## 1AC --- Black Techno-Conjuring --- NDT 2022

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#### Interpretations:

#### “The United States Federal Government” is a techno-social infrastructure that recursively individuates society through datalogical technics which have historically served as the basis for colonial and racial extraction.

Terranova and Sundaram, 21—Professor of Cultural Studies and Digital Media at the University of Naples AND Professor at CSDS, Delhi (Tiziana and Ravi, “Colonial Infrastructures and Techno-social Networks,” e-flux #123, December 2021, dml) [non-underlined portions of this evidence reference sexual assault]

The techno-social hypothesis is thus premised on the idea that the social never possessed an intrinsic or preexisting reality, but rather what, with Michel Foucault, we might call a historical, that is a “transactional” one. Like sexuality, madness, or civil society, the social is real, although it has not always existed. It, too, was born “from the interplay of relations of power and everything which constantly eludes them at the interface … of governors and governed.” As a result of this history, the social assumed its three fundamental properties: a form of abstraction, the territory of government, and a conflictual political domain.

The social thus existed inasmuch as it was a fundamental part of modern Western European epistemologies and eventually also as part of its governmentalities. As a form of abstraction, it grounded the truth claims of the social sciences, which posited that it was possible to scientifically study human societies inasmuch as they presented quantitative and qualitative determinations. As part of what Denise Ferreira da Silva has called the power of the nomos, the social entailed a distinction between transparency and affectability, between the position of observers and observed. This epistemological function of the social (that is, its accounting for human social life as a distinct, measurable, and observable sphere of reality, endowed with its own patterns and regularities) was also indispensable to the other role that the social played. As Nikolas Rose put it, from the nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century, the social constituted the “territory of government,” that is, a “novel plane of territorialization [which] existed within, across, in tension with other spatializations (such as blood and territory; race and religion; town, region and nation).” At the same time, the social also had a third inflection, one that Raymond Williams defined as its “emphatic” one: one that explicitly opposed individual and especially individualist theories of societies. This is the social which, as Wendy Brown has put it, constitutes the foremost language and political domain “where subjections, abjections, and exclusions are lived, identified, protested and potentially rectified.”

Inasmuch as it constituted a nexus of power/knowledge/subjectivation which functioned within both liberal and socialist governmentalities, the social was said to have come to its end in the late 1970s when a new political rationality—neoliberalism—displaced it with the more narrow notion of “community.” For postmodern philosophers such as Jean Baudrillard, the end of the social coincided with the rise of media, information, and capital coming together through the figure of the network. The circulatory logic of the Los Angeles highway system was Baudrillard’s favorite image for the end of the social in a space defined by circulation.

The end of the social, however, was far from a smooth implosion. It was a catastrophic one, involving not only the fall of socialist governments in the so-called Eastern bloc, but also the decomposition of social infrastructures, which entailed its own racialized death toll. Consider for example the centrality of the California highway system in two of Afrofuturist author Octavia Butler’s best-known novels, The Parable of the Sower and The Parable of the Talents. Written in the late 1990s and set in the 2020s/2030s, the novels can be read as a speculative depiction of the apocalypse unleashed by the end of the social as a territory of government in the last decades of the twentieth century. Butler narrates a near future world in which the breakdown of the United States government, caused by simultaneous economic, environmental, and epidemiological crises, has rendered large swathes of the population homeless. People are uprooted from their communities, pushed into nomadism, and exposed to the constant threat of the dehumanizing violence of rape, indentured servitude, and technologically enforced enslavement (as in the “shock collars” that control the newly enslaved). The protagonist Lauren Olamina attempts to compensate for the end of the social by founding a small rural community around her new belief system, Earthseed. Her effort fails. Only by constructing a planetary social network does she eventually succeed in catalyzing a movement big enough to realize her vision of an alien humanity taking roots in outer space.

The techno-social is the form of the social that comes after its end. It is neither a virtual nor a global digital community, but a component of the milieu generated by a new technical being—the digital computational network. It was triggered not so much by social media, as first assumed, but by the turn whereby social computing no longer simply supported social interaction but started “to process the content generated by social interaction,” making its results “usable not just by users but by the digital systems that supported their activities.”

The techno-social thus entangles the three properties of the modern social (abstraction, the spatial plane of government, and the conflictual domain) and the two properties of the network (scientific image and technical medium).

The techno-social manifests a new mode of knowing the social as defined by the rise of data science and social analytics in relation to the older epistemic privilege of academic sociology. The digitization of the social as an object of knowledge, tending towards what Patricia Ticineto Clough et al. have called the datalogical, has been intensified by the mass adoption of digital communication and the re-modulation of the latter by the internet industry through investment in the development and implementation of social interfaces, algorithms, and protocols. As an image or model, the techno-social manifests new sociogenic modes of individuation—recursively regenerating modern social categories such as gender, race, class, sexuality, disability, ethnicity, and so on out of the circulation of flows of information which are recorded through the mediation of social ontologies coded as metadata. For example, critical race studies of technologies have argued for the ways in which racial categories inform and inflect various forms of algorithmic social categorization (from facial recognition to police databases to search engines). The techno-social is thus the condition for the emergence of machine learning as a form of “soft thought”; the re-programmability of algorithmic instructions necessitates an infinite or entropic amount of data, or social quantities that have been recorded and stored by means of digital technologies. As a result, gender, raciality, ethnicity, class, and ability as epistemological abstractions emerge as performative acts of more-than-human techno-social assemblages.

The techno-social also displays the characteristics of a milieu or medium, which should not be confused with the modern notion of media as distinct devices or technologies for recording, transmitting, and storing information (as in record players, film, typewriters, desktop computers, gaming consoles, and so on). Indeed, the techno-social turns modern media, in Kittler’s sense of the word, into components of the techno-social as medium or milieu. This milieu describes a space of circulation with no simple circularity, a space that poses the problem of the indeterminate and uncertain series (of mobile elements, accumulating units, and events) which complicates the question of causality (how and when causes become effects and vice versa) and the task of accounting for the nonlinear relation between causes and effects generated by and around individuals, groups, and populations. The techno-social as medium is thus characterized by an intensification of circulations whose heterogeneity is no longer disciplined by the divisions of the past, as Ravi Sundaram’s studies of the post-postcolonial city clearly show. It is a milieu which, as Tony Sampson and Jussi Parikka have recently suggested in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, makes “universal virality … a techno-social condition of proximity and distance, accident and security, communication and communication breakdown.”

Finally, the techno-social constitutes a new conflictual political milieu that operates as the double or shadow of digital governmentalities that have been designed and engineered to faithfully replicate the modern imperative of economic growth and social stability—imperatives that are shared by its two dominant versions, post-socialism and neoliberalism. The techno-social as an “agile infrastructure of possibility,” as Sundaram calls it, has become visible in the various waves of twenty-first century political movements—each one of them calling for the abolition of a specific aspect of modern epistemologies and techniques of power, while also problematizing the territorial affiliation of the modern social: the end of financial capital (Occupy); the downfall of corrupt and violent regimes (the Arab revolts of 2011); the abolition of racist policing and structures (Black Lives Matter); the refusal of post-socialist authoritarianism (Hong Kong); the end of femicide (Ni Una Menos); the rejection of austerity (Gilets Jaunes), and economic inequality (Chile), amongst others. Shadow networks, however, have also emerged, fostering paranoid affects, such as those involving ethnic killings (India), white supremacy, misogynist and far-right extremism (alt-right, gamergate), and, during the current pandemic, movements against masking, vaccination, and lockdowns.

Ravi Sundaram’s Response

Tiziana Terranova’s essay uses the historical interfaces between calculation and sovereign power to set up the forcefields of the Western social: transparency and affectability, observers/observed, human life as distinctly measurable in the larger context of the displacements of the world. The calculative infrastructures of government were paralleled by the governmentalization of the state, itself a product of the epistemological function of the social. Expanded onto a world stage, this transactional field can also bring in technologies of violence and extraction, a specific form of colonial governmentality driven by racial and ethnological technics—which loops back into the metropole, unleashing longer temporalities of knowledge.

As Terranova shows, the techno-social recursively regenerates modern enumerative categories of the human sciences (class, gender, race), which are now reprogrammed in contemporary data ontologies through surveillance and associational technologies. Just as the human sciences of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries made possible the governmental management of populations, the contemporary datalogical turn is generative of the techno-social. “Soft thought” in the context of machine thinking becomes both the precondition and affordance of post-human performative assemblages as the now-encoded social categories take new directions. This recursion between the techno-social and the historic social, between histories of violence and the data ontologies of the contemporary—these clusters propel the storm of ideas that Terranova’s essay has stirred up.

Tiziana’s categorical insistence on the singular mode of the techno-social (as the enmeshing of the technological and the social) provides a connection to my own argument about the blurring of the medial and the social in the postcolonial world. The comparable trajectories of this shift are remarkable: “the end of the social” and neoliberalism in the West, globalization/mediatization in the postcolonial world. In the postcolonial world, the older partitions of politics/welfare/social became unsustainable as new forms of circulation undermined the previous designs of sovereign power. What emerged was a productive, wilder milieu of the contemporary, and the techno-social in Tiziana’s sense of the term. As Tiziana shows, the milieu/medium is central to the expansive ecology of the techno-social and is a multiplication engine of new modes of circulation. Even as partitions emerge between users and platforms, the milieu and capitalist power, the circulatory quality of the techno-social-as-medium constantly sets up the conditions of both instability and association. Never has this been clearer than during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The pandemic presents us with a remarkable diagnostic of the techno-social. While crisis is inherent in the temporality of the techno-social (Chun), the pandemic has accelerated all antinomies of the system: unprecedented platform power and collective responses to medical crisis; the crisis of neoliberal austerity and unapparelled monetary intervention by Western regimes; racial violence and global countermovements; the normalization of surveillance technologies with biomedical interventions and constantly shifting boundaries of the “normal”; the proliferation of hate speech and an extraordinary investment in scientific authority. To be sure, as Michel Foucault once suggested, pandemic time is always exceptional: boundaries between anatomo-politics and biopolitics are blurred; restrictions are placed on certain transmissions (circulating bodies); periodic biomedical interventions are normalized and accepted in order to preserve life. The coming years will show us if the present pandemic time can radicalize the third, collective dimension of the techno-social, or rather alternate between the paranoid states of speculative expansion and terror that have defined the previous two decades.

Ravi Sundaram

In 1858, a British official in colonial Bengal named William Herschel asked Rajyadhar Konai, a local contractor, to imprint his inked hand on a contract that had already been signed. After years of experimenting with handprints, Herschel sent copies of Konai’s fingerprints to London for Francis Galton, a eugenicist and cousin of Charles Darwin. Galton went on to argue that fingerprints were an accurate marker of identity and racial difference. In their Untold Intimacy of Digits (2011), the Raqs Media Collective used the handprint in the Galton archive to produce an animated video on a blue background. In the video, the still image of Herschel’s original handprint record was given motion. The thumb and the fingers begin to move, suggestive of hand counting or even a secret code. Herschel’s early biometric colonial experiments intimated colonial pathologies, as he and his counterparts strained to make colonial subjects into signs of representation legible to European rulers. In his Mimesis and Alterity, Michael Taussig described Herschel’s early system as one comprised of contradictions and collusions of “mimesis and alterity.” This system was conditioned by a colonial administration dependent on writing and signatures in a largely illiterate colonial society; administrators’ fear of massive fraud by means of false signatures; British administrators unable to discern unique facial and other identifying qualities among the masses of their Indian subjects (“they all look the same”); and last but far from least, the decisive ingredient in the discovery of fingerprinting, the use of the hand and thumb as a type of modernizing sorcery by the colonial bureaucracy.

Despite the fingerprint’s mimetic quality as a seeming signature of the body, the main challenge was elsewhere. Galton struggled unsuccessfully for years to come up with a mathematical method of classifying fingerprints. In fact, it was once again in colonial Bengal that Edward Henry, along with Azizul Haque and Hem Chandra Bose, developed a mathematical method for the classification of fingerprints, which was exported to South Africa and later to metropolitan Europe. Untold Intimacy of Digits referenced the phantom limb of Konai, as indeed the classification system for fingerprints developed in colonial Bengal successfully separated bodies from a number-based system of classification. Allan Sekula once wrote that the central innovation of nineteenth-century police photography was not the camera but the filing cabinet. The fingerprint cabinet Henry pioneered in Bengal closely paralleled the Bertillon system in Europe. Under colonialism, the “bureaucratic-statistical” police regime efficiently reduced the body to a number for retrieval.

Fingerprinting emerged during a time of multiple colonial technologies aimed at developing knowledges of the colonized. The colonial laboratory was the site of statistical techniques, periodic census surveys, and the introduction of photography into carceral regimes. Prominent technologies included the racially coded ethnological surveys developed by Herbert Risley, and an ambitious anthropometric rollout to develop knowledge of the colonized populations. Risley’s race technology was an assemblage of mechanical instruments, mathematical techniques, and paper infrastructures. Anthropometry faded away in later years, but the fingerprint-linked biometric regime has remained, becoming even more widespread in the contemporary era. As Keith Breckenridge has argued, mathematical implication, statistical inference, and probability theories were a central part of biometrics, albeit fashioned within a larger map of racial difference and colonial rule. What Breckenridge calls “biometric government” implemented technologies that shaped the colonial social: notably the efforts to bind subject populations to the sanctity of the contract, and the surveillance of criminalized social groups and individuals. The tensions and overlap between the individuating techniques of the contract and the group logic of (racial) technologies was of course not unique to colonial biometric regimes.

