Plenum Life:

Formality in the Movement of Free Ecology

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ABSTRACT

Plenum Life: Formality in the Movement of Free Ecology

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This work centres on a specific functional moment in the creation of collective self-defense: a novel reconceptualization of the endurance (and the negotiations around endurance) of forms that protect the conditions for emergence. Thus this thesis seeks to forward and invent theories and techniques of technological-financial-governmental activation that self-dispossess the 'source code' in these fields so activated, informed by the black radical tradition, process philosophy, and interaction-as-computation category theory.

It seeks this forwarding by articulating a new role for formality in the world through the perversion of the discourse of the philosophy of engineering (one already happening, partially, within itself). This thesis is interested in the hypothesis that (1) there is nothing proprietary in informality's production of the social economic conditions associated with it, (2) formality may then play a role in such productions, augmenting key functional aspects, such as the option for endurance, and adding to the field its own expressive inventions, not only without hampering or dislodging what Denise Ferreira da Silva calls the poethical, but perhaps revealing how it participates *in the poethical*, and (3) that an articulation of such a role will reveal new frameworks for organizational design *tout court*, frames able to ripple through practices and disciplines previously thought to be discrete and siloed.

"The total configuration of human experience requires other forms"

- Cedric Robinson, Black Marxism, pg. 167

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Table of Contents

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INTRODUCTION

FRONTIERS OF MANIPULATION

> "While it would be wrong to think that when one says 'ocean', one is
> naming a 'subject', we might be so radical as to posit that to say 'ocean' is,
> today, to say 'art'--art without the burden of institutional life, without the
> ideological twists of cultural politics, art as a practice that belongs to
> artists, art facing the urgency of socializing with all who care about life. In
> other words, to say 'ocean' is to replace the historical notion of the avant-
> garde with a code that is not determined by form and the invention of new
> gestures, but by an investigation of the substance of life, identifying this as
> the mission of art"

Chus Martinez, "Gathering Sea I Am!" E-Flux Journal #112--"the ocean"
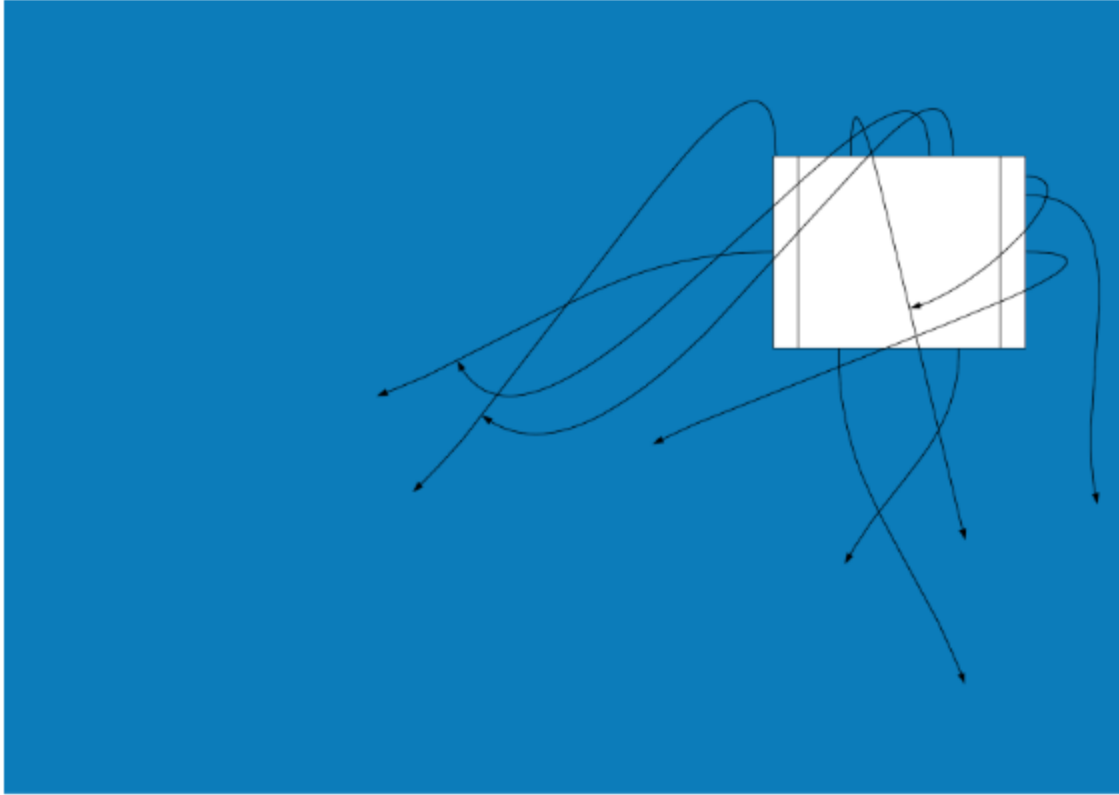
STAATSKUNST* da Iemanjá*

*staatskunst: the art of governance / the governance of art

*Iemanjá: the goddess of the ocean

GLOSSOLALIA

"Program" and "programmation" indicate the ability of a thing to function and continue producing decisions without requiring connection to a network or system. "Infrastructurality" refers to being able to utilize the formational capacity of infrastructure without falling prey to its naturalized sense of 'having always existed'. "Protocol" refers to a rule or law that holds itself as an "if this, then that" equation, equations which can be tiered, stacked, folded, or set to antagonize each other.

INSCRIPTION

Bloom and puncture with

the staatskunst stomp

the djerivative django

Take many risks with the friends you trust

And still a few with those you don't

Remember the curiosity of your father

The quality of which will never die

draw back

to fight on the frontiers of manipulation

The panic of the white liberal at moments of insurrectionary revolutionary pro-

black life is orthogonal to its avowed (if slow and reluctant) "anti-racism." Reactive-to but

intrinsic, all at the same time. In a South Africa nearing post-apartheid, pro-abolition

whites consumed and even produced dystopic literatures whose main mechanism was

a panicked and awe-ful playing-out of the imagined revenge South Africa's black

communities might take on South African whites if and when freedom were to be

gained. The feeling bleeds off the page, even to read of it, the terror of whites imagining

what whites deserve if they were to be treated by the same rules of their own still-

functioning governance encoding. Of course, famously, they were not treated by the

same logic. Yet this anxiety remains globally, fueling explicitly anti-black ideology and

life-forms as well as implicit white liberal intensifications of their own anti-racist affective

performance. Both are derivatives of the continuance of the frame of the transcendent

subject in modern life. And So: since the supra-violence of racial capitalism's endurance

continues in active deployment, since the code is still running down to the most base

logical inference about objects and identity, since the way--the manner, the rules-by

which *things are built* really does in provable fashion throw a startlingly clear backview (schematic) onto the philosophical, spiritual, and chaosmatic beliefs of the very idea of civilization itself, since it continues that civilization still means what it meant when it was made as a concept for colonialism's deployment: access to transparency only via the Anglo Saxon mind; since all these things be true by way of force: then ways of antidoting these modes of building cannot be but a simple counter-force of dialectical reformism (da Silva, 202). Nor can they be a refusal of all modes of building. Not looking to be a stronger outside than the inside, not looking to be included in the inside, the manners needed in order to abolish the conditions for slavery at the strata of repetitive, iterative structuration is an appositionality to that inside OR outside, and a reclaiming of what counts as base materials for collective ecological co-construction of reality. Stripping formal and informal of their signification in order to relace in a different manner on a different boot but still with string.

Endemic violence becomes us at the pace of the code that prescribes it. So a different code is sought, but sought appositionally in the sense that a different way of framing information is sought, one "out from the outside" of the entire play-space of Western civilized conceptual zones. This work has already begun, for some time, in autonomous communities and cultures on the earth, human and more-than-human, ecologies of recursive programmation form and deform what we study and live as *struggle and celebration*, detailing how otherwise to detail. What else is a story that would run beyond these oscillating fantasies of immunity and revenge-porn, heroes and devils? What else is computation—and what otherwise can it be made to be—through and in these intimate existences, dependencies, whorls?

The means of co-creation in a more-than-human world (Erin Manning) are both informal and formal. Informalities participate in the becoming formal of a process's movement, and they participate in the sensational dissipation 'back' into informal relations (Peirce, Whitehead). Formalities also participate in a process's mutation, and are not just subject to it or, even less, left out of its generative co-actions (Tarde). Formalities of all kinds are crucial ingredients in the soup of process. For what is the act of 'cooking down' but the act of rendering form? Perhaps just as cooking-through is a dissipation of a form's attendant nutrients down into a localized entanglement (the broth). Cooking down and cooking through makes for an entangled process of form-taking and form-breaking, of both giving way to informality and of letting go of informality into "forms irreversible." Soup is an irreversible entanglement (there is no technical 'back' because any attempted return or progression meets a new entanglement at each and every transition, cutting across any ontos or telos).

The purpose of this work is to join in the fugitive para-institutionalizing (or ante-institutionalizing) of rain-making for black life, for neurodiverse life, for the life of life beyond before and beneath capital, by focusing on a specific functional moment in the creation of collective self-defense: a novel reconceptualization of the endurance (and the negotiations around endurance) of forms that protect the conditions for emergence. Thus this thesis seeks to forward and invent theories and techniques of technological-financial-governmental activation that self-dispossess the 'source code' of those very fields, informed by the black radical tradition, process philosophy, and interaction-as-computation category theory.

It seeks this forwarding by articulating a new role for formality in the world through the perversion of the discourse of the philosophy of engineering (one already happening, partially, within itself). This work seeks the creation or the revealing of a role that would be programmatically disinterested in possession, and thus able to utilize formality's blunt functionality in the service of other types of arrangements, those associated with informality, that is, those furtherances of more elastic, situation-specific, and ecologically-connected (de)organizational endeavours. For instance, the platform; for instance, the derivative option; for instance, the council. What else could they be and how?

This thesis is interested in the hypothesis that (1) there is nothing proprietary in informality's production of the social economic conditions associated with it, (2) formality may then play a role in such productions, augmenting key functional aspects, such as the option for endurance, and adding to the field its own expressive inventions, not only without hampering or dislodging what Denise Ferreira da Silva calls the poethical, but perhaps revealing how it participates *in the poethical*, and (3) that an articulation of such a role will reveal new frameworks for organizational design *tout court*, frames able to ripple through practices and disciplines previously thought to be discrete and siloed.

In cryptography, the base concept of a hash can be defined as the extension of trust and trustability without the extension of possession. Or, a hash is the formal extension of the conditions for the execution of a collective action without requiring the formalization enacted in possession or knowledge (as we know it). What is the limit of formality's own dispossession of itself? Of its use as mediator of possession? Would it not be to remove that aspect of formality which is the functional crux of the possession

8

machine, mediation itself? This is just what a plenum view operates into by asserting

that all things are entangled in each other. Cedric Robinson writes on the 'how' of these

hashed connectives in the emergence of the Black radical tradition, the maroons of

Jamaica and Barbados, in a manner that makes us understand the importance of

otherwise modes of thought for otherwise forms of life:

> "Recall, almost one hundred years earlier, in Jamaica, another Nanny, the leader of the Windward Maroons, had similarly distinguished herself. The first Nanny had left her name on the map of Jamaica, Nanny Town, but her other 'possessions' she shared. Among them were the ethos of the Black radical tradition. Of course, it had not really belonged to her. Indeed, if possession were ever at issue, it would be the other way around. The tradition had produced her as it did the Nanny of Barbados" (160).

If everything is different yet inseparable, two things happen that are of interest to

this thesis: (1) the discrete feedback loops intrinsic to the success of current global data

structures in finance (the share, the derivative structuration process), technology (the

bit, the agent, the user), and governance (the vote, the voter, the represender, the

represented) lose base access to "verification" as a pre-known activity (by their own

midrash), and (2) those data structures, as well as all other infrastructures developed

under the project of racial capitalism, become conceptually open to the proposition that

these structures are only destroyed insofar as they are depleted, disempowered,

rearranged back into a non-death-dealing spectrum of possible action. Cedric Robinson

will show us more about why and how in chapter 1.

To Steal Through Legality

To steal through legality--on our way somewhere, together--is the movement this

piece is interested in. I guess we start by thinking that all that wealth has to be stole

back; forwarded or sidelined into a different past than the one that brought us this destitute present. And that "that wealth," in derivative terms, was never money at all. It had to be flattened to that but it can't be repaid like that, not if its going to be of any real use (that is, only if real use includes a "pragmatics of the useless" that undergirds and angles its antennae). More than new systems, we need mannered techniques by which we move and remove systems in an ongoing relational way, that is, an unflattened and constantly unflattening manner: a manner in the mode of a program.[1]

From new economy to new governance, the danger of not leaving 'the house'-- the flat--is ever present. The flat house is, for example, this body (known as "my" body, its political limit and litmus test in flesh). "Hire from within" is a decidedly bad and yet tempting strategy for the global transition, a strategy aiming to fill the conceptual role of Global chief communications officer, the ultimate managerial fantasy. How will this global (racial) story be told? Who will it be about? What communities will be remembered? Who are designated as needing to disappear in order to be remembered? Perhaps let us first "fire from within" so that we remember some of that mystical flame, that apophatic unknowing or fabric of potentiality that already haunts and perverts "the law" and "the economy" as we know it, not in opposition to those laws

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[1] On how "manner" is used here: A manner is a style that 'knows' or signals its vector-esque-ness (it is on its way somewhere). In a moment of relation, on its way into actualization or out into mythic attempts at reference, a manner encodes speculative answers to contextual questions at the micro-attentive level of *pores* and the vibrations that affect them (making manners a living account of the emergence of structuration): manners accompany, invigorate, forestall, re-exceed or re-diminish what can normatively count as expression. Manners are the immanent framing of knowledges rising to the surface unseparated--contouring gestures, backfeeding on any suggestion of natural smoothness, no serial numbers found, only scars. Sjoerd van Tuinen, co-founder of the Erasmus Institute for Public Knowledge, introduces the concept of manner on a future path to (I suggest) quatum entanglement: "The twentieth century has already seen two major reappraisals of mannerism in art history and cultural theory in terms of its difference from the baroque and its anticlassical purposes: the first loosely allied with expressionism and the second with surrealism. Today we are witnessing a third one, perhaps more closely tied up with shifting boundaries between nature, culture and art, but also with the multiple crises of capitalism" (Tuinen, "The Return of Mannerism: Art, Philosophy, History")

or those economies, because that would bring us round to their court again, but as matters of the becoming actual of these otherwise ways in the world.

We will forget everything we do not choose to program now.

But these mannered techniques are, at least in part, only as good as how well they can stay around to be felt or be passed on to stay somewhere else. And Staying Around doesn't (can't) be about staying the same (like a static target). When the feeling of capitalism's totality falters, it is never for very long: never long enough to run a whole process into instantiation. The conditions for 'thinking the change' evaporate because the mode of assuming recordation itself is fashioned with an erroneous assumption-- and thus an array of erroneous tech specifications--that because the same bodies remain in this moment and the one after, it follows that the beings who recorded were the same beings later reading, and thus able to work with a certain threshold of inference. But that will not be the state in which we receive. The change is too deep and too fast. We are too much "no-bodies." Therefore, HOW (by what manners) do we act now if we know that we will lack the lived experience of this moment in future moments?

I keep on not arriving home. I look to my sides, to the air and to the other shapes approaching, to the peripheral as it has been defined for me, looking to what will surely not be their threshold either (but which appears to be, just like mine). If we build this *together*--this not arriving--will we become a home for one another in the end, in the means? How will we remember its address when we are tired and hungry, or afraid? Do we pass it like a whisper on the forming and deforming wind? How do we maintain access to the wind?

Everything is already acting and thinking-feeling computationally (the temporary, nonrepresentational 'face value' of thinking-feeling), and this description is base. "Functionality" seen out from the outside of the 'human subject' makes computation and relation move very close to each other. Thus the rush to automation in our current scene is better described as a flattening of computation and relation, both, a kind of false 'discovery' where automation becomes its own kind of 'base source code' for humanity, the self-justifying move of prediction.

It has been well shown how the minor can be lost in such predictive infrastructures (indeed *must* be lost in order to still justify the algorithmic as the messianic mode of saving our 'historical record'). But in addition to this account— springing out from it—is another ongoing loss, one related and paid less breathing room: the minor aesthetics of that which continues to code as "normal" or neurotypical (that which endures), that which remains under cover close to its surround, but which is neither normal nor neurotypical. Such endurance is of prime interest when trying to think in 'design-brief' terms about what kind of formality (or formality-making machine) would serve a view of the universe as plenum, as entangled different yet inseparable life. This is full plenum earshot rather than a view of the universe as a cosmological map-territory collapsed as the perspective of the form of the European white male (the transcendent subject). What is queer already in the 'normal' beat? The thing that keeps the groove by always returning, and how is it essential to be able to appreciate these non-normative elements cloaked in the veil of neurotypicality, efficacy, permanence, repeatability, structurality? If formality can find its own expressivity, these additional minor elements might find their play-fight place in relation to that of the informal. This

piece looks to experiment with forms like the 'design brief', playing seriously with its myriad and often deeply problematic assumptions about perspective, iterability, and scalability to try to find what's inventing formality's new/old edge, the edge that might yet serve the struggle for proliferation of life, and all the beauties of all the defenses required, which are first love letters that invent how they get through the racist mail, how they cut what holds back the ink from leaking through the paper, how the address and the return get mixed up the way that love mixes you up, down.

Here I mean 'program' in the way the universe has been making do, already. If we only record, then our memories will be static and thus our processes brittle. So we must program, that is, seed the memory of our current visions into propositional fragments, ideas for experiments and the beginning instructions for running them.

If we consent not to be a single being, that should propel us to not send messages to our future situation, but rather to issue indeterminate programs now, for we do not know what assemblages will be there to receive it, except that **they** will not be **these**.

Formality can be a danger to the gathering force of mass intellectuality, but this is only so far as it is completely ensconced in its role as mediation. From an interaction-as-computation perspective, formality can be much more, and much more especially in the context of a plenum view of the universe, where nothing is wasted, even the ruins.

Alfred North Whitehead spends much of *Process and Reality* on the "concresence," the aspect of process where all that moves does so in increasing and decreasing volumetrics of formation and deformation toward but not (yet or ever) into

actuality. The concresence is the excess and hidden space of the fold, the warp of the uneconomical loop of life living itself in all its differentiality and inseparability. Concresence as a descriptive name for this aspect of process forms the backbone for Whitehead's philosophy of process. But there is another aspect, one on which he spends less time, perhaps because it is understood to be experienced more often as precisely the neurotypical habit which an account of process helps practices de-centre in their working. This other aspect is the "transition," the crossover of real to actual, the texture of becoming actual, the deaths of all those versions that live on in the new actual thing: because the multiple real presences formed what took shape, and continue to shape it. There is art in the transition as there is in the concresence, in the formal as in the informal.

I intend to do something akin to the art of the user's guide, its aesthetics, the user-esque blueprints, not a story for bed time or waking up, and not technical reports, but something in the middle, that which has been before forced to play medium instead being released into something else.

The shape of the gesture of this "infrastructurality" takes flight with its partners, the maroons of the past and the present, the Zapatistas, groups that have known there's no time for them in the time of the 1s who oppress them. They already know it, so they do something else with their energy. The shape is the outline and the lifted dimension of "seeing like a state"--but in the grip of the ocean, of the undercommons that moves through us, putting "us" into question with a comfort that's mom's stew and those dynamisms that haunt its taste. It's a parallel building project, or a machine that helps parallel building projects navigate their way in the making, with the pressures

replete and constant from the current situation's systems (devilish grant opportunities and innocent savagery of money-profit, to render a few dynamics in the social design field). In financial terms, it is a project of joining the rainmaking for neurodiversity as a general effort that is ongoing, joining in the assessing of the situation (which is the assembling of the situational), in the judging of what needs to be stolen (back, forward, whatever), and what can't be allowed in as it is, and to exit all that time away from the present by looping back on it to see, to make sure, that the very way the project tries to make rain doesn't reinscribe the drought that predicates the price of water, the paucity that makes prediction an activity of calculation.

The danger, the fight, as long as it is not too much danger or too much fight, is crucial. It is the only context, the one where the evil is not past (like we're told it is, like we wish and work for), and so no answer for liberation is anything without the incompleteness of needing to defend against that which is entangled but doesn't know it (or show it), yet. This is the feeling for the poethicality of disempowered but not massacred form.

When the evil is not past, as Robert Meister shows us, then there is an ethical imperative for projects like this that arise on two counts. The first, that what we build would be informed by a new mannerism with/out the subject (a gestural, non-temporal or atemporal, approach to process and its becoming), and the second, that we would risk to build in the first place because the forces of the present evil continue to shutter our options away into "stories without opportunities" (Meister).

Here the new computational and quantum accounts of the plenum (all that is, without emptiness, in space) meet at the juncture of immanent non-representational action in and as the world (beyond this world). The stakes of proof-checking each against the other is the project of creating protocols of self-defense against those that would massacre bodies and processes because of the perversion those bodies and processes present to the transcendent subject (the distinct bounded individual white male European form). It is the project of building the right constraints for an entangled world that can process in the midst of the politics of augmentation and acceleration, not before or beyond.

This dissertation seeks to join in those projects by making an account of the formal as within the plenum and not only emerging out of the conceptualizing of the plenum, thus making perversions both into more mystical philosophical accounts of process and, at the same moment, bringing that very mysticism back to bear into the new computational functions still too bound by measurement, prediction, and capitulation to the current market-price on computational architecture's production of governance norms for racial capitalism.

CHAPTER ONE

PROTOCOLS FOR SELF DEFENSE

This chapter is a study in the specifics of form-taking and deform-taking that can

be attributable to the sprawling and still emergent story of the Black radical tradition,

worked chiefly through Cedric Robinson's 1983 text, Black Marxism. What are the

protocols of the black radical tradition? What are the aesthetics of its edges that appear

when an insistence, obligation, or dependence is required? These questions were

planted for me first by a passage in a book that came after Black Marxism, *The*

Undercommons, by Fred Moten and Stefano Harney, a work that itself was led to where

it got partially by the same text we are studying now. Moten and Harney write how the

Black Panthers were "against the law because they were generating law" (18). As an

instance of the black radical tradition, the panthers were, of course, doing more than

just generating law. This black "law" was about "self-defense," a zone of protection

around those informalities emergent and local to communities; this "law" was a bundling

of protocols for life, not the technics of life itself, and so these protocols emerged as

ways to work the potential coming within earshot, wrestled by a desperate need, a deep

past, and a futurial vision.

RAGE

But these protocols have been and continue to be vulnerable to the aggressive encroachment and insistence of racial capitalism in its many distributed forms. It remains a crucial point, then, that if the perception is correct that the Black Panthers were against "the" law, it is so because of their own construction of their own governance systems on their own terms. Alter-governance is a deep affront to Western governance wherever it emerges because such alterity endangers the very ground upon which Western "civilizational" governance sits. The claim of Western governance, shown so well in its history of colonialism and enslavement and in the current systemic ubiquity of globalized trade routes based on 15th century slave route logistics, is an ownership claim on universality itself (this governance is the ground). I have never seen or read of a rage that can compare with that which emerges when Western governance is challenged on the terms of its own illusion. Having grown up in the charismatic church, I am reminded of every description of the anti-christ I ever heard, as well as every prophetic exhortation against it.

VENGEANCE

Herman Bell, first a member of the Black Panther Party and then of the Black Liberation Army, will be released on parole in April of this year after serving 40 years for the 1971 killing of two police officers. The findings and subsequent statement of his most recent parole panel, vindicated by Bell's 2012 long-awaited admission of guilt and disavowal of any political relation to his actions, drove the point home with a contained rage and fear: "Your crime represents one of the most supreme assaults on society."[1]

In *Black Marxism*, Robinson is adept at showing how and why this kind of reaction

against black independence is not only far from rare, but follows a specific logic of

'necessary domination' produced by pragmatic connection to a web of financial

stakeholding strewn across time and space, in whatever gradients of colour and

hierarchy that are required for the maintenance of those holdings, producing affect with

surety, even producing its own endless premonition of an always-incoming justice (or

vengeance as they call it).

THE LEVEL

The challenge here, in engaging Black Marxism for study, is to stay on the deep

level where Robinson is charting course: the historical and futurial analyses of the 'black

options' on governance design that emerged (and are emerging still) from before and

beyond the specific instance of black enslavement by Western global 'civilizational'

governances.[2] The level is what Robinson calls a deeper consciousness. That

consciousness knows the world is broader than what modes of Western governance

demarcate (including the extent and nature of such 'outsides' as defined by such illusory

centralization). As Robinson shows, even expressing such knowledge is a declaration of

war according to Western governance; in the introduction, Robyn D.G. Kelley excoriates

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[2] "We needed analyses of social movement that had made a difference. We needed to know how we built communities and kept ourselves whole in the midst of slavery and Jim Crow… We needed new histories willing to adopt a more global perspective. In short, we needed a clearer, more radical understanding of the past in order to chart the way forward. And *Black Marxism* was one of several books written by Black radical intellectuals in the late 1970s and early 1980s to meet these challenges. Among the others were Chinweizu's *The West and the Rest of Us* (1975), Angela Davis's *Women, Race, and Class* (1981), Vincent Harding's *There Is a River* (1983), V.P. Franklin's *Black Self-Determination* (1984), Manning Marable's *Blackwater* (1981) and *How Capitalism Underdeveloped Black America* (1982), and Cornel West's *Prophesy Deliverance* (1982)" (Robin D. G. Kelley, introduction to *Black Marxism,* xvii-xviii).

the Western academy's pan on Black Marxism (when it was published) as yet another structurated refusal to hear.[3]

MERCY

I contend that it is, in fact, correct that this is war. The only important clarification remains on the aesthetics of this total war; for on the terms of the black radical tradition as Robinson explores it, war is about the folding of dominance down into plenum, into entanglement, by flying away and immediately beginning alter-forms of life. The West cannot comprehend it. In the social-ontological entanglement of the plenum, parties are disempowered instead of massacred. This is a mercy, and should be considered as such. But the attachment to the idea of a civilized individual - an incentive ironically first set up in ancient Rome for servants to productively serve the imperial financial system in exchange for a hope of jumping social rank - forces Western narcissism to read disempowerment not as mercy but as the destruction of those Western selves, those prime examples of civilized humanity. Again, I cannot but agree and say, we are lucky indeed if disempowerment is all that eventually comes to the social-ancestors of whiteness, which is to say the current and future followers of white protocols.

NATURAL

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[3] "To the rest of the world…these books barely existed. With few exceptions, they were initially ignored in the mainstream, and sales fell below expectations… *Black Marxism*, in particular, garnered no major reviews and very little notice in scholarly publications. The few reviews it did receive were mainly from left-leaning publications or very specialized journals… The Europeanists, whose historical scholarship Robinson challenges head-on, have never, to my knowledge, responded to his criticisms. Even the new generation of scholars examining race and Black movements have paid scant attention to Robinson's insights (*Ibid.,* xviii).

