### 1ac – v3

#### Welcome to the domain of the World Computer – capital has created a world characterized by the risk management science of computation, the constant demand to expand the terrains of profit results in the reduction of all life to merely its financial value, turning humans into numbers, expendable 1s and 0s that can be sacrificed in the endless chess game of profit. This inevitably embeds antiblackness, settler colonialism, heteropatriarchy, and imperialism into the workings of the World Computer, writing the code in the blood of the dispossessed.

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Jonathan Beller, “The World Computer: Derivative Conditions of Racial Capitalism”, pp. 58-66 , Duke University Press, 2021 // sam

Categorically, abstraction, computability, and the horizon of omniscience become the basic architecture of capitalist planning and perception—the ever finer granularity of computation means precisely the capillary ramification and reorganization of the life-world, of space, time and consciousness, by means of the modular affordances of objective and objectifying content—indifferent 1s and 0s. These two numbers were and are of course ideologically neutral because content-indifferent—unless, of course, content indifference is itself an ideology, naturalized in the same manner that so many have naturalized abstract time. Is such a degree-zero view of number a blindness to the message that is its medium? Simulation, as Baudrillard (2004) powerfully intuited, was not just an effect of political economy; it was in effect a praxis, and thus a (quasi-) philosophy—of a kind that meant the end of traditional notions of both. It also meant a new period of capital and a new mode of production. “Today abstraction is no longer that of the map, the double, the mirror, or the concept. Simulation is no longer that of a territory, a referential being, or a substance. It is the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal. The territory no longer precedes the map, nor does it survive it” (365). In theorizing hyper-reality, he almost could have written, “All that is solid melts into information.” Computability liquifies the solid in accord with the requisites of capital. Just here in the informatic flux, we can see, alongside its vast achievements, computation’s intimate link, in the alienation of the territory by means of the map, to the colonial project, the industrial project, and globalization in the derealization of traditional forms of space and time. Capital’s ability to infiltrate, organize, and predict, to simulate a model and to impose it, to abstract and to subsume difference in accord with its own code (and, where necessary, to generate difference and distinction to serve the expansion and development of this code), to operationalize and then self-optimize, provided and continues to provide the conceptual, material, and existential basis, along with the urgency, for the further development of computation. Tragically, it also provides the urgency to transform its process, its processors, its processing. Compounding the tragedy of this millennium, those who are or might be in a position to best interrogate computational process most often view it as a ratification of their assumptions about nature by relegating the material conditions of computation and of their thought to the unthought. In sharp contrast, we view computation as a strategy of efficient risk management—a cost-benefit analysis of the “substitutable choices” for the essential program of capital. It opens new ways of apportioning resources and does so in keeping with the potential profitability of new sites of value extraction necessary in order to stave off the falling rate of profit. In this respect, computation has the structure of a derivative on any activity whatever, opening up a market for risk management and liquidity preservation to wager on an exposure to the underliers of any calculation whatever. Engineers, scientists, and coders manage their portfolio of interests to create their income streams. “Create needs, then help,” writes Trinh T. Minh-Ha (1981), summarizing the colonial logic of “development.” Thus, as with the development of colonial banking, analyzed by Rosa Luxembourg, that puts colonies and colonial labor in the service of capital—first by making them service an ever increasing debt incurred on their purchases from the colonizer of the instruments for the modernization of production, and second by making them compete each against the other in debt servicing—the development of computation, despite the democracy-themed PR that accompanied the rise of the desktop computer, further pits each against all. “Yes, but email,” some will exclaim, or, “FaceTime!” “The Higgs Boson!” We can’t help but wonder if the creators of Slack and Zoom savored the irony of their platform names. No more slacking off while zooming in on the requisites of the value form! Let’s intensify the production and invisibility of our own off-screen death in pursuit of pure production! Long live the factory code. Innovation organized by entrepreneurs of the self, of the cyberself, creates possibilities for arbitrage on those super-sets of labor-time, attention and life-time; and all the while, everyday risk management is underpinned and indeed anchored by the calculus of genocide. From the binary of the Abomb to IBM’s punch-carding of the Nazi Holocaust, from the calculus