In his final lecture in the Collège de France series, titled “Society Must Be Defended,” Michel Foucault spoke about how a set of political technologies called “biopower” initiated a collection of seamless medical and social technologies to optimize life and secure it. Biopower legitimizes periodic state interventions within populations to preserve the larger social body. This shift, which Foucault termed a subversion, was an infiltration of the earlier modes of sovereign power: “The right of sovereignty was the right to take life or let live. And then this new right is established: the right to make live and to let die.” There was a shift from the disciplinary techniques focused on the individual body and its spatial partitions (anatomopolitics), to a model of multiplicity: “So after a first seizure of power over the body in an individualizing mode, we have a second seizure of power that is not individualizing but, if you like, massifying, that is directed not at man-as-body but at man-as-species.” As catastrophic pandemic events generally gave way to the endemic, new techniques to optimize the human body were developed: statistical forecasts, enumeration, and natal technologies. These distinctions between biopolitics and disciplinary regimes in the West become blurred in a global regime of colonial difference marked by the circulations of war-making, captive bodies, and commodities. Slaves and bonded workers were transported from colonial possessions to plantation economies; enumerative technologies and frameworks of biometric government moved with these circulatory patterns, as did statistical knowledges and racial and ethnological schemes. This global circulatory network was spatially uneven, as colonial administrators in different regions sought to balance ideas of European political liberalism in despotic colonial systems.

The return of colonial biometrics to the global security regime after September 11 frames the vast expansions of biopolitical technologies in the twenty-first century. One of the features of contemporary platform capitalism has been the way it recalls and transcends colonial biometrics while radically expanding affective landscapes without limit. This was part of the extractive and dynamic colonial surplus, where long-term circulatory patterns unleashed potentials that continue today. Today, circulation as such emerges as a problematic, rather than the individual/collective bodies of the population. A key stress point is between infrastructures of measurement and the transient, affective networks now widespread under platform capitalism. The connections between infrastructures of measure and infrastructures of public affect have never been as contiguous and constitutive as in the post-pandemic moment. At the same time, they take on a particular dynamic in the Global South.

More than four decades ago, Jean Baudrillard published his sharp, almost polemical collection In the Shadow of the Silent Majorities, Or, the End of the Social (1978). In it he addressed two major sites of twentieth-century modernity: the social and the mass. The social, Baudrillard argued, revolved around “that opaque but equally translucent reality, that nothingness: the masses.” The masses had an “inertial strength,” that absorb the “electricity of the social and neutralize it forever.” Lacking an empirical reference but produced through the survey, the masses act as a shadow majority, opaque, formless, dispersing meaning even while positioned as the constant addressee of political and commercial projects. In the event, there is a proliferation of representational techniques, rendering them ineffective, “burying the social beneath a simulation of the social.” As Baudrillard argued elsewhere, this could be called the “evil genius” of the masses, producing the failure of the social and representation, dispersing into networks and simulations.

In two senses this argument turned the “social question” of the European twentieth century on its head. Propelled by information and media networks, the strategies of formlessness, opacity, and disappearance implode the historic social. The end-of-the-social argument could be a 1970s update of a larger strain in European twentieth-century critical theory. In their 1944 Dialectic of Enlightenment, Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer suggested that industrial media played a key role in homogenizing diverse populations into consumers. In their now-familiar argument, mass culture produced docile subjects, framed by false needs created by media corporations. The larger implication of the culture industry thesis was that the earlier street crowd had been significantly reassembled by media infrastructures. As in all his essays, Baudrillard had a point even in his errors. While the “new masses” of platform capitalism do certainly disperse old techniques of the social, the widespread transformations of digital networks require new perspectives on the techno-social, as Tiziana Terranova argues in this dialogue.

The vast explosion of global internet culture after low-cost mobile phones has shifted the terms of the debate from earlier generations of Western critical and post-critical theorists. Across the global South, there is a vast churning of media-enabled populations. Even as media platforms have expanded, the techno-political aesthetic has been reprogrammed recursively. What is remarkable about this reconfiguration is the referencing of older enumerative technologies of colonial rule, even when anticipation becomes the principle of the political. Feedback now becomes a key principle of politics; instability and contingency are the drivers of the performance of power. The distinctions that Foucault made between pandemic and endemic strategies of power become increasingly blurred as platform temporality has reconfigured the timescale of the political.

The normalization of a crisis temporality (which the pandemic has made prominent) is expressive of two overlapping milieus. The first milieu was the wild, informalized pirate-video era of the 1990s and the early 2000s. Pirate video in the South was an unstable media object, with a capacity for connection and association across a broad range of phenomena. Video was also a multiplication machine, attaching itself to mediatized public theaters. This atmosphere of multiplication clearly anticipated the current digital platform economy, where the sensational live-time effect of pirate video has been normalized into a larger complex of network circulation. Today, the atmospherics of network culture generate a somatic collectivity in public events, and also quite rapidly fragment into other formations. It is this collectivity that has energized the populist political aesthetic in the last decade. The second milieu is the rapid expansion of platform capitalism and social networks in the South from 2008 onwards, dynamized by mobile phone proliferation. This laid the ground for networks of affective measure driven by media platforms and governmental enumeration technologies, including biometric systems. While platforms have pushed anticipatory and “feed-forward” modes of calculation, governmental enumeration seeks to connect populations to security, welfare, and financial networks. Both the affective and governmental transact on a daily basis; the relationship is productive and parasitic. This is a remarkable remodulation of colonial and postcolonial arrangements. As discussed earlier, colonial enumeration technologies were a careful orchestration of disciplinary technologies of policing, contract enforcement, racial superiority, and global circulation. In the postcolonial period, in India at least, the social and cultural spheres were separated: while the social was expressive of politics and welfare, culture was managed by regulation and control. These careful partitions exploded in the video era of the 1990s, when informal networks of circulation bypassed control mechanisms of censorship and copyright.

In contemporary right-wing nationalist regimes like India, governmental enumeration has introduced stringent technical checkpoints even as it has created new spheres of value. The older enumerative infrastructures were defined by a productive ambiguity that served both rulers and the enumerated. For example, paper systems were generative of multiple writing strategies and permeable boundaries. Populations could have an electricity bill and not a legal home, no legal identity but access to welfare regimes via a ration card. The move to digital enumeration has generated a range of political technologies to stabilize informal populations: biometric identification cards, direct cash transfers, phone-based code verification. In line with neoliberal audit models that distrust porosity, what has emerged is the primacy of participation in governmental digital infrastructures. In effect, older welfare systems have been substantially disturbed, with disastrous consequences for millions—as has been visible during the pandemic. Conceived as an always-on model of optimization, governmental information infrastructures make network connections a condition of public support for the working poor. In terms of information design fantasies, populations become capacities, as data streams are harnessed for future projects of government.

#### The overrepresentation of Promethean Man within Western cosmogonies is a “business practice,” and “the private sector” includes technics of automated reason. Servo-mechanically misusing those technics against themselves is a prohibition “on” them.

Parisi, 21—Senior Lecturer at the Centre for Cultural Studies at Goldsmiths University of London (Luciana, “Black Feminist Tools, Critique, and Techno-poethics,” e-flux #123, December 2021, dml)

The entry of intelligent technology into all modes of logistics—from drones controlling borders to biotech controlling populations—has made claims about the poverty of critical thinking in relation to automated reasoning become paramount. With this entry, fixed capital—property, plant, machinery, land, installations, and physical infrastructures—acquires the form of interconnected data platforms that correlate property values, bodies, populations, goods, materials, urban infrastructures, and patents, effectively fast-forwarding the extraction and abstraction of value towards new forms of social subjection and the surrogacy of cognitive, affective, and human capital.

Since thinking in this scenario no longer matches truths, but instead follows the efficient causality of sequential algorithms, it is assumed that thinking itself has become impoverished by algorithmic capital, by the normative rules given in data. Even in the case of neural networks or ImageNet, algorithms are said to impose concepts on objects to fit the modern categories of gender, sex, race, class. This claim about the demise of critical thinking led by ubiquitous automation can be found in two main views of technology today; on the one hand, the thesis of the Master Algorithm and Computational Surveillance, and on the other, the thesis of Platform Capitalism and Tools of Resistance. Both theses, I argue, risk safeguarding the philosophical authority of Aristotelian distinctions between episteme or theoria, poiesis or creation, and technics or practical knowledge (skills, procedures, functions). I also argue that these theses operate within what Sylvia Wynter calls Western cosmogony, or the origin story of knowledge.

Importantly, this cosmogony must include the myth of Prometheus, as the autopoietic creator and mythical origin of technology for the modern world. As much as this myth corresponds to the belief in human progress, it also ensures that the technology of fire evolves into the steam engine of the modern bio-economic Man, telling the origin story of humanity as one of freedom from enslavement, from the obscurity of the unknown, and from Man’s own death. With these premises, the Promethean myth preserves the image of Man as possessing a surrogate, servo-mechanic flesh that preserves, records, and transmits the events of a liberation only Man can achieve.

However, one can argue that if Prometheus, as technics, demarcates the progress of modernity and its scientific paradigms forestalling the frailty of Man, the myth is also invested with a dark technics—a space of indistinction beyond life and death—where the racialization of knowledge and the speciation of the human constantly break apart. Since Prometheus enfolds instrumentalized servo-mechanic flesh within himself, his myth remains a project of/for enslavement, justifying the brutal order of colonialism and the world’s subjection to the bio-economic survival of Man. This also means that technics, whether demarcating death or the promise of liberation from destiny, has nonetheless absorbed the surrogate conditions of servo-mechanic intelligence. Under such surrogate conditions, servo-mechanic intelligence can only be systematically neglected, dismissed, and abandoned by critique for being seen solely as a threatening form of mindless efficiency, nonconscious thinking, nonsensical language, improper thinking.

The first thesis, Master Algorithm and Computational Surveillance, argues that the concretization of reasoning in machines coincides with an epistemological order of data governance, corporate surveillance, and planetary computation. Here algorithmic modeling, ranking, visualization, and recommendations work by aggregating and correlating data in order to model behavior according to the biases of transcendental categories. The demise of reason at the hands of machines is said to define the new regime of sovereign computation, where Promethean Man becomes one with the master algorithm. Automated reason, we are told, intensifies abstraction at all levels of living, constantly turning the input towards one and the same output. It is no surprise, therefore, that chatbots only have conversations that replay the epistemological brutalities of racial capital as they reactivate the racialization and gendering of names, jobs, and hairstyles. Similarly, it is no surprise that current Generative Adversarial Networks (GAN) can be used to design fake identities that place modern categories under a morphing oneness of diversities. A recent article in the New York Times describes the growing business of deepfakes, as machine learning algorithms (GAN) create faces of nonexistent people. The website thispersondoesnotexist.com takes computation as a virtualization of diversability, exposing the insidious racialization intrinsic within the Promethean myth. Here the overrepresentation of Western cosmogony coincides with the sociogenic datafication of the flesh—an intensified servo-mechanic surrogacy—subsumed under the master algorithm. Colonial and neocolonial bio-humanisms return in this systemic belief, which perpetuates the view that the master algorithm instructs servo-mechanic flesh to be a less-than-human, nonhuman, slave, refugee, immigrant, woman, non-abled, queer body.

For this first thesis of the Master Algorithm and Computational Surveillance, automated reason represents the governor that ensures the self-making of Man. Echoing the critique of instrumental reason, technics here figures as the means—procedures, functions, discretization, quantification—that have taken over the emancipatory spirit of human self-determination. This thesis remains trapped within the self-mirroring game of transcendental reason for which technics plays the role of both the master and the slave. The image of technics as an automated master also grants that technics remains a servo-mechanic vessel without a subject—a cold calculator—that threatens the integrity of the human. By neglecting the possibility that the concretization of reason in machines enfolds the trick of modernity—namely the racialization and gendering of human reason—such a critique can only see technics as demarcating the poverty of philosophy, the recursive colonialisms of surveillance and mastering.

The second thesis, Platform Capitalism and Tools of Resistance, instead engages technics as a tool of resistance through a plethora of techno-political imaginaries—e.g., the work of Tiziana Terranova with Uninomade, the work of accelerationism, xenofeminism, blaccelerationism—which radically retheorize instrumentality. In particular, technics as know-how is understood as counteracting, counter-using, and misusing the information networks that constitute the logistical order of platform capitalism and its high-tech extraction. With and through the automation of reason, the accelerationist thesis suggests that the surplus value of surrogate labor (from domestic to creative and human-capital reproduction) can be overturned. Automation is seen as a promise to replace the time of labor with time for care; the collective “building of tools to build new freedoms,” as the Xenofeminist manifesto writes.

As automation becomes entangled with politics, this second thesis also pushes forward the abolition of the capitalist imperative of bio-economic survival. Full automation becomes a communist possibility for subtracting labor from capital and unbounding sociality from commodification. The thesis brings forward a self-critique internal to the epistemology of techno-capital. Technics is not dismissed as the apotheosis of politics and thought, but rather potentiated to become a tool of resistance. Intelligent tools become part and parcel of hetero-glossematics, assembling struggles against the monotony of cognitive capital. Tools become entrenched in collective practices that break through and against the computational sovereignty of tech corporations. But enlarging access to tools and retooling algorithms for new ends (beyond the logistical order of capital reproduction) requires a radical abolishment of the architecture that sustains the Promethean teleology of instrumentality in the first place.

Audre Lorde asks, “What does it mean when the tools of a racist patriarchy are used to examine the fruits of that same patriarchy? It means that only the most narrow parameters of change are possible and allowable.”