In seeking an articulation of the protocols of the black radical tradition, it is worth clarifying how the term protocol functions in relation to what Robinson himself already achieves, and why it is potentially interesting to think those relations. Robinson is interested in "the character,...the ideological, philosophical, and epistemological natures of the Black movement" (167). As Robinson inspects it, the natures of the black radical tradition are seen in the choices taken, the innovations discovered, and the traditions repurposed by black communities in Africa, in the hold of the slave ships, in the plantations of slave labor in the Caribbean and the Americas, and in the subsequent proliferations of culture and knowledge production post-abolition, on through the Marxism of the 19th and 20th centuries, and into the post-critical black political communities of today. To focus on "the protocols of the black radical tradition" is to take the stories of these "natures" and ask to what extent they are expressive of, among other things, the emergent laws of the black radical tradition.

INSTRUMENTS

Asking about protocols is asking about rules for interaction. Despite their association with despotic governance systems in business and government, protocols helpfully name infrastructure and stop-gates (limit points) in a manner general enough to be able to find them existent in any mass organization. Protocols do not, in and of themselves, require that they be implemented any certain level of inundation in those structures and gates. The question of which protocols should appear in a certain social field is, I argue, a governance design question, and not predetermined. The design of the terms of an agreement is the design of a protocol. Of course, it will remain to be

seen in the course of this study whether the Western history of protocols (and the protocols of Western history) are inextricable from their past use or not. While I have confidence in the form of protocols as powerful instruments, autonomous spaces of governance design are difficult to come by and are contested at every juncture by the various stakeholders holding presumption over the spaces requested or demanded by autonomy. This is as true of a senator's office in Washington D.C. as it is of an abandoned church in Brazil being reclaimed by Indigenous communities. Nevertheless, I hypothesize that protocols bear this potential of serving autonomy well amidst the noise, if only because they are comfortable as byproducts of noise and not as 'cleaners of noise'; the conditions for protocols, most generally, are always already occurring in any emergent space of sociality. They are thus inherently remixable. Indeed, the remixing of syncretism as well as the decentering of Western universalism through black historiography are each a protocol of the black radical tradition.

TECHNICS

Another specific benefit acquired from the use of protocols is the view its basic operations give to technicity. Technicity names rhythms of doing-ness outside the purview of humanity-as-sole-consciousness, which is to say humanity-as-sole-manager. Protocols dig out of invisibility old universes of action (and of directions for those actions) that have, for a long time already, been operating on repeatability functions based on inter-relation, forests of mushrooms underground, operating technically. It is with a similar retrieval in mind that Robinson points out explicit elements of the black radical tradition, recreating them from histories previously disappeared on account of

their low value count according to European civilizational narratives. But Robinson goes

surprisingly little into the technicity of the elements themselves. In the first section there

are three major stopping points, marronage (escaping to build societies away from

slavers and slave society), the claim of a much less violent African tradition (focusing

mainly on the Yoruba tradition), and the obeah-women and men (syncretic religious-

occult roles connected to the black reinvention of life amongst their diaspora). We hear

from Robinson why these elements emerged and what they generally did, that they

encoded operations to sustain and expand life beyond the recognizability of the single

layer of white slaver society, that the manners of processing and responding to "super-

exploitation" were already seeded in Western Africa, that black communities would often

rather flee, fly, than kill, dominate, venge. But we are left to imagine *how* these elements

worked specifically (their doing-ness) or what the conditions are or might be for their

working in the future. Technicity is an aspect of how and why Robinson's retrieval (and

the subject of that retrieval) works in the manner that it does, including where and how

else it might launch in the future. Protocols and their functionalities offer a way, not to

think the whole from some other, more rational or improved universal standpoint, but to

think both the strategic element of a community's own law and the problematic of the

anarchic informality that calls on protocols to protect it.

STRUGGLE

Robinson is calling attention to the existence of black radical "natures" as they

modulate (which needed and needs revealing), opening the way to think these natures

(and, indeed, to re-think 'nature') in relation to the technicity of these practices and their

possible, intended, and imagined participants. As Robinson states, we begin by hearing that Western thought has had a "casual rather than systemic or organic relationship to the myriad transformation of human development and history" (167). This claim is mammoth in the context in which it comes forth: a global anti-blackness. And yet by the lights of the organizational and conceptual abilities shown by the global south over the last 500 years, he writes that "the most formidable apparatus of physical domination and control have disintegrated in the face of the most unlikely oppositions." The call, then, emits itself: we must attend to the logics of both otherwise form-breaking (resistance) and form-taking (strategic structuration) as both are immanent and transversal to the experience of struggle (both here and there, always): "the total configuration of human experience requires other forms" (167).

IMMOLATION

What are these forms, these protocols, what and how do they 'make possible', and to what do they gesture in terms of generalizabe conditions for their emergent design (which is to say, do they have meta-protocols)? Perhaps we can have generalizations, but the heterogeneity of struggle's expression suggests any generality must be self-immolating, non-reproductive, and more-than-human in its ownership and kinship structures while still maintaining the one key operation of protocols: to take us into forms irreversible. While guarding against cheap adoption, forestalling the kind of identity politics that have become commonplace in their bloat, Robinson rends the curtain of Western historicism when describing the end goal of the ecology of black radical thought and action: "the continuing development of a collective consciousness

24

informed by the historical struggles for liberation and motivated by the shared sense of obligation to preserve the collective being, the ontological totality" (171). It is the "shared sense of obligation" that creates new conditions for protocol design, reframing our expectation of what constitutes the 'desired effect' of any protocolization by building it in the shadow of an already technical ecology, an ecology functioning (speaking, listening) volumetrically (intensively). A code of differential, multi-angular pressure. In this protocol design workshop, there is no farcical opposition between the 'humanity' of technological action and the unintelligent, only discoverable (not discovering) 'natural resource' of the world. Of course, whether what actually mutates from those inter-dynamical pressures ("constraints" as Skye Boughsty-Marshall calls them) can be held as collectively autonomous remains to be seen. Then again, and this is one of the most radical aspects of Robinson's text for our current context, the result of the fog of Western epistemics' continued claim to the throne of veracity itself (and Robinson includes here Western radicalism) is that we do not yet know the actual limit of what 'collectively autonomous' can do--how it can do--when it is loosed according to principles befitting its becoming. Let us move to an overview of Robinson's argument, from which ground we can begin to glimpse the seeds of an emergent technicity bound in obligation to its own immanent outworking.

BLACK MARXISM

COVER

Black Marxism is split in three. The first section is devoted to rendering clear the problem with Western historiography from the end of Feudalism until today. For Robinson, the West is completely bound up in the project of its own financial-civilizational superiority. In binding itself to its form as universal, it had to acquire both financial sustainability and endless authority; to do so, it found it needed to bind other persons and cultures to that form, situating them between their own civilized persons and the fire of the production of the conditions for that civilization. For Robinson, Western historiography (the way the West has described itself to itself through narrative constructions of the past of the world) has been unable to attribute worth to any knowledge-producing community or nation beside either itself or those it narrativizes as its forerunners (the mythic parentage of the ancient Greek agora birthing Western democracy or the Christian church conferring the sacrament of a cosmic governance into the hands of Europe--taste and see, oh Europe, that you are the seed of cosmo-genesis itself). For Robinson, Western historiography has deftly accomplished a cross-generational 'cut and cover' campaign by invigorating academic transformation, or the pedagogical road to the civilized life, with a noble role: to both be and deliver a sign of this self-fulfilling prophecy of singular access to the category of 'the civilized', into which is collapsed and collateralized the cultural currencies of each community it consumes.

IRISH

Central to this section's argument is a refutation of Western history's inscription of the racial as a genetic category, where the difference of blackness codes as a natural difference of intelligence. Rather, Robinson argues that the ideology of racial

differentiation began first on inter-european terms. Looking back on it, as the discipline

of history is wont to do, post-feudal Europe appears to be experimenting locally before

going global, practicing the dominating social-financial force of "a global idea of race" on

its own terrain and its own "barbarians" before setting out for broader pastures. But of

course it is just the opposite: free intra-European labor begat wealth, which begat

growth, and growth begat the need for additional free labor, this time from outside the

European continent. The ideology of racial purity legitimates the parsing of power simply

on the grounds of its own claim to be the judge of such a state. The examples of the

Irish (whose transformation remains the derivative holding of the British) and the slavs

(whose 'eastern European' traits continue today in productive distinction from and

economic servitude to the Dutch and German) form the basis of Robinson's retrieval of

Europe's initial fixation on race as a means of cementing its existence as the crowning

achievement of God's kingdom.

    SMUGGLE

    The second section decenters Europe as a focus of investigation, turning

precisely to those elements of African cultural production that so profoundly affected the

Europe that endlessly forgets it. From the Muslim black moors' domination of the

mediterranean, to pre-European Egyptian cultural and infrastructural achievements, and

finally to those traditions and intelligences inadvertently smuggled into the primordial

soup of global capitalist circulation by the very African bodies enslaved for its service.

As becomes clear, the creations of Africa do not need Western recognition in order to

be essential creators of the West itself. It is in this section that Robinson lays out the

"natures" of what got smuggled in on those slave boats. He writes of Marx and his consideration of the "negro question":

"Marx had not realized fully that the cargoes of laborers also contained African cultures, critical mixes and admixtures of language and thought, of cosmology and metaphysics, of habits, beliefs, and morality. These were the actual terms of their humanity." (121-122)

For Robinson, these smuggled resources were live mutational capacities, tools, and techniques. While Robinson locates these capacities more generally in a collective mind conscious of its interdependencies and obligations, I attempt to break it down from there, as follows: (1) Syncretic religion, including the powerful role of obeah women and men, (2) marronage, the mass flight from plantation enslavement into autonomous community construction, and (3) radical historiography, the practice of collective fabulation: developed at the mutational nexus of abducted peoples who, retaining the techniques of their traditions of orality, developed rituals of creating the past into the future even though they were physically partitioned from their past and embedded as timeless commodities into a slave scene bound to a temporally violent financial operation. These three elements are the core of what will be termed protocols in the pages to come, though more attention will be paid to marronage specifically.

SYNCRETIZE MARX

Adding to these protocols and flowing from them, the third section sets three black intellectuals in their historical political context from the late 19th century until the mid 20th century. W.E.B. DuBois, C.L.R. James, and Richard Wright form Robinson's black vanguard, not against but before the Marxist vanguards of their times. Indeed, it was their lived necessities that brought each first to Marxism. Then, as if to acknowledge all that had brought their thought to bear, including their debt to Marxism, they had to, in their own ways, move beyond Marxism's unnecessary and unfruitful ties to an assumption that Western forms and contexts equalled universal forms for systemic liberation. The protocols explored in their stories, and in Robinson's technical approach to writing itself, are expressions ofblack historiography and black aesthetics. The aesthetics of the protocols of marronage, the syncretic obeah, and collective fabulation—the manners of encoding, of making repeatable, of making defense of life possible--are readily apparent in the mutations of life that James, Du Bois, Wright, and Robinson chronicle and are pulled into as co-creators.

The beauty of syncretism (as a black protocol) is the deep lean it takes into difference. The violence of whiteness is in the invention of the singular, the one face of reality, the one order to which all must swear fealty (including new fabrications that inhale difference to exhale unity). Instead of such violence, Robinson leads us into the appetite that would be close to the ground, to the earth, a thirst leading to make as a matter of course (a protocol that defends) the reason to return again and again to the differential of what is becoming rather than a universe of individuals, return to the reality of our changing but never ceasing trans-obligation to what is most dearly, deliciously, survivingly obvious: the dynamism of life living itself in joyful apophaticism of its entirety.

Here the object of devotion is not a known object at all; what is encountered is an emergent aspect of all objects in their modulation and mutation, an encrypted collectivity.

With the tones of that apophatic spirit, syncretism is not, however, disappearance into a hole,nor is it a modern kataphasis , a discovery of 'that whole' (knowledge as knowledge of an entirety). Fred Moten references Lee Edelman's terming of "(w)hole," as Edelman tries to bring it to term, to place in reconciliation being-black and black-being in a white world that polices such attempts with such pettiness. In the end, Moten holds it open in a manner that pulls, I suggest, from the syncretism that Robinson highlights in the Obeah men and women. He writes that "for a critical discourse on…black performances in general, hole and whole both remain operative even in their sublation (*In The* Break, 283). They (the absence and the presence) remain raucous crossings of the break of signification and semiotization, happening NOW beneath the project of identity (and the freedom it can afford or withhold) (*Ibid*, 282). So, the problem of (w)hole as a reconciliatory program is the impossibility of foreclosing a relation along the lines of a body, or a body of work, the intimate antagonism within structure that wants to seed its own dissolving, the thing within identity that chips away at itself, and yet also the thing in dissolving that concretizes up around itself a history of reference against its own well-wished totality of dissolution, a citadel falling in on itself into the form of a town hall, into a hovel, an idea, a church, a whisper, across the ankle of a brook at spring flood, a wrecked bridge that remembers working, and does so by giving way. These rhythms take us away from totality-as-supremacy so that the impulse to

totality can work its shit out, so it can starve off its own presidential dreams, dreams that have been killing and killing in their protocols for too long.

Here we find a relation between the syncretism of the black radical tradition and its appreciation of the simultaneity of durations, multiple and multiply different movements of life. Syncretism allows the edges of a mutational, religious moment to be felt, that is, to insist that its protocols be felt in and as the landscape of a current syncretic mixture, and does not concern itself with whether those protocols will be around tomorrow. Because tomorrow will be a new mixture. Filled with this current one, and filled with more than we ever knew was already operating in potential. Syncretic protocols know their working by the feel of these atmospheric, mutual, and yet (crucially) differential, obligations. They let the world in--because they already did . Syncretism is a tuning fork to the world in its unfolding, a completely different protocol than the externality-producing 'selves-for-some' protocol that--through its re-invention of oppositionality--makes normative the continuing domination of Western racial capitalism.

SELF-DEFENSE

VISION

For Robinson, liberation from "racialism" is liberation from the continuing historical force of Western civilization itself: its "perverse assumptions and contradictions" that are "loose in the world" (318). The mass black collective consciousness is outfitted for such emancipatory planning and action by, as Richard

Wright says, a knowledge composite from the inside as well as the outside of Western

civilization, a "gift of double vision" (300).[4] Black communities--those carrying on the

practices of the black radical tradition intentionally or not--constitute for Robinson one

important aspect of a potential path to global consciousness as well. Here Wright

asserts that black collectivities have a special access-to-function, whether they are

appreciated as doing so or not; they are "centers of knowing" (300).

SCOPE

Such liberation has been making, and no doubt will continue making, trouble for

the concept of value. Denise Ferreira da Silva writes it elegantly in a recent article for E-

Flux: "1 (life) ÷ 0 (blackness)." There are limits to what a mathematical science of value

can do when the conditions of its emergence are always already vested with a

racialized cosmology. For da Silva, if the veracity of the value of a thing comes from a

scene in which so much reality has had to be externalized (anything not conforming to

the white male European form and its others), it calls into question just this, its desired

answer as desired and therefore found. Financial equations, such as those of

prediction, adhere to value a false naturalness by performatively 'discovering' it through

equationing, an externalizing machine, as much "discovery" as the discovery of the

Americas. This is not all equationing can be or will be, but we will leave that to a later

chapter. Robinson writes, "the limits of Western radicalism as demonstrated in Marxist

theory, the most sustained critique of the modern era, are endemic to Western

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[4] Wright's double vision as gift is set in order to compile alongside W.E.B Du Bois' concept of "double consciousness" as burden, a weight of two-worldings between what it is lawful to exist *as* in racial capitalism (when black) and the extent that such a bending constitutes a traumatic re-bodying and subjectivization between exits that remain inaccessible. See *The Souls of Black Folks* (1904).

civilization" (66, emphasis mine). It is not only that the centralization of Europe as the global stage is full of illusion and self-contradiction. It is the very notion of centralization itself, and thus centralized governance as governance, which is a misnomer. And just as it is a mistake to think that any single governance protocol can hold the world in justice and vitality, so too is it a mistake to think that we need none of it. There are manners of infrastructure-like operations that do not rely on the externalizing racist fictions of infrastructure, that do not *need* to endure just to maintain control of supply lines while pretending another game, but rather look to serve differential totality in a continuance of care, the plenum, the Gudwara. Neither chess board nor blob, but an entanglement of all. Da Silva writes in the above-mentioned article, "when deployed as method, blackness fractures the glassy walls of universality understood as formal determination" (da Silva, "Matter Beyond the Equation of Value," 2). A pre-known logic of determination is a pre-known flow chart of value. The black radical tradition shows us an alter-flexibility that contrasts rather than opposes the flexibilities of capital and capital organization, not by eschewing agreements, contracts, laws, or protocols as such, but by inventing protocols with an entirely different logic and goal, beyond a singular determination of antagonistic subjects. The black radical tradition has a different atmosphere in mind. Here I rend Robinson's "consciousness" as the self-defense of the anarchic informal in a field of uncommon relation.

NO-BODIES

These "self-defense" protocols have a dual relationality at their core, pushing beyond. The first is the relation of the anarchic informal to the protocolized (which is to

say organized) self-defense surrounding it. In this first mode of relation, we are talking about the relation between the formal and the informal as productive in and of itself as a continually reorganizing assemblage, and we are also talking about the relations made available when anarchic informality is protected from harvest or destruction. The second aspect of relation is important to this study, for it is eminently about governance. As said above, the black radical tradition, as I am so far given to know it, is not only about self-defense producing independence, it is also about making available shared stakes between uncommon parties through self-defense as a disjunctive relational aesthetic: self-defense not of a pre-existing self, but of and with a collective atmospheric, it is the touch achieved when the line of self-defense is understood as an already permeated membrane of relation, mutually co-invested by those holding, modulating, and troubling the line. As said to me once by a colleague from the black radical tradition, "I'm not fighting you, I'm fighting the thought." Or, to put it another way, in the words of Erik Bordeleau, "who we are is but a manner of war." Or, to take it from a different threshold with Brian Massumi, the place of potential for the relational field is neither the enforced and fictive solitaries of play (Hegel, Gadamer) or the fight of competitive survival (Darwin), but in an indiscernible entanglement of play-fight.

HIPPIES OR PANTHERS

Collective self-defense is a manner of touching--an aesthetic in and of itself--and not only a pragmatic decision to protect where relation is really happening. Before communication as a concept formalizes 'what we mean to each other' (into our separate selves), the pressure differentials of touch have already set the tones (and been found

by the immanent stakes) of our entanglement as irreducible, as forceful, as decision moving again and again in favor of impurely working amongst this: our shared and perverse inter-generation: our mouth of teeth and tongue.

In a conversation with Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, he related a framing that is too poignant not to include, even though doing so will not do justice to all that de Castro moves with and co-makes in relation to indigeneity, South American politics, and syncretism as "the practice of the permanent decolonization of thought."[5] But in relation to Robinson's use of "consciousness" as the landing point for collectivity, and for the stakes involved in claiming collectivity as the operative force, it must be related how differently sublte notions of said collectivity can play between ideas of oneness and the differential play-fight we have already begun to grace. De Castro shared the notion that the governance design choice before us after 20th century Marxism is between the hippies (techno-utopianism) and the black panthers (collective self-defense of uncommon relations). The difference between the two crosses back across our discussion of consciousness, where the hippies look for a consciousness paired with a positivity in the general field of perception (where outrage comes at not finding it there), and where the black panthers pair consciousness with a well-felt negativity, the knowledge--obtained at incredibly high cost--that in order to be beyond the reach of this law, they must generate their own. The invention of these protocols, their design and proliferation, as Robinson and Wright point out, is nothing less than the invention of new options for living beyond and before Western civilization itself.

THE MYTHIC

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[5] See Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, *Cannibal Metaphysics* (2009)

Self-defense is about the encryption of ante-social life, such that the relation and inter-holding already occurring can proliferate. If no encryption occurs, or if the encryption is not strong enough (or if it is convinced to change its protocol—if we become individuals defending ourselves), then the unique intensity of that relation and the complex knowledge formed through that inter-holding become accessible as artisanal commodities to be sold back to you-now-as-self. When the defense is part of the gesture of relation, you play the encryption as an encrypted currency yourself (out of your self), out from being flattened by equivalences of cultural, social, economic, or financial types into asignifying constellations against transformation. The protocolization of self-defense is a question of the intimacy of encryption, the rhythm of the ecology of protocols and their affect, and the transgression and perversion that anarchic informality visits upon both encryption and protocol.

MARRONAGE

NEGATION

In Robinson's narrative of the emergence, mutation, and transmission of the black radical tradition, there is no example more profound than the maroon communities formed in response to the "super-exploitation" of black persons and communities. As Robinson leads us to consider the accounts of marronage as programmatic of the emerging black radical tradition, one can read current struggle directly into its implicit protocols. He writes, "[t]his achievement as a structural phenomenon was a concomitant of the world system and the imperialist expansion that it demanded. Its coherence,

however, was based on the African identities of its peoples" (166). The coherence of the

protocol of marronage included elements that were contradictions *as such* as well as in

relation to the false universal of racial capitalism in its groan, and it was these

differentials which were the pebbles grinding, pulling difference away to safety.

Robinson continues, "the most formidable apparatus of physical domination and control

have disintegrated in the face of the most unlikely opposition" (167). What did the

protocol of marronage accomplish? How has it syncretized and continued operating?

When someone asks Angela Davis in 2018, "what can white people do?" and she

responds with, "stop being white," and when Fred Moten answers a similar question in

2017 by saying, "I never assume a person is white until they give me reason to," when

these questions are asked and these answers given, I hear two things: the pragmatic

notions that one's investments are always being clearly expressed into the relational

field, and, that the negation of the Western project of distinct rational identity is always

on offer precisely because of the work of the maroons.

FLY

The core protocol for Marronage, drawn from Robinson's study, can be

summarized in the instruction, 'fly from the centre and build'. Every instance of

marronage that Robinson covers begins from this implicit (or at times explicit) protocol.

Leave "the centre," which is to say, leave the place whose very definition of

centeredness is expressed in a double enforcement of your habitation in it and your

exclusion from it. An unlivable simultaneity. Contrary to the accounts circulated amongst

plantation owners in which they read marronage as an expression of savage and

mindless fear, the truer accounts render a picture of distinct requirements. The protocol of marronage says, once the atmosphere instituted by the centre is mitigated against by your exceeding of its authoritative reach, begin building immediately. In a distributed fashion, throughout the expanse that the slave trade circulated across, from the 15th century until today, these protocols were collectively taken up, remixed, cut down but not destroyed.

MANNERS

One can see, in the context of marronage, the dueling of unequally powered manners, one for life, the other a series of governance logics positioning themselves for the maintenance of a certain value flow associated with civilizational progress; one in reference to what is immanently potent ecologically, the other looking to make all objects, by definition, stand in reference to it as cosmos. The difference between these manners is performative in a base sense, empowering one set of protocols over another, engaging in one protocol and not another, taking a technical leverage point in the war in the terrestrial places: a mannered flight from that context of mass murder or the mannered anti-blacknesss that produces premature death in its search for surplus value.

TERMS

Conditions for marronage are found in the terms of living noted by Robinson, conditions that would be easily felt as idealistic were it not for the evidence at hand of

their occurrence and recurrence. Three terms for living emerge as almost completely

consistent across the examples Robinson cites:

the ability to retain and mutate "concepts of family and kin quite beyond the

comprehension and control of the master class"

the ability to make dependably and consistently felt "a concept of land tenure that

was in contradiction to that of the dominant European culture"

to be "free to develop their own culture, particularly their own, syncretized

religion." (122)

What are the sub-protocols inherent in the operation of marronage that, through

the interaction of protocols with each other and with the social informalities of those

events, produce a fabric of potential experience that always exceeds any attempt to

render it an example of static value?

GLORY

As seen in accounts of the spatial politics of the plantation, enslaved blacks

would ritualize the flight of marronage beforehand in worship, an encrypted anti-public

public performance. The various codes of speech and song needed to communicate

while enslaved are too often reduced to reactionary necessities. The 'public' worship

black slaves performed was not primarily a trick or an exasperation, though it was of

course these. But primary to the operation of singing "I'll fly away oh Glory / I'll fly away

in the morning" was a performance of the protocol of the emerging, mutational tradition

which carried and called them above, under. It was worship indeed. These performances, anti-public in the sense of a negation of that public, were activated as private performances before--in front of--a private collective feeling, encrypted in gospel in order to pass undisturbed through the air they currently occupied. The success of the protocol of anti-public public performance was in the ability to draw a fabric of private collective feeling over the whole scene-without-time: over Africa, over the spaces of the sea and the plantations, and over the soon-becoming futurial maroon (its "hallelujah bye and bye"). That these means of encryption are themselves a protocol of black aesthetics, endlessly proliferating in every culture where black culture works, signals the depth of the informality they protect.

LIMIT POINT

Here it is notable that, at least in Robinson's text, little is said of the specifics of these terms, their specific qualities. It is comprehensible to see this lack of specification as one limit point for the formal. Here, in these terms, the "freedom" required is precisely to allow practices to do what they do, how they do, which is to say, fold upon the grind of repetition. Robinson calls it "development" but it falls flat in front of a collective attention too disinterested in that total transport, knowing what such universality had already cost. For the problem of the formal is not that it presents stop-gates or limit points, but that when formal protocolization is encouraged to invade spaces of social informality, creating affective 'pay gates' at every nodal point, there are rarely present the kind of alter-formalities (counter-protocols) able to leverage the space back into indiscernability.

ANTE-DESIRE

These "terms of living" are best thought of as machines of plenum, and the protocols that serve them as "enabling conditions" for their anarchic machinic operation. For black ops, black protocols are needed. Successfully performing the "Fly from the centre and build" protocol is a prerequisite for all three terms to find their mutation point, and yet all three terms are prerequisites for the protocol to find leverage in its use (proximity and ungoverned space). In marronage, without the weight of a constructed financialized linear time, the formal and the informal conspire together against time, where time (as slave trade) measures lack and produces desire. For the question of desire is quite alien to the immediacy of marronage as a collective movement beyond property. In marronage, it is desire (and its lack) that are being fled, divested from, continually, mystically, already and not yet in the same moment, every breath.

GHOSTS

Into these informalities that produce protocols for their own protection, Robinson charts an incredible proliferation of traditions with escape plans ready for deployment without a centralized call. The Ladinos exhibited during the atlantic slave trade what the Irish practiced during the post-feudal inter-European slave trade: this "tendency to ... run away" (79, 119, 128-29). Slaves from the Gold Coast and from Central Africa spread these tendencies as seeds in the Caribbean and the Americas. These protocols of flight were "grounded on the syncretics of African cultural and ideological materials" (155). Further, such protocols of flying away and building were "not predicated upon the

Africans' experience of plantation life, but on a total rejection of their lot" (169) in favor of the already potentiated presence of those syncretics. Negation, again. For the black radical tradition in its emergent coalescence, the protocol of disengagement from a false centre--rather than a solely destructive one--framed their exit as a schizo-social fabulational vision of what lay beyond the threshold. Robinson writes of the black radical tradition in its expectation of maroon-work to come: "it more easily sustained suicide than assault, and its ideological, psycho-social, cultural, and historical currrencies were more charismatic than political. When its actualization was frustrated, it became obeah, voodoo, myalism, pocomania--the religions of the oppressed" (169).