of sovereign debt to that of social media, the lives of people (in Nagasaki, in Auschwitz, in Furguson), become the substrate that registers the meaning of the compute—at least the meaning as far as they may have been concerned. So many are posited as but renewable pawns in an endless game, and the game goes on. Dispossession and genocide, and the capacity to wreak these, guarantee the liquidity of the financial system by guaranteeing that there will always be some billions willing or forced to do anything for its money and the access to information, to informed matter and therefore to life that it provides. In our era, we see clearly that, under capital, the “stability” imposed by systemic integration and its programs of finance, surveillance, security, mediation, and so on produces ever greater volatility, and we see that this volatility risk can be bought and sold; it can be cut up, bundled, bought, and resold, priced as content-indifferent numbers based upon volatility indices. Meanwhile the markets roil, dispossession rages, and the planet boils. As history could confirm, by the mid-twentieth century, the complexity of the techniques for the management of societies, from markets to warfare, from media to cybernetics, and now from social media to the derivatives created by synthetic finance, all required discrete state machines to store and manage the pertinent inventories, schedules, and programs—their valuable information. Though usually thought of as properly belonging to the history of science, communication, mathematics, or computation, the socioeconomic endeavors composing the history of the discrete state machine and its ever more supple functionality are to be thought as part of the increasing complexity of capitalist abstraction and thus the abstraction of social relations. They are the elaboration of real abstraction, the expansive formalization of the field of exchange taking place “behind the backs” of living people. These socioeconomic endeavors such as Google, Facebook, the security state, are the effective occupation of space and time at all scales by the logistics of exchange and its expanding field of production. 12 Datalogical representation is already risk management. Management, efficiency, optimization; Foucault’s entrepreneur of the self; and even Brian Massumi and Erin Manning’s “more than human of the human” all recognize a technological paradigm of control operating in and through (and as) the individual (Massumi 2018). We may also observe that the technologic of capitalism bent upon efficiency—the maximum exploitation of the laboring substrate to meet the demands of the falling rate of profit—prevails across all organizational scales, from the individual to the laboratory to the university to the jail, the township, the state, and the nation-state. In “cultural” spaces, representative agents (a.k.a. subjects) manage and aggregate resources, offering themselves as profiles or brands that are themselves not only marketable, but marketable as derivative exposure to their underliers: their audiences, networks, assets, and currencies. I “friend” you to add you to me, to gain exposure to your network, to add you to my portfolio. I am an “influencer.” “Culture,” too, understood as a semiautonomous domain separable from materiality and technology, can today only be a fetish—another case of platform fetishism—because the generalization of computing means that culture as the connective, communicative tissue of the sociosemiotic is ever more subject to the granularization and grammartization of commodification on the “object” side (and, its other aspect, the fractalization of fascism on the “subject” side) in what, from a global standpoint, is a racial capitalist sociocybernetic bio-techné. Such is “culture” today—an expression of an overall informationalization of social relations subject to historically imposed computability. Cultural form, computable because inseparable from computation, heretofore always a way of connecting to (or disconnecting from) a multiplicity of networks, is now itself a derivative—a social derivative. Its derivative condition explains what was known as “the postmodern condition,” and is instituted by the universal expansion of the factory code toward the total colonization of space, time, representation, and mind: sociality itself in the largest sense. That the principles of the ordination of matter, being, time, and value by number (or of publics by statistics, and/or of opinions by likes) were perceived to be universal, that is, generally applicable to all phenomena, was more than convenient. It was, as we have said, colonial. It was racializing and gendering. It was capacitating and maiming (Puar 2017). The math, though famously “content-indifferent,” was never value free. Nor were the devices, from desktops to mainframes, from bombers to smartphones, that it spawned. As Diane Nelson (2015: 56) writes in Who Counts?, her astonishing ethnography of Mayan number systems and genocide and, also and as importantly, her scathing ethnography of Western mathematics and genocide, “Double-entry bookkeeping is also an ‘ethnomathematics,’ but one with an army.” Double-entry bookkeeping was also a proprietary technique; its truth claims, in the form of accounts, implied pathways of control and functionality that served as conduits for capitalization and colonization. It was a system of representation that repressed noise (context) to clearly resolve the value signal called price in a calculus of profit and loss. In our own period, where we see very clearly (simply by looking at the business pages or, for that matter, the culture pages in any newspaper) that contemporary global capitalism is in lockstep with computation, we might expect that the politico-economic meaning of computation as an emergent order of proprietary organization is becoming clear. As new and powerful terms such as platform sovereignty (Bratton 2016), algorithmic governance, and the society of metadata or “metadata society” (Pasquinelli 2018) indicate, it appears that it is the information itself that has (or indeed is) value. But the argument here is that it is only valuable within the framework of computation, and indeed within the framework of computational racial capital—at least thus far. Information is the result of that framework; it is an ethno-graphic (not just anthropocentric) instantiation composed from, in, and on states of matter. The framework, a computational infrastructure that is also primarily fixed capital, emerges in conjunction with the myriad phenomena that are now treated informatically; the apparatus is the other side of the supposedly raw material of information. Information is and can only be a relation. The clear implication of this argument is that, just as a DVD presupposes a technical world that can record it and make it play, the very presence of “information” implies the background armature of computation as a mechanism of perception and organization that is fundamentally social and historical. This background armature of perception and organization further indicates the background armature of racial capital as the primordial condition—the meta-machine architecture—of the present social system of accounts. We note, and not only in passing, that this way of narrating the epic poem of AI puts anti-Blackness, slavery, settler colonialism, indentured servitude, imperialism, sexism, proletarianization, racial capitalism, and the active organization of oppression for profit at the epistemic center of a compute that could be called world history. It is computation that perceives information, and it is capital expansion that requires the perceptualinstrumental processes endemic to quantification, digitization, and computation. The entire system has its conditions of possibility and derives both its significance and its character from the history of capital accumulation, that is itself theft and only theft, and which is, to defer again to the chorus: colonialism, slavery, white heteropatriarchy, imperialism, globalization, financialization, and genocide. Let us not romanticize the awesome capacities of so-called civilization. Sadly, indeed tragically, with the encroachment of value thus described, to value something, anything, threatens to be a mode of evaluation for capital. Odds are, anyway. And so much has been swept away, repressed, annihilated. In this book we will also have occasion to dwell on the remainder, on what Neferti Tadiar calls “remaindered life,” a category I understand as designed to demarcate the domains or haecceities of experience that fall outside of systematization—a dialectical category for that which is beyond the resolution of the dialectic. Remaindered life—a social derivative on capital whose market value went to zero but that nonetheless persists as lived experience, existence, or survival beyond the horizon of capitalized representation. As I understand it, remaindered life is the disavowed context and condition of relations for any and all value creation. However, despite our adherence to an “immanent outside” (Massumi) in this volume and everywhere, the dominant and dominating principles organizing value and evaluation have been colonized by what Randy Martin called “the financialization of daily life” in the “society of risk,” centuries in the making. This financialization structures representation, and the structuring of evaluation—internal to the elaboration of the value-form and to the universe of information—gives renewed meaning to this longstanding and recurrent theme in my own work adopted directly from Marx and already invoked here: again, the forming of the five senses is a result of the entire history of the world down to the present. As Marx’s observations themselves imply, and as this text is at pains to elaborate in a sociocyborg vein, our senses have been further informed— by/as information and informatics—since he wrote that line. The urgent and perhaps ultimate question of whether or not we might use these emerging perceptual capacities to reprogram the socius echoes Marx’s abiding stake in revolution and what today (at least before Spring 2020) for many seems even more unthinkable than ever before—the abolition of private property and the withering away of the state. However, in the key of Marx in The Communist Manifesto, we hasten to add that this abolition and this withering has already been achieved for more than 2 billion people—that is, for twice the living population of Earth during the time Marx wrote. We must take courage from the fact that much of what “we” might claim to value has already been lost for two planetfuls of people. For that allows us to see that what would like to pass as “our values”—which in one way or another might include an allegiance to the enduring virtues of the nation state, of private property, of “liberal” society