We know that technics, as the tools that maintain the racializing and gendering production of difference, is now reactivated in computation and artificial intelligence. The Master Algorithm and the Platform Capitalism theses continue to rely on poiesis (as bringing into being) as a way to save technics (as crafting) from the original program of master and slave, even when engaging technics as a tool of resistance. Under the premise that humanity needs to be saved from the demise of reason by retooling machines, the appeal to poiesis becomes the Promethean secret that constantly restores the origin story of the self-making Man. While presented to us as an alternative to techno-capital’s sequential logic of quantification, the Master Algorithm and Platform Capitalism theses restore the Promethean appeal to autopoiesis. Either in the form of a sovereign self-making algorithm or as the retooling or recrafting of algorithms, Promethean cosmogony regards technics as the servo-mechanic labor through which the progress of bio-economic Man can be realized.

The centrality of poiesis in critiques of technologies, however, is not new and can be found in Martin Heidegger’s reflections on cybernetics as an advancing form of instrumental reason. Writing after World War II, Heidegger saw how the empirical sciences of observed facts—and the positivism of statistical analytics and quantification—had culminated in an automated infrastructure of learning, menacing the self-determination of being, the ontological condition for knowing. Heidegger lamented the incumbent horrors of the mechanics of capital and war, of the end of the world exploding from automated decisions. As reason had become mechanical rationality, so too had the ontological condition for thinking been reduced to binaries of machines without souls. For Heidegger, the task of thinking became an urgent preoccupation for re-originating the task of philosophy in the age of automation. To do so, he turned to the pre-Socratic union of poetry (or poiesis) and thinking (noien), in order to re-root philosophy and withdraw thinking from the world of quantification. Thought is thus redelivered back to self-creativity. Similarly, while lamenting the neglect of media tools in philosophy, Fredrick Kittler embraces the re-origination of technics in and as poiesis. Instead of abstract mathematics or symbolic language (software, logic), Kittler founded a media ontology in the autopoiesis of crafting and tooling.

As a remedy for modern techne, does such a (re)turn to poiesis address entanglements with colonialisms and the racialization and gendering of machines sufficiently to overturn the Promethean cosmogony of Man’s liberation from death? Heidegger’s recuperation of a pre-Socratic poiesis invokes crafting as the experiential passing of time, an ontological condition of existence that is denied by cybernetic loops of automated reasoning. His preoccupation with the modern question of technology maintains that in the global order of techno-capitalism, the servo-mechanism of networked machines can only perform, implement, and accelerate a spatialization of thinking (a thought without being). The cybernetic order brings to the surface the self-destructive acceleration of modern rationality, revealing the essence of technology: machines become the markers of Man’s horizon of death, the end of the human, and of the world as we know it. Here poiesis comes to save critique. This union of poiesis and thinking continues to be central to critique today and has been recently evoked by Bernard Stiegler as the basis of noosology and noodiversity. To refound theoretical computer science against the global order of techno-capitalism (and the demise of critical thinking), Stiegler places technics within noosology, or what Aristotle understood as the noetic—as cognitive motion—in order to ground the bio-technical diversity of minds in creative living.

However, this recuperation of technics as the merging of poiesis and thought only seems to want to repair the loss of being. It appears as a conservative return to an idealized time before the techno-capitalist racialized and gendered programming of tools. What is overlooked here are the material consequences of global colonialisms and the material-semiotic and sociogenic articulations of inhuman thinking, of death, and the inorganic, preserved in technics as servo-mechanic flesh. In other words, this (critical) judgment continues to perform the ontological premise of the self-determining subject’s given existence, only now with a mechanology of mind-machines. And yet, the inhuman servo-mechanics remains locked once again in the dyad of Promethean colonialisms, forced to perform the part of surrogate flesh or mindless instrumentality. As Louis Chude-Sokei’s study of blackness and machines already explains, nineteenth-century epistemological discourses of racialized sapience already compared and measured black slaves with the automated intelligence of machines. Tests were developed to show that the artificial intelligence of slave-machines could perform tasks efficiently and imitate choices, yet the slave-machine was unable to originate concepts, models, theories, language, and knowledge unless it was paired with a human mind. The servo-mechanical roots of machine intelligence return in today’s popular visions of AI as either despotic automated Master or as the machine’s failure to be human. Both scenarios show that slave-machines don’t know what they are doing, don’t know the value of their processing, don’t know how to make their outputs count, don’t know what they are saying.

Instead of merging technics with poiesis in order to restore the authority of philosophy, one must work to abolish the ontological premises of critique as the limit of knowledge, together with abandoning the view of technics as being part of the creativity of Man. Audre Lorde’s appeal to refuse the tools of the master already shows that tools are caught in the instrumental reason that positions them in the matrix-maternal slave, that is, as originating from flesh-machines without form. This refusal to maintain the master/slave parameters of knowledge is a refusal to place critical thinking before the apocalypse of racial capitalism. As much as servo-mechanical instrumentality cannot be disentangled from the instrumentality of reason, technics (the know-hows of slave-machines) exposes the dark side of improper knowledge, stemming not from self-creativity but from machinic assemblages, the unintended contagions of techno-cultural practices, techno-political logics, techno-economic experimentations.

Technics as instrumentality carries within itself the brutality of racial capitalism not as a trace that reminds us of the past, but as heretical know-hows breaking open the sequential logic of algorithms. It is only from the inhuman condition of the slave-machine that artificial intelligence—as an instance of today’s technics (computational procedures, data correlations, learning algorithms, information randomness, networks and platforms, etc.)—can refuse and hack critical thinking away from the Promethean myth. By following unorthodox models of computation (constructivism, experimental axiomatics, interactive language, alternative logics), mediation becomes techno-language, and procedures become acts or interactions—responding to one another as complex patterns, abstract information, randomness, and models.

When dealing with computation, poiesis clashes with instrumentality and becomes techno-poethics, a non-creative practice (non-original, non-performative, non-efficient, non-organic), a generative reasoning enfolded in the quantification and discretization of infinities. One can understand this generativity not through the Heideggerian view of poiesis, but more through the philo-fictions of Octavia Butler’s cosmogonies as they show the past-futurity of the human world’s inhospitable brutality. Here the inevitability of a murderous past that cannot be erased becomes enmeshed in the know-hows of inhuman epistemologies—a thinking and a living that follow a logic that exits this world. Not a cosmogony of the same, but the proliferation of xenogenic dimensions of technics against the organic history of techno-sapience.

Interacting syntaxes—and not the self-determining grammar of the human—are what expose alienness in mediation and the communicability of alien words, as a surrogate intelligence that cannot be given in thought. This automated reasoning of an alien kind is one conditioned by the ingression of incomputable realities within mediation, within a language that thinks the incompleteness of worlds. Instrumental reasoning is also what flips transcendental philosophy to become the point from which automation dissipates the modern subject’s teleological ends as computational whirlwinds crossing the algorithmic and syntactical interactions of a complex flesh machine. Transcendental reason’s reliance on the surrogate work of machines means entering the irreversible instrumentality of artificial intelligence and artificial knowledge. By unmatching the sapience of the human and refusing the racialization of reason, artificial intelligence becomes a xenogenic program that hijacks the servo-mechanical model of technics. For this program demands not simply the performing of the indeterminacies of results but the running of incomputable techno-poethics in machine thinking.

#### Promethean cosmogonies are “anticompetitive” for two reasons:

#### They monopolistically subjugate Black consciousness by iteratively encoding the indeterminate noise of Blackness as signals of abstract value. The impact is the obliteration of Black thought itself in the name of surrogate humanism.

Parisi, 21—Senior Lecturer at the Centre for Cultural Studies at Goldsmiths University of London (Luciana, “Golemology, Machines of Flight, and SF Capital,” e-flux #123, December 2021, dml) [expanded numbers into words, denoted by brackets]

As Science Fiction Capital expands the limits of perception beyond the phenomenological experience of the subject, so too are the limits of transcendental intuition being overtaken by a machine aesthetics, now regulating the abstraction/extraction of a surrogate labor—a labor with no value. The limits of perception are not a phenomenological problem here, but instead mark the thresholds of change in the automated arrangement of signs and flesh constituting the operations of SF Capital, where abstracting value requires the deterritorialization of data-flesh from the colonial archives. SF Capital enfolds visual culture’s racializing economies of representation within the planetary ecologies of data navigation, where algorithmic patterns of (mis)recognition show how the negation of blackness returns in the automated functions of predictive policing and facial identification. The ocularcentric nexus of knowledge and power is constantly being reprogrammed into automated patterns of navigation: the algorithmic paths that connect platforms and the neural networks that create our everyday “wounded attachments” to the electro-informatic matrix.

SF Capital lives off the future profit of colonial data whose value is undecided until it becomes selected, aggregated, exchanged, owned. The question of technology today no longer coincides with the universal picture that enframes the world, following the monologic vision of capital’s reproduction. Data navigation instead requires that mereotopological assemblages of local spatio-temporalities turn self-determining apprehensions of the world into a multiplicity of partial prehensions—fragmented sets of machines that learn where information volumes reach n-1 dimensions of randomness, namely data that cannot be compressed into one universal axiom, language, or postulate. Navigation establishes the future value of valueless data, that is, data-flesh that has no self-constituted value in itself but corresponds with what Denise Ferreira da Silva argues is the incalculable value of blackness. Da Silva explains that as value becomes universal and moves across scales, the object (thing/matter) is unified by its formal qualities, which in turn are the effects of judgments (and thus transcendental concepts) derived from the measurement and classification of objects (that is, by the ontic limits of science). Within this transcendental field of value, blackness as a category of racial difference “occludes the total violence necessary for this expropriation [namely, the colonial expropriation], a violence that was authorized by modern juridical forms—namely, colonial domination (conquest, displacement, and settlement) and property (enslavement).”

SF Capital infuses this system of value with a preemptive feeling that defines not phenomenological perception or sensory experience, but a parasitic hold upon the transcendental conditions of human sensibility. SF Capital amplifies subjective forms of intuition and adapts the general condition of human sensibility as an a priori rule to steer data navigation, ensuring that the extraction/abstraction of value continues over and upon what has not had and will not have value, namely the nonsubject surrogates of racial capital. As Neda Atanasoski and Kalindi Vora argue, the surrogate human effect is a constitutive part of the grammar of colonialism and techno-liberalism. At the core of SF Capital lies “the racial unfreedom of the surrogate” necessary for the self-determining project of liberal subjects. Drawing on Hortense Spiller, Atanasoski and Vora consider how this project relies on a “feeling human” that justifies the epistemological operations of racial engineering. But this equation of value between 0 and 1 [zero and one], following da Silva, can also become a method of hacking and reversing the mathematical operations of value, taking the 0 [zero] value to be a proof for which blackness as nothingness—zero value or infinity—has the generative capacity to unsettle the ocularcentrism enfolded in patterns of (mis)recognition, in the algorithmic navigation of racialized data.

In what follows, I will turn to two speculative constellations of machine aesthetics and SF Capital to argue that algorithmic patterning or automated aesthetics demarcate not the (phenomenological) limits of the perception of the self-determining subject, but the fictional tendencies of capital’s reproduction of value. These fictional tendencies are based on the extraction/abstraction of 0 value as they come to rub against the alien patterns of imagination—or xeno-patterns—that explode the master/slave program of total subjection, turning it inside out.

I will first discuss Octavia Butler’s 1977 book Mind of My Mind as a figuration of how SF Capital—as the ongoing manifestation of AI in capitalist corporations—resonates with the telepathic power of its protagonist, Doro, and expands by possessing the flesh of surrogates and destroying their minds through the centuries of colonization that have kept Doro’s mind alive. His nonoptical telepathic power could also be understood as a navigational space of thinking, as Doro’s immortality requires the migration of his soul across the bodies he takes over and the telepathic networks he maintains across colonies on the globe. Secondly, I will turn to Jordan Peele’s 2017 film Get Out as another speculative device for discussing how SF Capital involves a recursive investment in the future value of blackness. In the film, the owning of flesh by the eugenic Order of the Coagula resonates with how the surrogacy of flesh—its 0 value—is necessary to the structural survival of Man’s cognition and its bio-economic model. These speculations contribute to discussing how SF Capital relies on surrogacy as a form of slave labor where the surrogate, as da Silva would put it, has no juridical, economic, or political existence.

At the end of the Pattern’s first year of existence, we all knew we had something that was working. Something new. We were learning to do everything as we went along.

—Octavia E. Butler, Mind of My Mind

It is possible to argue that the colonial subjugation of flesh coincides with the project of taking over the thinking of flesh. The subjugation of consciousness entails the elimination of thinking altogether, or the negation of the possibility of thinking otherwise. One configuration of how the possession of minds remains central to the process of the subjugation of flesh can be found in Butler’s Mind of my Mind. For four thousand years, an African man called Doro has used his telepathic power to transplant his mental essence into the minds of telepathically sensitive people. Conquering the globe, Doro enslaves his surrogate hosts in order to survive and expand the pattern of his thinking. With his telepathic power he invades hosts and destroys their consciousness, but he also procreates superhumans by selectively interbreeding gifted telepaths that will be more like him and make him feel less alone in the world. However, while Doro hopes that his hosts and interbreeding telepaths will step into a higher power by moving from the stage of latent to active telepathy, the reality for most gifted telepaths is that access to this higher power is felt as chaos: active telepathy smashes against the world’s wall of noise, turning into an affective amplifier of sorrows and pain. More telepathic power only means more empathic capacities to feel. Doro’s interbreeding experimentation ends up in disarray as the flesh he selects kill one another in madness.