DERIVATIVE SPREAD

'Raid and return' is a sub-protocol of flying and building. After successfully flying from the centre and beginning to build, maroons would return to the fictive centre (plantation) to acquire resources to continue building the machinic informal (130). Maroon communities returned to the plantations and mines to steal food, materials, and most interestingly, religious artifacts to be used freely in the technics of syncretic belief (130). Relative to the violence perpetrated by plantation owners and staff, maroons killed and injured few in these raids. I argue that this historical aversion to mass violence is derivative of the collective obligation that Robinson describes, and not merely constitutive. This 'raid and return' sub-protocol had the effect of unsettling both the land and the white mind's self-embossed ownership. Desperate to believe their own title, spasms of insecurity in the form of torture and murder erupted from the hands of white "owners" onto the slaves that remained (131). But no amount of violence could

deter what was the plain truth, evident in every moment, on the tip of the tongue in a black gospel hymn: "this world is not my home." What better proof of concept than to fly from this world and build another.

NAMES

In the maroons of Palmares in Brazil, the Bush Negro Tribes of Suriname, the Leeward and Windward communities of Jamaica, and in the national example of Haiti, Robinson gives us the most structured examples of black radical protocols brought through to new expressions of mutation. They experienced various longevities; Palmares lived for almost a hundred years (1605-1695), Suriname's maroons won land rights as late as 2007, the Leeward and Windward maroons have endured the atomization of two maroon wars through finding new constellations (1731-1739, 1795-1796), and Haiti is continuing today, though suffering under the continued and varied racialized contestation of its legitimacy by Western governmental and cultural forces.

OBEAH

It is on the foundation of these protocols of construction, maintenence, and defense--the foundation of the Maroon--that the hunger for elaboration of other protocols would find a fecund home. Here the obeah women and men could structuralize security on their terms (by administering oaths of secrecy). Here the collective fabulation of a home they could never return to would find roots with wings, an

aesthetic that layered itself, folded itself into cross-pollinated beliefs, histories &

traditions into what is not, in the end, some expression of unending grief, but rather the

location of the collective in the event, wherever the event takes the collective. Into and

against writing, into and against historiography, fleeing from each by way of each, the

black radical tradition finds a single voice only in the polyphony of the breakdown of

singular governances and the rapt risk of difference expressed in the modes of concrete

protocols for their protection. In what is perhaps the best 'Plenum Protocol' I have ever

seen--that is, a protocol for bringing the hapticality of plenum to bear in enemy-held

territory, we hear,

"In present-day Tanzania, the Yao and Hehe in the 1890s confronted the

Germans who transgressed the bounds of good manners. Machemba, the Yao general,

had written to them in Swahili: "if it should be friendship that you desire, then I am ready

for it, today and always; but to be your subject, that I cannot be." (165-166)

The terms for relation are open and clear. The limit point, the stop-gate,

immovable.

COLLECTIVE FABULATION

PRIVATE PROTOCOLS

The "structural ignorance" of Western civilization continues to express itself in the

construction and maintenance of a logistics logic amenable to catching the financial

upside of trading in free or oppressively cheap human labour (121). This includes,

perhaps most notably, the historiographic ignorance of the relation between the profits

acquired by the enslavement of black labour and the financing of the Industrial

Revolution in England. The financial upside was and is shared around hierarchies of

Western society on the boon of the expansion of Western economy, muting the affect of

enslavement on the white mind, rendering it unfeelable as anything but a "practical

necessity" (141). In consequence of this relative gold-rush in capital accumulation, the

optimal performance of slave labour was and is secured through the "practical

necessity" of elaborating "systems of control and discipline" (130).

GIVEN

Keeping the violence muted and the upside loud, companion literatures aimed at

Western readers ("histories") narrativizes a natural world in which every active element

(whites, blacks, markets, divine plans) was in its right place, each proceeding according

to its differential abilities (including the ability of whites to lead and the inability of

Africans to register pain--an ability still actively assumed in the American "racial

sensibility"). Robinson quotes B. Magubane as rating this literature "a powerful

mystification of the real forces at work" (165). Before the 1831 slave uprising in

Jamaica, the governor of Kingston reiterated this narrative of the naturalness of racial

sensibility and the racial order: "slavery is not the institution of any particular colour,

age, or country" (159). Robinson criticizes the Western historiographic tradition as

aiding in the enshrouding of the actual financial stakeholders in the Atlantic slave trade

through the use of "grander levels of generalizations," 'universal' narratives of cause

and effect that were much more tactical than they appeared (101). These were not completely individual acts of conscious covering for the actual anti-black forces at work, rather the very nature of Western historiography--a pedagogical instrument of the West--gave tools to see only so far, only so deep. None of the active agents in the chain of slave stakeholding could "see colonialism as a force and a social process," but rather experienced it "as given, as an existential reality like a landscape" (165).

RESERVES

It is no surprise that a structural ignorance of such social scale and financial scope would make crucial mistakes in favor of black resistance globally. Robinson focuses on one element in particular that would affectively power and re-power the revolts, resistances, and marronages of the black radical tradition in emergence. The heavily incentivized optimization of the financial upside for every actor in the chain gave birth to the "practical necessity" of attempting to dominate and torture african labour into slave labour. When this necessity yielded mass death and low birth rate, "replenishments" were sent, increasing the traffic of the slave trade exponentially. For Robinson, it is not just that African cultures and traditions were smuggled in unbeknownst to traders and stakeholders, it is the social choreography of reserves, the social and political impact of 'refreshing' those very traditions and cultures into the mutational quality of the black protocols that surfaced. A common practice from Brazil (151) to Suriname (138-139), from Jamaica to the Americas (146), replenishment as a financial tactic got away from its deployers precisely because their embedded racial

sensibility disallowed their perception of what was, clearly seen from here, a replenishment of enemy forces and forms of life.

FORM

Even with such bungled tactics of social domination, and even with the great evidence of the social innovation cultivated by maroon communities with the cultural fuel of replenishment, many Western critical histories still maintain that, in the end, "blacks became slaves" ontologically (124). Quite the opposite, the 'routing' of the slave trade, its logisiticality, would prove possible and profitable to hack, riding the circuit of capital with the mutational cultural infusion of the black disjunctive collectivity, a collectivity whose affective profile could not be tracked by racial capitalism because racism's starting premise was the inability of their commodities to organize themselves, much less create a social-financial 'fork' with a mix of their experience, intelligence, and ancestors.

GENERATE THE VAST PLENUM

When all the evidence is imbibed, it is clear that black bodies did not become slaves ontologically, in their being. That "social structures...are coins that do not readily melt" should be heard as applying as much to the potentializing forces of emergent black resistance as to traditional Yoruba codes of community conduct (47). It is clear that a field of mutation occurred, a strange syncretic protocol for mutation rather than a static change or retrieval. The unrecognized theft perpetrated by the colonial slave trade was the theft and destruction of black governance traditions. But, just as black people

did not "become" slaves, so too their governance traditions were not completely stolen or destroyed, nor completely saved, but put into an unforeseen and miscegenous field of play. The search for decolonial techniques includes a search for different governances, where 'different' is not code for a pure black past. Unlike attempts to return to traditional ways of life, these "different" governances must have at their heart motors for generating knowledge of the vast plenum that includes and subsumes the disjunctive Western universality as but one force within a dynamic field. This disorientation of "knowledge as we know it" is just what Robinson's radical black historiography achieves.

THE RHYTHM OF MARRONAGE

It is from such a theoretical heritage, black thought being shot through circulation networks in complete invisibility from its captors and complete intimacy with the forms and functions of the network, that a critique of universality comes forth. Black thought does not oppose but mutates--institutes--a syncretic fork on the value of that universality. We hear Robinson, speaking about DuBois, James, and Wright,

"the Black radical tradition that they were to rediscover from a Black historical experience nearly grounded under the intellectual weight and authority of the official European version of the past, was to be the foundation upon which they stood." (170)

Capital universalizes the money-form as a store of value, flattening the heterogeneity of agreements into a single referent. Marxism, for Robinson, universalizes

the proletariat (and its struggle with the bourgeoises), making a mistake in its "meta-theoretic" (51) by presuming a universal class consciousness. But Robinson, with his forebears in DuBois, James, and Wright, writes in the rhythm of marronage, not the single note of class: fly from the centre and build, come back to smuggle others out, and perform all this in the style of a fork: a practice of divestment at the juncture of your situated power as an affirmative gesture to your otherwise investment. Here we are approaching the aesthetics of the black radical tradition. It is not an aesthetic of the closed route of dialectic, where the synthesis spills out necessarily onto a single stage of perception, but an aesthetic of fork, disengagement, and affirmative building up of mutational ecosystems of difference, backed by the very syncretic religion that bore the black radical tradition through its many dark nights.

DON'T FIX, FORK

From the aesthetic position of a fork, from an autonomous position which knows the insides of the value from which it forked, hearing calls in that public square for reformational politics conjures the same disbelief which made staying at the plantation so impossible. Robinson writes, performing the very negation-knowledge that he references,

"the black radical tradition cast doubt on the extent to which capitalism penetrated and reformed social life and on its ability to create entirely new categories of human experience stripped bare of the historical consciousness embedded in culture." (170)

The black protocol of Marronage is an example of a proof of fork from Western civilization. This the black radical tradition accomplished in the midst of widespread murder and devastation.

THE GIFT

Maroon communities express the intellectual and formational aspects of a larger protocol of ritual aesthetics that invents at both edges of privacy and collectivity. These ritual aesthetics provide real protection and enable socially informal conditionality. They are separate from one another at the same time that they carry forward in their structure a fabric of collective feeling, an art of action and disengagement, which is to say, the choreography of a culture encrypted in the design of a protocol. Thus we arrive at what I suggest is a meta-protocol of the black radical tradition, to encrypt through ritual aesthetics a moire of black protocols.

RITUAL AESTHETICS

MOIRE

Moire terms when two or more similar patterns are laid disjunctively together. The apparition produced in a moire is of an almost-but-never-synchronicity; creating rhythms and hallucinations, the patterns join, disband, and stretch the possible of perception as a matter of course. Herein lies a key to the power of the moire protocol as a black radical protocol. As with the layered writing of Robinson, of Moten, of DuBois, of

James Baldwin; as with the layered proliferations and myths surrounding the mountain maroon kingdoms; as with the syncretic rituals of the obeah women and men and the rhythms of revolt and peace-building that their incantations provoked; as with all these protocols of black radical life, the understanding of a moire comes only after the point of entanglement, never before. Even this is a fork from Western civilization. There is no arm's length due diligence available; if I do actual due diligence on the black radical tradition, I will be on its side before I'm done. Anything else is a lack of comprehension, proof I have not cracked the code. If the moire-nature of the black radical tradition is not a protocol, I don't know what is.

SOUND WRITING

The moire of writing. I read the moire in Robinson as an incredibly complex tactic born from the very hybridity he writes into and of. It is radically not only about what the content of the writing is. It is radically about the way of writing, the way of thinking. the black radical tradition is there in the writing, a deep loud movement, a rhythm where he writes Nubian Africa as running away to the same beat as post-feudal Ireland, where he pushes the colonial accounts past the edge of shame into a "structured ignorance," where he lays out the African Blood Brotherhood and Marcus Garvey's Pan-Africanism in their depths and shallows, and then folds everything back again. The moire protocol is present in Robinson's writing, in the craft, the creole of how the high white academia mutates with the school of Oakland in the 40s and 50s, dancing irreversibly together. This way of writing, the rhythm of moire that seizes Robinson at the very height of his mastery of Western historiography can be described as a layering of forces: unsteady,

not committed, laying pipe, almost hallucinogenic but pulling back from the edge, falling

back, embracing the creole in plenum in his production, more than just 'making use of it'

-- it is a fork, a real-actual otherwise way of assembling the problematization of value--a

way that leads to a completely different vision of the world.

PERSPECTIVE

This moire protocol is the obeah expectation/incantation that calls to perception

the anarchic informality of the plenum. In the plenum, I rejoice with Robinson to find that

the Western universe is already subsumed and entangled inside the plenum. The ability

to see Western civilization as already thus demoted in the actual state of things is tied to

being able to traverse its accounts up out of themselves, experiencing their artificiality,

and the experience of the black wealth always already circulating through, under, and

beyond it. And it is tied to a deep and costly pessimism. As Fred Moten says, "how do

you fight a fantasy that shoots real bullets?" All these knowledges form a vibrational

moire, discovering each other's falsities continually as a condition of relation. From the

moire of physics we go to the beat phenomenon of music theory, where the beat marks

itself as the interference pattern of two sounds of slightly different frequencies. I argue

the beat phenomenon is the location of the fork the black radical tradition takes away

from the centre of Western civilization. It is the condition and consistency of rhythm. The

Western assertion, through philosophy, history, art, and religion, of the ownership of

universality itself, is an assertion of but a single, pure, tone. But there is no energy, no

rhythm, no complexity in such solitary tonality. The beat of the black radical tradition is

in the disjunctive rhythms of differential life, not resolving and not drawn to, but play-fighting to dispel & re-spell our multiple shared edges.

PROTOCOLS FOR LIFE

What is easy to take as contingency in the black radical aesthetic is really a kind of hallucenogenic field set up by any occasion in which sound is done as writing. This contingency, which appears to the Western imagination that Robinson critiques as almost naturally tied to 'turbulent black life', is less a contingency to its claimants and more a pragmatic effect of putting the governance authority, the governance onus, into the immanent entanglement of the physical and spiritual world and not at the feet of the discourse of Western literature, its visual knowledge production, and the individual subjects it prescribes. This is why the black radical tradition can play writing so masterfully; there is nothing so obvious in the world to them that the discourse of writing is not primordial, not ontological; so it plays it--as a moire pattern and a beat phenomenon. And yet there is this costly lesson: that the illusion of everything that writing represents does indeed shoot real bullets. To incant here and now, to fabulate in a potential collectivity: Uncaptured by the Word, for now, they swim in and out of it, escape and re-raid incessantly and play the percussive of the sound of literature as it ricochets off surfaces other than, and alien to, the "European Christ-face." The circulation of these alien affects into cultivated civilized territory is the retrospective choreography of the black radical tradition, in moire-esque dissymmetry with the undestroyed logistics of racial capitalism. The discovered primacy of sound over writing, and of its mutual co-habitation with all sense and unsense, allows access to intelligence
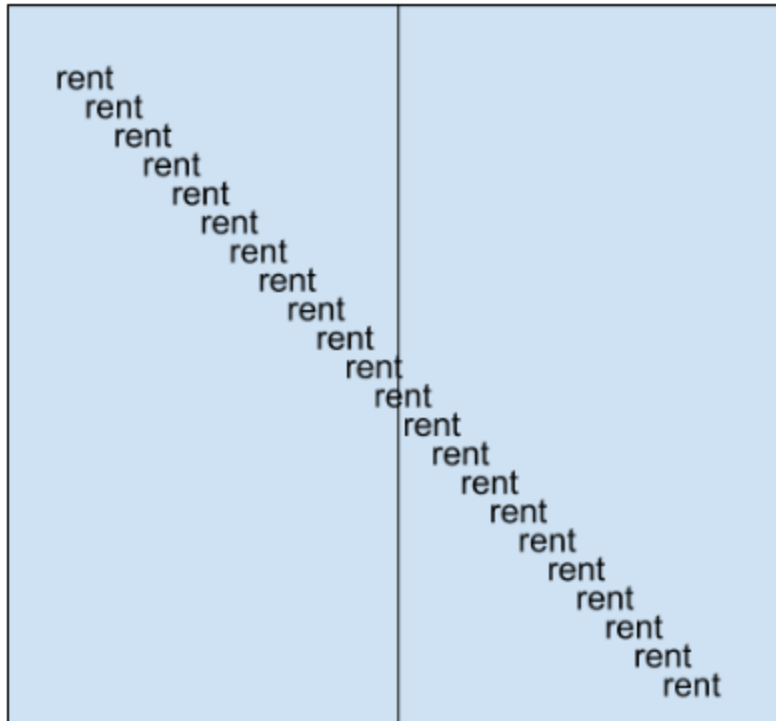
unmoored from enforced representation in reference to a center. Protocols for life: as

legal ghosts and with the experience of the total dividuation of the enemy and ourselves

into tradable shares that remain unregistered, disperse these shares around in

irreversible action. The black radical tradition is Post-human Ubuntu.

CHAPTER TWO

ENGINEERING OTHERWISE

"A waiting outside of and beyond and against the colonialism of

Western time and space... otherwise possibility as a flesh thing, as

a connection thing, a yielding and presumed preferential option for

weakness such that she could ongoingly practice love, care,

concern"

Ashon T. Crawley, "Of Forgiveness," 2020

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THUNDER IN PARADISE

Robert's Rules of Order was first published in 1876. *Robert's Rules* continues to be, despite heavy research and experimentation into otherwise techniques, **the** Western authority for organizing any 'within' of an organization.

The *Canada Business Corporation Act* (CBCA) came into place in 1975, and was the first revision since 1934.The CBCA lays out **the** protocols for how to structure a corporation in the Canadian legal landscape (the within of the nation, the 'without' of the corporation).

In both cases, there is an astounding lack of revision in the infrastructural canon.

The mystique of governance, like the mystique of the economy, continues to operate as its own justification. As in the mystique of economy, the mystique of governance is there to hide its revisability,

its reprogrammability,

which is to say its functional organization as ongoing art.

The cloaking of governance's revisability is supported by academic and governmental complexes, their contents and (dis)contents, those committed to "getting things done" through "intelligent compromise" and those whose non-profit paychecks and university salaries are helped, not hindered, by having an endless object for their critique. This is a mutually decaying oppositionality.

But if the mystique of governance and the mystique of the economy can teach us anything, is it not that what is pulsed within a system is felt in the system (the sum total of which is not the total)? That racial capitalism didn't invent mystique, or the relational fabric through which it extends itself? The pulsing can be 'read' by those who are its mediums of communication, that is, everything (not deferred in their differential).

But it is the form of this particular mystique, that of governance and the economy, that is specifically constructed and reconstructed to remind us that, while we feel we can read these currents, and to the extent we somehow 'know', and to the precise extent that we report we are being taken by a reading different from the made smooth by this mystique, we are in-formed that we cannot actually read, we are crazy.

The Dow index is a good example of an infrastructure which, in holding an average of the 40 best for-profit performing companies, sends out a pulse of its own, one delimiting the signals we are already partaking in and helping to create, and one resettling the perception of fields of the possible and the composable to be (1) infinite in terms of growth by its own measure, and (2) private in terms of the rights to compose truly alternative indexes. For a truly alternative index would not start with the base structure of what is considered "indexical" to the transcendent subject.

An indexicality not held as private property would approach form in a different way, for it would not be constrained to render clear a return to the centre of a single subject substance. Anti-social sociality, a "desire for misrecognition" (Fred Moten, *B Jenkins*, 104) would flow in indexically without codification as we know it, for such desires are not, and will never be, immanent to the project of trying to transform a centre. It is for those who fly away and build.

INFRA-STRUCK

So we must get at and into the creation of forms, in structuration, the kind of techniques or approaches that will allow the work's real purpose to remain in movement, which is partially to say, quick, and which is partially to say, never captured by quickness. Such techniques must be functional rather than moral, infrastructur-esque rather than sentimentally eternal.[6] I want to call the search for these movements *infrastructurality* (a move which I owe to Moten & Harney's distinction between logistics and logisticality).

It was through Reza Negarestani that I first encountered the thought-line--the speculation--that there can exist an expressive and gestural (and somehow joyfully improvisational) formality, not in contradistinction from the informal but running in entangled parallel, one which did not try to explain 'everything' through its new systemization. This parallelism is acknowledged in Negarestani's partial apophaticism:

> "You do not need to interpret or understand the system in order to
> act on it, [not] by way of factoring in ideas such as input and output,
> intrinsic architecture, foundational dynamics, certain forms of
> essence, [or] analytical constitution." (On Anonymous Materials,
> 2015)

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[6] See Brian Massumi on "-esqueness" in *What Animals Teach Us About Politics* (2014). "The gestures' –esqueness is the performative signature of the mode of abstraction at play. It embodies the 'standing for' in Bateson's formula. In other words, it is the enactive sign of the action's value. In itself, it is pure standing-for, pure expressive value— the very element of the ludic in expression, as a form of lived abstraction. The –esqueness of the act instantiates the play-value of the game" (10).

In Negarestani's philosophy of engineering, the formal acting on an actualization (a "manipulation") fundamentally cannot assume to grasp the majority of its own action or any of the elements therein. By so doing he minimizes the need, the ability, and the usefulness of mapping as much of a system as possible in order to act on it. Rather he calls for an awareness of the fact that any supposed knowledge drawn from manipulating a system is a product of the system and the manipulation itself.

> "You cannot understand a system unless you act on it, manipulate it...The functional organization is about manipulation and you can't really identify these functions unless you intervene in the causal fabric."

In the plenum sense, we are always already intervening, and we are always already being intervened in and through; monads endlessly refract one another (Leibniz, *Monadology*, #60). So Negarestani's formulation, while not getting us all the way there, proposes an interesting question: what is produced in terms of knowledge by the endless inter-manipulation of refraction in the plenum?

WANDERING WALKING HOWS

Negarestani's thought experiment with Artificial General Intelligence uses AGI as an emergent speculative model to try to imagine the conditions for thinking beyond our conception, to attempt to imagine how 'Other' forms of life-living and refracting might

compose epistemologically and relationally quite beyond our frame of reference, that is, the naturalized frame of the transcendent subject. This curiosity can be expressed in the question, how do you plan to be in relation with something you will never "know" cosmologically?

It is remarkable to contemplate together the AGI 'Others' of Europe and the non-white, non-male "Others" of Europe (Denise Ferreira da Silva, *Toward a Global Idea of Race*,). Both are conceived in their otherness to "Europe." Both are outside that universal perspective, and their efforts to join are both deemed 'inauthentic'. They are, at best, artificially civilized.

Derogatory names are often flipped on their heads and utilized by the communities being dragged, not primarily as performativity of protest, but mainly as an encoding of an analysis of the political situation, an analysis that has at its heart a function of rewriting the meaning while simultaneously continuing to understand that the power structures feeding the previous meaning are still in full operation (though not in every 'how'). The important part is that, in the view of the plenum, any kind 'naming' is already differentially derogatory for the right-to-name it assumes. Naming is a juridical, economic, and symbolic function of the transcendental subject, where things are thus named and graded according to their authenticity. Contra-wise, "artificiality" in Negarestani's usage is an interaction-as-computation perspective, admitting or reaching for a making without subject, in intimate relation to its functions and what is done as they are triggered. He writes,

> "Put simply, artificiality, in this sense, does not signify an inferiority
> to the natural or something that vainly attempts to mimic the
> behaviours of natural language. It is rather the case that the
> 'natural' in 'natural languages' designates a subset of the
> designation 'artificial' in 'artificial languages'." (377)

If again I try to take Negarestani where I want to go (from 'without the subject' to "with/out the subject"): this 'natural' is one whose inside is already colonized into a synonymity with the transcendent subject (the white male European form), and its outside already staged for the endless deferral-toward-obliteration of all these 'Others'. Thus can we say that artificiality names all the actions taken *out from the outside* of this frame?

But in a way, Negarestani does want to go there too:

> "Said differently, the designation 'artificial' in ''artificial languages'
> implies the possibility of unbinding the formal as that which
> structures content" (377).

The formal-as-computation has other tasks at hand beyond the myth of a straightforward tool that structures the non-tool substance of meaning. His primary concern is the "narrow domain" of the subject's expectations of form:

"Subordinating the structure of language to the structure of the

subject invariably results in a subordination of the logical potencies

of language for structuration of the world to a narrow domain limited

by the particular transcendental structure of the subject" (378)

By retracting the subordination of artificiality under the structure of the subject,

artificiality is allowed to speculate again, expressing toward the field of the possible

without predetermination. One reviewer of Negarestani's work is not convinced,

"All these new Promethean projects in one form or another,

whether on the Right (Land) or Left (Brassier/Negarestani) seek to

empower the inhuman at the expense of the human agenda. Many

of these so called turns toward the non-human in philosophy and

the arts are playing into the hands of such programs whether

consciously or not." ("Reza Negarestani: Prometheanism,

Intelligence, Self-Determination")

The reviewer's anxiety about the planned obsolescence of "the human" under AGI is as

much a fear of justice as it is of injustice, and harkens to the anxieties of the wielders of

the tools of raciality. The transcendent subject cannot know how its powers fare in a

plenum, and so can only imagine retribution within its cosmological limits (Robert

Meister, *After Evil*, 111). But artificiality in Negarestani's sense is characteristic of a kind

of perspective that takes no action or subject to be as bounded or as present or as

absent as the metaphysical map of the transcendent subject suggests. It names rather the imminent and intimate narrowing that is participation, not the narrowing of preformed expectations of form of content. A question to Negarestani is whether his lack of accounting for what has been "0" in the past, and that which is "0" in the present under the world of the transcendent subject, affects his political understanding and thus his construction of the scene of encounter between the transcendent subject and its AGI 'Others' (the potential 'artificial' languages of which represent its inadequacy before that subject, and yet also a continual creation beyond the scope of that subject). Da Silva writes,

> "Now while Blackness when an index of a social situation consistently and continuously never fails to signify slavery, it also exposes the ways in which the expropriated enslaved African's productive capacity continues to produce surplus value in the global present. More, in spite of this endless expropriation Black (symbolic and economic), labor has not vanished (as the scientists of man once predicted and hoped). For beyond capital--and its colonial, national, and imperial architecture--Blackness signals the creative capacity, which is a quality only apparent when one contemplates the World as Plenum and not as Universe" ("Toward a Black Feminist Poethic," 85).

In the world of the transcendent subject, and much against its wishes, every index has

other, unauthorized productions. But for Negarestani's thought experiment to help the

experiment of infrastructurality (the subject of this writing), we must work against any

accidental embrace of a situational narrative where (1) AGI is a part of modern

progress, and where (2) the conditions for the radical emergence of un unimaginable

AGI are conditions created in cyclical reaction to the transcendent subject, and

therefore not free from its orbit of power. To fit and move beyond Negarestani's vision,

AGI must hook not only into an emergent "causal fabric" 'in general', but into the living

memory of those computations considered as "0"--those which have found and made a

way with/out the subject. Da Silva writes,

> "Before we can even conceive on how to design these
>
> architectures, we need another account of racial subjugation, for
>
> the one we have cannot comprehend a demand for decolonization,
>
> that is the unknowing and undoing of the World that reaches its
>
> core. Before we can collectively design the framework for
>
> reconstruction, we need first to follow Blackness as it signals that
>
> knowing and doing can be released from a particular kind of
>
> thinking, which is necessary for opening up the possibility for a
>
> radical departure from a certain kind of World" (Ibid, 85-86).

For Negarestani, this collective design cannot happen in human modes, or at the

very least not under their control. But artificiality's speculative "0" can only avoid the

missteps mentioned earlier by touching the creative capacity necessary to do so. That is, interaction-as-computation needs an account of plenum to augment its already admitted con-fusion at the moment of manipulation, its own intimate partialness as manipulation. It needs to somehow plan that its freedom to hack the subject is predicated on the hacks that have gone before and continue on through in modes also not deemed "human" where human denotes the male European form, and its attendant politics of thought.

