review

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**W**hat happens when the invitation to wander off the beaten track is extended to the very act of critical peer review? This piece of performative writing is the peer review for x paper. The wandering and wondering presents a pluriversal way of peering, of being with, of relating to authors who are coming from another place, another world.

*Keywords:* Reciprocity, Relationality, Affect, Indigenous Knowing

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As I read, I too am wandering and wondering. I wander through the contours of the paper, sensing a landscape both familiar and not my own. I wonder what it means to (un)discipline my review. The paper is curious as to how we might “subvert the primacy of the western colonial imagination.” In return the ideas in the paper grant me, the reviewer the permission to act otherwise, to not follow my disciplined conventions of reviewing academic writing.

I review this therefore not as a design researcher, not as someone focused on designing learning encounters, but as an Indigenous, queer, (dis)abled woman motivated to explore a new approach to reviewing wondering/wandering texts.

From an Indigenous perspective I am drawn to the invitation to see beyond the fleshy limits, to attune to the air, the landscape, the water. I think of my whakapapa, my Māori ancestors, I sense their relationship to my iwi’s (tribe’s) awa, maunga and waka, and how that relationship to the river, the mountain and their wandering would never be peripheral, could not be forgotten. And yet, here we are. This paper, an antidote, a mediation, a call to action, offers into this colonized space...hope. The paper makes me smile, grounds my convictions and forges virtual connection.

Yet still I find myself residing in my physical body as I read. The resonances of the text draw me in. Whereas the designer in me is drawn to the form, I find my neurodivergent, queer self, sitting with where the words take my body and my mind. I am in conversation with my affective reflexes to the free words on the page. I sense my emotional, embodied responses and I trace the cognitive paths the metaphoric thinking illuminates. I am engaged, curious, connected. Disinterested in finding the gaps, I resist a convention that normalises the reviewer as the tractor driver, running roughshod over the terrain. I instead seek to explore the role of the reviewer as following on a goat track, learning from walking closely, silently behind you. I will not read this paper looking for what is not there but looking for what is. This narrow, winding track I follow offers both a path upward and a time and place for communing with the authors.

### **A New Way of Peering**

This has me wondering what happens if the rigour of the review process is not wedded to the reviewer performing their authority or claiming terrain they previously mapped? What if the rigour of peer review lies in the capacity to hold space for the authors ideas, to make visible that you are listening? As I imagine this pluriversal world, I wonder how this asynchronous, anonymous looping of ideas might yet be grounded in reciprocity, in a relational exchange? I am left grateful to the journal for a call for papers that asks us to break genre conventions and to the authors for seeding for me this idea that I too could adopt a different track.

To follow is my liberated, (un)disciplined review. I chose this path because your paper asked more of me.

In asking me to show up differently in the world I also show up more as myself. My arms are in pain from a previous life driven by a productivist agenda. It hurts to write. But that is not the only reason I turn away from paragraphs. In offering a colour-coded visualization of how I felt my way through reading the paper, I am also turning to a body that is drawn to non-verbal communication. The attached manuscript highlights the emotional and embodied spectrum of responses I experienced while listening to your words.

I resist offering amendments that bring your work closer to mine. Instead I share how your ideas sat alongside my lived experience.

*Yellow is for resonance.*

These turns of phrase left me smiling in communion. These were the words that made me feel seen.

*Pink is for understanding.*

I would choose the dropdown pink colour when I found myself nodding in agreement, concurring with your insight, affirming the position you were outlining.

*Cyan is for paradox.*

Specifically, I felt the bittersweet paradox of sorrow and hope. The many times that the liberatory sense of imagining a new way of being was still defined in relation to the past ways that persist in the enduring present.

*Lime is for anticipation.*

These were the lines that quickened my heart. The expressions of an idea that left me wanting more, left me optimistic, left me imagining a different tomorrow.

The visual kaleidoscope of reactions and responses highlights that I accept this paper as it stands.

{for what it stands for}

I have no need for revisions.

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### About the Author:

**Lisa Grocott** is a Professor of design at Monash University in the Emerging Technologies Lab. Lisa's approach to peer review is informed by her research into transformative learning, Indigenous knowing and co-design practice. The invitation to resist conforming to an academic culture of critique is grounded in the generative knowing that comes with exploring what might be possible. Her whakapapa are Ngāti Kahugunu from the east coast of Aotearoa, New Zealand.