and its pleasures—have fallen into the black hole of self-contradiction and self-negation. As the shiny and pleasant other side of dispossession, they are never to be resurrected or redeemed, for beneath their veneer they are literally the expressions of hell on Earth. And this adherence to their bloody privilege is why the “liberals” of today are closet fascists, and why at the time of revising the copyedits for this book, Joe Biden, a racist, misogynist white man, is the liberal candidate for President of the United States. Therefore, the event horizon of this book is the end of capitalism, a horizon that forcibly, it must be admitted, exceeds the horizon of contemporary common sense—at least it did when I began writing it. Witness Stanford economists who, dismissive of the very possibility of revolution, blithely suggest along with the Daily Telegraph writer James Bartholomew (2015) that we “learn to love economic inequality.” But as Gramsci (1971: 170–171) reminds us in The Modern Prince, “Anybody who makes a prediction has in fact a programme for whose victory he is working,” and this without doubt includes today’s self-proclaimed realists, as well as a more reactionary faction in open pursuit of profits from the volatility of racial war. Another aspect of the topos of the argument here is that not only have the imaginary and symbolic been transformed by capitalist informatics, but a corresponding transformation of (human, but not only human) being itself has been instantiated. It is thus unsurprising that those with the big paychecks (economists at Stanford) uncritically parrot the logic of ucomputational racial capital, even if they may be partially unconscious of its basis in slavery and murder-by-numbers, and even if they refrain from explicitly demanding that we lick the bottom of their boots. But people get the unconscious they can afford. Most can no longer afford to build our egos on such self-serving ignorance—if they ever could. But are fascists really people? We demand the right to wonder if anyone is left in there after being fully colonized by computational racial capital’s AI. Capital’s realization and generalization of simulation by digital logic— as, for example, with spectacle in the aesthetic register, or by means of statistical modeling in the computational register, and with multiple grids of intelligibility and evaluation (algorithmic governance) in various other academic and social disciplines—allows for the machine-(re)thinking of ontologies in general in terms of the effects of processes of instrumental inscription and codification. Metaphysics itself is under siege. Is there any remainder in the fascist? Thus, when considering the recent interest in ontology, Fredric Jameson’s “Always historicize!” comes to mind (1981: 9). Machinethinking, which is one with execution, entails a reconfiguration of ontologies. As Alex Galloway (2012) taught us, the medium of computing, which instantiates its objects via programming, is metaphysics. And as Allen Feldman (2015) brilliantly demonstrates in analysis ranging from South Africa to Guantánamo to drone warfare, metaphysics is a medium of war. However, in a classic disappearing act of the medium, this fact of the instantiation of executable ontologies by computation, as well as their ascription to physical forms, most often goes unremarked—despite the fact that the reformatting is “the message.” The question is whether or not it is possible to critique this computational, capitalist ordination of phenomena and thought—and the stakes here are far higher than what is generally meant by “academic.” Ontological claims, such as “x is y,” always have an addressee. The ontological layer, what something is, is an artifact of data visualization—in short, an inscription, an act of writing, and a speech-act— and never a neutral endeavor. Simulation deconstructs objects into distribution patterns; it makes us skeptical about who or what is present, both objectively (as we regard the perceptible) and subjectively (in ourselves as consciousness). It ordains “a tremendous shattering of tradition” (Benjamin: 236). Fake news! Data teaches us that we, as subjects, may not be the privileged addressee. The reign of simulation is everywhere imposed as antecedent forms of subjectivity are garbled, shattered, reformatted, and placed on a continuum with informatic throughput. Through an inversion of the priority between world and data visualization, the digital simulation of the world by concepts encoded in apparatuses at once reveals the stakes of intervention in the protocol layer of computation and raises the pointed and possibly still political question of what may remain of so-called humanity beyond the purview of a now fully financialized knowing that is a kind of doing—and here again, we glimpse the remainder. It does so by posing the question of the possibility of a “beyond” to (contemporary) simulation, particularly in a world—and in keeping with current physics, a cosmos—in which simulation has overtaken the place of truth as ground, and has done so in a way that both implies and corroborates the insight that number, deeper than matter or energy, is the fundamental component of All. I’m not sure, but it seems that some of us have an awareness of remaindered life and its possible alternative futures, and others not at all. It is no wonder the oppressed called Pinochet’s brutal fascist supporters “mummies.”