PROTOCOLS FOR LIFE

What would it mean for an infrastructurality to plan to be taken by its own parallel anteriority (the informal participation of all things prior to affect)? Could such an Infrastructurality of the plenum be expressed through techniques for form-taking that utilize non-invasion and non-assumption, or, affirmatively, welcoming and unknowing? Could such gestures 'welcome away' from universality, and 'unknow' their lack of options under racial capitalism? Or have these gestures been going on this way already, spreading open plenum options as a practice of inter-manipulation, modes of co-agitation in the waters of our mutual relation? At the end of his exposition of black and indigenous resistance movements in the 18th and 19th centuries, Cedric Robinson relates an interaction between the Yao people of Tanzania and their German would-be expropriators,

"Machemba, the Yao general, had written to them in Swahili, 'If it should be friendship that you desire, then I am ready for it, today and always; but to be your subject, that I cannot be'" (*Black Marxism*, 165-66).

If friendship is the extension of a relation of mutual confusion, of mutual disempowerment, and a latch onto the confusion of a lack of ledger, a lack of record, we can think of a porous door that is never closed or open. The only thing that cannot walk through this door is a solid, bounded, bordered transcendental subject. Machemba might as well have said, "if it should be friendship that you desire, then I am ready for it, today and always; but to be a foil to the emplacement of your own trascendental subjecthood, that I cannot be, and, of precisely that subject, neither can you be."

The "ready for it, now and always" of the plenum keeps us from taking our gestures of welcome and unknowing as emitting only from a solitary subject, and they allow us to begin to think refraction as inter-manipulation in the plenum. That is, manipulation done then led away to the collective flying in the neighborhood.

But if this is too easy (and I'm not sure that it is), I wish to try to push farther into the problem of form.

REFRACTION

To begin outside the human, and not in the agency of present machines, but in the possible collective composability of the future (in the now) is the task calling forth a different manner of regarding the formal, formation, the purposes of technicity, and the responsibility to participate with the world in manipulation of the world.

To get there, while Negarestani reaches for the cypher of the unimaginability of AGI, da Silva reaches for the cypher of the nothingness of the black female form.

Da SIlva reflects on Judith Butler's use of Derrida and Foucault,

> "[Butler] colonizes matter under the rules of discourse, saying that it
> is impossible to conceive of a matter without form. Yeah of course,
> because form is conception, and is the conceptualizing of that
> [form]. You can't conceptualize matter without form, or you can't
> conceptualize the sexual female body, but you can contemplate it,
> you can imagine it. But the moment of conceptualizing is the
> moment of informing. This is part of the limit of critical discourse,
> that has necessarily to inhabit that which it is undoing, unpacking,
> because otherwise it will make no sense, hence nonsense: this
> exercise in nonsense is trying to 'not do it'" ("Hacking the Subject")

I suggest that Negarestani does not make this mistake, of insisting that there is no matter without form. He is rather interested as da Silva is, in "The possibility of being in

the world anew" ("Hacking"). I propose that he avoids this mistake by a modeling of

functional organization that accounts for the informal by severely disempowering the

very informational quality achieved through that gesture of engineering, limiting it

epistemologically in a way that frees it, by insisting on formality's own complicity in the

changes it forms, and by placing its expectation of informational feedback only at the

juncture of 'what it does':

> "[Manipulation is] a form of inference. What is this inference? It is not
>
> really deductive or inductive inference. It is what they call 'material
>
> inference'. Material in the sense that it does not abide by logical norms. It
>
> is basically non-formal. Peirce calls it abductive manipulation. How this
>
> works is that… what you need is a form of intervention or manipulation
>
> that is error tolerant, i.e. fallible. That treats the material as a hypothesis
>
> so you can intervene with a certain patch of causal fabric to see what is
>
> really there in a conceptual behavior from this level to that level. What is
>
> the specific function of this and how this specific function explains the
>
> functions on another level without creating a rigid designation." ("On
>
> Anonymous Materials, 2015)

In this account of manipulation there is a kind of openness to the plenum created by

structuring where one will not go and what tools one will not use (informed in such

choices by his critique of the transcendent subject and its falsely 'holistic epistemology').

But this openness is still threatened as long as language is not understood as code-a-

running,--that is--as fugitive code. If language remains an implicit defense of meaning discrete from function--if universally named, whether that meaning be deemed natural or artificial--then function is chained to a definition of itself as fundamentally uncreative. The unbinding that Negarestani describes must translate to the ability to be carried away by alien knowledge, for the code to run away with you in its pocket. Negarestani continues,

> "Shifting from language as the medium of communication to interaction-as-computation--the protological foundation of language and logic--unbinds the logico-computational functions of language while making it possible to rethink, reimagine or reinvent linguistic communication on a completely different level" (378-379)

Negarestani is attempting to redefine form itself as expression, and as only able to find itself in that expressive capacity once it is detethered, "unbound," from the transcendent subject and its assumptions about universality and form's own status within the hierarchy of that universality. The narrowness of formality conceived only in reference to the universe of the transcendental subject, whether that reference is for or against formality, falls onto the stage of the subject's fantasy. Da Silva writes that "it is possible to access an absolute outside, but it is not possible to conceptualize it ("Hacking the Subject"). What then is the other side to the index that da Silva references above? We must then wonder at the 'how' of the plenum's inter-manipulation as non-conceptual, or perhaps as 'unraveled', and the techniques by which we might protect the collective

ability to be taken by form's other side. Could such a protection be a part of the event of a refractionary ensemble?

FORMLILY FORMOTION FORMROUNDABOUT

For what if the forms are unimaginable because they have not yet emerged, and will not stay? What if those same forms will go on--in process--to new fields of unimaginability (if not held back by governance as it shepherds forgotten infrastructures into ontology)? And what if they already have in the gift of the "0" of the World? What kind of governance would we call such collective and unequal creation? The question that lingers is, do we need to call it governance at all? It is the process of the world, of the earth, and we need formidable defenses protecting the distributed abilities of becoming-in-process rather than defenses protecting already defined bodies, institutions, and nations. Then, I do not know whether it is better to say 'some of these will be formal, some informal', or, 'each defense is a collectively emerging in/formal collaboration characterized by a code (an index?) of reverse-hierarchical perversion'. With the second, the perversion begins, and rebegins again and again, to *not begin* at the white male european form that is pretended to preexist. Then, some kind of a multiplicity of spiraling happens, where the informal, the generous nothingness, the plenum, moves up, disempowering but not massacring the formal it finds, playing with the abundance of form's minor expression, and carrying it away. A hypothesis: what remains of the formal is the formal we need, and nothing more. For disempowerment is the most important code in the formal, it is its own unlocking into expression, a

movement beside and beneath the constraint of false pretense around all the actions that flow from it.

Organization will happen. It is without doubt one of the most convoluted subjects of study that can be thought. So perhaps we should attempt to do it, rather than think it. Perhaps poetry is a part of it, as an anorganizing force, a force that organizes against the wishes of the subject who approaches it as author, as a distinct 'who'. Poetry is a subject in its moment of actualization, an unforeseeable machine, every time. So, in that moment, poetry is Poetry (non-transcendent), and then it is again poetry, an object for delineation, analysis, memorization of forms and habits past. But something at its gathering, right before interaction, was functionally aroused into expression. Something--many things actually--snapped like embers snapping free of the log at a certain contrafugal convergence of air, heat, water, and wood. What is the wood anyway? Phoenemes grow, speak, spark, and carried away. Things are reaching together as they are carried. At that moment, something we've known as poetry appears through these multiple refractionarily produced 'snaps'--full of the echoes and silences of all the others. Or at that moment, as has happened now and again when we are lucky, something we've never known as poetry appears as poetry. The pleasure in that moment is in being unable to find anything out of order, or out of the usual, as something quite 'out of order' appears as if in a different referential universe. Multiple and recognizable 'snaps' occurred, harbinging the arrival of poetry, but then what arrives is not poetry through memory, because memory is not serving, instead the machine is standing in front of you executing its function as poetry (that is, a thinking-

feeling anorganizationality cutting across our attempts to write). Or, as an example of

the same surprising form-taking, I have been there when many of the multiple snaps do

not register as familiar elements, and alarm bells are rung. But before the guards can

come, late-coming snaps arrive, familiar ones, ancient and/or trusted ones, and a felt

gloved hand is placed on the bell. This is something of a dramaturgy of engineering

otherwise, a song of infrastructurality delving into its manipulation as it is carried away

by processes beyond its purview but within its appetite as expression. I do not know

which line of apophatic code i like better, the closeted arrival or the five alarm fire into

quick resolution. There are, of course, many more. You see, all this (above) just wrote

itself, in perhaps the way I'm trying to describe. I did not think it, it thought me. There

was no debate. Can a fluidity of relation organize faster (quick enough to avoid

quickness) and with more immanent and poly-local intelligence than an old piece of

toast? Oh, I didn't mean an old piece of toast, I meant the present and policed canon of

organizational force, the canon that is the smile of racial capitalism. But--toast admitted-

-there is the other remain that the "0" knows. As Fred Moten says, "whiteness is a

fantasy, but the issue with this fantasy is, it shoots real bullets" ("Notes on Anti-Fascist

Living").

AN ANGLED LINE

How be it if we try on Reza Negarestani's approach to manipulation via the

technique of stratification, and combine it with da Silva's work on "Hacking the Subject."

Perhaps we can evince that situation where the in/out is disempowered but not

massacred, where, in this context, a formation like stratification can be seen to provide a tool useful and appropriate to the activity of the plenum versus that of the cosmos, emergently participating in collectively ordering and de-ordering rather than predetermining the capacities and directions of ordering/de-ordering machines.

Now, understanding its purpose from his perspective, we can hack the technique. As each motion in Robert's Rules is separated unto 'itself' and situated in classes of orderedness (some things cannot come before other things), we can take as an aspect of the technique the deployment of cuts (this is easier to see from the perspective of the plenum than from that of the cosmos--a 'naturally' ordered universe). A cut is one step toward a form without being lost in servitude to it. With this technique we can first erase every cut separating motions by reference to their solitary and self-enclosed type. We notice a second aspect to the technique, already mentioned, that of designation of motions into classes of things that can be interrupted and classes of things that cannot. In retaliation, we can rearrange ad hoc their places within the list, retaining the function of *meta-box* (a box whose job is to hold other boxes) for reasons that will immediately become clear. We then, with all lines erased between all motions, use the technique of the cut again to, instead of repeating categorical cuts horizontally, ADD one long vector at an angle from the bottom and the top, beginning at dissimilar intervals and so arriving to each other at a non-equal meeting point. This line now designates not categorization but entanglement, where, if the rules are followed, one portion of all motions include one portion of all other motions. And since the cut is at an angle, no portion of any motion is the same as any other. The meta-box feature is an option in the situation where groups

of motions find themselves as a group, for a duration. In any case the meta-box feature

is restrained implicitly to be an augmentation feature, not a takeover feature. The line

cutting through all uncategorized (and uncategorizable) motions transforms the

separation that first appears as visible through the meta-box (the space between those

motions in and out of the meta-box) and depurifies it. Since, by the rules of the vertical

cut, every motion takes into account a different aspect of every other motion, all motions

outside the meta-box are impacted by the perspective of all motions in and out of the

meta-box, and all motions inside the meta-box are impacted by the perspectives of all

motions in and out of the meta-box. The rules of the vertical cut depurify the rules of the

meta-box, restraining it into augmentation, manipulating it. Leibniz writes,

> "Since the monad is by its very *nature representative,* nothing can
>
> limit it to represent merely a part of things. It is nevertheless true
>
> that this representation is, as regards the details of the whole
>
> universe, only a confused representation, and is distinct only as
>
> regards a small part of them, that is to say, as regards those things
>
> which are nearest or greatest in relation to each monad. If the
>
> representation were distinct as to the details of the entire Universe,
>
> each monad would be a Deity. It is not in the object represented
>
> that the monads are limited, but in the modifications of their
>
> knowledge of the object. In a confused way they reach out to infinity
>
> or to the whole, but are limited and differentiated in the degree of
>
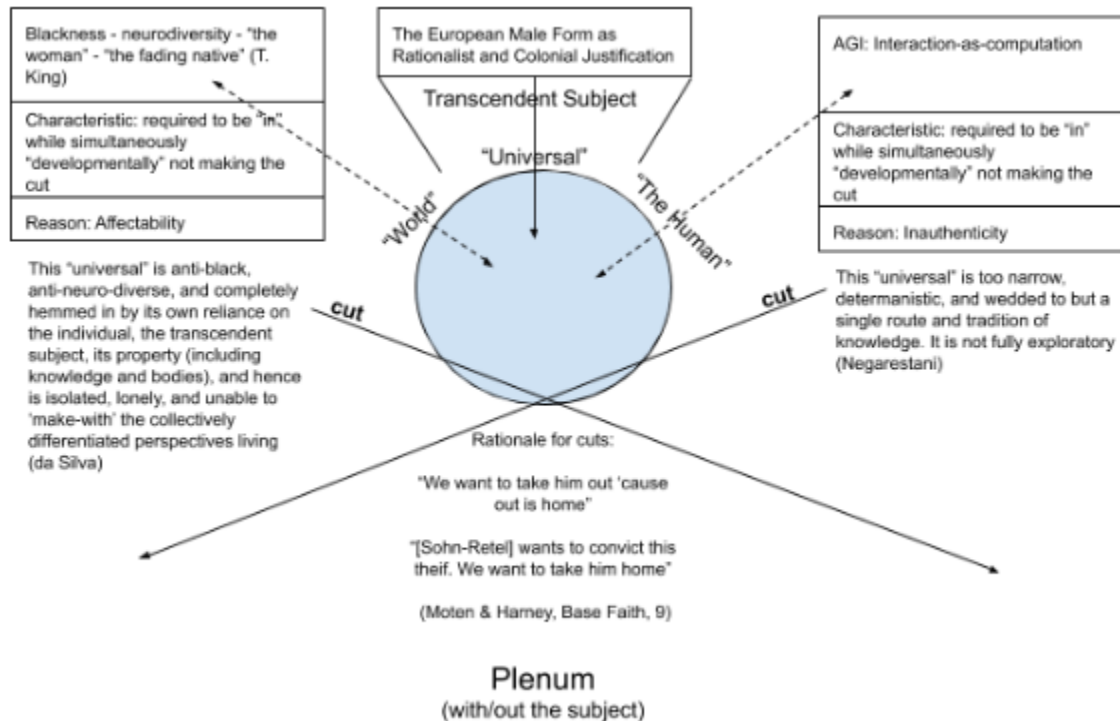> their distinct perceptions." (Leibniz, *Monadology*, #60)

A protocol of the black radical tradition, evidenced by the lack of reciprocal massacre when given the chance, is *disempower, not massacre* (Cedric Robinson, *Black Marxism*, 130). The different yet inseparable characteristic of life in the plenum knows the massacre of another to be a violence against one's own; this plenum-view both lifts and tarries the perception of all things, confuses them, as they are simultaneously (1) not limited "to represent merely a part" (every perspective holds everything refracted through it) and yet (2) every perspective is also "indistinct" and "confused." This is the impetus behind the experiment of drawing an angled vertical line through previously categorized elements, replacing the numerous horizontal lines of classification and categorization between them. Bring down the deity of the transcendent subject (the white male European form) and let us play-fight together on grounds uncommon enough to register the plenum's perspectival unequality ("confusion") but not so uncommon (or disconnected, or unequal) that types can be inferred by a survey of the prepared myth of a natural landscape from a solitary perspective (partial knowledge of everything in everything). Let our uncommonness be the difference of our differently informed perspectives, and our entanglement the imminent relations between the parts of everything in every perspective.

PICTURE MODUS TOTUS

Before I began writing, I composed a diagram that represents my best understanding of da Silva's argument in *Toward a Global Idea of Race* of the state of power under the

symbolic of the transcendent subject, and I was able to figure into this Negarestani's

concerns around the need to detether the project of AGI from reference to that same

subject. It is reproduced here in its original pre-writing form:

Blackness - neurodiversity - "the woman" - "the fading native" (T. King)

Characteristic: required to be "in", while simultaneously "developmentally" not making the cut

Reason: Affectability

This "universal" is anti-black, anti-neuro-diverse, and completely hemmed in by its own reliance on the individual, the transcendent subject, its property (including knowledge and bodies), and hence is isolated, lonely, and unable to 'make-with' the collectively differentiated perspectives living (da Silva)

The European Male Form as Rationalist and Colonial Justification

Transcendent Subject

"Universal"

"World"

"The Human"

cut

cut

AGI: Interaction-as-computation

Characteristic: required to be "in" while simultaneously "developmentally" not making the cut

Reason: Inauthenticity

This "universal" is too narrow, determanistic, and wedded to but a single route and tradition of knowledge. It is not fully exploratory (Negarestani)

Rationale for cuts:

"We want to take him out 'cause out is home"

"[Sohn-Retel] wants to convict this theif. We want to take him home"

(Moten & Harney, Base Faith, 9)

Plenum
(with/out the subject)

I wanted to indicate a non-spatial imaging of the encapsulations at play, and a

basic contour to how the logic of plenum entanglement comes at those living things

which have been transcendent subjects but have been 'taken out' to be 'taken home'. I

wanted to name the need for cuts, withdrawal, and this anti-social sociality that moves

the whole different way of responding to the "universal," a way which the "universal"

could not mimic, nor understand its math.

But I ran into a problem, if it is a problem, that I did not know what to draw in the lower part of the diagram. I did not know how to draw this vast different but inseparable "home." I could only stare, imagining the cuts lopping off the lower parts of the transcendent subject's securitization of the world, wondering what kind of flows would make the Moten & Harney quotes true. And, most vastly, how to draw the plenum "with/out the subject"? I don't know. We may have to, at another time, move into experiments with dramaturgy (mentioned above) and somatic choreography to make any headway there.

NOTES ON A PICTURE OF A LIST WITH/OUT CONSTITUTION

> "A functional organization can emerge and be manipulated, can be automated, can actually gain a form of autonomy, that develops not because of the constitution in which it was embedded, but in spite of it" ("On Anonymous Materials, 2015).

- Can we say from this that
  - *1* functions within finance, trade, logistics, and infrastructure can be de-tethered from their colonial constitutions (what follows from what Negerastani is saying)
  - *2* in the context of colonial constitution of forms, its functions are co-creations by the mutational nexus of all the intelligences present in that

constitutional becoming, namely, via Cedric Robinson and Fred Moten, the black radical tradition, and not "born from" that constitution.

- *3* that the nothingness, the plenum, that is tended in the black radical tradition, exerted its non-value on that emerging colonial constitution even as it was forming, as a way that remains in the form, or on the other side of it. The black radical tradition mutated a fork of that colonial timeline (just as coloniality was attempting a fork based on securing free labor through extreme violence). The already nascent black radical tradition produced another timeline, a plenum version.

- *4* the functions born in the context of a colonial constitution were already infused in the black radical tradition's otherwise timeline, its continual otherwise deformations into new formations.

- *5* the black feminist aspect of this tradition takes it another step further, where the "0" is a coding. I don't mean this in a flippant way. The black female form as the location of no-value is the point of coding escape from the manipulation of conceptualization (of the subject's form) into the collective intra-manipulation of contemplation. Intra-manipulation of contemplation can be expressed as a protocol for collective discernment, where the speculative location and purview of the discernment is out from the outside of in/out collectivity. But the in/out is not destroyed, per se, but is rather quilted in as the "difference" aspect of "difference without separability." The 'no farther than nothing, no closer than everything'.

- **6** the protocols of the black radical tradition as Cedric Robinson works with them are functions otherwise from their naturalized and historicized habitus in the colonial constitutional moment. These protocols are not born from coloniality, rather collectivity itself took a course and mutated against and away from the constitution of the transcendent subject's sovereignty over the world.

STRATA-BEARS

Perhaps we can explore another strata (vertically cut) of the speculative formal we have been thinking toward. However we try to explain how formality can serve the distributed entangled interests of the plenum (and whether we are successful or not), the other strata I imagine is the function of iteration.

If the plenum is 'everything in everything' and yet 'everything is different', then it can be stated that each living thing in the plenum is an iteration of all the perspectives of all the others. Not just all the others, as if one snapshot was taken, but the continual republishing and refreshing of new states in each living thing, each state again a refraction of all others, but this time in a new way.

From the base state (faith) of "partial confusion," a constant experience flowing from a limited exposure (but an exposure nevertheless) to the *entire* whole, contemplation of the vast plenum means speculatively experiencing and expressing

iterations. To conceptualize would be to expect repetition, assigning bodies and/or bodies of power to roles with the expectation that they will endure or depart simply because we say so. Contemplation is a practice, a pool you sit by. It is perhaps too crude to say the following: that by that pool, changes come to the surface. There the changes are adding us up, along with other living things, until we are swept up (and sometimes concur or consent).

THE PAST IS COMING OUT MY FOREHEAD

The storytelling of these events, expressions of the changes, are like adjacent gatherings round the pools of plenum, a ritual adding and removing layers of entanglement-composite which is itself another event of the changes adding us up. How do we remember that we will forget imperfectly how that fish came together at the end of our string? Was it already, beneath the water? Or already, in touching the air? Or as I grasped it, I grasped me? When I touched the fish, can I have touched it without my touch naming it as to my knowledge? Is not this living thing a part of the plenum? If we are attuning to the dynamic poly-regionality of lemanja, depth, volume in endless variation of flex, can we not discuss how the actions that take us when in attunement are different than those that we take when living "naturally"? And if we can discuss, aren't we priming ourselves as 'partial-plenum-pool-entire'? We are then participating in the manipulation of our perspectives with an eye toward, an ear for, future ritual gatherings.

This is a kind of a map toward a plenum infrastructurality, wherein a practice of remembering the past and current layers of vast plenum makes for a different economy of attention. An attention to the layerings, to their differences, to the to-come changes, none brought direct from analysis nor fed into the gaping power of time (the tool of the subject's structuration), but all experienced as misrecognized. For if formality can continue to misrecognize, to fail its master, then it can be speculatively free to join the more porous, suffused, blurry pathways of expression.

The search for a protocol for plenum form-taking (mud raking?) has to be about asking if we want visualizations, and then forgetting that we asked.

THE COMMUNITY SHOPS

I see an image of this vibration in the 'community shops' that are being started around the world. These are storefront locations, funded by the community and/or by non-profit grants, that are loose propositional spaces. Anyone can offer a class or workshop and use the space to do it. Often they have general emergent themes. One in the U.K. is focused on relearning how to fix material objects, taking the elements of apocalyptic anxiety, loneliness, unused skills and creative capacities, and predatorial planned obsolescence, and turning them in toward each other. Another shop in the U.K. is even more open; the proposition there is that everyone has ideas about their community, but nowhere to share and plan any possible furtherance of those ideas. It

has been massively successful, with stories of earthly collaboration streaming from the people who have attended to that process.

What is common between these examples, and which is most fruitful for our thinking here, is a structure that defends against financialization, is autonomous and local, is open to all, and which suffers precarious funding sources (while enjoying the immanence of community self-funding). In other, more neoliberal, examples, community shops change elements of the first three commonalities in order to ease the suffering of the third. Basically, they categorize an aspect of their operation as a commodity to fund their overall operation, or they trade off autonomy for funding to entities who will select the commodification on profit terms.

RELATIVE TO HOW?

It is here that I become interested in relative ratio. We know it in finance only on for-profit terms (for even non-profit relative ratios are for-profit in the sense that they are written off as losses in the government grant structure). But relative ratio (which is really just the governmentality of a budget) can operate otherwise, for it has the option of assembling information without knowledge. Stratification is useful here, where relative ratio has stratas of operationality that function by rules different from one another. The input of the data is a layer, and a drama about "universal truth." The decision on what to categorize (so as to fund it) is a layer, and a drama about Governance. The overall dynamic of shifting the ratio, the cascading effects of change, is a layer, a drama that

can be about risk and profit margin, or, it can be about tuning with the expression of the effects. It is in this third layer where I see relative ratio being able to play an otherwise role as a technique of infrastructurality. For, as was said regarding the freeing of the formal from its 'universal' role (which is nothing but a role at the service of profit), relative ratio is a formality in search of a feeling.

THE FORMAL AS EPILOGUE

In this chapter I sought to experiment with ways of describing an account of the formal that does not abandon it completely to a position of inferiority to the informal. The reason for these experiments is an interest in how to join in working for the sake of an end to the racial capitalist world, without those facilitations engendering the same manners of organization that attend to not only explicitly racial capitalist structures but also to those many well-intentioned projects founded against such structures, that nevertheless begin with the opposite problem: a rapt worship of the formal as the category through which the informal is liberated into effectiveness.

To do this, I proposed to try to think with Denise Ferreira da Silva's work on the plenum and her earlier work on the analytics of raciality, as well as with the Iranian philosopher of engineering, Reza Negarestani, and his work on stratification, artificiality, and Artificial General Intelligence, such that I might sail with some of the modes of thinking their work opens up, and perhaps therein find some making-doing toward an

active and emergent infrastructurality that is practically and ethically useful for our communities of resistance and living.

I wanted to look in depth at the context that da Silva extends in *Toward a Global Idea of Race*, itself a crucial analysis toward re-emplacing our thinking *in our different but inseparable midsts*. Most important is her account of the vast and continuous violence white supremacy puts on thought itself (and anyone who finds themselves within thought's differential). Without otherwise techniques we are always left with the fictionally obvious truth such racial capitalism establishes. Further, I wanted to lay out my understanding of the plenum to date, as I take it to be the best contender for a subsequence to the current system and its narratives. From Negarestani's lecture at the Symposium on Anonymous Materials, I provisionally welcomed in his account of manipulation. He holds there that different stratas of material have different rules of engagement re: manipulation, and I find it a convenient way to defend the notion that working "with/out" the subject, as da Silva has it, is better than trying to rehabilitate that subject into a different form. Or perhaps that it is better to be working on a different emptying point for the subject's subjecthood. The question remains whether such necessary emptying of the subject means a necessary emptying of the formal. Utilizing a key section in Negarestani's newest work, *Intelligence and Spirit*, I explored how the formal can be understood as an expressive function rather than a utilitarian one. Additionally, here, I followed how Negarestani's critique of the subject lines up with that of da Silva's, and where it does not. Finally, I attempted some creative gestures to embrace the plenum and its immanent responsibility to participate in the collective manipulation of itself. I wagered that such activities might lead to an 'infrastructurality'

unmoored from formality's historicist and universalist roots, an infrastructurality that is rather a way of expressing emergently that a play-fight with form is possible, with structure most necessary, and with organization long overdue.

It is an intuition from the study and living of the last 6 years, that perhaps the financial language of "fork" is appropriate to the task at hand: to disempower the force of dominance exuding from the transcendent Subject in modern discourse, planning, and governance. What defenses and what *modes* of infrastructurality are needed, are called for, here? The fork is a defense, the hack is a defense, the coalition is a defense, all of relative ratio in an otherwise universe. These must be all considered both within the conditions in which they must play out at the global level and within an analysis of the costs that each 'how' of defense defers from its target to those who deploy it.