Similar to Doro’s plan is SF Capital’s project of owning the future flesh of surrogates: tech corporations already own the racialized and gendered surrogate labor of the human hidden in the loop, whose task is to train and correct the artificial intelligences they are enslaved to. As Elisa Giardina Papa’s project The Cleaning of Emotional Data suggests, the free/slave labor of surrogates is justified by the transcendental form of intuitions determining the general conditions of human sensibility. Surrogates are expected to record human emotions as meaningful expressions, and correct algorithmic misunderstandings of patterns, following a universal taxonomy that teaches machines to recognize and predict meaning, affectivity, desires, and behaviors.

But training slave-minds to recognize human sensibility ends up generating patterns that fail to fit the master plan. Doro’s psycho-colonial training of artificial minds is immediately weakened by Mary, one of his daughters, as she becomes incubated within Doro’s plan of breeding gifted telepaths. Mary, a poor young biracial woman, is an exceptional telepath able to link with other telepaths around the world. She quickly learns to navigate the noise of the world that she can feel through Doro’s telepathic power and connects with enslaved minds around the world. She soon realizes she is not just sharing Doro’s telepathic power, but that a mind of her own mind is building her first Pattern by mentally attaching onto six other active telepathic people. After two years, when Mary has added fifteen hundred people to her community of Patternists, Doro thinks Mary has acquired too much power and demands that she stop acquiring telepaths and growing her patterns.

In other words, Mary’s patterns swerve from Doro’s program when she connects with the noise frequencies that are enveloped within his sequential patterned algorithms. One can say that Mary breaks Doro’s telepathic power by being able to connect through what Wilfrid Sellars calls “sheer receptivity,” a form of intuition consisting of nonconceptual representations. While this is an extra-referential level of intuition, it is also a radical shift from a Kantian intellectual intuition primarily rooted in transcendental concepts. For Sellars, sheer receptivity is a material form of intuition that comes to interact with conceptually guided intuition in a second moment, when the combination can generate a dimension of “productive imagination” in data patterning. Starting from the sheer receptivity of noise, Mary’s patterning begins to enmesh with an increasing number of patterns that become larger than Doro’s empire, ultimately bringing forth an artificial vision of a world without Doro, an ambivalent image in which the power of Mary remains entangled with the power of Doro. If she discontinues the expansion of her Patternist community, Mary will destroy her own mind as well as those of all Patternists. With support from her people, Mary gains the strength to fight and kill Doro by adding him to the Pattern and draining his life energy. Mary is ultimately able to continue to grow and protect the Patternist society she has created, but to do so she must share her nonconceptual receptivity with all sorts of thoughts. Her Pattern, even if attached to transcendental synthesis, is taken over by the process of productive imagination, falling out of Doro’s order of extraction and subjugation. By growing layers upon layers of telepathic thinking, Mary wants to share the frequencies of her patterns with Doro’s enslaved populations, offering them the chance to transition towards higher mental power. If Doro is a psychopathic tyrant, Mary knows that the power of her Pattern is entangled with the surrogacy of the flesh—a dispossessed thinking that hosts alien intelligences and all kinds of thoughts building (under)common patterns of her patterns.

One could say that there are two possibilities of machine aesthetics in SF Capital here: On the one hand, Doro keeps the pattern for his monopolistic enslavement of surrogate Patternists in the form of a transcendental intuition. On the other, Mary’s telepathy operates through the fleshiness of sheer receptivity, the telepathic function that allows the noise frequencies or randomness of the world to enter and unlock the gates of Doro’s program, also allowing the intrusion of valueless patterns into hers. Mary must relinquish total control in order to grow telepathic connections into her own patterns. She occupies a double role: while gathering the patterns that telepaths around the world produce through their new access to sheer capacities of noise receptivity, joining together the multi-dimensions of their productive imagination, Mary’s own patterns could eventually be overtaken by dispossessed and heretical rules.

Mary’s sheer receptivity is not an exception. She soon realizes that the telepathic power of navigating noise frequencies can be shared with all Patternists, and can become part of the AI navigation of data patterns as they occur in machine learning and machine vision, and in their randomness and processes of compression. Recent research at Google has focused on how artificial neural networks (convolutional neural networks in particular) offer more varied possibilities for compressing noise or randomness in machine vision in order to eliminate errors in pattern recognition. This concerns how tech corporations need to eliminate errors from automated systems without depending on surrogate labor: a move towards a full automation of vision. In this research, capsule networks are proving to be particularly capable at randomness compression because their dynamic routing annexes algorithmic patterns and predictive vectors. However, in order to automate predictive vectors, algorithms must increase their material receptivity of randomness so as to expand machine learning beyond set parameters. Randomness is here enfolded within patterns as algorithmic agents interact and learn from each other in a continuous composition and decomposition of concepts and objects that do not exist: a sort of productive imagination assembling sheer receptivity within existing patterns, bringing forward supplemental information from not-yet-compressed noise.

Predictive vectors do not simply navigate data and recognize patterns, but also construct counterfactual virtualities from the randomness of patterns that bring together the texture of a cat with the texture of an elephant skin, missing the shape of a cat that is not a cat at all. Such a predictive process, which includes extra-referential patterning of texture instead of shapes, leads algorithms to envision objects and concepts that do not exist in the grammar of categories. This improper patterning is what enmeshes data and algorithms in a process of productive imagination, starting not with categories but with the sheer receptivity of randomness—the textural randomness of the image. It is as if mereotopological aggregations of data that algorithms navigate are flipped inside out as more dimensions of noise frequencies are added to the discrete order of the algorithmic network. Instead of a continuous autopoietic growth of the master/slave pattern, convoluted neural networks add more textural pixels to the network, a fractal breaking of a random complexity that cannot be fully navigated. It is as if there remains a nonoptical randomness in machine learning that kicks in to engender patterns that do not and will not have value, but continue to be part of SF Capital, as the creation of value in the form of randomness demarcates the brutal and total subjection of flesh.

It is as if nonoptical randomness comes to enfold within itself a black light, to quote Denise Ferreira da Silva—that is, the luminosity of slave labor, whose state of total surrogacy coincides with the juridical conditions of being a slave (owned by a master), placing the slave labor outside Marx’s theory of the appropriation of surplus value. Reduced to “raw material,” slave labor points to “the colonial as the moment of creation of capital” as it continues to proliferate under a black light that reminds us that the question of technology cannot be separated from the brutality of colonialism.

#### They carry out dark pure war against the planet, which is per se anticompetitive.

Towns, 19—associate professor in Communication and Media Studies, Carleton University (Armond, “(Dark) Pure War: Virilio, the Cinematic, and the Racial,” Media Theory, Vol. 3, No. 2, 145-160, dml)

In Pure War, Paul Virilio argued that war continued beyond the physicality of the battlefield. Outside of the violence of the fight lay a violence of industrial production toward the conditions for war. Put differently, pure war signified the new ways that war was now acted out ‘in infinite preparation’ (Virilio, 2008: 29). Pure war indicated the always already active preparation for war by the state, even when war was not being physically waged.

One could say that a cornerstone of Virilio’s research has been media’s relation to unending war. A central component of pure war, for example, is information, or the gathering of data to surveil and police populations that are always under the watchful eye of the war machine. Interestingly, Virilio concerns himself less with the racial implications of those who are open to surveilling and policing and more with the expansion of policing and surveilling as practices that are applicable to ‘everyone’. Yet, his examples of war have racial undertones that he often does not fully investigate: the Vietnam War, the Iraq War, and the Italo-Ethiopian War, to name a few, all creep toward the pure war. Even as Virilio (2002) acknowledged the racial implications of the Second World War, he had less to say about the recognition that the Nazis pulled their racialized strategies of death for the European Jewish population from the US state’s approach to black and indigenous people (Whitman, 2017). Each of these wars, between white and nonwhite people or between white and white people in relation to those who could never fully be white, suggest that the wars that Virilio found most interesting were not race neutral.

What can Virilio provide for a media studies of race? I argue that Virilio’s work on pure war can be reinterpreted as a ‘dark pure war’, concerned with a militaristic, unending war against nonwhite populations. It is a dark pure war, one that structures the colony and the metropole, that lays the foundation for pure war. Dark pure war is not necessarily ‘black’ in the racialized sense, even as it often functions that way. Instead, it is black in the ‘blackening’ sense, in what Kumi Silva (2010) calls the ‘identification’ of nonwhite bodies as open to state violence. Thus, pulling from Virilio and Simone Browne’s (2015) Dark Matters, a dark pure war outlines the centrality of race to the continuance of war, even as race is the purposefully forgotten genesis of such war. This is not Michel Foucault’s (2003) ‘race war’, as Europe is not the central locale from which such war occurs. Rather, dark pure war is inseparable from Euro-American imperial, capitalistic expansionism (colonialism and racial slavery) as militarized projects toward the maintenance of white life and the conditions of black death, ad infinitum.

Virilio’s work has been called, rightly in my opinion, ‘wild and aphoristic’ (Sharma, 2013). Yet, I want to say that what Virilio may point toward is an investigation of the centrality of technologies to racialization processes. Surveillance studies (which has long investigated race) and media philosophy (which has been slower to discuss race) are put into conversation with one another here. I advance the concept of dark pure war in three sections. I start by delineating the connections between war, cinema, and information that Virilio argued were important. I then move into outlining the darkness of pure war, particularly by outlining the racialized components of contemporary policing and surveillance. I conclude by calling for a rethinking of ‘dromology’, one that moves toward including the multi-symbolic capacity of ‘race’ in discussions of war.

The Perceptions of War: Vision and the Cinematic

In War and Cinema, Virilio argued that the history of war was both theatrical and a history of transforming perceptual fields, whereby vision was increasingly the site of power. As such, the rifle’s gunsights and the camera came together to situate the world as a field of vision that could be measured, calculated, and shot. For Virilio, film functioned as a pedagogical tool, one that involved an increasing sensorial detachment from film itself. Virilio’s example is the famous myth of an audience in Paris watching a film of a moving locomotive filling the screen causing the people in the cinema to believe the train was going to drive over them:

[In] fact it was the precision of the camera-shot which first created audience panic at the Lumières’ ‘motion demonstrations’ of the train’s arrival at la Ciotat, when everyone felt that they risked being crushed or injured by the train. This kind of fear, akin to the sense of speed that people seek on roller coasters, did not disappear but simply became more pernicious as the audience learnt to control its nervous reactions and began to find death amusing (Virilio, 1989: 39-40).

What Virilio pointed to was a transformation in perception: film produced images of objects, thus, perceptually distancing audiences from said objects, to a point where there would no longer be a need to panic at the sight of an oncoming train in a cinema. There have been a few attempts to debunk the myth of whether or not the audience was actually sent running at the sight of the train (Cooper, 2016; Grundhauser, 2016), but the fact still stands: ‘film is now second nature to us, but it was utterly shocking not much more than a century ago’ (Cooper, 2016).

Cinemas were ‘training camps’, bonding ‘people together in the face of death agony, teaching them to master the fear of what they did not know – or rather, as Hitchcock put it, of what did not exist’ (Virilio, 1989: 40). In short, cinema readied people for ‘the artificial horizon of a screen or a monitor capable of permanently displaying the preponderance of the media perspective, the relief of the “tele-present” event taking precedence over the three dimensions of the volume of the objects or places here present’ (Virilio, 2006: 66). This training did not occur overnight, but involved multiple media forms that all worked toward perceptual transformation. As such, more than cinema, Virilio is interested in the ‘cinematic’, which included and exceeded cinema, proper; he tried to track the link between cinema, war, and later ‘vision machines’, such as television, CCTV, smart devices, and drone strikes, assuring us that ‘Components of a cinematic machine have been in use over many centuries: forms of projection, moving images, immobile voyages, and visionary illuminations’ (Crary, 2009: 13). The cinema, television, and war all worked together toward distancing audiences from objects, for Virilio.

Virilio’s work on cinema also adds much to those interested in studying the Web and information. In the wake of the atom bomb, Virilio warned of a second bomb, the ‘information bomb’, which is important for pure war. Whereas the atom bomb was a war of movement, the information bomb was a war of knowledge and speed, signifying a war ‘won’ by the increasing speed of interactivity in real time. Such a bomb included and exceeded cinema, and essentially structured computer screens and the Web – both media developed during and after the Second World War, and very much because of it. This is a trajectory of transformations that cannot be said to have origins in cinema, but were representative of the impact of the cinematic:

We’re still here in the domain of cinematic illusion, of the mirage of information precipitated on the computer screen what is given is exactly the information but not the sensation; it is the apatheia, this scientific impassibility which makes it so that the more informed man is the more the desert of the world expands around him, the more the repetition of information (already known) upsets the stimuli of observation, overtaking them automatically, not only in memory (interior light) but first of all in the look, to the point that from now on it’s the speed of light itself which limits the reading of information and the important thing in electronic information is no longer the storage but the display (Virilio, 2009: 56).

For Virilio, then, the shift from ‘tele-vision’ to ‘tele-surveillance’ reflected the demands of capitalism and war. Whereas tele-vision held ‘the task of informing or entertaining the mass of viewers’ (Virilio, 2006: 59), the new tele-vision, or the ‘tele-surveillance’, was concerned with ‘exposing and invading of individuals’ domestic space, like a new form of lighting, which is capable of revolutionizing the notion of neighborhood unit, or of a building or district’ (Virilio, 2006: 59). The drone strike, then, could pinpoint a ‘target’s’ location, whether indoors or outdoors.