#### This means that our communication itself is labor – we are workers on the assembly line of communicative production, reproducing information, and, as we know, information is money and money is death.

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Jonathan Beller, “The Spectatorship of the Proletariat” Boundary 2, 22(3), 171, 1995 // sam

The concept of the economic alienation of sensual labor (and hence the senses) has been with us since the 1840s. In a formulation that might have inspired Benjamin's "orchid in the land of technology," Marx tells us in The German Ideology that German philosophy's "man" "does not see how the sensuous world ... is, not a thing given direct from all eternity, remaining ever the same, but the product of industry and of the state of society; and, indeed, in the sense that it is an historical product, the result of the activity of a whole succession of generations, each one standing on the shoulders of the preceding one, developing its industry and its intercourse, modifying its social system according to the changed needs. Even the objects of the simplest 'sensuous certainty' are only given through social development, industry and commercial intercourse."38 That television and telecommunications are seen only as instruments of circulation suggests that Marx's concept of circulation-the mediation of value described above ("the image of a process occurring behind it")-needs to be rethought. Marx's rather cinematic trope signals that, in and of itself, circulation cannot produce value because the creation of surplus value takes place at a deeper level, in the production process itself, in other words, at the worksite. However, I am suggesting that the production process no longer occurs uniquely behind the image created by the commodity form in motion (what Marx here calls the movement of money); it occurs in the dynamics of the image itself--in its circulation, movement, incorporation. In our experience with the fetish character of the image, we know one of the forms this invisible labor of vision takes. This is more readily understandable when one realizes that, today, all things are, in addition to whatever else they are, images. Put another way, all objects are signs. As we read them (Coke bottles, sneakers, automobiles, whatever), we produce their signification. The image is perceived not only in and of itself but as a consequence of the perception of others. The density of this perception of others is part of the quality of the image-its cache. In perceiving the fetish component of the image, we perceive the value accrued to it from the looks of others. Thus, we perceive that the media, as a deterritorialized factory, has become a worksite for global production. The value of our look also accrues to the image; it sustains the fetish. This new type of production is not a happy accident of the postmodern condition, a fortuitous cyber-buzz, but a cipher of the transformed dynamics of the global mode of production. It is, at the same time, an innovation that works to stave off the falling rate of profit, since it increases the sites at, and times during, which value may be extracted. Cinema is an innovation in productive efficiency. Though I cannot develop this point here, let me simply say that if the circulation of capital is not simultaneously grasped as productive and exploitative, then there is no more Marxism.39 Marxism is the active dialectical critique of the price of society. Despite Baudrillard's claim in For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign that it is the sober dialectic that collapses when all objects circulate and, as a result, become mediators, that is, ambiguous signs in polysemous movement, the jury is still out on the fate of the dialectic.40 With all due respect to the Godard of Marxism, in cinematic spectatorship we are dealing with what the sociologists today call "disguised wage labor."