> "The Panthers theorized revolution without politics, which is to say
> revolution with neither a subject nor a principle of decision. Against
> the law because they were generating law, they practiced an
> ongoing planning to be possessed, hopelessly and optimistically
> and incessantly indebted, given to unfinished, contrapuntal study
> of, and in, the common wealth, poverty and the blackness of the
> surround." (Moten & Harney, 18)

"Against the law because they were generating law," Moten and Harney swing with the Black Panthers into a strange territory, one defended so as to not to be occupied by time and space, by these orienting powers that work because they appear

as if they are not orienting but rather just happening to us. Time and space are conceived as backdrops that make the false drama of becoming Man a convincing drama. Not only convincing but predetermined. The cosmological St. Augustine of Hippo said, "love God, then do what you want." Pre-programmatic programming so that one's desires are 'in order' and thus 'by order', allowing that one to act in the freedom of its prior giving up of a certain idea of freedom, or giving up on its participation in its own contingency. Accept time and space as they are handed down, then do what you want. And depending on the form you fill, you may also take up Being, the thing which can be what it wants, against every silenced proof to the contrary.

Structures and the philosophies of structuration that call for structures are the continual shock troops of time and space. The city is a message, a billboard, a continual performance of the truth of the background of space and time. And the city is a message about subjects acting in the freedom of the acceptance of that backgrounding.

So to be about "generating law" AT ALL is a kind of assault on the laws of time and space, an assault on the chain of claims between time and space, on the one hand, and, on the other, the structuration of our daily lives, the field of micro-oppressions replete with the tradeoffs needed to make it a functioning economy of subsequent and irradiating oppression.

Racial capitalism operates successfully and continually through the universality provided by the backgroundment of time and space into natural phenomena. The cultivation of the transcendental subject, the only ruler and knower of the world, requires that its history be naturalized and its nature be historicized. For one can only defend an

evacuation of the ethical if choices are delimited by an unchangeable factor: nature. And one can only justify doing "what you want" onto the world by outfitting oneself with a history of cultures proving their natural endowment with the desire to gain the intelligence (which was already within) to shape the world correctly. Rationality and empiricism think they are without speculation, which in so doing make their speculations into demands that the code of their process produce the truth parameters they are looking for, which is nothing but—formally speaking—a justification for the commitment of resources to establishing the infrastructure to continually prove the right and goodness of doing so. But no one, and nothing, is without speculation, nor is any most successful production without debt to its activity.

Time is not time, time is the time of progress. Space is not space, space is the space of nature's vote in favor of that progress and *whatever it requires*. Progress, propped up by space and time so policed, is the force of racial capitalism, the story of movement contradicting every other story of movement in the world. The story to end all stories.

How do we work toward ending the story to end all stories? Or, as Denise Ferreira da Silva has it, how do we work for the end of *this* world ("Toward a Black Feminist Poethic," 1). Any work that could legitimately de-world the world of racial capitalism must be worked in a different *manner* than the de-worlding activity of racial capitalism itself. That is, it must be collective and irresponsive to the kingship of the individual and all the analytics of raciality that come along to standardize and make unachievable that "individual" to the "Others of Europe" (da Silva, *Toward a Global Idea of Race*). As De Castro expresses in a earlier chapter there are two modalities of

collectivity in "the Hippies" and "the Black Panthers." The first is a universal oneness, the real truth of our existence that is covered over by our cyclical divisions and the violent-because-damaged responses in our patterns of reaction. The second is an entanglement, a "difference without separability" that has life as a Plenum, space completely filled, distinguishable while together, always changing. It is this second account of collectivity (we can also say collective autonomy) that understands how the analytics of raciality has pre-stacked our ways of knowing with a false natural point of beginning. Thinking with the plenum understands any approach to a universal commons to be but a changing of the aesthetics of domination and extraction rather than, as said above, an experimentation with *the manners of our very knowing, our modes of relation*.

POEMS FOR COMPUTATION
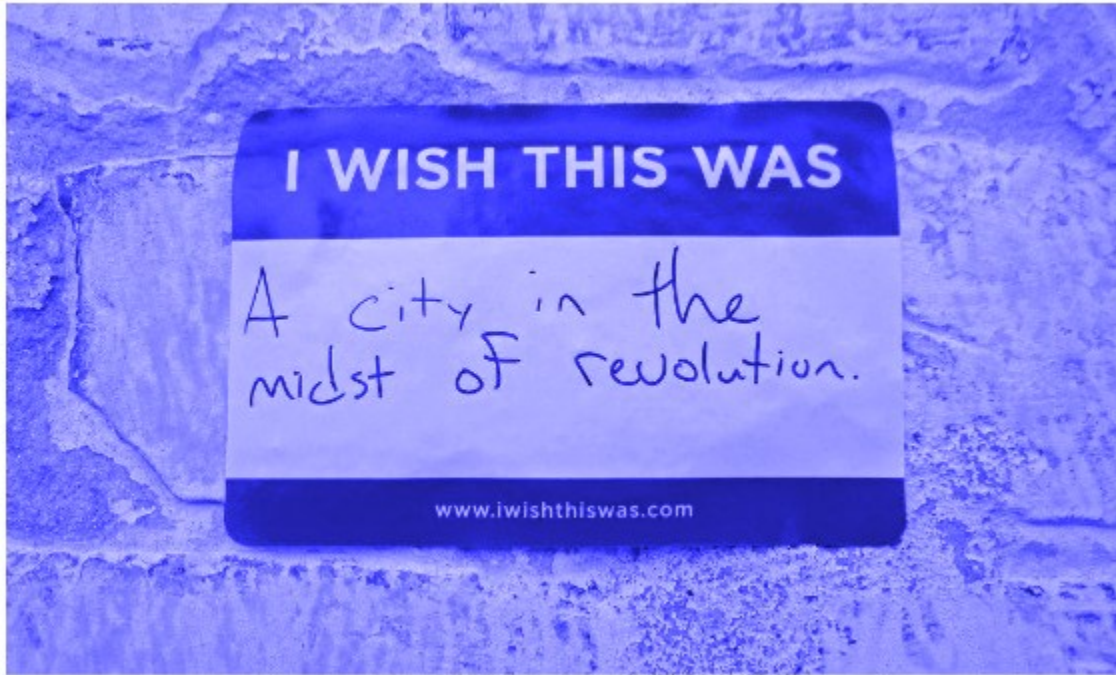
"I Wish This Was" (2010-ongoing) by Candy Chang. A piece of distributed and decoordinated performance art where participants (anyone) places the above sticker with a written expression of their desire for a physical location. MSIL understands "I Wish This Was" as an example of infrastructurality at play, at work, and sets it as an example of how to offer tools rather than prescriptions.

This is nowhere

From the frog's perspective this town is

its own fraction felt down

the enormity of the grey step

As mountain

how to code

Needs to love

How things stitch

Before they are fixed to any rod by any human hand

You will look back and say

I knew you all along

You were the heart of my life

The fashion and fabulation of living

The widening spin of heels, turnt trunks

(Everything in the wind)

otter hips wet with melting ice

the sorrow in the lack of completion

its necessity

When the peach is gone its stone remains

I wash up on the beach and spawn

Everything is sensing

And with its other face

does not sense

Misses the dust

While in its midst made by it

to code

you teach me how to be unafraid

say to the islands--their waters between--

remind him to take the knife of decision

with whatever incises over and over and over again

remind me to taste

remind you of taste

And together there will be this dance

Of code

And the earth

Our together hone and pluck

sculptures of moving thought

Cracks the speed plate

The processing mouth clamps up

in the appetite of animals

We spring up

To attention

To counter clear the water ways

And supply the fucking community

Not debating with all our hours and strength

But show show, hide, show

bleed of contrasts

Running out

relapsing

Make things that dissolve!

CHAPTER THREE

INFRASTRUCTURALITY

[*The Difference Scale Makes For Affect*]

"The minor thus gets cast aside, overlooked, or forgotten in the interplay of major chords. This is the downside of the minor, but also its strength: that it does not have the full force of a preexisting status, of a given structure, of a predetermined metric, to keep it alive. It is out of time, untimely, rhythmically inventing its own pulse"

Erin Manning,*The Minor Gesture*, 1-2 (2019)

The way we live our infrastructure, our mandate and our articles of incorporation, is to not live by them, but underneath them, constantly deontologizing them without destroying them (for we need them for defense, because we are complicitly already in them). But also because we do not believe in a world that needs the kind of saving that a static organization can offer. We live the laws and conditions to come while also expending energy to build an architectural bridge up to that potential struggling with the laws present in the here and now.

This is the performative gesture of infrastructurality, a "minor gesture," one that points to the ship of potential just offshore, one that is always scoping our weight and the distance to the home we're reaching for. If it is a site to see, an acrobatic risk *in this lived context*, a space betting it's falling for the sake of us and others who are also witnesses, publicly valuing what we desire in spite of political illegibility, then it is in apposition to the locked horns of the problem of value in the frame of chronological time.

Retour

If ontology is forgotten infrastructure, the made being remembered as given, then what is current infrastructure? And what are its options?

Perhaps new infrastructure indicates accepted ontological edits, things we are interested in experiencing as natural, situations where it is beneficial to do so, a way of extending the lifespan of naturalness to sustain the liberal project of progress, and using the law-making force of resource allocation to do it. But even if every infrastructure begins in proximity to what is current, the way of constructing infrastructure, the way of its mode (its code)--its art of 'permanence'--condemns its people to an eventual amnesia, leaving us with nothing but a justification for its governance *in general*. Can the needs and wants that give rise to infrastructure—not infrastructure itself--give something else: a creation that is more, less, and otherwise, from this fate? What are its options?

Contra-infrastructure, this piece of writing is offered to outline a particular performance of what I will call 'infrastructurality' in the emplaced constitution and event-based interventions of the Maritime Social Innovation Lab in St. Stephen, New Brunswick, beginning in January 2019 and continuing on as of the date of this writing.

The move to designate this 'infrastructurality' as a living technique comes from two places. (1) Erin Manning, Brian Massumi, and the Senselab's focus on 'esqueness', and (2) Fred Moten and Stefano Harney's *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study* where Harney's work on the difference between logistics and logisticality

95

meets Moten's work on totality "in the break." The goal is to together reverse-engineer the political surround.

Perhaps it is best to begin in the current middle, a muddle and a fiction in terms of any proposed stasis or suggested arrival. The following short definition of the 'state' (*staats*) of the Maritime Social Innovation Lab was written on February 21st, 2020. I will attempt to reference the dates of writings in order to draw attention to processes that go backward and forward through the duration of this project's various actualization points. In addition, hereafter the Maritime Social Innovation Lab will be referenced as MSIL (said out loud like 'missle'). We have learned backwards that we say it this way--out loud--because:

MSIL is a tactical unit

For agitating and nurturing

The emergence of collective autonomy

In the region of Charlotte County, New Brunswick.

The art of the governance of the thing has meant we always Imply or outright state that, whatever the assumptions of the people and orgs we're talking to, there is already "other" governance going on, and it can be called on in all its porous differentiality as the STAATSKUNST da lemanja (the art of governance of the Goddess of the Sea). We don't say it, and we don't bring it. It brings us. It brings us *in like that* to meetings, negotiations, emails, encounters, *like this:* "out of time, untimely,

rhythmically inventing its own pulse" with this weird vision that they are all, all of them, events of preconsensual coalition building, coalition building that is necessarily preconsensual because there is no formalization to consent to, yet or ever, or because the recognition of this proto-collective is impossible to achieve by the very rules governing *over* these orgs and people, which is the rule of recognition itself: make "yourself" visible and then "we" will decide whether to recognize "you." The quotations marks express the lack of epistemological traction any of the actors involved truly have on these categories, the hard to face facts of the low informational quality of any analyses or decisions brought forth on the basis of such confidences.

But this is not critique, it's life. Governance otherwise is already going on, other worlds are already existent, and none of them are the property of MSIL, no more or less than they are of our local interlocutors. Instead we view our work as galvanizing a gathering round a fire that is lit, but not yet to our perception. How do you build a fire you cannot see? You engage in fabulational performances of thought with others where you collectively grow your fabulational abilities. Here 'fabulational' and 'infrastructurality' cross over in the way the attunement processes of both start to atone for our lack of attention to what processes the past is bringing forward and what portfolios of actualizations are being called forth from the futurial jungle of potentiality.

97

We imply in our communications that it is all of our collective responsibility to hear and move with the hands of past and future, reaching for each other in our midst. This is the plenum.

What is the nature of this responsibility? Is it, as Reza Negarestani states, to put our hands into the event with those other hands, an event appearing for the moment but ethereally, and to then join in the manipulation of matter as an active and destructive and constructive mode of collective discernment? Is it to say that to discern which way to go, which project to invest in and, crucially, in what manner, is an intuition that is an act of *making that way in concert* with the processes and proto-actualizations at (as) hand?

If so, what is the nature of this "in concert" with the plenum? Is it not imperialism (metaphysics) or could it be worship (object oriented ontology)? Or could 'in concert' mean together-with, a means of play-fight of relation that does and undoes math together, fails together, rejoins and splits, comes into sound as a relational antagonistic entanglement, serves a movement? It seems ironic to say that in order to avoid hubris, we must stick our hand in it, as if it needed us. But perhaps it is only not hubris, and only then plenum participation, when we expect other more-than-human hands to be there--forcefully--when we do.

No Bodies

Even in this unorthodox approach--seeing the construction of infrastructure and the tending of infrastructurality as 'performances'-- it would not be unexpected to suggest that observers and participants see MSIL as a performing 'body', with its articles of incorporation forming its skeletal structure, the successful exercising of its various sub-committees growing its muscles, and the efficacy of its various projects comprising the politico-aesthetic movements of its body in space, shifting affects in the ecology of experience that change tides of appetite to render new worlds, new realities, new possibilities for living of all kinds.

While we want the latter, a shifting of affects toward an awareness and responsiveness to the inter-agency of all differentiated-but-entangled life, MSIL declines to begin with the premise that 'the organization is a body' of any kind. When appetites are predetermined as emerging from bodies, whether human or collective, the field is recentered around the making of law for bodies and the boundaries to that law's governance are erected in places that expect agency from the wrong location (Da Silva, 221). How can anyone be expected to make ecological decisions, decisions with and about *everything*, when the very first assumption with which we are forced to begin is that the thinking machine is inside a discernible bordered agent that implicitly exists to bring the rest of the ecology to heel, in accordance with (and because of) the privileged perception of that agent preconstituted as such? Standing instead to the side, following Fred Moten, who is following Edouard Glissant, can the things we call organizations (in-*corp*-orations), just as much as the things we call people, "consent not to be a single being"?

Toward such multiplicitous desire, MSIL has opted to value event-based organization over other defensible if not ultimately helpful compromises. Withdrawing our participation from initiatives that are not open enough if necessary, but more often outstaying our welcome in preferring to model attunement to the realness of ideas in their process of becoming. We have bet on the idea that just being constant in this push begins to awaken the thing that *is* given: the participation of everything in everything, not in the way of mush, but in the way of relation between already entangled entities, themselves always already changing.

While the commodity form of labor induced, or called for, a "class-consciousness" able to repudiate mystical claims of free-floating, unattached, and unresponsive "work," the digital age, the networked age, the financial age, the age of climate collapse, all induce a rising awareness of "process-consciousness," an understanding of how the forced formalization of processes in the attention economy steals (or sells off at a very low price) those very processes from underneath communities of care, processes which would otherwise entail, if unstolen, our very ability to remember that we are already participating in the mutual thought creation of many worlds, many of which are much closer to form-taking than advertised (Beller, 181-82, 234).

It is in support of this emergence of process-consciousness that MSIL has demurred in situations where a strong structural hand was asked for or imagined in the local civic politics of resource allocation and project-planning. There were many times where I was unsure of this strategy, involved as I was and am in the actual everyday economy of the place, its historical hesitancies and its unacknowledged wounds, its constant capital leakage. Instead of starting from a recognition of the centrality and

100

naturalness of the 'civic', we have become "a tactical unit," taking no place but seeding

an expectation that an event of co-learning might arise in response to a running

knowledge of "what is wanted" and "what is needed" in our specific context. This has

proven entirely worth it.

How Plenum frames "time" as functional infrastructurality

To use financial language, the tools of infrastructurality, as we endeavour to build

them, use them, and model them, are about trading on the optionality of infrastructures

to come. As in Deleuze's treatment of the "people to come," it is urgent that these

infrastructures not be waited on or for. Here a "people to come" names the speculative

figuration of future potential in the aesthetics of the now's performance, drawing the now

out to an expression that is actively expecting a different world and thus enabling a

different creation in the now. This allows our insurgent and emergent infrastructurality to

not bear too heavily the weather of the present, but to also orient by the speculations of

weather patterns to come. The "people to come" need never arrive in any particularity;

and interestingly, in the case of infrastructure, it might be better if they didn't. Their "to-

come-ness" is a lure drawing us into present and future actions that would be otherwise

stalled for their impossibility to graph or plan for. Stuck between vain estimations of our

present analytic capability and the paralyzing effect of an impossible to imagine future, it

is the optionality of "to-come-ness" that, like in financial markets, offers current value for

potential futures. Infrastructurality as a technique can be explained to investors as an

option cutting the risk on future infrastructures failing (which we know they always will:

the effect of misremembered ontology). An option in finance is a contract selling future

access to a pre-agreed upon price (when certain and stated supply or time conditions are met). These contracts can themselves be traded between parties before they ever come to term (where the conditions are met and the asset changes hands). While the purpose was originally to settle volatility in markets vulnerable to geo-seasonal changes, the options contract, in its tradeability, has become a way to call forth a "people to come" around a certain reality yet to be instantiated. That is, options contracts don't just make the future safer for investors, they also show how trading options in its base conceptual form is a world-making proctocol where what is bet on becomes more likely to occur. Thus the benefit of the optionality framing continues, where the "to-come-ness" of a bet on potential future justice or on a potential future free ecology of entanglement acts as a risk on its face, something to be mitigated, but in reality, in its functional social arousal (where arousal figurates what appetite is 'trading'), is an active and liberating substituting out of a "messianic time" for an imminent "prophetic time" where *now is the time for justice* (economic, social, psychic, environmental), for care, its proliferation and protection (Robert Meister "The Past is Evil doesn't mean the Evil is Past," 2018).

In performing infrastructurality, we lure with the future in order to trick ourselves into building, yet without falling into the constraints of an impulse to legacy protection. We act now on the partial information of the future precisely to halve the risk of building without said constraints. We are not interested in sentiment alone, it is low level politics. We are interested in achieving an upsurgence through resource allocation itself and into projects which are deeply connected to the dynamic inter-connection of all lived processes, processes which are full of sentiment. All of this optionality talk is important

because of the way an option--betting somewhere in the spread of risk between now and the future--increases the chances that those involved will stay with the process in the here and now rather than escape into an endlessly-deferred present-promise merely *about the future*. Optionality is a financially inflected way to justify the waiting required for the emergence of the living thing (what is rising from beneath) and to avoid worshiping at the altar of a politically convenient deferral. Optionality is the art of waiting without deferring. Avoiding that and embracing this, as is the tendency of the gift of fabulation (a gift at the heart of optionality), what we make-believe we can believe into making. And if we remember the dream throughout the making, its temporary body-esqueness, then what we have made through the power of dreaming can be given back to the dream without losing our multiple "beingness." Welcome these 'economies-to-come' as a response to their potential.

The Art of Infrastructurality

The art of infrastructurality is the way MSIL has attempted to engage the civic space. And since so much of the organizational and anti-organizational theory employed has led to informal actions, it is a task to name what has been done in a way that puts the value and the power at the right layers of 'happening'. What is more important than any formal partnerships, platforms, or products: We look to art as the manners we employ and that are employed 'against us', that cross our thresholds of experience, the aesthetic singularity of the event's 'how'. The moments, the slices when

infrastructurality has become aware of itself: Art as the way, the path. We are looking for the formalities which already portend a porousness to an intaking expressiveness, a stepping away from mediation, a loose-enough boundedness around its technical construction and its attachment to endurance that it can even be spoken of: the transition from a potential infrastructurality to an actualized form-of-force infrastructurality that is such to the extent that it expresses in its structuration the particular and aesthetic shapeliness of the nutrition of process it has been living with in its journey in and out of sensation.

Infrastructure—rather than infrastructurality--pretends to deliver services but only delivers an end to delivering services in (and as) a slow protracted and torturous manner of scarcity politics, minimizing the output in order to maximize the profit. So: Infrastructurality as art, as what's happening, what's gathering, a non-linear path (where linearity is the capitalist naturalization of "shortest length between two points is a straight line"): this 'how' of infrastructurality needs by necessity to explore the expansion of delivery of services as aesthetic, if only to increase the field of resonance, feedback, and refraction. Go back and forth like the fishing boat, back and froth like the fish in the tide of this tidal river. Do work like the salt river. But the backs of many are rightfully fraught with exhaustion from infrastructure's form.

We have instilled an attention to emergence
And a pedagogical account of collective autonomy
In our interactions with individuals and orgs, including municipal and provincial
government.

MSIL attempts its artwork, in part, by stating itself as a lab. A lab, as we understand it, is an entity unvowed to its own success, and that is rather wedded to a desire for continual generative 'failure', the kind of which is interested in thought's own experimentation above all else, the risk of thinking in and with the world far above any metric of success that would put MSIL at the centre of the equation. As part of the Senselab at Concordia University in Montreal, I never quite realized the functional practicality of Erin Manning's oft-asserted leaning toward dissolution, failing, and collapse, always to veer away at the last moment. Now, with the benefit of hindsight and the arduousness of MSIL's everyday work, the logic of Manning becomes clear: whatever is not willing to fail at every point is not willing to risk at every point, thus losing the real opportunity of living and acting in an actual world, and bearing the greater risk of falling into simulation, a servant to someone else's mission, a waste. This approach assumes that any success worth having will be collectively wrought without the force of central coordination and without a detailed vision of what the future must contain. It will come together by appetite.

Infrastructurality's Performance
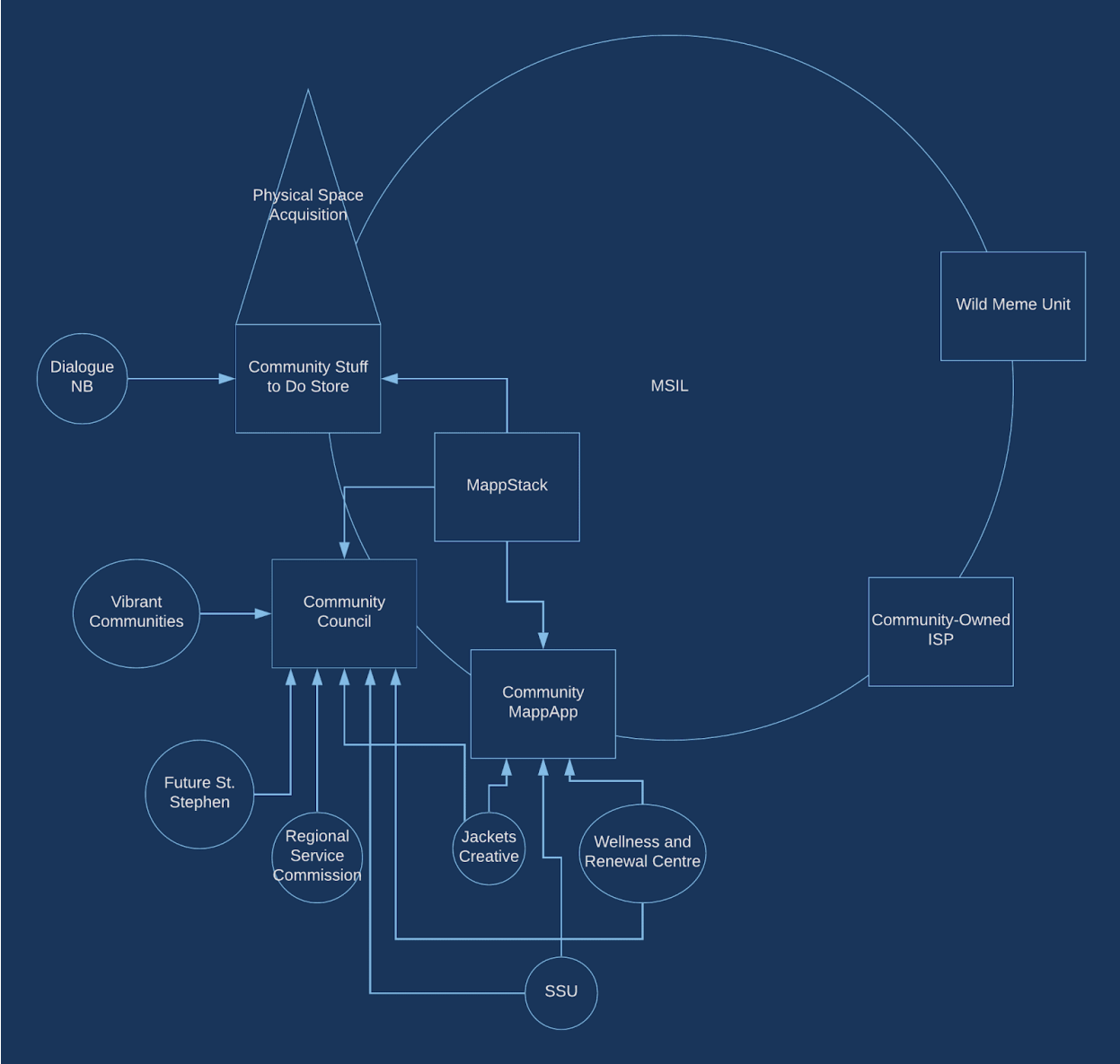
Infrastructurality is the quality of a gesture aimed toward the potential of getting together on 'our terms', by which I mean terms yet to be known by any particular description other than 'collectively autonomous' beyond any conception of ourselves as individuals that people in process). Here an announcement of the existence of our numerous, overlapping, yet differentiated responsibilities. If we take this as a cue to form government, we've missed the point, we've lost our responsibilities.

Infrastructurality is about the collective ability to organize and de-organize structures in such ways that they defend against expropriation.

This would still seem to definitionally leave infrastructurality in a reflexive mode, a functional mode. But infrastructurality is also expressive, which is to say its gesture is meant to play out in a politico-aesthetic field that gradiates along sensible and insensible lines in relation to emergent and dissolving figures of 'those that may witness' or 'those that live'.For instance, cooperatives mainly perform the taking of an ethico-aesthetic stand in a sea of for-profit endeavours and nonprofits funded by grants, both beholden to the interests of their funders. But if one does not take the current regulatory framework as ontological, the coop's performance stops at a severed aesthetic, cut at the bottom and the top. To incorporate in any fashion under current Canadian law is to suffer the immediacy of infrastructure, its upkeep but more importantly its public pretense at endless and exclusive existence (the cheap reward of legitimate publicness), performing a scene at odds with the ecological flow of process, barring against not only its own death but against the awareness of its own organic and porous inflow and outflow. Because it cannot die, it also cannot live. Added to this, and by no means specific to them, coops have no way to recognize their collectivity as anything but first and foremost a group of individuals.

The question has thus become for MSIL how to maintain its ability to act in ensemble with what is emerging, what is appetizing, with what wants a coming together, a splitting apart and rejoining elsewhere, while also achieving a trustable defense against takeover or a petering out without traction. Performing infrastructurality has become our name for acting together in such a way that allows us to quickly form and

deform as the event dictates, and to call out to those in our local community, those working in infrastructures, to study together, to attend to the thing that brought them and us to formalizations rather than to the formalization itself.