Thus, tele-surveillance spoke to a ‘dromology,’ a ‘speed politics’, or a politics of instantaneousness, sparked by the increasing need to entertain, monitor, and prepare others for their own monitoring. Further, it replicated the waging of war on people at a distance: ‘Making information resonate globally, which is necessary in the age of the great planetary market, is in many ways going to resemble the practices and uses of military intelligence, and also political propaganda and its excesses’ (Virilio, 2006: 62). Likewise, this spoke to what many have called a ‘slow violence’, one that disproportionately impacts the Global South (Nixon, 2011; Parikka, 2017), as a space largely viewed solely as a waste station of the Global North. War is a continual process that does not end when the last round is fired, but is also carried out via the circulation of information and propaganda in ways that penetrate architecture without necessarily physically destroying a building’s structural integrity.

Dark Pure War: Surveillance and the Racial

Pure war is the continuance of war after the physicality of war is over and done; now, information functions toward the continuance of war, as a preemptive strike against enemies: ‘But war doesn’t really end, as Virilio noted, it just accelerates, approximating ever more closely to its pure form’ (Wark, 2018). Information is now a central component of war, whereby ‘Not only is architecture vulnerable to bombs, it proves defenseless against information, passing through the doors and walls of our homes, rearranging the space and time we imagine we live within’ (Wark, 2018). Indeed, ‘the capability of war without war manifests a parallel information market of propaganda, illusion, dissimulation’ (Der Derian, 2002: viii).

To rethink Virilio’s pure war as dark pure war requires thinking about not only how information is weaponized toward war’s continuance, but also the presumed racial neutrality associated with both war and information. Thus, race is the underexamined, overlooked element of Virilio’s theory. Like discussions of dark matter in physics, Browne’s employment of ‘dark matter’ is meant to point toward the ‘unseen and unperceived’ elements of antiblackness in the surveillant practices of contemporary society. She argues that ‘rather than seeing surveillance as something inaugurated by new technologies, such as automated facial recognition or unmanned autonomous vehicles (or drones)’ (Browne, 2015: 8), we can instead think about ‘surveillance in and of black life as a fact of blackness’ (Browne, 2015: 6). Thus, Browne connects surveillance theory to a dark history concerned with the measurement of bodies to see their ‘intentions’, a dark history often underexamined in surveillance studies. That history is scientific racism:

Anthropometry, or Bertillonage, was introduced in 1883 by Alphonse Bertillon as a system of measuring and then cataloguing the human body by distinguishing one individual from another for the purposes of identification, classification, and criminal forensics. This early biometric information technology was put to work as a “scientific method,” alongside the pseudo-sciences of craniometry (the measurement of the skull to assign criminality and intelligence to race and gender) and phrenology (attributing mental abilities to the shape of the skull, as the skull was believed to hold a brain made up of individual organs) (Browne, 2015: 112).

What Browne points toward is a question unasked by Virilio: what if the ‘fact of blackness’ is the structuring necessity for the new technologies of surveillance themselves? This would require that we rethink pure war as a dark pure war, which is to say that pure war holds race as central, while never acknowledging its importance to the maintenance of war.

What if we thought about Virilio’s pure war as a racial condition in the US? In short, what if we were to rearticulate WEB Du Bois’ (1994) question of, ‘How does it feel to be a problem’, as a racialized question of war? The end of the US Civil War and the end of racial slavery marked the structure of pure war as a condition, rather than a contingency, of black life. Another way to say this is that white people went to war with each other over the right to own our black bodies in the US Civil War, and it presumably ended in 1865. Yet, the replication of racial violence, what Saidiya Hartman (2008) calls the ‘afterlife of slavery’, has yet to end for black people; instead, racial violence is fundamental to what it means to be black (and white) in the US. Jim Crowism, ghettoization, deindustrialization, white flight, mass incarceration, and gentrification are remnants of dark pure war. They are post-war answers to how to deal with a ‘problem’; to call for their end is to call for the end to what many cannot let go of: whiteness. Further, with race at its center, this entails that black people are not the only ones affected by dark pure war, but are part of dark pure war’s larger assemblage.

What Virilio pointed toward, then, was that cinema and war were necessarily interconnected and assistants in the perceptual transformations that readied populations for their own continual surveillance; and just as important, such forms of surveillance have been tested on people of color prior to their implementation on the larger society. This is what Browne refers to as the ‘unseen and unperceived’ component of dark matter and what I call dark pure war: it is the necessity of the black body as an always already surveillable, commodified object, one that can normalize even the contemporary surveillance of people’s information online.

#### Black techno-conjuring “expands the scope” by deepfaking the indeterminate hieroglyphics of Black flesh into the topical code.

Dixon-Román, 21—Associate Professor in the School of Social Policy & Practice at the University of Pennsylvania (Ezekiel, “Haunting, Blackness, and Algorithmic Thought,” e-flux #123, December 2021, dml)

Drawing from Derrida’s concept of hauntology, a play on the pronunciation of “ontology,” haunting points to the non-full, non-total presence of being. In every being there’s always already an absence of presence, an inheritance, a trace of that which was and that which is to come. In every being there is a haunting. Haunting is a necessity of recursivity. As a process, finite models seek to compress infinite information, including that which is indeterminate to the model’s system. The model’s attempts to compress and recursively enfold indeterminacies into its logic produces a temporal break or discontinuity that points toward a haunting. This haunting is often unseen yet is affectively registered or perceived by those interpellated by the algorithm. It is a complicated and indeterminate ontology that is a result of the relation of power imbued in technology.

As an extension of my work on inheritance, I am interested in the haunting logics of colonialism in the epistemology of technology. Haunting, and what I will discuss later of Black techno-conjuring, provides an analytic to identify, read, and tease out how the post-Enlightenment subject is configured in the epistemo-logics of technology while also referring to a potential process of computational fugitivity. Haunting is both the inseparability and discontinuity of time and that which viscerally and affectively shapes behavior. In addition to Derrida, my thinking on haunting is informed by Avery Gordon’s focus on the seeming dis/continuity between social structures, social institutions, and everyday life, Karen Barad’s dis/jointedness of time and space and entanglement of the here and now, and especially Mark Fisher’s argument that haunting is also about the temporalities of technology that produce a virtuality, a relation of what is no longer and not yet, and a shaping of affects of nostalgia or anticipation. Yet, what I seek to advance on haunting are the ideas that it is fundamental to the recursive process, it is part of the logics of technologies, and it is both an analytic and computational process of potentiality. Again, the disjointedness of time and space affectively shapes and indicates spectral presence.

For Derrida, time was signified through the sign, a mark of the complicated and non-full presence of a ghost. I want to offer some propositions toward rethinking time and haunting, as well as their relation to the recursive. I also want to think through the political-ethical work of time, especially in relation to the problem of colonial articulations in the development of the human. Finally, I’d like to leave us with some considerations of what I am calling a Black techno-conjuring and what it might offer us toward addressing, redressing, and/or rerouting the fears, anxieties, desires, and anticipations of the political affect of the no longer/what happened and the not yet/what’s yet to happen.

Hauntology and Time

Toggling the New York Times deepfake faces raises questions about how time and space is configured and enfolded into the curation of these digital productions. As Elisa Giardina Papa has illustrated, the generation of data for training affective computing is temporally and spatially situated particularly in the Global South, yet also processed by a technology that was developed from nineteenth-century phrenology and assumptions of the transparent or liberal subject. Thus, racial logics became part of the nonlinear axiomatics of the technology. This materializes in part due to the temporal-spatial situating of the subject and assumptions of development, progress, and narratives of cultural difference. For these reasons I’m advancing proposals on temporality (and by entanglement spatiality) through which I hope to (1) move beyond the modern categories of past, present, and future, (2) shift a theoretical gaze from the signifier to the becoming process and its material reconfigurings, and, as such, (3) open up the potential for an alternative conceptualization of haunting that’s based on the inheritance of colonial violence and racial subjugation—what Spillers has characterized as the intergenerationality of “hieroglyphics of the flesh.”

Obviously, linear teleological time does not exist. Discrete categories of past, present, and future are inherited categories of modernism that were constituted by the interest in progress and the development of colonialism and capitalism. According to Alfred North Whitehead, there are only conceptual prehensions and persuasions of the future in the supposed immediate present. The past is immanent in the present. The “what happened” and the “no longer” are enfolded in the present, encoding the fleshiness of bodily and techno-social systems. Whether it’s the neurobiological or neural network, the sociogenic code becomes reinforced through the spiraling feedback loops of recursion. As Mark Fisher described, the haunting of the past is instantiated in the disorienting experience of déjà vu or nostalgia where the past is immanent in the immediate occasion. I argue that this haunting event initiates the coding of the flesh.

The future is also immanent in the present. It is the virtual and what shapes affective anticipations and the constructed political necessity for algorithmic future prehension via prediction. The past is immanent in the future; it is futures past. The virtual becomes actual and the actual is shaped by the virtual. From the anticipation of the virtual, the not yet, the what is yet to happen haunts the event toward what Massumi has called preemptive logics of power. Cybernetic “predictions” of the virtual are the preemptive logics of algorithmic governance that shape and become the actual. In other words, cybernetic “predictive” acts form the becoming-actual that is haunted by futures past.

I am reminded of a passage from Claudia Rankine’s Citizen:

You know feelings destabilize since everyone you ask is laughing that kind of close-the-gap laughter: all the haha’s wanting uninterrupted views. Don’t be ridiculous. None of the other black friends feel that way and how you feel is how you feel even if what you perceive isn’t tied to what is …

What is?

And so it goes until the vista includes only displacement of feeling back into the body, which gave birth to the feelings that don’t sit comfortably inside the communal.

You smile dumbly at the world because you are still feeling if only the feeling could be known and this brings on the moment you recognize as desire.

Desire here is that which is the pursuit of knowability, recognition of affect, and even the potentiality of subversion. Yet, desire is also that which is already slipping the grasp of the present, becoming futures past.

The present is the heir of both the conceptual or perceived past and future. Replacing the category of history in Massumi’s characterization of a “history in the present,” I restate this as a “becoming-process in the present,” an affective becoming and material reconfiguring of encoded flesh. Yet, to be clear, the haunting presence is not colonial reason or whiteness, nor is it the creative indeterminacies of Blackness or the flesh. Haunting, I argue, is the disjuncture or disjointedness that instantiates the recursive system’s inheritance and enfolding of colonial violence and racial subjugation. It is precisely the temporal skip or spatial discontinuity in the becoming-recursivity, as seen in the dis-adjustments of the toggled shifts in deepfake faces or the logo design of the Recursive Colonialism symposium website. And, with Parisi, it is that which is working in the interval between the finite system and the incomputable infinities. It is the tension that’s produced from the system’s recursive efforts to self-regulate and maintain the changing same of colonial reason (or whiteness) in the face of the incompressibility of the creative indeterminacies of Blackness or the flesh—what Aimé Césaire called the colonialist encounter, yet in computational logics.

Recursion, Time, and Haunting

Time is a fundamental part of the feedback loops from outputs to inputs in a recursive system. It’s via the temporal process that recursion does not simply loop back on itself but rather opens up to self-regulate and maintain a homeostatic system while simultaneously processing contingencies, producing a spiraling process of recursivity. Recursion is a computational process of enfolding temporalities. According to Yuk Hui, indeterminacies characterize not just recursive temporalities but also recursive thinking.

The Turing halting problem, or the incompressibility of Gregory Chaitin’s “Omega number” and Parisi’s “incomputable,” is an instantiation of recursive haunting. The skipping of the incompressibility of indeterminacies is the expropriative-appropriative logic of capital seeking to compress indeterminacies into colonialist reason. In what ways do we see the recursive logics of the New York Times deepfake faces enfolding temporal-spatial territories of political-symbolic matter? How is what Ramon Amaro has called the Black technical object configured or not configured in the computational production of these faces?

Time and Space

As I mentioned earlier, history, time, and space (as in geography) were important in shaping categories of difference. As Denise Ferreira da Silva argues, it is through the temporalizing of categories, via Hegel’s and Herder’s natural history of racial categories, that sociopolitical logics of raciality are produced. Herder’s account of human history is situated in varying geographical contexts; he conceptualizes the development of the interiority of human groups by way of their achievements.

Da Silva states that Hegel replaces Herder’s nature with “[Father] Spirit, a gesture that further apprehends the World as the Exhibition Hall of an entity that belongs in time, an interior thing. There he finds that Spirit had not … done its work on African minds and territories, for the Negro lacked the ideas that registered the Spirit’s presence.” Through Herder’s and Hegel’s move to make natural history and the Spirit the causal force of the development of a group’s interior capacities, they cemented colonial ideas of progress and development and, as such, the manifestation of sameness and difference via what Sylvia Wynter has called Man 1 and Man 2, or the cosmogonies of prototypical Man.

Consequently, time is not the only dimension in which haunting makes its appearance or apparition known but, as a significant premise in the conceptualization of the post-Enlightenment subject, time is also profoundly important for the spectrality of colonial violence and racial subjugation. In fact, time, history, and space (as demarcated by geographic context), or more specifically development, became the necessary descriptors in the formations of sameness and difference as well as economic conditions, social conditions, human capacities, and even frameworks that inform social policies and practices of governance. Thus, that which is out of joint or dis-adjusted is always a haunting imbued with the political-ethical concerns of colonial violence. As a result, the temporal skipping, spatial shift or blur, and political-symbolic ambiguity of the deepfake faces mark the apparitions of the transparent subject of the post-Enlightenment.

