manifesto text

last year was the deadliest on record for global conflicts, with 233,000 people killed over the course of the year, according to Armed Conflict Location and Event (ACLED) data. A startling 1 in 8 people were within 5km of conflict around the globe throughout 2024

reject the mechanistic view that reduces institutions to efficiency metrics and humans to resources. Instead, we cultivate organizational forms that function as living systems: rooted in relationships, adaptable to context, and preserving invaluable social capital like trust, goodwill, and collective intelligence/expertise.

seamlessness — tech is so embedded in society and daily life that it becomes natural, inevitable, and invisible. It is often unclear where human agency ends and nonhuman agency begins in complex sociotechnical systems

boundaries between human and nonhuman actors are not pre-given but are instead attributed or performed through social practices and interactions
erasure of embodiment so that intelligence becomes a property of the formal manipulation of symbols rather than some set of actions in the human life-world.

information as an entity distinct from the substrates carrying it, as a kind of bodiless fluid that could flow between different substrates without loss of meaning or form + human identity as essentially an informational pattern rather than an embodied enaction

power is maintained through controlling how information is distributed and interpreted. technology breaks down this control because it is able to distribute, classify, limit, expand etc. knowledge and information in a manner that disrupts the original pattern

many communities/regions/countries will struggle with the fact that their right to self determination and agency will be constrained by technological conditions produced elsewhere.

social structures are not merely abstract containers for human action but are inherently material and technological, which complicates traditional sociological analyses of social power and agency

analyzing social interactions must include nonhuman elements such as machines and infrastructures – because a purely social network analysis would overlook how technology and materiality shape these interactions. network analyses must include nonhuman elements to capture how technology mediates social relationships and influences power dynamics

limitations on what we say not as product of a lack of intelligence but as a product of limitations on what can be done: difference between what a system might know vs what it does. competence vs performance

there is knowledge and possibility that is rendered inaccessible by our inability to look beyond traditional research or disciplines. reality exists between and beyond disciplines as well, on several layers at once

technology mediates and transforms the character of social relationships, which makes it crucial to include technological artifacts in sociological studies of interaction and power. Thinking: tech world is building a lot of agentic tech that directly impacts human agency and expression, things like personal assistants, tools for connecting and collecting knowledge etc. → changes your experience of daily life...

...but the people who design the frameworks within which you live that daily life, from the urban planning of the community you live in to the design of the interdependency with the international community that they establish, have no concept of this new experience

the challenges of today require more and more competencies than ever to be resolved, but it has also become more difficult than ever for people from two "distinct" disciplines to communicate. serious efforts would need to be made for a physicist to speak to a poet beyond generalities. this renders decision-making (whose purpose is knowledge integration, lowering ideas into the "body" of the world + preventing collapse of civilizations) impossible in today's social frameworks because they cannot hold all competencies at once...

... meaning that as knowledge becomes more inaccessible or fragmented across disciplines that cannot communicate, decision makers inevitably and unknowingly become more and more incompetent

from a subject/object perspective, genuine relating isn't just about a subject (caregiver/observer) connecting with an object (person being cared for), but about accessing a shared space where such distinctions become fluid. genuine human connection requires dropping our habitual ways of "objectifying" others

robert irwin: "Seeing Is Forgetting the Name of the Thing One Sees"

perhaps the most effective acts of care, the most rigiorous displays of humanity, like the most effective art in Irwin's view, create conditions where we can't maintain our comfortable distance but must engage directly with what is. It is a Weil-ian force, attention as the rarest and purest form of generosity.

work in conflict zones seems to embody this principle - I remember my milkshake with a former gang leader in Nairobi or the dance circles i joined on an Axum highway on my way back from collecting documentation of unreported war-related mass atrocities. not just observing as an external subject, but entering into that "zone of non-resistance" where genuine connection and understanding become possible.

radical technological inventions are often also suppressed by organizations that see them as threats to their established systems, yet these inventions frequently become the foundational elements of new technological paradigms + all models, belief systems, and methods gain their epistemic power by establishing constraints within a structural framework, excluding all other alternatives

analyzing why technology matters, rather than merely explaining how it works, allows us to shift the focus of science and technology studies to deeper philosophical and societal questions

interpretative flexibility: technical artifacts have multiple potential meanings and uses, making the role of social groups central in shaping their interpretation and stabilization

social structures are not just containers for action but are themselves material and technological, complicating traditional sociological analyses of power, class, race, etc.

focus on the entanglement of humans and nonhumans can serve as a foundation for political action, emphasizing the need for nuanced understanding in policy and ethics

social groups play a crucial role in defining and stabilizing technology

traditional philosophy separates science (truth discovery) from technology (application), but this model oversimplifies their interdependence. whether scientific theories are true or false is irrelevant to

sociological analysis; what matters is how knowledge is socially accepted, embodied and institutionalized
magic tricks: rely on accepting at an early stage assumptions that determine how you interpret what you see later. technology has already integrated us in a cybernetic circuit that interacts with our will, desires, perceptions etc into a distributed cognitive system. no matter what you do after or with that, you've already entered the era because you've accepted the early stage assumptions

what are the ancestors of the domesticated ideas we spread today?