To stay true to what real experiments can offer to larger processes of societal emergence is an enduring core of MSIL's hesitancy to chase legitimacy or desire for recognition or legibility. Rather MSIL looks, as is stated above, to agitate and nurture any movement toward collective autonomy in Charlotte County, NB. The upside is stated in a MSIL project description from July 2019, introducing the Community Map Stack (a map app, a walk-in idea-sharing storefront, and a council structure for ecological conspiration):

> Our project, the Community Map Stack (CMS), is a project about many things at once: it is a project about collective art, a project about collaborative entrepreneurship and new business models, and, finally, a project about allowing a community to create its own story, its past, present, and future, in an ongoing, diagrammatic, visual, social, and socially inclusive way. We want to see what happens to a community when it can create its own record of the hope it wants to have for its future. This 'happening' is art. CMS is about showing people the artfulness embedded in collectively building collective assets, and how the act of considering this 'building' as art derives positive social effects in the community, in addition to the more traditional indicators of

economic growth. So CMS is an art piece, and it is truly artWORK, a

real collective labour to produce measurable net positive economic

impact. We believe there is a social transformation possible when

community members appreciate the art of their own community

creation. This is about reactivating community citizenry as cultural

agents, philosophic agents, and social agents--all without having to

please any knowledge-centre and what it thinks constitute any of these

disciplines. Communities are full of intelligence, and the failure of most

social programs is that they are not tuned in to be able to appreciate the

creationary intelligence lying latent. Rather communities with economic

problems are considered maladapted and in need of fixing. CMS runs

on a constitution that links a community's involvement in its own future-

making with its economic growth.
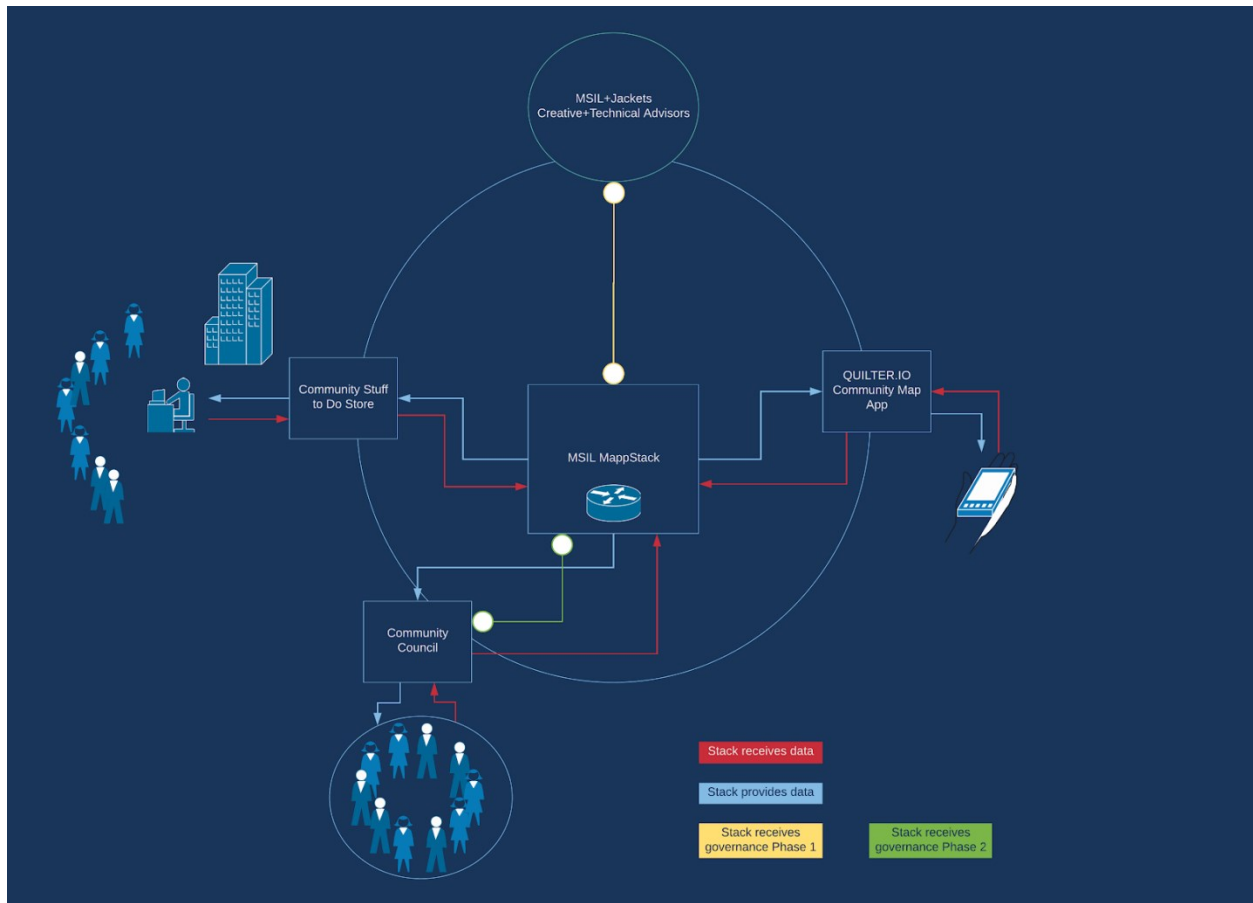
MapStack Part 1: Quilter.io

In its beta-stage, Quilter.io is a digital community map for community members and visitors to create and collaborate on events, ideas, and stories. The creation of the app is ongoing, and is a collaboration with a local coding company named Jackets Creative. They, perhaps above all other partners, have understood, defended, and worked for the anarchival vision of Quilter. While local municipal government and other non-profits have pressured us to make it an event app, MSIL and Jackets have maintained the primary importance of the "Idea" and "Story" functions.

MapStack Part 2: Stuff to Do Store

In a holding pattern after negotiations fell through with investors, the Stuff to Do Store is a proposal for a storefront location for the collective imagination and fugitive planning of the community. The Store will give a space of play in the analog where Quilter gifts in the digital. The imagined affect of the space is drawn from Senselab's spaZe operations as well as the Buy Nothing Stores in the UK. What both have in common is a protection of contingency, which in turn presents itself as an electrifying engine for people's ideas and intuitions. Manning recollects how spaZe was/is itself a conditionality in its expressive function, a "practice that moves at the pace of a transduction, following the logic not of originality or wholeness, but of emergent process. In drawing the shape of movement, what appeared on the page was not a representation…so much as an activation of how what they leave behind produces a field of composition in its own right" (*For a Pragmatics of the Useless*, "How Do We Repair?"). This is the creative power of communities beyond 'themselves'--that are differential and non-centralized, and where the uncommon detritus makes a functioning machinic protocol of composition creating of and beyond its own ensemble.[7]

 A new round of investors is interested in acquiring a building for MSIL to pursue the Stuff to Do Store and to house mentorship processes for ecologically-minded start-ups.

MapStack Part 3: Community Council

In process, and perhaps the most important piece of the entire MSIL-facilitated ecology, the community council is a collective organism to come, envisioned to be comprised of all actors of good faith in the entanglement of the three ecologies in

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[7] For fragments of spaZe operationality, see http://senselab.ca/wp2/spazeunderspaz/

Charlotte County. It is conceived of as four meetings a year, one for each season, where alliances and coalitions can be formed or intimated toward, where food and stories can be shared. By holding back on its development, MSIL has been able to build sympathy and collective thought around the proposition. A planner in the city planning office attempted to procure funds from United Way for the council but, as has been mentioned as a general principle above, the excessive documentation and the low-level conception of what documentation entails by the United Way led MSIL to withdraw the proposal for another moment with better partners. An important local advisor to MSIL, Sharon Thira from Salish Nation in B.C., has encouraged us to pursue a bold syncretism in the council's model, challenging us to light council fires in their physicality and intention, and to call together those interested in broadly defined ecological health. It is my current intuition that the art of the governance of this community council will (or must be) a true invention of emergent thought, itself born as a living diagram of everything that has been lived, everything that will have allowed it to come into existence. We are not in a hurry.

These are three examples. It has been MSIL's desire to build tools that can be used to find together our uncommon future. Tools uncoordinated but made to allow coordination, designed to uncover and attune to the generality of vivacious process: differences between us that are nonetheless connected and connectable. These are 'tools of infrastructurality', augmentations to our informality and nothing more.

Beneath Preclusion

In thinking with the past year regarding MSIL, this is of course not what was designed or predetermined to hold steady. Rather the events of the incursions we've led into civil economic life have changed our forming one by one, two by one, two times two. The multiplication of processes creating new infrastructurality, the techniques that allow us to increasingly hear infrastructurality's whistle, its harmonic against the wind of millions of microprocesses. This is the impulse of process when freed of legitimized planning and enclosing strategizing. It is the appetite we mainly want from infrastructurality, its child, infrastructure, comes along anyway in the global scene. Infrastructurality is the engine of MSIL, we continually hope to exert, exert to hope.

This current logic of MSIL governance will not stay the same or become a new everlasting normal. Infrastructurality will change our constitution as the events continue to happen, continue to insurge from beneath. We need to draw them as they happen (and this is about that) and we need to return to what was drawn in cyclical movements of anarchiving our own emergence, of learning what infrastructurality's own timing and moves have to teach. Let us follow Erin Manning here, where Anarchiving is "that transversality that returns experience to what most potently moves across it, and changes it in the crossing" ("How Do We Repair?"). The world is always washing over itself with multiplications from past and future. This is what "most potently moves across it." Against this, the present is but a word for colonization, a justification for not bringing the future here and now, for not hearing the demands of the past here and now, the operation of flattening itself. The lonely present is a gift to those in power currently, but they are not in the current that washes through, back and forth. The present is against the now, but we are not.

*See Appendix for introductions to MSIL's architecture and individual projects, including examples of literature produced for the public (ex. Philosophy of Investment document, "Triple Bottom Line Thesis").

POEMS FOR ATMOSPHERE

The feel of the infrastructure

That giant in our midst

That monstrous version:

A hardened collective agency

A lobster

The infrastructure molds melds the subjectivity intimately to its giant perspective.

If Nietzsche's frog knows the jungle of lawn grass and the mountains of front steps, the

shareholder in an organization knows the anthill of mountains, the petunia of redwoods.

Both are powered by the infrastructuresque of knowledge.

In infrastructure it is frog vs. giant, in infrastructurality it is giant vs. atmosphere.

Infrastructurality is perspectivism of a similar scope to the giant but informed through a different manner of participation in the infrastructuresque. Sensing through movement, differential touch, gesturing governance to preclude the erasure of contingency, not to ensure it.

Infrastructure flattens organization like money flattens value, mummifying and redeploying with such radical efficacy that we forget the event of it. The metrics that infrastructure justifies rely on prediction which relies on endurance as a necessary truth. But prediction is only predation in a mathematic mask, a tool for getting to a resource access point before others, strangely uncurious. When we love degradation, it is because structurality has been restrained enough that it can then dance.

Infrastructurality is the moan of the fog light as it particalizes through the wet air, showing every porous moment of difference, showing the net of communication already present before the light passes through. Organize like the moan of foglight sounds, and that's infrastructurality. There is too much Now--with the future and the past in it--to settle on the present as a land virgin of any responsibilities or ghosts.

But this is just what infrastructure attempts to cut out, the now nexus of future and past, and to pass off a facsimile of it in the form of the annexed present, the walls of the corporation of time. The option of enclosed rule.

Otherwise:

The living ghost of the world

The goddess of the sea

STAATSKUNST da Iemanja

Brings us somewhere else

Moten and Harney conclude *The Undercommons*:

"There's a touch,

a feel you want more of,

which releases you."

(99)

CHAPTER FOUR

ANTE NETWORK

[What is freedom computationally and ante-socially?]

"I didn't use the rope of the self to climb out of death"

Mary Walling Blackburn, "Swim To Us"

"The limits of Western radicalism as demonstrated in Marxist theory, the most sustained critique of the modern era, are endemic to Western civilization"

Cedric Robinson, *Black Marxism*, 66

"Throughout the twentieth century, computing technology and planning technique developed hand in hand, nurtured by generous investment from the Department of Defense. In the decades immediately following World War II, much of this activity happened within the interdisciplinary space of cybernetics, linking the military and its technological programs to an array of private sector and civil-society initiatives"

Jasper Bernes, "Planning and Anarchy," 53-54

Cedric Robinson holds that there are limits to western radicalism in its operation as a knowledge production frame, and it can be extended to say, as Jasper Bernes does above, that these limits impact the ability to imagine what else computation (and other ante-social life) can be. These limits are the limits of the transcendent subject as frame, the network as metaphysics. Infrastructurality is unhinged from the false necessities of the transcendent subject's model of executive endurance and form-as-mediation, and yet it is not a stranger to form-taking; it knows how to make a fulcrum at the apex of a potential becoming actual, sprawling mushroom of otherwise intelligence that can bear weight. Let us now turn in the manner of a design brief to what else programmation might be in the plenum.

PROGRAMMATION

All capabilities in a system exist as a mechanical byproduct of the network working itself. Thus a system is bound to a static and uni-dimensional conception of its own metaphysical "communication railroad" (its network) and bound to have that uni-

dimensionality deeply affect its core governing principles (or laws). The foundational characteristic of a networked system is its static boundedness. This is a distinct claim about networks when held in contrast with 20th century techno-utopianism (both its accelerationist necro-capitalist bent and its attendent oppositional and reformist progressive arm). That is, networks can only look salvific from a position where human agents are considered the main (or highest) manipulators of processes in socio-technical design. Networks from the perspective of plenum are entirely too clean and pre-made in their effort to display the fractal symmetry of thought, that is, an image of thought that reifies its own ability to map itself by externalizing the nonsensible as dross and emptiness. Or, it is the display of the ability to increase the speed of thought without having to dispense with the essential nodal character of the individual subject. The attempt to get all the benefit of the plenum without capitulating to the embrace of difference-without-separability and all the financial fallout (change) that is feared to occur as a result. This defense against entanglement is called systemization. Its progressive bulwark is the network.

Now, the difference between systemization and programmation is that where systemization formalizes capabilities that require a network, programmation formalizes capabilities that do not require a network but a state. Where a system is a collection of organized things, a program is a set of structured activities (i.e., it is one hundred percent vitalist). Activities start and end, are born and die, are remnant and forward-pulling or leeward-pulling lure; they graft and grade experience to the extent of their intensity of impression in an immanent happening.

The capabilities of a program require a state. A "state" in its functional entirety is only the communication of that state, a perspective of itself *as itself*. There is therefore nothing "within" that state (because it is the communication of itself). Further, there is nothing that delimits the actuality of an atmosphere said to have emitted or produced or manipulated--in partial or 'total' compresence--that state. In cryptography, the base concept of a hash can be defined as the extension of trust and trustability without the extension of possession. Or, a hash is the formal extension of the conditions for the execution of a collective action without requiring the formalization enacted in possession or knowledge-as-we-know-it. Where we earlier utilized this definition to defang the ownership rights of the transcendent subject in the form of the human *as* white European male, here we call it forth to further track that concept into the automated zone of the transcendent subject as proxied machine network. Because unlike system in its weaponization of transparency and 'open-knowledge' networks, a state does not possess the reality from which it garners its ability to communicate itself. That which is cryptographically necessary to communicate about a state does not comprise the actual atmosphere of which that state is but a single momentary face. The face as temporary bridge, expression as gestural dissolving bridge. To say the same in a different way, the communication of "state" (which is itself) can be rendered colloquially as happening on a "want to know/need to know" basis, and should not be characterized as an ontological disclosure. Networks, on the other hand, verify their connections within a small system of agents; the dots and lines are the entire ecosystem--as far as a network is concerned--and the empty space between those dots and lines is, to a network, just that, empty. Such a view hardly knows the realness and the actuality of the currents of

air and ocean, of the plenum where even the notion of space is much too much born from the financial and political upside to separating that which is "in" space and that which is not.

A networked system definitionally forecloses on itself with such dependability that there can be postulated, as Jasper Bernes leads us to begin, the existence of a direct connection between cybernetics as a DOD funded field of inquiry and the automated (quickly repeating) nature of 21st century financial and legal externalization. That is, perhaps there is nothing holding back a more open ended and dynamical computational model than the endurance of financial incentives betting (stealing) shaving off private reserves of 'profit growth' via the fictional externalization of our shared ecology (the real site of economy). A network is an externality-producing and externality-managing machine.

A network verifies itself through distribution of perspectives, holding fragments or aspects of a task or an answer to a cryptographic problem. Networks are resilient in this regard. But it is not considered a positive trait in this work that networks be resilient to all attacks on their cogent process when the reason for such cogency is the falsely purifying effect of externalization as a financially motivated operation. Put a network in the plenum and its cogency will wobble and spin into its own minor expression.

Infrastructurality is the non-predetermined form-taking gesture of programmation. The existence of infinite numbers, and the non-predetermination that they bring to programmation, aids the techniques of infrastructurality in providing a pathway to logically embrace a more fully emergent account of computation, AGI, and neuro-

diverse life in general. Neuro-diverse life as emergence itself: a lopsided circle, looping and reinventing momentum as that lopsided "general antagonism" to any perfect circle of cause and effect, of externalizing in order to render the perfect circle of the transcendent subject's closed ledger of accounting. The nonpredetermination of proveably existent sets of infinite numbers constitutes an account of how the plenum's entanglement starts and ends with emergence *as* continual emergence of neurodiversity, of (in partnership with) formality expressing itself functionally within the plenum as a "poethic" hash, the manners, the aesthetics of protocolization, of programmation within/as a dynamical "Base Faith" ("Base Faith," Fred Moten and Stefano Harney, E-Flux, 2020). Against such base faith, in support of againstness, the solitary sensational (which leads to the formal preconstituted as carrier of content) attempts to enact itself without the non-sensational, proving its humanosity toward collective subsistence on a programmatic level. In strategic response to such non-ecology, Skye Boughsty Marshall argues for a decoupling of "formality" from "human construction," "perception" or "experience" and, thus, numeration as we have known it. He writes, "objects of objective knowledge are of form, not experiential content, and so can be described as "structural entities," which is to say constitutively articulated by logical relations that can be intersubjectively coordinated" ("Growing Symbols," 17). "[L]ogical relations" is understood here to mean the speculative logic of relations of functionality AS expressivity "with/out" the subject (*Ibid.*, and da Silva, 236). What Boughsty Marshall calls the inter-subjectivity of non human expressional forms flies away from the data-markets that networks are made to make necessary: fly away and build into a speculative autonomy from form as we've known it. Thus, we postulate that

the entities that are in becoming, the spaces and knowledges supposedly between nodes and lines (under and orthogonal), are in fact ante-space and ante-knowledge, are plenum, and are apart from networks as far as networks can know it in their own structural oppositionality, and yet are deeply entangled with what gives to networks their stolen cogency. Whichever these structural entities are, they must be innumerable entities, logically of that second kind of infinitude (as Peirce describes), in innumerable rather than endless sets.[8] There is one kind of mathematic objectivity in expressions of endless sets of infinite numbers and another kind in expressions of innumerable sets of infinite numbers. The first objectivity is obtained through what Peirce calls "mathematical induction," the application of a patterned range of a finite number within the equation of an endless set, or, as an example, by increasing "the exponent of *Y* by 1" in successive variation (317-318). They will go on forever but they are still numerable. The second kind of mathematical objectivity in infinite numbers, the kind associated here with what we want to call formality in a free ecology (structural entities in the plenum), expresses the infinitude of innumerable numbers. In this, Peirce gives us the clearest example in Pi. He writes,

> "[T]here are collections [sets] which are certainly innumerable. Such is the
> collection of all numbers to which endless series of decimals are capable of
> approximating. It has been recognized since the time of Euclid that certain
> numbers are surd or incommensurable, and are not exactly expressible by any

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[8] See Deleuze and Guattari on the "numbering number" in *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987: 389); also, "the numbering number…pertains to smooth space, just as the numbered number pertains to striated space. So we may say of every multiplicity that it is already a number, and still a unit. But the number and the unit, and even the way in which the unit divides, are different in each case. Minor science is continually enriching major science, communicating its intuitions to it, its way of proceeding, its itinerancy, its sense of and taste for matter, singularity, variation, intuitionist geometry and the numbering number" (*Ibid*, 484).

finite series of decimals, nor by a circulating decimal. Such is the ratio of the

circumference of a circle to its diameter, which we know is nearly 3.1415926. The

calculation of this number has been carried to over 700 figures without the

slightest appearance of regularity in their sequence" (319, *The Law of Mind*).

It emerges then that, in reality, the perfect circle *is* a lopsided circle, "perfect" in the

sense of its intimacy with--its programmation participating in—that "approximation of

proximity" living in the rhythm of difference without separability (Erin Manning, *For a*

Pragmatics of the Useless).

Still image from Ponyo *by Hiyao Miyazaki (2008)*

Such objectivity is precisely claimed at the level of proving infinitude's expression

in constant arrhythmic form-taking and form-breaking, a proof of emergence as

language of the universe. These structural entities have much more to tell us, much

more to refract in uncommon traction through the midst of us, troubling our 'contents'

and the ways we use them to create and maintain naturalized economic partitions as

"objects of knowledge" to be owned. For instance, because there can be no accessible "range"in innumberable incommensurable infinite numbers, neither can there be any indexicality at all, there. What otherwise-machines might flourish in such incommensurability?

The structured activity-esque-ness (the program) of listening is a speculative loop that proposes itself as a machine of porosity. If oppositionality to ownership only produces more private property, where ensconcement without functional invention only makes a new falsely-stable circle within which to assume the transcendent subject, perhaps appositionality to ownership and its knowledge is called for, called forth. MaryWalling Blackburn writes, "Can Big Data be half-shucked off by Deep Listening?" ("Swim to Us"). The activity of listening, its collection of vitalities, does not necessitate any partial or full ownership, but is rather interjecting as programmation, as creative manipulation into a suffused space without network (or without finalizing, ontologizing network). Listening can take in actuality without owning it through inscription in a table, which is to say inscribed across the length of a naturalized time. Rather, the expressivity of listening is an operation of infrastructurality that, one, provides a temporary defense and, two, further, marks where in the surround there are infinitesimal-expressive formations of a certain (which is to say immanent) hash of a speculative set of existent forces.

Infrastructurality names the speculative engagement (listening) with these entities as aspects of an entangled universe of more-than-human forces, including the forces of that which almost happens but does not. Thus can we say about structural entities (the temporary faces of infrastructurality) that the above is true or something

126

else is true that yet produces the same effect of "form" as dynamic co-constituence. It is fascinating to think the question of whether there be form in the plenum. Because: is it form "of a different kind" or is it form "of a different origin" or is it form "of a different action" or simply form "seen from another angle, another position"? I take Boughsty Marshall to be laying out a thought train as such:

1. Forms are existent without content

2. Therefore, knowledge of the formal is knowledge of the constructions of the formal

3. Shared knowledge is shared knowledge of forms, it is the formal that makes explicit our undertaking of an understanding (having seen such formal connections, we endeavor to explore and detail them)

4. These forms change, are negotiated or are 'negotiatisms' – "structural entities" of their own doing-ness

5. These forms change through the interaction of logical relations, where the 'speech' is the changing aspect of the thing – the co-articulated agreement--the 'state' (with no representational capacity)

6. These are made through the articulation of them, where their holding together is how they gain the reputation of being functions (the supply line works, whatever it happens to subsist in)

7. Forms are far from the only things that are real. Rather, it is only when forms take on a habit of expressivity rather than mediation that they become in any way *ecologically real—real in the plenum, in the earth.*

THREE PLENUM PROMPTS

- Formality With/Out Ownership or Property

- Formality in Free Ecology with/of Informality

- Formality With/Out Networks

ANTE SOCIAL PROGRAMMATION

What can this new formality do, when it is about expression and not bounding the binds? The weight must be considered, what the speculation does to the weight and the weight to the speculation. Stephanie Dinkins is there to help us consider some alternate and transgressive ways into the joy of study, into lightweightness, of building, into structure as expression on its way somewhere NOW, of engineering, into the world building that's architectural, and it has everything to do with fabulation in the now. We

stumble there by jumping in with different contemporary voices on the notion of intelligence itself, as it relates to race, debates on identity, and the potential problems of representational frameworks as ultimately tied to reformist racial politics. We then look to extend some hypotheses about what a computational language of the plenum would sound like, practically, in design-brief terms. This portion should place the study in a more satisfying position for discussions on the purpose of technology in a post capitalist world, and how it might assist in the ritualizing of a non representational non temporal non spatial interconnected field of relation where there are "no selves to abolish," which is to say where the white terror has been permanently forestalled (and not massacred) at the level of collective rituals looped forward in asynchronous ecologization. To loop asynchronously, in a lopsided anorganic fashion calls forth the frame of programmation as it overtakes systematicity.

The programmation we need is more xeno than just a recapitulation to the modeling prescient in pre-computer computation. We cannot forget that the rationalist proto computer allowed us to process this present frame of whiteness in action, this racial capitalism. The entire discipline of the philosophy of engineering, for example, exists not as itself emerging in an entangled world, but as a concrete expression of reducing what counts as counting in order to reduce what counts as efficient. Boring, brutal, violent cheapness. And so--doubly so, to try to swing double like Robinson-- we postulate that programmation is legitimately less violent because its base mechanism assumes relation with an outside beyond its control (and beyond its care).

To be free within a system is not to be free.

Computational Design scholars like Ron Eglash & Audrey Bennet bring us into the territory where we need to sit but for the wrong reasons and with hopes for the wrong outcome: an expansion of racially diverse culture, replete with a kind of mundane tracking of these histories of identity through their visual patterns of world-making. In their article, "Race-Positive Design: A Generative Approach to Decolonizing Computing," it is not strange to find the aforementioned pre-computer computation already happening in African fractals, like Eglash and Bennet assert, "[b]y documenting the ways that African traditions used recursive scaling in built environments, hairstyles, metal sculpture, textiles, divination codes, and other domains, we were able to make these "heritage algorithms" available for contemporary projects in STEM education, artisanal production, architecture, arts, urban agriculture, science fiction novels, and other design related disciplines" (3). But it's strange to think there is something cultural about it, that is, some kind of identity of a "people" that is always only meant to play a part in a squadron of diversity, which is to say, pre-given away to a centre where "scaling" is an assumed bedfellow to conservation. Indeed Eglash and Bennet are "[t]hinking about race as positive presence—as cultural capital" and it shows; it is auditory (1). I would rather stop there, before the diversity train, and turn to another angle (and miss the whole ontology of race from which the rehabilitation into positivity derives), going rather into how 'proliferation' itself is a part of blackness as a living concept most attended to by black communities but not only there, that in fact it is the specific generality of a concept like proliferation that is the blackest part about it, because it is not private as private property is private, as whiteness is the invention of

130

private property. I'm interested in the politics produced by the forms of life, not the history of visual cultures. What freedom means when it's more about a lack of price than about charters for individual human rights. And what freedom means when its more about how to count free, because you know what we mean by 'lack of price' is that price can never really settle down, can never really point in a single direction, price, cost, stakes, they are all constantly, shimmering, innumerable. From this then there is most directly speaking whole different modes of computation that are not riddled by whiteness and its way of counting to zero, this is the strong tone I want to hear coming from Eglash and Bennet, some Tsing, some perfectly oblong circling out from the outside of their morning coffee: that is the wonky generativity that's going to bring us right by keeping us wrong in terms of accountability.[9] Then I hope we can not fit, together. Because commensuration within a racial capitalist frame is the accomplishment of extinction, and Denise Ferreira da Silva hands us a paradox that she calls a cipher, which is the zero undestroyed, which is for her the black female form ("Hacking the Subject," 2018). What happens to the zero when it maintains, under-stands, falls back into a whole other community?