Haunting as a Condition of Possibility

As I’ve argued, haunting is the complicated enfolding of the affective patterns of the no longer and anticipations of the not yet that maintains or reinforces the changing same of the transparent subject. In techno-social and techno-political systems, haunting is the discontinuities and dis-adjustments of the recursive enfolding of the indeterminacies of Blackness that are a result of colonial violence and racial subjugation. Yet, I also posit haunting as a condition of possibility (or perhaps potentiality). That is to say, the fact of the apparition’s presence, its seething presence, demands address, redress, and/or rerouting. I want to assert the utility of a technological reading and force that is in relation to haunting and the creative indeterminacies of Blackness, what I am calling a Black techno-conjuring, which has the potential to strengthen the influence of the diffractive.

In the Oxford English Dictionary, the third entry for “conjuring” is based on Caribbean and Southern US Black English. It’s an attributive noun in folk magic, religion, and medicine, such as the “conjure man” or the “conjure doctor.” “Conjure” may refer to the trick or spell that has been placed on a body, while also being the work of “curing” someone of a conjuring. While the algorithm may be possessed by colonial reason, and while Blackness is in part shaped by racial violence and subjugation, the haunting also conditions the possibility for the transformative force of the creative indeterminacies of Blackness. As Fred Moten reminds us, the forces of racial capitalism are necessary, yet not sufficient, for understanding Blackness, as racial capitalism conditions the very possibility for the infinite variability of Black performances. Thus, in relation to haunting, Black techno-conjuring brings forth two operations. The first is a reading of techno-social and techno-political systems that centers the metaphysics of Blackness as it seeks to trace the post-Enlightenment subject within the logics of the system and exhume the bodies in the violent wake of the algorithm. A Black techno-conjuring reading is also informed by Hortense Spillers’s flesh, Cristina Sharpe’s the wake, and Denise Ferreira da Silva’s poethical reading. This is a practice of thinking and reading that forces one to locate or identify the haunting logics of what happened that are immanent in the what happens, how the what happens anticipates the what is yet to happen, and how the what happened is already immanent in the what is yet to happen. To put this plainly, when read through the GAN-produced deepfake faces, the grounds for abolition become articulated. Thus, a Black techno-conjuring could be deployed on all techno-political systems as a practice of reading their veracity toward anti-colonial interest, especially prior to their establishment in policy.

The second operation of Black techno-conjuring is a technological force that has the potential to reroute and alter the logic of the system. The discontinuities and dis-adjustments that emerge from the system’s limits to compress indeterminacies are part of the diffractive patterns that are residual in the GAN-produced faces. Borrowing from Karen Barad’s articulation, diffraction is the way in which wave patterns overlap and how waves bend and spread when they encounter an interfering structure, producing differences that make a difference. The processed dividual data of human faces are diffracted through the generative adversarial network algorithm, the interfering structure, to produce the deepfake faces. The blurred spot and mismatched accessories of the algorithmic facial images are the diffractive wave patterns left in the wake of the GAN’s attempts to compress that which is incompressible, such as its inability to compress the creative indeterminacies of Blackness.

These indeterminate diffractive wave patterns in the wake of the GAN-produced deepfake faces also point toward the potentiality of computationally identifying, undoing, exorcizing, or conjuring the bodies of the racial Other in their diffractive wake. The computational identification of the diffractive wave patterns of temporal-spatial disjoint, I argue, opens up the possibility of a Black techno-conjuring reading of the haunting enfoldings of recursive logics. In other words, by identifying the discontinuities and disjointedness, it enables a reading of what happened, what happens, and what is yet to happen that occasions a potential address, undoing, or unmaking of the instituted violence that brought it into emergence. It is through such interventions that we might identify, exorcize, or conjure instances, moments, and openings toward a redressing, or more radically a rerouting or refusal, of the colonial and racial subjugation haunting our present.

#### Hauntological speculation “substantially increase[s] prohibitions” by generating speculative machine epistemologies that explode the recursive procedures of Promethean cosmogonies.

Parisi, et al, 21—Senior Lecturer at the Centre for Cultural Studies at Goldsmiths University of London, the authors are collectively writing as the Critical Computation Bureau (Luciana, with Ezekiel Dixon-Román, Tiziana Terranova, Oana Pârvan, and Brian D’Aquino, “Dialogues on Recursive Colonialisms, Speculative Computation, and the Techno-social,” e-flux #123, December 2021, dml) [expanded numbers into words, denoted by brackets]

Working in the strange attraction between speculative approaches, critical theorizations, and imaginary practices, this issue also asks how a technology or machine epistemology constituted by the entanglement between racial capitalism, recursive colonialisms, and computation can still overcome the overrepresentation of Man or Promethean cosmogonies. How does machine epistemology also allow for futures that run counter to a mere feeding into and from techno-social networks? In this procedure of abstraction, which could be called socio-technical or techno-sociogenic, the iterability of techno-signs through the flesh discloses the possibilities of otherwise languages, otherwise worlds, otherwise cognitions. If machine epistemology depended only on the cognitive extension or prosthetics of the brain’s neural networks, it would be just another version of the Promethean project of the mastery of tools. Machine epistemology does not articulate cognition in terms of embodiment in an environment, but rather in terms of a form of cognition. This entails a possibility for a techno-semiosis whereby the flesh at once remains and becomes the medium of the world and as such becomes a techno-sign of cultural formations. We have thus become aware of how the socio-technical or techno-sociogenic can inherit existing cosmogonies, not in a deterministic or imitative way, but through its iterability. But if techno-sociogenic flesh is shaped by repetition with alterity, it also takes on a mix of cosmogonies to make something else.

What we call “cosmo-computation” entails a fully automated recursive system for which there is supposed to be no human-in-the-loop. This term applies Yuk Hui’s concept of cosmotechnics (which calls for a technical mediation between metaphysics and cultures that do not conform to the universal standardization of knowledge) to the cognitive paradigm of technology by asking what it would mean to experiment with auto-imaging multiple ontologies and multiple metaphysics through computation. But cosmo-computation still maintains the specter of whiteness and intensified legacies of racial capital within itself. These are legacies whereby computational schema cannot erase anti-blackness or the brutalities and techno-semiotic hieroglyphics marked in flesh. In other words, cosmo-computation must also work on the cyber-mechanics of the machine in relation to slavery, to take on and step outside the dialectic of the human and the thing.

But how to run with cosmo-computational epistemologies without risking a reinforced universal logic or another plea to techno-cultural difference in the name of multiculturalism? What critical space is left to counter-actualize the recursivity of this double pincer that simply conceals the monologic discourse of self-determination through a proliferation of dualities? How can cosmo-computation—as a procedure of existing as techno-flesh—become a way to construct worlds from the heretical rules of what Denise Ferreira da Silva calls “difference without separability”?

Cosmo-computation does not coincide with any reclamation of the modern history of technology that starts from the local, the periphery, or the colonies of the West. Its critical possibility lies in exposing the operative power of the universalism-multiculturalism double pincer in preserving the overrepresentation of Man. This critical moment is undoubtedly haunted by the “continuous present” (Fred Moten) of the brutalities of racial capitalism, colonialisms, and slavery. Thus, it must also become surrounded by practices of fugitivity, by speculative moments, methods, and activities that spring out of the negative negation (da Silva) of the slave, the refugee, the woman, the immigrant, the trans through the existence of otherwise techno-flesh that refuses the saving promise of Promethean Man.

Our proposition is that machine epistemology, as a cosmo-computational affair, must not only challenge the view of techno-capital but also the human form. Within the history of machine epistemology, industrial capital took on the prototype of automation, replacing the archetype of enslaved labor. With the invention of the robot, the enslaved became enfleshed in machines as much as machines became the hosts of already brutally wounded flesh. Even if this modern form of recursive epistemology extended colonial mentalities into the model of global ecologies of extraction and commodity exchange, it had already voraciously incorporated into techno-capital an irreversible contagion that infiltrated the cosmogony of Man and his belief in the bio-economic myth of evolution.

From this standpoint, it seems essential today to not separate the critical from the speculative moment. Speculation is not the opposite of critique, but rather the whirlwind, the spiral, the vortex, the invaginations of critique inside-out. In the critical there is always the possibility of the speculative. As such, cosmo-computation can also be a space of transversal epistemological possibility whereby otherwise cosmogonies are not originated by, from, or against Promethean Man, but are rather ante-universal patterns, fractal algorithms that come before and run beneath, alongside of, and break across the pattern.

The dialogues in this issue are both critical and speculative interventions into practicing cosmo-computation as thinking with “difference without separability” and venturing into how AI—from expert systems to machine learning to interactive computational languages—contributes to defining what computational epistemologies can do. As much as recursivity preserves the iterability of functions and constitutes the structural parts of an overrepresentational whole, it also maintains a rhythm that is out of sync with itself, an atonality or dissonance in the beats. This out-of-sync rhythm and computational dissonance are the reverberations of a haunting that is not a trace of what was and no longer is, but rather tells us of the rhythm that stands apart. It tells us what exists within its elemental functions of counting infinities and of assembling together what falls out of patterns of recognition.

What recursivity therefore entails is how the complexity of critique and speculation cannot be separated into two forms—into models or paradigms that are in contradiction or that fall into a linear order. Recursivity tells us that critique and speculation can happen at once—multiple times in space and multiple spaces in time. But this simultaneity also demarcates the interlayering of techno-flesh in the ongoing project of Promethean cosmogonies that have returned across and within the computational forms of colonialisms and racial capitalism.

Speculation therefore works from within critique through the iterative moments exposing the continuous performance of anti-blackness and the renewed conjunctures of auto-poiesis that obliterate difference. From the techno-surrogacy of intelligent flesh to the necropower of planetary computation to the biopolitics of debilitation and the modulations of slow life/death, modes of haunting return to expose the 0 [zero] value of blackness across stateless and dispossessed realities of techno-social practices around the globe. What the enfleshed machine can do is to explode within recursive procedures of disability and debilitation anytime and everywhere.

#### The 1AC’s fugitive repurposing of Black media expands “core antitrust laws” to include the Black media forms which are structurally unthought within white monopolizations of the techno-social.

Towns, 22—associate professor in Communication and Media Studies, Carleton University (Armond, “Black Escapism on the Underground (Black) Anthropocene,” *On Black Media Philosophy*, Chapter 2, 64-69, dml) [language modifications denoted by brackets]

Western media philosophy's contemporary approach does not allow for a critical discussion of the Underground Railroad. We would do well to take a page from the Black enslaved people to rethink both media content and media form in relation to race. In short, what we see within the discussion of the Underground Railroad is a central theme of today's media philosophy, though largely unacknowledged by its scholars. What some might call nature (sticks, the North Star, etc.) were media for the Black people fleeing for their lives on the Underground Railroad. While such concepts of nature have found themselves a home in media philosophy, Blackness has not." For example, Anthropocene research has focused on "extraordinary burdens of toxic chemistry, mining, depletion of lakes and rivers under and above ground, ecosystem simplification."38 Likewise, media philosophers have concerned ourselves with the relationship between the Western, capitalistic need for new media and the depletion of the earth's natural resources toward the creation of those same new media. Indeed, the extraction of natural, raw materials from non-Western locales has been important for the powering of laptops, cellphones, and flat screens of disproportionately Western use." Thus for decades, media philosophers have flirted with the interconnections between technology, capitalism, and planetary destruction.

Although delving into the Anthropocene literature is important, another related term may remedy the problem of Blackness in media philosophy research: the "Black Anthropocene." Kathryn Yusoff argues that the Anthropocene under investigation in academia is truly a Black Anthropocene, meaning that the Anthropocene assumes a racial, gendered, sexual assemblage as its organizing principle, even as much of the research on the Anthropocene does not acknowledge this."' Like the Anthropocene, the Black Anthropocene relied on largely Western resource depletion of non-Western resources, but such forms of depletion cannot be distinguished from a world in which the Negro [Blackness] was also an important part of the same natural resource depletion, a body deemed to be closer in proximity to nature than to civilization. The Anthropocene always held raced and gendered conceptions of nature, even as race and gender are ignored in much of the contemporary media philosophy that focuses on the Anthropocene. It would be similar positions that would distinguish between "the underground" and "the Underground" for Preston: not only were Black people deemed closer to nature, but such proximity to nature also presumably justified a tendency toward unorganized media. There is a link, then, between Western conceptions of nature, capitalist resource overdepletion, racial Blackness, and media.

Whereas the Anthropocene is often presented as a nonracial project, Yusoff rejects this position and also rejects the alternative -cenes of the Anthropocene, such as the Capitalocene, the Chtulthocene, and even the Plantationocene." The Black Anthropocene, which assumes the plantations and the colonies, is irreducible to the other -cenes because it also holds alternative, radical potentialities. In other words, the Black Anthropocene can point toward new conceptions of humanness and freedom. Likewise, enslaved people on the plantation (as well as those who fled from it) engaged in new modes of thinking about human interaction with the nonhuman world to foster multispecies well-being.42 This new multispecies well-being is a narrative, a "plot," as per McKittrick, that never stayed on the plantations but moved with Black people, on and off the plantation, as they traversed alternative space times toward abolition—that which white people often cared little to interrogate in any serious way.'

McKittrick argues that the plantation was indeed "a location of black death," but to assume that it was nothing more brushes over the new, alternative futures that Black people imagined and created. On the plantation, the locale of the Negro, there were dreams of a struggle for life, far beyond white imaginations of the Negro." Because there were certain elements of the plantation, and its racial violences, that continued on (such as slave catchers, fugitive slave acts, etc.), for McKittrick, the plantation also demanded transforming "decolonial thinking, predicated on new forms of human life from the start.4S In other words, the enslaved people, and those who escaped, were radical thinkers. The plantation functioned as a blueprint for the spatial-temporal imaginations of those enslaved Black people who fled from it; it was a simultaneous reification of and rejection of commodification—a rejection of the Negro of white imagination and an expression of alternative concepts of time, space, and life.

The Black Anthropocene was both a factory, one highly productive of our current overextractive processes that structure Western media (including the Negro [Blackness] as a medium), but it also pointed toward new futures than what white enslavers, slave catchers, and liberals were fully aware of or prepared for. In other words, Black people used their bodies and/as alternative media toward freedoms that fully exceeded Western humanism's frame." As I see it, we have a chance to remake media philosophy in at least two ways, though likely far more. We could relocate our discourses of contemporary media technologies away from the Anthropocene, toward the Black Anthropocene, which is to say toward the plantation and the colony. In the process we could fully resituate the destruction of the natural environment not solely in the destruction of both flora and fauna but also in racial violence.' 7 If we focused on the Black Anthropocene in media philosophy, we could also better understand the centrality of the white, Western imagination to the raced and gendered construction of nature, that which would make up our contemporary media devices as well as the contemporary racialized order of knowledge.

Second, and far more important for me, we can also think about how those media, inseparable from the plantation and colony (and the flight from both), continue to plot out new worlds than what Western man could ever fully comprehend—they create radical, alternative conceptions of Black life. If media have potentialities underthought by Western man, they are not only his trusty tools, but they are also technologies that he can never fully monopolize or comprehend, especially in the hands of Black people. There may be few better examples of a rejection of, yet full comprehension of, man's anthropocentric media environment in North America than the alternative mediations of the Underground Railroad, where media and Black liberation collide outside the limitations of white, Western epistemic imaginations.

BLACK GEOGRAPHIC MEDIATIONS

What we have from the Underground Railroad today is largely written documentation, particularly from enslaved people's autobiographies and abolitionist interviews with former enslaved people after they had escaped. Here some may argue that we largely reside in a similar context that we are critiquing Preston for not critically seeing: phonetic writing is one of the most important modes through which we come to learn about the Underground Railroad. Furthermore, the online proliferation of information about the Underground Railroad is massive. Virtual tours are now available of routes taken on the Underground Railroad, and many tourists continue to sign up online to take plantation tours, itself a big industry, which often teaches about how many enslaved people fled the plantation. 48 Yet there are clues about alternative traversals of space in the enslaved people's narratives themselves. A close reading of the narratives of enslaved people illustrates that their media were not considered media by those chasing them. Black people's forms of media were necessarily deemed primitive, natural, or tribal by scholars like Preston (and I argue even McLuhan), compared to the media forms associated with white, Western Europeans and North Americans. As a by- product, primitiveness, naturalness, and tribalness provided a needed cover for Black escapisms.

While slave catchers, academics, and scientific racists considered the lack of writing and mapping as proof of racial inferiority, it could also reveal enslaved people's understanding of the importance of such media forms for white people. The enslaved people often did not use writing and mapping to escape slavery; this was essential, as scholars like Paul Gilroy argue that writing and mapping may have undermined Black escape attempts if paper routes were ever discovered by those pursuing them.49 Alternatively, Black escapism required media based on the particulars of the situation, not a paper trail. Enslaved Black people and their sought-after freedoms often required illegibility/illiteracy. Although many enslaved people wanted to learn to read and write, and many did so, the current negative associations with illiteracy were not viewed in the same light for those on the run. Inseparable from the enslaved people's understanding of spatially biased media, both illegibility and illiteracy could assist the runaways to navigate space in alternative fashion, often ignored by white enslavers and catchers. Simultaneously, the white assumptions of Black illiteracy furthered white monopolizations of the media function, or the presumed ability to sophisticatedly technologize objects, pushing forward arguments of Black undevelopment.50 However, what these assumptions ultimately showed was that Black people had long expressed alternative conceptions of humanness and knowledge, blurring distinctions between human and nonhuman as a necessity for survival."

Under the terms of Black media philosophy, we find a plethora of long ignored media on the Underground Railroad. The most famous example of alternative media forms involved the frequent personification of the North Star or Polaris, the brightest Star in the constellation of Ursa Minor. The abolitionist and author William Wells Brown factionalized a mode of travel for Clotel, a fictional enslaved daughter of Thomas Jefferson, in his book Clotel; or, The President's Daughter (chapter 1). But beforehand, Brown had to actually escape his own enslavement. In recounting his experience, he argued that finding the North Star was like finding a lost friend: "l knew not which way to go. I did not know North from South, East from West. I looked in vain for the North Star; a heavy cloud hid it.... I walked up and down the road until near midnight, when the clouds disappeared, and I welcomed the sight of my the slave's North Star." S! Josiah Henson similarly argued that the North Star was not only his personal savior but likewise a divine signal, provided to him by God: "I knew the North Star—blessed be God for setting it in the heavens! Like the Star of Bethlehem, it announced where my salvation lay. Could I follow it through forest, and stream, and field, it would guide my feet in the way of hope. I thought of it as my God-given guide to the land of promise far away beneath its light.""

Frederick Douglass, in a retelling of one of his attempts to escape, famously stated: It "was our purpose to turn our canoe adrift, and follow the guidance of the north star till we got beyond the limits of Maryland." 64 Upon successfully fleeing to New York, Douglass went so far as to name the newspaper that he founded in 1847 The North Star, an homage to this medium. In another retelling of a runaway slave named Margaret's escape path, abolitionist Eber M. Pettit recounted that when Margaret saw the slave catchers approaching, she "then pressing her child to her bosom ...fled with all the speed of which was capable toward the North Star." ss The North Star was a guide; or even better, the North Star was the medium through which the Underground Railroad conductors and those fleeing slavery effectively stunted mapping and writing as the privileged modes of spatial traversal.

The North Star was not the only medium used to navigate space. In the abolitionist Benjamin Drew's interview with runaway enslaved person Edward Hicks, Hicks stated that he created makeshift markers to note where and when he should start moving: traveled on about twelve miles, when it was so dark I dared not walk any further. I made for a bush, and laid a stick with the big end the way I was to go. That night, about dark, I got up and started again." 56 A stick could be just a stick, or nature, for someone in pursuit of an enslaved person; however, for a Black person it was natural material repurposed to extend them toward a life beyond slavery. The naturalness of the stick served a purpose: it both was easily ignored by a slave catcher (and such ignorance was of necessity for those seeking escape) and artificially selected by someone on the run to mediate their way toward liberation. The Black Anthropocene both assumed such a Western, white arrogance of nature but also Black people's ability to make a way out of presumably no way. It is here that we can say that Western man held no monopolization over media, even as we often associate the term media with specific Western technologies today.

#### You should position yourselves as immediators, favoring the ethical co-creation of new collective subjectivities over the violence of impartiality. After all, “the blackening of the earth requires the production of something entirely other than me, or you.”

Manning, 22—professor of philosophy and cinema at Concordia University (Erin, “Out of the Clear,” e-flux #125, March 2022, dml) [non-underlined portions of this card reference sexual assault]

How we organize bodies, we who sidle whiteness, how we excise (from clear sight) the ravages of an earth desecrated, of a people brutally murdered—these are the workings of logistics. Logistics mediate existence by keeping it at arm’s length, soothing us into believing that we are not responsible. The deaths are newsworthy, and we’re sorry, but we must move on. It’s not really about us and in any case, there’s nothing we can do about it. Let’s get a mediator and sort this out!

At arms length, we see these workings—the cleared forest, the dying planet, the dead children—as somehow disconnected. We do not acknowledge the felling of the trees as the wanton destruction of all that transversally connects. And yet logistics, in its power of mediation, is all about the forests. It’s all about the cotton planted in their wake.

The ghostly outline of Proulx’s pine table haunts the residential school, its absence equal to the absence of education. Because what the residential school really does is unteach. Taking the place of pedagogy, what is practiced here is theft. Theft of thought, of imagination. This theft is a rape. A physical rape, a sexual aggression, but also a conceptual rape, a clearing—“to snatch, to grab, to carry off by force”—of all that lives in the abyss of what has been left behind. Rape, relation severed, cuts the fragile interwoven threads of existence, wresting life from life-living, from the more-than that gives it its spirited and spiritual contour. If body is land, if bodying is only ever worlding, what residential school does, in this most recent form of clearing, is sever this imbrication, leaving the body lifeless.

All that remains is the clearing. And a mess. But this can be handled. This is how mediation does its work, in the name of and as logistics. From here on in, things will be managed. Managers will be appointed to organize, to administer, the now-reduced environment. This science of loss—“which is to say the science of whiteness, or logistics”—is predicated on the end of sharing, on the destruction of the excessive share, the annihilation of that which exceeds the one-two form whose dramaturgy relies on the intervention of the mediator. The mediator will take the form of the “yellow eyebrows” in Proulx’s account, but it also need not take a simple human form. Repetition of the same is the form it takes in a dramaturgy of extinction.

Scene 3

Clearing produces property. Property produces dispossession. “All property is loss because all property is the loss of sharing.” The accursed share of all that exceeds interpersonality, mediation, whiteness, logistics, all that cannot be accounted for, sickens the field. And sometimes rejuvenates it. The force of the transindividual, of all that exceeds and precedes the individual, does rewild. But its vitality is weakened, and as perception is honed to single out the individual over the field, the human increasingly becomes the focal point, becoming synonymous with life. This is how the logistics of genocide—the genocide of relation—does its work.

The genocide of relation can never be traced back, quite. Relation cannot be propertied. What is lost cannot be parsed. The yellow eyebrows have a role to play, of course, and we could call on the archbishop for that missing apology, but the truth is, it was never just one. He was never just the one. He is a logistical pattern, a commitment to the dramaturgy of (white) man as self-centered orchestrator of existence cleared.

Scene 4

Logistics: the slave ship, but also the body-as-individual. “The first odious vessel produced by and for logistics is not the slave ship, but the body—flesh conceptualized—which bears the individual-in-subjection.”

In the clearing, man is revealed as the loss of relation. Humanism is born here, in the empty space of the stolen land, in the vast expanse of the 1+1, the infinite regress of nothing-in-between.

How to fill the emptiness? How to create an account for all that is lost and yet claimed?

Mediation offers to fill the shape of the between. Mediation as the figure of what comes between, of what fills that “empty” space. The adjuster, the divorce lawyer, the priest, the government agent.

A quick intervention to make sense of all that has become unclear, to fill in the lines, to provide context.

And perhaps this does make things clearer, perhaps we understand each other a bit better now that we’ve mediated all we couldn’t make sense of in the vast emptiness of our difference. But the problem is: mediation never goes away. It sits there, inert but active, facilitating the ongoing impoverishment relation by adhering to all that takes the shape of the 1+1 of body-as-individual, of interpersonality. Because in advance of the gesture of inserting the mediating influence, he is already there. Long before the divorce, he hovers, betweener, judging, parsing, condoning, condemning. His take doesn’t really matter. What matters is that he remains in the offing, holding things apart.

Mediation is the father of the control society. It is the way surveillance takes on a personality from the outside in. Whether formally or informally, mediation sets the tone for an interpersonality that, by definition, can only be lived at a distance. Playing at impartiality, mediation haunts the surround, reducing it to what is already known, what is already valued, what is already within the scope of the expressible. 2+1, always less than 3, mediation is passive aggressor, poised for judgment, always in the know (while it listens carefully). Because its role is to keep existence in its track, on its logistical path. It doesn’t really matter who is right. It matters that it needs mediation.

Mediation knows best, trampling on any detail of middling, sewing interactivity into a twoness without excess. Hardening the between of interpersonality into the amplification of the self-same, mediation lodges at the interstice, cutting it into a hyphen, setting up its colony on the bridge. Settler, it speaks from a place it has never had to truly encounter because its role is only to order things apart.

Harney and Moten might speak of mediation with the same disdain as they do of logistics, which they call the “science of whiteness.” Mediation is the logistic category par excellence of whiteness. It has no content, is not in itself an agent of transformation, does nothing but cannibalize the life it parses. Its intervention happens in the beat of enter and retreat, leaving the uneasy twoness of existence to sort itself out. In the name of property and propriety, mediation solves all uncertainties of zoning. That it never actually leaves is its dirty secret.

But the logistics of mediation can only fail. The interface is shaky—we know this both from the endemic code 404, page not found, and from the impossibility of truly domesticating our surrounds. Ultimately, the squirrels, the black flies, the birds, the worms, the fungi, the weeds, the viruses, the hackers cannot be kept in their place. The disarray is handled, of course, with more mediation, with more logistics.

The interface claims a distance, a secure between-two that repeats the refrain of nature colonized, of culture denatured. It promises a security of inhabitation, a zone that can be controlled, a slip through which we can safely enter, we who claim the place. Here, in the logistics of passage that beats at the cadence of the one-two, me-you, the outcome is always the same. Police to subjugate. Code to organize. Clear to colonize.

Logistics aims to straighten us out, untangle us, and open us to its usufruct, its improving use; such access to us, in its turn, improves the flow line, the straight line. And what logistics takes to be the shortest distance between us requires emplotting us as bodies in space where interiority can be imposed even as the capacity for interiority can be denied, in the constant measure and regulation of flesh and earth.

Scene 5

Deleuze and Guattari speak of man as the white wall of the black hole of existence. Think landscape painting, especially the kind that excises that very life that breathed it into existence. If you’re not familiar, search for “Canadian art.” And if you don’t know the history of the mansplaining of the Canadian landscape, search for the Group of Seven, the early twentieth-century Canadian landscape painters, and notice not only the ubiquity of the vast open, uninhabited space, notice the clearing. Very little has changed over the last hundred years. We still see Canada through the clear, in the emptiness of nature cultured.