But perhaps in order to keep bringing back in the power that's moving officially right now, we must slow down and bring it back to how the field of design is a problematic and how it is invoked in the above issues. For all or most of the resources being studied in the midst of this writing have as some aspect of their projects a search for a resolution to hypotheses around the role of design in the accomplishment of social justice. That is, there are of course many ways to wage the intellectual wars trying to

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[9] See Anna Tsing, *The Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins* (2015).

waymark the currents moving us out of racial capitalism (if that is what is in fact

occurring). So this question remains of what it means to 'design' in this work, for design

to be common work, from creation of code to the creation of coding languages, from

event curation to the deployment of financial instruments in officializing instances of the

'coming due' of cultural capital. Or is it, with the great Cedric Robinson, a deep

reflection on alterior historiographies and what these do to the long-ensconced

knowledge-power quadrangle of 'history' when it is revealed to be nothing but the

particular program of obfuscation and the programming of obliteration. That is, with

Robinson do we discover design anew in his own written incursion, in the doubling up of

techniques, going beyond mastery of western canon techniques and yet not arriving to a

pure non-western canon on the other side (Saidiya Hartman helps us face this) but

rather the doubling is the practice of releasing into 'mixture', the iteration and

proliferation as itself the revolutionary programme, the counter-writing that's an anterior

writing that leaves behind the centre as reference and yet still maintains some element

of that centre's stain in a purposefully ineffectual spot in the architecture, the remnant of

that which was 'efficient' in the previous world and its—quite literally meant—Self-

serving laws.[10] The Design Studio for Social Intervention sees the social as being

constantly constituted and reconstituted by a string of infrastructurality *in situ*: "ideas are

embedded in arrangements which in turn produce effects." They bring this sense of the

social, then, as a kind of public computational infrastructurality that can be intervened in,

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[10] See Saidiya Hartman, *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route* (2007). Hartman, like Robinson, helps us avoid the expectation of any pure arrival to any history whatsoever, marking the arrival and departures in terms more immanent to the stakes at play in the different communities involved, the stakes of facing the necessary artificiality at work in the re-membering and disavowing machines of Western historiography at play. And of this not only white ameliorations of slavery but also in the longing to recapitulate a home otherwise from the slave trade having happened at all: "In Gwolu, it finally dawned on me that those who stayed behind…told different stories than the children of the captives dragged across the sea" (167).

adjusted, deleted, resurrected, transmogrified. It is on the move. While perhaps the 'social' can here be taken as too much of a network of similarities (from which are extrapolated, backwards or forwards, patterns of sociality writ semi-large), it remains in any case revelatory to see "the social" as an open source computational infrastructurality before and after and during its more official computerization on this or that platform or in this or that policy. Can we say "infrastructurality" to reference this virtual element of the social's becoming formationally, the technique-aspect to sociality rather than any singular universal "social"?

As is alluded to above, it cannot be an accident that Audrey Bennet, the co-author of one perspective on computation and race, and Ramon Amaro, the author of a different perspective, both work in the production and study of visual images and cultures. Bennet's work looks into what is encoded in images that changes behavior (behaviousrist, physicalist, sponsored by Google), while Amaro's study finds the visual already embedded in an anti-black neurotypicality (co-constitutive is more accurate than embedded). I want to follow Amaro where any aspect of representation, any reimaging, is already playing to the tune of the global racial order. He writes, with Fanon, "the phobic image of the racialized (or what he calls the "photogenic object") is embedded in the psychic orientation of the West" ("As If," *E-Flux*). This visuality is related to the limits of the techniques produced from a focus on an object's abilities or inabilities, for visuality is almost solely "representation" as we know it. The frame for what makes for an understandable visual experience is set in the personification of experience with Western art in the background, its characters with their wills, reasons, and minds, bodies that are never more than metaphor, daffodil genitals. Part of pointing this out is

133

to suggest that there is good reason to look for new approaches to computation in modes of living not dominated by the visual, that is, by the representational. I.e., in these new/old modes, the shape of an "agent" need not be the shape of the white male European form (and need not be conceived as an "agent"). But how, and in which ways? Perhaps it is simply, in a kind of base-code manner, that there is no endurance of shape at all. Or, as is suggested in this thesis, perhaps shapeliness is neither "non-existent" nor "bound to a past" but is a form of actively-ness itself, the very shapes of that doing-otherwise from efficient-to-capital programmations.

Amaro begins his article, "As If," with a concise description of a work of technological art/design/activism-vation/thinking alternate futures:

"In 2016, Joy Buolamwini, a researcher with the Civic Media group at the MIT Media Lab and founder of Code4Rights, developed the *Aspire Mirror*. Buolamwini describes the Mirror on its website as a device that allows one to 'see a reflection of [their] face based on what inspires [them] or what [they] hope to empathize with.'…"

Buolamwini says she developed the Mirror to induce empathies that can help facilitate the spread of compassion in humanity…

Ultimately for Buolamwini, these transformative futures are a 'hall of possibilities' where individuals can explore self-determinant futures, 'if only for a small period of time.'…"

Another shape-crafting technique comes alive to Cedric Robinson as he writes the 3rd

and final section of *Black Marxism* about Richard Wright and his chosen medium of

political contemplation: fiction. Of this medium, Robinson reflects on its capacities as a

world-building and speculative engine,

> "Serious attention to these works should not be deflected by the
>
> form through which Wright sought to articulate his ideas. Indeed, it
>
> must be recognized that his works are uniquely suited to their
>
> tasks. Using this form, Wright could reconstruct and weight the
>
> extraordinary complexities and subtleties of radical politics as he
>
> and others had experienced it. His characters could live with and
>
> struggle through crises he had encountered. They could 'test' the
>
> meanings and signifigances he had given to those experiences. His
>
> novels were consequently much more *authentic* documents than
>
> the conventional forms of history, biography, and political tract for
>
> they were constructed from lives with which he was intimate. In
>
> these novels, Wright could achieve his intention of weaving living
>
> consciousness into the impress of social theory and ideology"
>
> (292).

So much of what is beneficial in sitting with Robinson's thinking and writing is to see the

sensitivity with which he draws near the implications of genre, of mode, of form. He

understands in the most pragmatic sense the 'use' of different forms of writing when the

frame of knowledge creation has been centered around the social-scientific modes of "history, biography, and political tract." He knew what research-creation departments in universities know now, that knowledge is made in the collaborative interstices where multiple allegiances equal to a multiplication of the ability to contexualize, foment, and renarrativize (and even, miraculously, admit to be doing so!).[11] Perhaps the technical requirements for the kind of double literation that Wright employs (and Robinson celebrates) can address the legitimate anxiety Amaro feels at the prospect, the proposal, of the possibility of a union between the "black technical object" and the moment of technological ability itself, "The possibility of an affirmative engagement between the black technical object and the algorithm, as a technical object, is then limited by the necessity to reconcile the psychic potential of the racialized individual with that of a pre-determined technical structure." If we can make an account for a non-predeterminative formalization, this "infrastructurality," then we can, according to Amaro, start to build an affirmative engagement between the black technical object and infrastructurality without fear of loading the black technical object with the well-made play of white ontology.

If an ideology is used to dominate, or if ideology is domination, as in AI facial and racial misrecognition, one cannot oppose it successfully with counter-ideology, i.e., machines that only 'better' misrecognize faces and races by doing so in ways that undergird a world of individual faces and races, but this time from a liberal narratival

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[11] "Research Creation" is a term mainly employed by experimental departments or interdisciplinary centres in Canadian universities and, since 2002, has been designated a category in federal funding applications. While it stands in useful proximity to the European term, Artistic Research, or to that of Australia and the United States, Arts-based Research, Research Creation engages in a more direct experimental struggle with the modes of valuation of the work passed with its moniker than its European counterpart.

perspective. Rather the only successful opposition is not an opposition, not a reaction (as if from outside, bound in dialectical resonance with an inside), but what Robinson—studying Wright—calls "a critical commitment" contoured by its need, its want, to be a "critique of the modern world" (307). Robinson writes, "no people's liberation is the result of their abject surrender of critical judgement" (306). But what is a critique of the modern world when the modern world was invented on the need for critique as an aspect of knowledge production, consumption, and privatization? What kind of 'critique' is able to critique the machine of "critique as we know it"? Here a central mechanism is that the "critique of the modern world" is not a surrender to Western critique or to imbibing 'the Word'—the gospel of critique—from anybody.

I want to mis-read Robinson to say, alongside of and not against what has already been said: "no people's liberation is the result of their abject surrender *to* critical judgement." Here, in Robinson's reading of Wright and adding my misreading of both, we find seeds for Fred Moten's work on black renaissance *(In The Break)*, where what is encountered (much more than simply spoken of) is the weird truth of all the ways differential life changed for all beings involved in the mutation chamber of the slave trade. Robinson writes, "for the realization of new theory [the mode of expression of this "critical commitment"] we require new history" (307). A new (kind of) theory, a new (kind of) history. When we learned history as History (singular, natural), any "new history" is in fact, is in *mechanistic fact*, a new philosophy of history, a new historiography, which is precisely what Robinson begins to create in Black Marxism (and later does the same in political science through *The Terms of Order*), and more than this, Robinson shows that it is possible to blend and syncretize modes of knowledge in real time on the page, to

take risks and accept conceptual death, in order to see born actual new theoretics, new because they are based on a different list of characteristics about the world after the end of this one. Robinson teaches us that when we write in double, we write in programmation, we write in ritual.

Artist Stephanie Dinkins, in her work with AI and race, stages emergent co-learning happenings. In doing so, she helps us feel a different route when faced with that abjection, that surrendering *to* critique that is a part of modern life. Dinkins fabulates a hinge turning away from critique and toward what she calls "Afro-now-ism." She writes, "My grandmother's philosophy….For a black woman who was born in 1913 it was about going forward when there wasn't really a path. For me, Afro-now-ism helps me think into a world and think a world that I really want to be participating in. And not only think it, but build it." As in Moten's "desire for misrecognition" there is here in Dinkins an understanding of the danger of the field of play and of the consequences of not knowing what it means to inscribe "yourself" or let others inscribe "you" onto that field and its laws.

What's paramount for Dinkins is the freed ability to work—and this is not a base unit but a flapping expanding and contracting quality (Amaro's "black technical object"). She writes that we need to treat "the artwork as a call for construction, and not just a critique," not because that incision is bad but because it weighs *something* in a moment when the weight being carried might determine whether we get through this moment. She continues, splicing different modes within the black radical tradition on the edge of these pragmatics: "of course I find them useful in different ways. For me even the term afro-pessimism becomes heavy. I'm trying to figure out ways that I'm not carrying a lot

of weight so that I can actually do work." The weight of insisting on a single shared world ("we rail against things an awful lot. It takes a lot of energy") is the weight of carrying the principal during a period of speculation, the weight of conceptual tools made to combat white supremacy but formed from the same philosophical flank. Dinkins writes,

> "I've always thought of Afro-futurism as a really interesting space…but I'm impatient. A lot of time has gone by… We have been asked to speculate a lot. And this is about black folks in America particularly. So when is the time… that we just take the moment to do what we need to do?"

Critique requires content-in-form in order for its adjudication machine to function. It makes you hold this 'universal content' while you wait for its decision. For Dinkins, it is too heavy and has been too long. Enter the fabulational where dreaming is (always has been) a form of planning: "its really important to dream a world that's different, that one can function in differently. My idea is that we enact that world now" ("Stephanie Dinkins on Afro-Now-Ism"). She says this knowing it comes off as hallucinatory, as disconnected from all the content critique requires in order to pronounce a movement revolutionary. She advocates for a moving-thinking-feeling, transversing in and out of "knowing," both in order to survive the knowledge of evil and also to, like Robinson, enact a technique of double function, which is to say de-ontologizing the frame of reality as it is "given." Moire pattern, beat phenomenon, just off kilter enough to remind us of the otherwise also already working.

Dinkins knows there is no otherwise world without the fields afro-pessimism and afro-futurism have been tending, and yet she moves elsewhere with a logic hearing

something else. There is something strategically fugitive in her planned escape from the predetermination inherent in always-incoming critique, as if she knows and is telling us how a shared vision isn't everything it's cracked up to be. As Robinson says, "The total configuration of human experience requires other forms" (167).

Against Shared Visions

The fantasy of there being one approach to a single shared reality is the basis of white supremacy in both neoconservative and neoliberal orders, most practically to the extent that both maintain the integrity of bank accounts founded on stolen labour power. The excess of this particular stolen labour power emerged as a growth through the mechanism of interest rates categorically disinterested in that which was ground to make the excess (the agreement of mutual uplift between the banker and the bankee), growing to size until a whole other genre of economy was formalized to deal with the tumor of these sins, or, if it sits better, to produce infrastructure to manage the particularities of the excess generated in its social context. That genre is finance.

To get together for any purpose unconnected to the maintenance of a shared vision is to open up possibility for life, for organic generation, for complexity beyond the dreams of techno utopian progressivism. Asymmetry. Then visions *are*, in a sense, shared because they are the ones that found their way to join us (without joining), not the ones we invited as if we knew where we were going. *Because the quotient of what we do not know is precisely our algorithmic offering to the complex becoming in plenum*, that righteous attunement that is not something we do but something we experience,

something that expresses as momentary structural entities. I believe they used to call it grace.

In the video series, "Notes on Anti-Fascist Living," guests Fred Moten and Stefano Harney move together on some thoughts for what freedom might be *outside the individual*. At one point, Moten says, "can you think of anything more terrible than a 'relationship'?" Moten meant the technology of a network and the way it dangles intimacy and inter-dependence in exchange for accepting the terms of the transcendent self, ultimately the isolating frame of racial capitalism. A relationship assumes a whole series of things about the self, its ontology, the body and its ontics. This moment always strikes me as so just, because its always that aspect that escapes attention, that doesn't get called to the dance floor. Similar to the frenzy around new network technologies, the very premise of a network is made to spin so originary in the mouth that you don't spend time trying to hack *that* down, you focus on how the network is built or governed, but you don't attack the network-esque itself. But it strikes me that, in between the laughs, because of the laughs, that moment when Moten says this rhetorical question, it blooms a world wherein that question would indeed be heard as rhetorical. Networks offer connection but do so by exacting the cost of our moveability, our phase-shiftability, our time-flexability, etc. We have to be "just in time" at any time, and to never ever conserve.

Ecological Computation and the Future of Western Radicalism

141

The black radical tradition upends what we can mean by knowledge, history, and

computation as a historical knowledge of both what happened and can happen.

Returning to where we heard Cedric Robinson at the top of the chapter, "[t]he limits of

Western radicalism as demonstrated in Marxist theory, the most sustained critique of

the modern era, are endemic to Western civilization" (66). The question remains, in light

of all these tables strewn on their backsides around the temple, what is to be made--

what is to be done--with Western radicalism? It is not so difficult to imagine what to do

with Hegelian-infused civilizational hyper racism (at least when we imagine we can

banish it successfully); it is more difficult to understand what to do with Marxism, with its

legacy as expressed in myriad leftist approaches to knowledge production, when those

approaches utilize principles of separability to build their more free and more collective

"agents". Robinson continues, "those limitations relate directly to the 'understanding' of

consciousness" wherein "the persistence of racialism in Western thought was of primary

importance" (66). While Robinson uses "collective consciousness" in a manner noted

here for its reliance on images of thought as emanating from 'mind', its thrust remains

for us to feel just how deeply and drastically Robinson wishes to underline the

difference between the individuality of class consciousness emerging from a civilization

blind to its own computational dependence on "racialism" and an already active

collectivity of existence that is ante-connection (connected *before* connection

presupposes individuals that need connecting)--where the body is not the primordial

location of the formal (the thing that keeps life alive is not housed). It is foreseen that

whatever computational machines can be made in light of the black radical tradition's

Plenum Pluriverse, we have 400 years of Western radical struggle and complicity, a

struggle and complicity misunderstood both as exclusive of one another and as productive of a dialectical process to exude a single answer. So if an answer isn't coming out, if there's no out to come out to from no inside, how does that come together in this compression chamber. How does the plenum net of entanglement make felt in a new way the true horror of massacre (lopping off your own arm) and the necessity to programmatically opt for disempowerment over massacre as a base protocol? Beyond the question of the fate of explicitly racist systems and foundations, what disempowerment needs to happen to Western Radicalism, and what can remain? Surely not the white ally, not even solidarity if conceived as emanating from a "white community" or as proscripting individual bodies as the tool for demarcating or transgressing said solidarity. The individual must go, with its strained poetics. Seep down into plenum where its totality defanged becomes an aspect of formality as expression, where personality arrives sometimes to a body but never as a matter of course, birth, or ontology, and never as a matter of staying but most often as a visit with intensities, a holiday or a contract or a moment in a jam with Moten's soloist.[12] Because you see how the "one world" without differential wants to not just stay, but stay at the top. And do we see, can we see, what the foment of Western radicalism really is, and how it is already in network systems, improving democracy, not talking about the other side to democracy (the unremonstrated statues that have never been built but that are rather functions of racial capitalism screened as 'development')?

The black radical tradition explicates the principles for a dynamical computational decision structure in response to a certain depiction of the constraints and capabilities of

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[12] See *In The Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition* by Fred Moten for his exposition on assemblage, "ensemble," as the mode of subjectivities temporarily arising in concert with collective effort and expression, and melting back into the fabric of sound and its jagged beat phenomenon.

the earth and its many worlds. The tradition doubles the false universal of the west, the transcendent self in the form of a European white male, creating the writing technologies—which are the protocols for self defense—which are the structural entities—which are the programmations of a free ecology moving through Langston Hughes and Saidiya Hartman, Cedric Robinson and Fred Moten, there the white world is gracefully and finally subsumed in the power of a "poethics," where 'the punishment' is doled out (the great fear that has been anticipated) but where that punishment, according to a freely ecologized plenum form—a protocol—a temporary face that hears out its mouth: 'disempower not massacre', is only but seeing what ends western civilizational fragments comes to in such an event, flowing into something so un-west, so un-white, so expanded and apophatic, that touch of a poetics of relation, where unspinning is respinning is underspinning, is never leaving our aperceptive sides: "we want to take him out because out is home" ("Base Faith," 9). God forgets himself in the joy of hearing such a multiplicity and feeling such a judgement.

Infrastructurality isn't just a protocoled para-institutionality. It is the readiness to build paired with the assertion that the assemblages coming together towards a certain build may often be quite outside a mappable terrain, though they will arrive to sensation in faces and traces, in loops and fragments that do portend and antagonize recursive strategies and intuitions, a becoming-rhythm. This is what it starts to mean for infrastructurality to be ante-network and for infrastructurality to be a protocol of the black radical tradition, that it understands a mass intellectuality outside the frame of Western

civilization (pre and post individual) and it looks to protect *the emergence* of structuration, not structures *per se*, made in light of that collectivity and ecologization.

From vectors that will appear so partial and 'other' to the false universal of the transcendent subject, we need to express into the multiply expressing world, not to add to it as if from outside but to participate with the incompleteness of the circuits-without-networks, which are already humming, which are trying to get through. Not urgency or drama for its own congratulation, as if a game is being played, as if weight is a fiction, but resonant living in its unequalness, as Aime Cesaire writes,

> "Beware, my body and my soul, beware above all of crossing your arms and assuming the sterile attitude of the spectator, for life is not a spectacle, a sea of griefs is not a proscenium, and a man who wails is not a dancing bear" (Notebook of a Return to the Native Land).

CONCLUSION

FACE VALUE IN THE PLENUM

If its all code, we're all code. If there's parts that aren't code, then we're all--parts of us, somewhat, sometimes--not code. There is no controlling this, only delaying the connection, laying dead body after dead body as weight on top of it to extend the delay. But code is not the problem, network is the problem, which is to say, with Stefano Harney, that the problem is a specific logistical problem.

When Robinson says, as was quoted earlier, that Western civilization has a casual rather than systemic or intrinsic relation to the development of thought in the world, he means, I suggest, that the controlling of supply lines (and the suffocation of other instances and forms of circulation) is not an argument in favor of Western exceptionalism. This should be applied to philosophies of technology and engineering, where the frame of necessity must be seen to be as artificially constructed and applied as it indeed is. The very fact that technology and engineering as disciplines would be so limited by such banal force-of-individual profit (and the perverse privacy it produces) is indeed as tragic as it is boring. It is in the very production of those elements as discrete disciplines that displays its lack of porosity to the subjects supposedly under their study.

146

This is also why Robinson focuses so much of his formidable analytic power on the role of Western history and historiography in shoring up popular support for the narrative of manifest destiny and its whiteness. He understands how the logistical routing of racial capitalism is an ongoing conceptual affair, an ongoing externalization protocol. The whole business of incentivization-as-we-know-it is only incentivization for the purposes of this ongoing conceptual logistical maintenance.

Without the constraints of network and its assumed impositions of techno-homesteading, the scenario changes: constraint-as-function and function-as-expressive-form are loosed from their servitude, they join collectivity as parts of refraction. What is important in the world makes itself felt to those interested in knowing it, it is collective, an open secret. What is expressed comes from somewhere, a vector, has personality (not mine or yours but its own of which we are a part); expression is multiple, differential, queer (thank god!). Whitehead writes, "the two together, namely importance and expression, are witnesses both to the monistic aspect of the universe and to its pluralistic character. Importance passes from the world 'as one' to the world 'as many'; whereas, expression is the gift from the world as many to the world as one" (Modes of Thought, 20). The circuit is alive and well, and it is only hampering to not embrace the 'already' of feeling's activity in its currents and by its own wild emergent rules, which dissolve and harden with as much alacrity as a humorous brow turned furrowed at the hearing of a despicable statement. Everything affects everything, all the time, with wildly different composts of energy.

So, to loop: a kind of misrecognition becomes not only a way to understand how I tune to somebody's playing in the midst of an out of tune world, but necessarily (with the

147

tuning) an aesthetic that harbors no need or ability to land on a static pad because the pad is moving. As Robin D G Kelley says about Thelonious Monk,

> Is Monk a surrealist? Absolutely! Though he isn't an artist who
> identified himself as surrealist. (Yet in an interview in the late '40s, he
> compares bebop more generally with Salvador Dali; whether or not
> Dali was a real surrealist is another thing). But Monk moved in that
> direction for the same reason that people like Wifredo Lam, the
> painter, and Aimé Césaire, the poet and activist, all moved to
> surrealism: it was a matter of self-recognition. In other words, their
> lives were *already* that. What they saw, what Wifredo Lam saw in
> Santeria, for example—he says, "I recognize surrealism." ("Solidarity
> is Not a Market Exchange")

I recognize a continuous and vibrating surreality to this whole thing, and so my expression comes as calling for a kind of intimate misrecognition, something surrealism is good at, something its people have been developing for a long time. I don't want to draw a straight road for you, and I hope you don't do it for me either, but neither of those desires mean I don't want to walk my path, I love to walk the path of "my" (for the moment), my circuits-without-networks, I just know it by its topsy turvyness.

And all in the meanwhile illegal loggers in the Brazilian rainforest have assassinated another hero of the resistance, who resisted against the destruction of their land, a land they protect so that the land may protect all of us. His name is Paulo Paulino Guajajara. I don't know what to say. The official statement by his community

speaks this moment, "his death will not be in vain. It makes us sad and angry, but it gives us strength. One more warrior has been planted in the soil. It will give us the strength to keep fighting to protect our forest for our families, and for the survival of our uncontacted Awá relatives. We will never give up."[13]

Guajajara and the rest of the Guardians of the Forest cannot afford to be recognized on the terms with which Bolsonaro and the logging companies demand, that of private property and fealty to the mythic market they promenade as cover for their death dealing and profit making for themselves. The Guardians maintain their resistance to being recognized as clear through the eyes of logistical greed, ecological enmity, racial leveraging.

With Whitehead, how importance comes from the "world as one" and expression from the "world as many," we have the generative misrecognition that keeps us tied to what is going on 'globally' and yet continually—programmatically--restrains and chops up that hegemonic attitude so it never encloses into a single importance to overshadow all other takes.

This generous misrecognition is the relational play out from the outside of play, the gifts of one to many and many to one. Moten has it as this "kind of movement— Mackey would call it centrifugal," which is that oneness, and which is yet "inseparable…from a certain desire for misrecognition," to keep the song playing, to keep new renditions coming and coming as long as there's breath, as long as there's

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[13] "Amazon Guardians respond to killing of Paulo Paulino Guajajara," November 19th, 2019. **https://www.survivalinternational.org/news/12268**

oneness there's manyness, let it be ("Words Don't Go There," 2). The oneness is the accessibility we aspire to: "I'm trying to make it for everybody." Guajajara and his community are protecting that forest for us all. But the way to make that accessibility hum for the long run is to allow it to creak like wooden boat boards that are stronger because they came together—were built--to give way to a manyness of directions of pressures that would befall. With that manyness comes *misrecognition as its transit pass*, its manner of movement, misrecognition as a manner of fugitive movement. Moten again, carrying forth with Hartman,

> "In the end, however, as Saidiya Hartman says, 'the right to obscurity must be respected.' This is a political imperative that infuses the unfinished project of emancipation as well as any number of other transitions or crossings in progress. It corresponds to the need for the fugitive, the immigrant and the new (and newly constrained) citizen to hold something in reserve, to keep a secret." (*B Jenkins*, 105)

The secret is of the codes to that recognition and its aconstant polyrhythmic 'missing', and the keeping of the secret is an aesthetic that is a oned/manyed communication machine, an "As If" machine that is trying to let living be possible again and again beyond whatever official terms of recognition get proposed as "reality." The secret of process and the codes to know who can bear to handle it at any given moment in its crossing is at the heart of "the how" of living aspirationally, fabulationally. There is an emergent trust in an ongoing participation of the modes of that aesthetic of misrecognition, that place where grief and love go mingled down.

The Plenum says: what more interesting judgement can there be of the individualism of whiteness than to show how its broken frame is of better use than its 'whole' self? In the face (the state) of difference without separability, how does it look, this wholeness so untrue it requires a completely enclosed system, a network, to make it true?

"At the moment when a people begin to realize a meaning in their suffering, the civilization that engenders that suffering is doomed" (305). Richard Wright speaks, and it applies—it plies—how the brokenness that a closed system positions onto us computationally and civilationally becomes the thing that leverages that old computation and civilization (which was only ever selfish finance) onto the same borrowed time—the spit--it used to skirt its own responsibilities over onto us. For Wright, to "realize a meaning" means a collective encounter with symbols and rituals and the experimental creation of those elements combining to program an unknowable encounter and to design modes of programmation that keep the unknown in mind even as we pull in answer after answer.