The denuded land, the empty north, is how we art ourselves still today, we who property the land. The Group of Seven, those painters of the land pristine, of the great white north, the painters of the land of the (single) pine and of the distant ridges, they are still with us, still managing the imagination, orchestrating the field, playing the dramaturgy of extinction. Logistics are also aesthetic (if not artful).

The white man is a specter. That is to say, the white man is without content, without shape. He is the shift in form that allows all takings-place to be propertied inhabitations, which is to say, sites already claimed. This is whiteness: the pretense that the lines that demarcate the boundary between me and you protect you, protect me, from the wilderness of all that cannot be contained (and must be kept at bay). The truth is, the wilderness was cleared, but never quite colonized. And that is why whiteness is alive and well. To police a job half-done.

Scene 6

Mediation makes many promises. It promises clarity: think, drop-down menu. It promises fairness: think, divorce court. It promises health: think, therapy. The gesture is cast as innocuous. A simple third, a neutral agent. A little bit of reason. A moment of distance. An interlude so that things can be tied up again and smooth functioning can resume. A representation of the useful.

But what is it to insert distance into a field of relation if not violence of the highest degree? Whose distance? At what cost? To what ends?

Guattari fights against this at every turn, refusing mediation either in politics or in psychiatry. Schizoanalysis is the proposition, a call for a transversal operation that breaks the pretense of neutrality in the encounter. A therapeutics of transversality. No more triangle. No more transference. Schizoanalysis is the event of the encounter itself, the practice of encountering. To be in the relation is to have been changed by it. What this looked like: a years-long institutional arrangement housed at a clinic called La Borde in the north of France whereby to be in the therapeutic encounter was to live with the effects of encounters in the everyday and to learn from them how to continue to live. Nothing very complicated, really. But infinitely complex in its transversality. Because to live in the encounter, to allow ourselves to be changed by it, is to be continuously undone, and to be sensitive to all that comes alive in that undoing.

Who we are is a question that can only really be asked (and answered) by the mediator. The mediator, after all, looks in from outside to tell us how our actions are affecting the world. Without the mediator there is no steady external gaze, no calm interface for the mirroring. That’s why “who we are” is always a white question, a question of whiteness, of colonization.

Blackness, write Harney and Moten, is not a thing, or a state (of being). It is the way the doing expresses. It is not a subject, not a person, not a property. It is a field. It is the excess on itself of a body claimed, blackened by hate. Blackness is the celebration of refusing to claim, to be claimed. “Meanwhile, Michael Brown is like another fall and rise through man—come and gone, as irruption and rupture, to remind us not that black lives matter but that black life matters; that the absolute and undeniable blackness of life matters; that this is not a judgment of value but a description of a field of activity that obliterates the worldly distinction between the organic and the inorganic.” Blackness is not the simple descriptor of what has been enfleshed. Blackness cannot be mediated into a form imposed (exposed). Blackness is the force of living that exceeds colonization, its accursed share. And in that sense, the wildness of the surround, it too is black. As is the earth.

This is what Guattari means when he entreats us to move from schizoanalysis as a therapeutic-political dispositif, an agencement more than an apparatus, a moving-forth of encounterings afield, toward the transversality of what he calls the “three ecologies.” These three ecologies, the mental/conceptual, the environmental, and the social, are the overlap, as I see it, of a commitment to a blackening of the earth, out of the clear.

(Necessarily European) man, in and as the exception, imposes speciation upon himself, in an operation that extracts and excepts himself from the earth in order to confirm his supposed dominion over it. And just as the earth must be forcefully speciated to be possessed, man must forcefully speciate himself in order to enact this kind of possession. This is to say that racialization is present in the very idea of dominion over the earth; in the very idea and enactment of the exception; in the very nuts and bolts of possession-by-improvement. The world is posed as the way to live on the earth as the individual is posed as the way to live in the world. To live in the world as an individual is therefore to be logistic, and to be logistic is to settle into a rhythm that kills, to beat out that rhythm over the undercommon track that keeps (giving away) its own measure.

Scene 7

Guattari wrote The Three Ecologies in what have come to be known as his winter years. The winter years came after a sustained attempt at working with the Green Party in the aftermath of the terrible letdown of post-1968 politics in France. This attempt to connect to state politics left Guattari with a sour taste. He knew better, of course, than to trust state politics to be a site of transformation. Schizoanalysis had been the wager that there were other ways—that to work “in common,” “toward the common” is, ultimately, always to commit to the logic of mediation. In The Three Ecologies, he makes a plea to invent new ways of being committed to and involved in the urgent call to transversalize experience, ways that move beyond how the state lays claim to existence:

In the domain of social ecology there will be times of struggle in which everyone will feel impelled to decide on common objectives and to act “like little soldiers,” by which I mean like good activists. But there will simultaneously be periods of resingularisation in which individual and collective subjectivities will take their marbles and go home without a thought for collective goals, and in which creative expression as such will take precedence. This new ecosophical logic—and I want to emphasize this point—resembles the manner in which an artist may be led to alter his work after the intrusion of some accidental detail, an event-incident that suddenly makes his initial project bifurcate, making it drift [dériver] far from its previous path, however certain it had once appeared to be.

There is an echo in this ecosophic call to Moten and Harney:

Rather than dissipate our preoccupation with how we live and breathe, we need to defend our ways in our persistent practice of them. It’s not about taking the streets; it’s about how, and about what, we take to the streets. What would it be and what would it mean for us jurisgeneratively to take to the streets, to live in the streets, to gather together another city right here, right now?

Ecosophic logic is a refusal of the clearing, of the ways in which we seek to inhabit the space already colonized. It recognizes the lure, and understands the commitment to change that the gesture of taking the streets embodies. But ecosophic logic asks a different question: What if instead we practiced living by creating new conditions that didn’t center us, that didn’t inadvertently redeem that central and self-centering figure of man and its mediating logistics? What if we painted into the dérive of artfulness’s angle on experience? What if we moved at the pace of that accidental detail tangled with the weeds we have been wasting so much time clearing?

Ecosophic logic is an urgent call to refuse the ongoing clearing that denies, decries, and violates the force of blackness in the ongoing genocide of all that resists the count. To refuse does not mean to face and challenge. Frontality, the neurotypical activity par excellence, only cements into place what is already there, what is already claiming the ground of existence. To refuse means to move into the accursed share of life-living twisting in the troubled interstice, to move with that anarchic share of existence that keeps giving life.

For life-living to thrive, life has to be activated at those interstices that exceed man. Life’s expression as tangle has to be attuned to from the edges in. Conditions have to be crafted to honor what is not about us. This is what the First Nations in Barkskins of course already knew. And for this they were cleared. To see, to feel, what was always already there, to pulse with a force of life-living that cannot be claimed—owed or owned—this was always the crime.

Scene 8

The many years Guattari spent practicing schizoanalysis, which is to say, living at La Borde and encountering, daily, the shape of an existence unmediated, an existence committed, always, to a refusal of normopathy—these are what he takes into the project of the three ecologies. And it is specifically the orientation of La Borde toward neurodiversity, I believe, that makes it necessary to underscore what he calls the mental, or conceptual, ecology as the inflecting force that must, and will, change the contours of the environmental and the social. La Borde taught him this: to skirt the question of the subject leaves the black hole wide open, filled to the brim with neurotypicality, whiteness.

In the sickness that has befallen the earth—the ongoing genocide of all that eludes the count—subjectivity, too, has fallen ill. Replaced by the face of man, given the guise of whiteness in all its logistical powers of mediation, subjectivity has been swallowed, engulfed by the subject. “The main feature of the colonial-capitalistic unconscious is the reduction of subjectivity to its subject’s experience.” But subjectivity, as Guattari understands it, is nothing other than its ongoing production. It is not the subject. It is the transversal, the emergent unmediated middle, the collectivity that must never be reduced to the one. This is why, for a renewed project of the earth, or as Moten and Harney would have it, for the blackening of the earth—“we are the moving, blackened, blackening earth”—“it will be a question of literally reconstructing the modalities of ‘group-being’ [l’être-en-groupe], not only through ‘communicational’ interventions but through existential mutations driven by the motor of subjectivity.”

To construct modalities for group-being is a call for an aesthetics of sociality which exceeds the 1+1 of interpersonality. Group-being, or what Guattari refers to as the “group subject,” is not countable. The group subject is never the sum of its parts. As solitary as it is multiplicitous, the group subject makes felt how subjectivity is produced in the excess on itself of coming into relation. The group subject is how the more-than of the relational field finds expression. It is the emergent collectivity of an expression of life-living shared (in its accursed excess), expression irreducible to the one, always beyond consensus. Without mediation, the group subject is activated in the renunciation of summing up. To produce the modalities for this excess of existence requires a mutation on existence itself, a mutation that in every sense rethinks subjectivity as a position.

The group subject reminds us that what we produce is never solely ours. We are not simply our-selves. We are fieldings of complex imbrication. Any other account of experience is subjected to mediation, organized by logistics. Anarchival to the core, the production of subjectivity is not an account of a life contained. It is not condensable to something like identity. It is not reducible to the form of the human. It is always more-than, always in movement, a motor or conduit of a worlding.

The production of subjectivity bodies in the same gesture that it refuses to be a body, an “individual-in-subjection.” That is to say: in the production of subjectivity the bodying is always a being of relation. Always in movement, it does its living in the unlimited exposure that exceeds any body-world separation. Subjectivity is not inside. It is not in me. It is out of me.

Rather than speak of the “subject,” we should perhaps speak of components of subjectification, each working more or less on its own. This would lead us, necessarily, to re-examine the relation between concepts of the individual and subjectivity, and, above all, to make a clear distinction between the two. Vectors of subjectification do not necessarily pass through the individual, which in reality appears to be something like a “terminal” for processes that involve human groups, socio-economic ensembles, data-processing machines, etc. Therefore, interiority establishes itself at the crossroads of multiple components, each relatively autonomous in relation to the other, and, if need be, in open conflict.

“That abolition starts with the self.”

In the drift, subjectivity’s dérive is irreducible to the human. Active in the interval of worlds making themselves, subjectivity is never reducible to a subject. The production of subjectivity is the activity of the interstice: vector, not form. Schizoanalysis works at this uneasy juncture. The task of schizoanalysis is not to get between body and world, between-two. Its task is to make way for all that already populates the between, and to agitate, from within the field of relation, orientations already in germ. Fostering the germination, tending the field, schizoanalysis vectors the inflection.

The vectoring requires a subtraction from the open field of all that is still in potentia. Schizoanalysis culls from potential a shape, a way. This excision from process is a subtraction from infinitude to the finite. From the side of infinitude, in the field of immanence, Whitehead calls this activity that sparks a standing out of experience “importance.” From the side of finitude, in the field of activity, Whitehead calls it “expression”:

Expression is founded on the finite occasion. It is the activity of finitude impressing itself on its environment. Thus it has its origin in the finite; and it represents the immanence of the finite in the multitude of its fellows beyond itself. 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.

Importance and expression function as intensifiers of experience, bringing into activity the singularity of a life that nonetheless continues to carry its anarchic share. In this account, the human is not singled out. There is no externalizing voice, no mediator. Arrows of experience are their own force, importance not a question of what matters to me, but of what actually (but always also in potentia) makes a difference.

Importance makes way for precision in experience. That is to say, importance is what fosters a certain specific angle of existence, allowing certain qualities of experience to take precedence over others. We have come to believe that mediation is necessary to parse experience. But as Whitehead emphasizes, the world is always in its own pursuit of amplification. Incessant clearing, colonialism without end, in the afterlife of slavery, results in systems out of kilter. Ecological destruction has finally begun to register, centuries too late. The question of how to bring things into a metastability that is conducive to life-living must involve a reckoning with the deadening force of mediation. We don’t need another apology. We need to get out of the way. The blackening of the earth requires the production of something entirely other than me, or you.

Scene 9

The infraface of the three ecologies—“the world as one to the world as many … the world as many to the world as one”—is immediating. Immediation is not the opposite of mediation. Rather, it is the force of a thirdness irreducible to a between-two. Immediation is the more-than, the n+1 that is by necessity n-1, one as many, many as one, the qualitative force of an uncountability that diagonalizes to give rise to what else moves in the relation.

The production of subjectivity is immediating to the degree that it is not produced by something outside itself. Immediating, always at once body and world, its own perspective. That is to say, its angle on existence is not ours, cannot be reduced to us. The production of subjectivity is a making-conceptual of existence. It is an attuning to the deadly violence of the body-world split produced in the wake of the clearing.

There are not three ecologies. There is one ecology multiply intertwined. To get to the potential of what the three ecologies in their transversality offer, the production of subjectivity must be attended to. We have failed each other at the juncture of the production of subjectivity in particular, and nothing will be possible without that shift. In the words of The Invisible Committee,

the exhaustion of natural resources is probably much less advanced than the exhaustion of subjective resources, of vital resources, that is afflicting our contemporaries. If so much satisfaction is derived from surveying the devastation of the environment it’s largely because this veils the frightening ruin of subjectivities. Every oil spill, every sterile plain, every species extinction is an image of our souls in rags, a reflection of our lack of world, of our intimate impotence to inhabit it.

To become in excess of a person, to activate the conditions for a life-living that worlds in the bodying, is a social and environmental act. The emergent sociality of becoming-environmental never happens through the clearing. In happens in the midst, black flies and all. The production of subjectivity in the transversality of the three ecologies is the way the more-than of nature naturing crafts a sociality ecosophically. A sociality, as Harney and Moten might say, all incomplete.