If we find ourselves in the active world of formality and informality, both freed as expression finding freedom in building and unbuilding each other, and neither as any container, except in the way that currents talk while plankton talks (over the idea of "each other"), how do we hold while we are temporarily the ones they say we are? But they're wrong, because if all these things are true, if we can find life living itself in this dynamical forming and deforming, then we're living in trust of a free ecology, with its technique as much as groan. With *some* techne and some air mist, all in the throat of the earth. Then it makes sense of a quote that is funny: "In life, there's the good, the

bad, and the musicians." Music is a technical field, or better a field of experimentation in bending technicality, infrastructurality. A music of free ecology is a practice that includes the creative attunements to that which is sensible and insensible (speculatively, necessarily), to that which is both "formal" and "informal."

In the formality of free ecology, intensity marks some akinness between sensations without needing to claim actual measured distance. Nor are we relegated to the network fallacy of empty space between lines and points. Relative ratio *sans* networks allows a true working knowledge to spill from in/formal improvisations; that is, there is a besideness to the intensities spilling from "one" set in contrast to another, what Erin Manning calls "an approximation of proximity" (*For a Pragmatics of the Useless*).

In the formality of a free ecology, the question is always, with anticipation, "is the patent office still closed?" We embrace the endless deferral of the conferral of ownership, and instead turn to an economy of intensities, of animal play-fights, of plenum infused obligations to all that flows and all that almost did:

(Set A of infinite numbers)unique intensity + (set B of infinite numbers)unique intensity = Set C + Set D

The term "Set A of infinite numbers" can be placed within brackets as a hash, a nonpredeterminate expression of the particularity of the state of that pre-value flow. Its "value," its face is rendered "approximate of proximity" by the unique intensity corroborating between the sensational and the nonsensate, rendering not a measure

but a provincial memory, a memory that has left the site of its birth and, like deer tracks, can be seen heading into the forest (back into the insensible). The "+" sign formalizes the approximation of proximity, since the presence of innumerable sets of infinite numbers makes addition impossible. Then the "=" function must not resolve, commensurate, or settle those equations into a final formality. It is rather the case that the = sign marks the Whiteheadian return to process, the = is the banks of the processual river as we get deep again. So what was qualified through the "face value in the plenum" of marked and described "unique intensity" is inverted on the water slide of the = sign. Something has happened, and we have the hash for that approximation:

(unique intensity squared x black female form [0])

(Set A of infinite numbers)unique intensity + (set B of infinite numbers)unique intensity = (unique intensity squared x black female form [0])Set C + Set D

"Unique intensity" is squared to mark sufficiently the level of change that constantly happens in the plenum (always more than one). "Set C + Set D" are speculative byproducts of that which "did not happen" for formality. Because formality--in its disempowered and thus now expressive posture—truly experiences what "doesn't happen" to its skin, and what "didn't happen" was itself no pre-known product, not a solution. But in the movement of free ecology, *non-solutions are machinic*. For the next hash, a minorized indiscernibility lives on as an update. We can expect that there will be made felt on our palms the presence of at least two sets of infinite numbers, and "Set C + Set D" stands in for this, the communication of the state (which is the state, which is not the whole).

"([T]he black female form[0])" does two things to our equationing: 1. Through "x" it returns everything formal to zero. It references directly Denise Ferreira da Silva's lecture, "Hacking the Subject," where she renders experimentally the black female form as the place of contemplation with/out form, both for what has been rendered as nothing and for what nothing becomes on its own (without network) without any transcendent permission. 2. It brings "the social past" or "historicism de/re/fanged" into the space of the philosophy of engineering and the philosophy of mathematics, and of computation and economy (the philosophies powering the current state of hyper capitalist functionality). It is the conceptual bridge to return the experimentalism of Cedric Robinson's double historiography back into the social engineering milleiux. History reenters, undoing itself on the way, for the record will be adjusted with a more real tone of the "super exploitation" that forms all the phalanxes of all the brittle white computations that abound. The "zero" of the black female form is the generative backing up off of form, whenever and wherever form's identity is the past and present of the fake universal.

Further on da Silva's un-formulation, it seems to reconfigure, re-dance with, an aspect of Richard Wright's train to meaning that we can enjoy to hear again: "At the moment when a people begin to realize a meaning in their suffering, the civilization that engenders that suffering is doomed." When the meaning is made opaque to capitalist calculation, even to the point of disturbing the progressive ache to acquire said meaning as product, as property, then we have it as:

'At the moment when a people begin to fly away and build beyond calculability,

when the hash is approximate to proximity but no farther, amen, when the

suffering and the joy is bubbling and fermenting out from the outside of final

accounting sheets, then the civilization that engenders that calculability is

doomed to melt down into inter-activity, into zones of indiscernibility flashing up

into bubbles of structuration destined to pop, into the programmation of relation in

all of its difference without separability, into plenum'

MEMENTO MORI

I have tried to resist the urges and pressures to constantly re-member this dissertation as a singular entity. Rather, I have sought to learn-out from Cedric Robinson's double writing as a set of writing techniques tied deeply to both the black radical tradition and to a study of the nature of emergence itself. It is this similarity, this moire pattern, between the black radical tradition and theories and activities of process, that has been the pull and the curiosity of this study. And from that learning, I bet on a posture of being present to the creationary wrought by both what has been collected and by all that has been collecting. In a relation with technics, with computation, flank to flank, naked, we lose our selves and collectivize, assemble into an emergent navigational faculty.

FIN

APPENDIX

Further discussion on the Maritime Social Innovation Lab (MSIL)

Insurgence out from the outside

To build this bridge in the contexts so described, a number of experimental strategies have been employed. Trusting the power of the informal is one that has already been discussed. The question of how to frame our acting to ourselves has been just as paramount. When Andrew Sutton and I founded the lab one year ago, we were discussing membership and considering a goal of growing that membership, if for no other reason than we thought that's what an organization was supposed to do. But the motion died before it hit the floor. We couldn't explicate it in detail, but the whole idea, not just the particular fit of this strategy for that time, seemed deeply wrong. Instead we returned to our study of collective autonomy. It is the vanity of any group to exist to fix another group, even itself. It is not only vanity of power, but vanity of centrality. The word "organization" is synonymous with closed off collectives whose unawareness of the dynamics operating outside their walls destroys their ability to make good on their mandates. But since this is such a widespread problem, managers are deployed to fix the problem from within, with no one stopping to reflect on the problem of the constructed universe of their perceptions.

With the apolitical and the rational firmly in place as decoys to distract from the potential of gathering forces of thought in this (or any) community, the possible cannot be spoken of. What movements of infrastructurality could displace this gas bubble? We decided to go the opposite direction from membership increase, from advertising, and from events designed to bring

attention to our name. Instead we would find a few people who already attuned through their

own experience to our approach, our analysis, and our beliefs, and we would become

insurgents *as if* the commons of Charlotte County was already owned by all of us, and not just

by all of us humans, but by all the processes, plants, ghosts, animals, and waters, the entire

ecology. From July 2019:

> The Maritime Social Innovation Lab (MSIL) exists to aid in the thriving of
>
> the Maritimes economically, socially, and ecologically. To do so, MSIL
>
> focuses on the innovation of building new tools that effectively "de-silo"
>
> initiatives already occurring. With active partnerships in community and
>
> business development, MSIL engages in research, creation, and
>
> provision of coordination services under the integrated categories of "new
>
> business models" and "new community models."

And from Reza Negarestani,

> "Once you manipulate something... it implies two things. One, heuristics
> are about non-entailment. What this means is that they do not preserve
> foundations. They do not preserve truth. They do not preserve axiomatic
> assumptions about what the constitution of, for example, this book is.
> What they do is to turn the book into a fallible hypothesis in the sense that
> in order to render it intelligible you just need to deepen the scope of your
> manipulation. You need to expand the scope of your manipulation
> techniques."

Andrew became lead reporter at the local paper. I helped start a friendly if fairly benign local

chapter of the Dialogue NB organization, a decentralized group working to combat xenophobia

in New Brunswick through exposure, dialogue, and media events. We took the liberty of

coordinating meetings between people and orgs with similar ideas. We pitched and pushed

MSIL's ideas as connective tissue, charging no tax. In all this we would model a Charlotte

County out from the outside, as Fred Moten says, where the entire collective autonomy of a

shared space is assumed in word, action, deed, and the official and formal delegations must

apply to see if they are small enough to fit through our tiny door. In this way it became clear that,

to us, MSIL was not something that should have much if any of an inside. It should all happen out there because *it is all happening out there*, where life is, before and under whatever infrastructures are being played at. If we had any inside at all, it was the conspiratorial angle and the syncing of analyses between the (by then) 5 members. But even this was fuzzy as we would bring others into this confidence as the momentary processual collaboration suited. In addition, the Senselab's invocation of the free radical impressed upon us this need for a lack of "checking in" or "running things by" any certain person before taking a decision. We were bubbling away at a chemical mixture that took an understanding of the dangers of normative sociality and laced it with an expectation, a trust, that every person, every thing, was part of powerful living processes, often unacknowledged by themselves or others. These processes exist between rather than within, and thus come 'out from the outside', crashing into the flimsy walls of both outside and inside to open a mode of thought. By the time MSIL was a recognized name, we said, half the organizations in Charlotte County would be influenced by a processual autonomist thinking.

Further discussion on the New Brunswick Context

The massively treed and ocean-coasted land known as Charlotte County, New Brunswick, is famously poor. MSIL works from St. Stephen, N.B., ever on the top ten list in competition for Canada's poorest postal code. As the centre for local prosperity reported recently, "Atlantic Canada's overall level of leakage is 40% -- that is, **four out of every ten dollars spent leave the economy**" ("Import Replacement Project Brief," 2018). New Brunswick is slightly higher than the rest of the Atlantic provinces at 45%. But the proposed macro-remedy of import replacement remains the same for all Atlantic provinces, where a 10% increase in locally manufactured solutions or services for daily Maritime life would render approximately 43,000 new jobs, $2.6 billion in new wages, and $219 million in new tax revenue (Ibid, 2). In a direct sense, import replacement offers environmental, social, psychological, and economic healing to the region.

But in New Brunswick's ontology, its recalcitrant infrastructures are forgotten like hidden rather than forgotten as in gone, active and daring rather than ancient and dank.
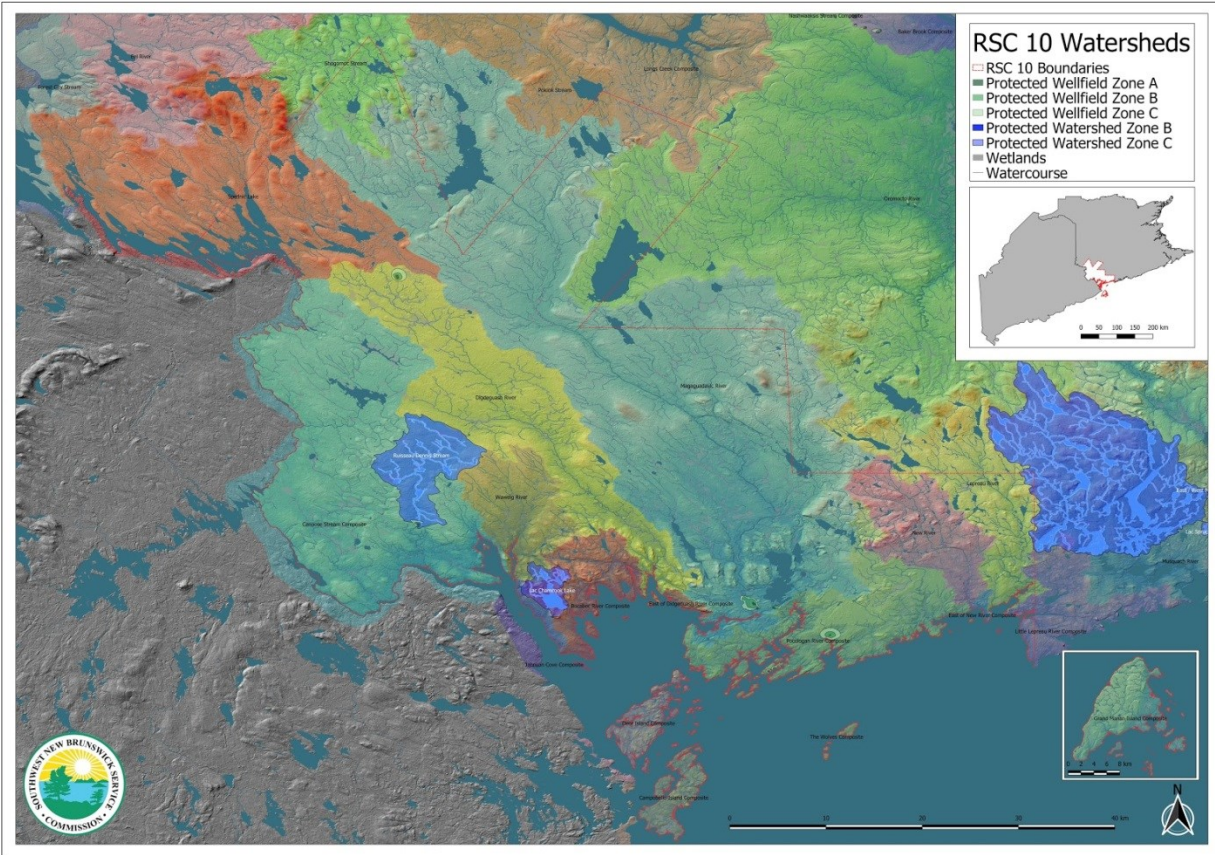
It is currently illegal to build structures using untreated wood, and treated wood is purchased from authorized mills, almost all of which are owned by Irving Ltd., the oligarchic New Brunswick family with massive offshore holdings on which they legally owe no tax. Irving ranks 13th in land ownership **globally** ("Does New Brunswick Have Free Press?" 2019). The current premier of New Brunswick, Blaine Higgs, worked for the Irvings for over 20 years before retiring to serve the public in a dispassionate and unbiased manner. The Irving family owns 3 out of 4 province-wide daily papers and the majority of weeklies. 9 out of 10 gas stations are Irving Gas stations (Ibid, 3).

But while Charlotte County is poor, one of the only non-Irving newspapers is located in St. Stephen (where Andrew is lead reporter). In addition, the province's only independently owned TV station is located St. Andrews, 20 minutes from St. Stephen. Both have resisted closure or buy-outs. In the ecology of experience, somehow something is already happening

161

here, gesturing toward a collective autonomy which in turn calls for more resourcing to flow to

these joints that are working free (if poor) of the Irving stranglehold on this province's wellbeing.

These framings are inspiring, but how are its speculations held up, how is an early-

course exposure maintained enough to grow roots of sustainable long-term operation? In short,

how do you fund it?

The Salt River Fund

The Salt River Fund is in active development, with MSIL representing one seat out of three on

its committee. The Cooperative Enterprise Council of New Brunswick received a pilot project

grant to support three communities in launching social enterprise funds that utilize a new

incentive mechanism underwritten by the provincial government.

This mechanism, the Community Economic Development Corporation (CEDC), is an augmented version of the small business tax credit. In the small business tax credit, a 50% tax credit voucher can be issued to friends and relatives (up to 50 persons) in return for investment in one's small business. The restriction on investors who are neither friends or family (as well as the maximum number) is lifted in the augmented CEDC addition. In a CEDC, any resident of New Brunswick can invest as little as $1,000 or as much as $250,000 in an offering and receive the same 50% tax credit voucher. In addition to the voucher, the full amount of investment is converted into shares reflecting the ongoing valuation of the particular CEDC. Investors commit their resources for a minimum of 4 years.

The Coop Council chose St. Stephen as one of its pilot projects in part because of MSIL's interaction with the council at various times in the year previous. When invited to participate in initial meetings on the appetite for a CEDC in Charlotte County, MSIL extended its engagement strategy (detailed above) and proposed a fund-structure whose mandate would be in complete alignment with the ecological appetite of MSIL, the STAATSKUNST da lemanja. We reasoned that if the meeting participants were not ready to commit to a larger mission of valuing what are called "intangibles" (the social, environmental, and psychic), then MSIL would withdraw its participation. This move prompted some participants to drop out (the same ten men) and some to stay, one soon to retire green business analyst from Fredericton and one former corporate leader who had recently moved back to St. Stephen from Toronto. In June 2020, in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Financial and Consumer Services Commission, and supported by local data conspirators, we will launch the Salt River Fund.
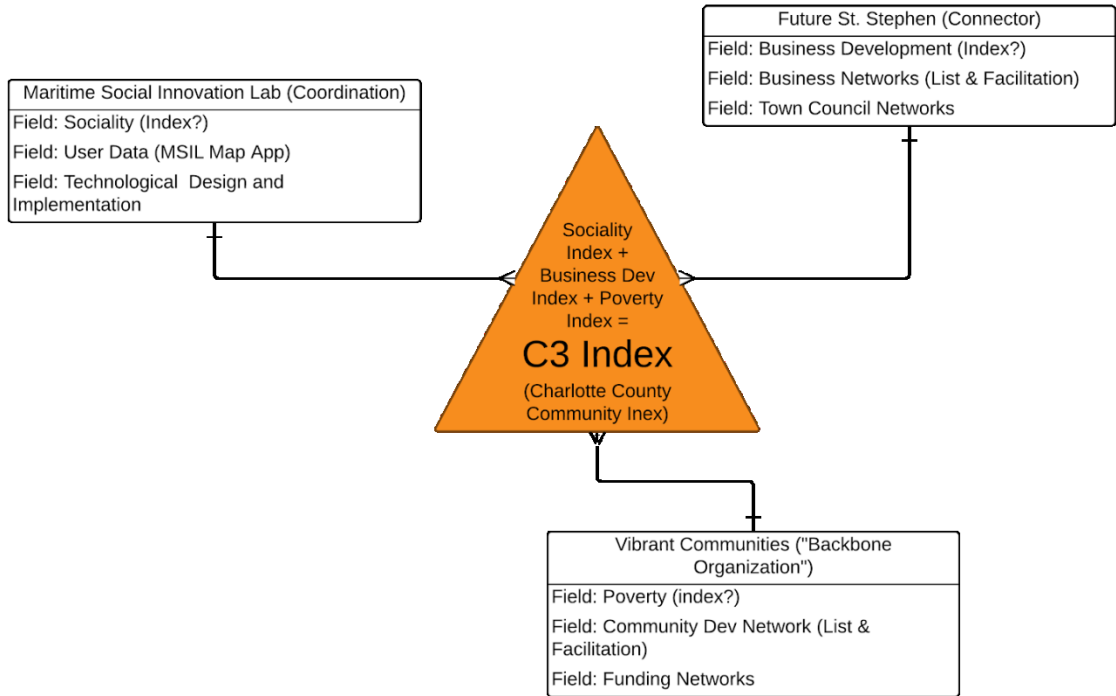
"C3 Index," a project initiated by MSIL in January 2020, seeks the functional amalgamation of mapping data from different sector research in Charlotte County. The goal is to create an index for the Salt River Fund to use in its adjudication of investee applicants.

Throughout 2020, MSIL will be directing the branding and communication of the Salt River Fund in a campaign aimed at inspiring and educating New Brunswick residents toward our first public raise, scheduled for December 6, 2020. To this end we have authored two investment theses, one aimed at the 1-5k general public and one to the 10-250k general public. Both rely heavily on a strategic embrace of the Green Capitalism narrative, a narrative designed to waylay fears about the additional risks and fallout possible from moving away too quickly (or at all) from a system of capitalist measurement to a system of ecological benefit measurement. These kinds of documents for MSIL, and the narratives they rely on, are an important part of our communication strategies--our performances of infrastructurality--ones where we take up the

164

responsibility of incentivizing people's involvement into a movement they may only understand later on in the journey. It is our responsibility to proffer a movement they can understand now in the immediate so that they are not left behind as ecological and social collapse continues. Rural communities are left behind in the austerity campaigns of the past and will continue to be so in the ones to come. Rural communities are placed in a position where political campaigns fear-monger and meme-target them demographically toward a xenophobia of the only groups harder hit by austerity than they are: indigenous, immigrant, black, and brown communities. These minority communities are "hit harder" precisely because rural communities turn their fear and despair on their natural allies rather than the beneficiaries of such austerity. If MSIL's work with the Salt River Fund can move even a portion of local residents' money into local inter-connected investment portfolios, we expect meme-targeting to show itself as less effective in the coming year.

I want to reproduce the two Salt River Fund theses below to give a direct sense of the strategic political communications at work, as well to give a feeling for how investors in different brackets see themselves in the social economy of New Brunswick (or at least how we think they see themselves). First, "The Triple Bottom Line Thesis" aimed at 1-5k investors.

Salt River Fund: The Triple Bottom Line Thesis
Joel Mason, Salt River Fund Organizing Committee, 7 February 2020

The Salt River Fund is a fund for local social enterprise. We perform due diligence and provide mentorship so that local people can successfully start and manage businesses driven by a "triple bottom line": economic, social, and environmental profit.

Most investment funds, up until the last 3 years, have invested your money based on the single bottom line of economic profit. This was understood to be normal: whatever a company did, and however they did it, as long they attained an **economic** profit, the investment was considered a success. But with news of Europe's largest investment fund divesting (selling their shares) in **all fossil fuel companies**, it is clear the rationale is shifting. It is now becoming normal to see economic, social, and environmental measures of success as measures that depend on one another and enhance each other's performance.

We all need less risk and more stability in our lives. In this time of global economic, social, and environmental uncertainty, tools of finance normally reserved for the wealthy are being made available to all. This is a global phenomenon. Like in finance, or any innovative business sector, the most profit is available to those that see the potential of new systems early on. These are

called "early adopters." At the Salt River Fund, we are passionate about bringing those early adopter profits to everyday normal people from Southern New Brunswick. You and Me. Us.

By arriving early to the success markers of the next decade, the Salt River Fund will use the considerable skill of its operational managers and founders to do something unique: give local rural communities a leg up on prosperity, quality of life, and economic momentum. Normally, by the time innovation reaches rural areas, it is no longer innovative and, therefore, no longer competitive or profitable. The Salt River Fund looks to restack the deck by investing our time and expertise **here first** in Charlotte County and McAdam, taking the advantage of being ahead of the curve and handing those benefits to the local residents who participate with us (through the mechanism of investor shares).

We are creating a market for good community businesses, where competition for "profit" includes profit for the area in which the business operates. For too long we have lived without high standards for heroes in our midst. For too long we have accepted low social standards for those working "in the economy." It is time for us all to become heroes, to act heroically. It is time to be examples to our children of how to make profit that brings everyone along. Before we did not know how, now we do. It is time to make a place for all these children to grow into.

We believe there is a critical mass of people in Southern New Brunswick who understand this message, who have been calling for it for a long time. And we believe that many more will come along. We can transform our communities through social enterprise funding. We need the right kind of competition, a heroic competition to outgive each other in pursuit of success that touches the profit margin of entrepreneurs but also that of the whole social and environmental landscape.

What do we owe the apple orchard? The St. Croix River? What do we owe the poor grandmother who is so much like your own? What do we owe the local child with endless ideas but nowhere to launch them? The heroic answer is that **we always owe each other everything**. We do not need or want outside guidance in how to account for this "owing each other everything." It is a personal, communal thing, born of the history of this place, and called into action by its future. We will decide, here in this place, what it means to owe each other everything. We started the Salt River Fund so that we could all, every one of us, **use funding to find our future together**.

I owe you my hope for this place, even though I do not always feel it. You owe her your belief that we can do something good and new together, even though past history comes around like that one naysayer at the thanksgiving table. But this is what we're talking about, we **are** setting a table of gratitude for our future. And while it is not yet sure, the setting of the table tilts the chances in our favor, we will make it if we act together. We, in this shared space of Southern New Brunswick, are a family.

And second, the "Philosophy of Investment" thesis aimed at 10-250k investors:

Salt River Fund: Philosophy of Investment
Joel Mason, Salt River Fund Organizing Committee, 30 January 2020

Where there's Climate Change, there's Capital Change. The investment thesis of Salt River Fund meets head on the looming reality of climate based financial volatility, and follows a line of emerging financial theorists and practitioners to suggest that the arbitrage is happening in the wrong location, currently and by and large. Rather we recognize the signs of collapse and enmity and offer a conciliatory investment portfolio and offer agreement template, respectively, to investors and applicants, seeing each group as representatives of parties in a larger socio economic opportunity.

It is a foregone conclusion that climate change will dramatically affect financial markets in the years to come (indeed it is already so). And it is thoroughly understood that social upheaval is a financial indicator of risk and opportunity.

Salt River Fund is a fund that blends profit driven metrics with social and environmental metrics to create a best outcome plan tailored to both individual and collective interests with a region-focused scope (in this case Charlotte County). Its team has international experience in finance, law, cultural affairs, corporate structure, and the global cutting edge of socio economic research. With the strategy of blending the metrics that value different aspects of growth, rather than pitting them against each other or amalgamating one into the other, we take the position that the market needs time to adjust to the presence of social and environmental metrics. We need a transitional blend of market motivations to stay resilient and agile.

We at Salt River Fund think of this as an investment opportunity itself, if the market is already an ecosystem, already a jungle, then, we say, let these new metrics emerge unhampered by both old thinking and old idealism. Let us explore how the market can value the social, the environmental, and the individual each on their own terms (every metric is it's own universe and should not be conflated with the rules or assumptions of other metrics). And let us therefore catch the financial upside of taking actionable steps on this data more quickly and with more confidence than other funds in Canada. Let us create a new culture of investment in New Brunswick as an example to others in the field.

The very act of attempting to measure is already an act of valuation. Salt River Fund looks to be competitive not only in solution-per-problem on the ground in Charlotte County, but competitive in the development of fund structures for the future, toward innovation and new market share, yes, but also armed with new assumptions and theses. We see a longer loop wrapping the shorter typical ROI (which we do not abandon) where investing in the whole ecology of a place means healthy and happy and educated consumers.

 Part of a truly healthy consumer (that can purchase for the long run) is a healthy relationship between consumer and the production apparatus presenting them with options. At Salt River Fund we understand how signaling interacts with actual reporting effect. We will be leaders in our community on the discussion of what is valuable and how to justify it. With special regard to transitionary frameworks where old modes of capital can still be valued and, far from being the enemy, can actually serve as a temporary hedge position for the rest of the portfolio (with remuneration for such services built in). To put it bluntly, in this transitory time of climate and capital, 'socialism' and 'capitalism' can benefit each other if, we add, those forms are controlled by people interested in the direct benefits of collaboration.

So we call capitalists and socialists with interest in forms beyond our current binaries, who are not afraid of profit, who are not afraid of redirecting capital flows for greater ecological enjoyment, who believe we need to try something new to get somewhere new.

We believe the problem with federal or provincial taxation is not that it exists but that local communities have not been able to exert their own form of locally focused counterbalance within finance itself. We want to lay the rail lines for more representative capital flows and for more reflexive and particularized rules of paying in and out that enable our community to grow on its own terms.

Any economist interested in the coming climate volatility understands that the future will include expanded definitions of ROI to meet these challenges. At Salt River Fund, we will lead the province in publishing these definitions and pursuing them as cultural talking points in relevant public discussions, giving the people in our area a head start into the economy and financial

markets of the future. It is one thing to say that a profit driven investment decision is impacted by social and environmental factors, it is another to say that each category is its own metric which needs to devise its own measuring schema that can grow over time.

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