#### Communicative capitalism means that the form of the message overdetermines its content – the use value of a message no longer matters as much as its exchange value. This means only a revolution at the level of communication can make our words mean something – star this card on your flow.

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Jodi Dean, “Communicative Capitalism: Circulation and the Foreclosure of Politics” Cultural Politics an International Journal 1(1):51-74, March 2005 // sam

The delirium of the dot.com years was driven by a tremendous faith in speed, volume and connectivity. The speed and volume of transactions, say, was itself to generate new “synergies” and hence wealth. A similar belief underlies the conviction that enhanced communications access facilitates democracy. More people than ever before can make their opinions known. The convenience of the Web, for example, enables millions not simply to access information but also to register their points of view, to agree or disagree, to vote and to send messages. The sheer abundance of messages, then, is offered as an indication of democratic potential. In fact, optimists and pessimists alike share this same fantasy of abundance. Those optimistic about the impact of networked communications on democratic practices emphasize the wealth of information available on the Internet and the inclusion of millions upon millions of voices or points of view into “the conversation” or “public sphere.” Pessimists worry about the lack of filters, the data smog and the fact that “all kinds of people” can be part of the conversation (Dyson 1998; cf. Dean 2002a: 72–3). Despite their differing assessments of the value of abundance, then, both optimists and pessimists are committed to the view that networked communications are characterized by exponential expansions in opportunities to transmit and receive messages. The fantasy of abundance covers over the way facts and opinions, images and reactions circulate in a massive stream of content, losing their specifi city and merging with and into the data flow. Any given message is thus a contribution to this ever-circulating content. My argument is that a constitutive feature of communicative capitalism is precisely this morphing of message into contribution. Let me explain. One of the most basic formulations of the idea of communication is in terms of a message and the response to the message. Under communicative capitalism, this changes. Messages are contributions to circulating content – not actions to elicit responses.1 Differently put, the exchange value of messages overtakes their use value. So, a message is no longer primarily a message from a sender to a receiver. Uncoupled from contexts of action and application – as on the Web or in print and broadcast media – the message is simply part of a circulating data stream. Its particular content is irrelevant. Who sent it is irrelevant. Who receives it is irrelevant. That it need be responded to is irrelevant. The only thing that is relevant is circulation, the addition to the pool. Any particular contribution remains secondary to the fact of circulation. The value of any particular contribution is likewise inversely proportionate to the openness, inclusivity or extent of a circulating data stream – the more opinions or comments that are out there, the less of an impact any one given one might make (and the more shock, spectacle or newness is necessary for a contribution to register or have an impact). In sum, communication functions symptomatically to produce its own negation. Or, to return to Agamben’s terms, communicativity hinders communication. Communication in communicative capitalism, then, is not, as Habermas would suggest, action oriented toward reaching understanding (Habermas 1984). In Habermas’s model of communicative action, the use value of a message depends on its orientation. In sending a message, a sender intends for it to be received and understood. Any acceptance or rejection of the message depends on this understanding. Understanding is thus a necessary part of the communicative exchange. In communicative capitalism, however, the use value of a message is less important than its exchange value, its contribution to a larger pool, fl ow or circulation of content. A contribution need not be understood; it need only be repeated, reproduced, forwarded. Circulation is the context, the condition for the acceptance or rejection of a contribution. Put somewhat differently, how a contribution circulates determines whether it had been accepted or rejected. And, just as the producer, labor, drops out of the picture in commodity exchange, so does the sender (or author) become immaterial to the contribution. The circulation of logos, branded media identities, rumors, catchphrases, even positions and arguments exemplifies this point. The popularity, the penetration and duration of a contribution marks its acceptance or success. Thinking about messages in terms of use value and contributions in terms of exchange value sheds light on what would otherwise appear to be an asymmetry in communicative capitalism: the fact that some messages are received, that some discussions extend beyond the context of their circulation. Of course, it is also the case that many commodities are not useless, that people need them. But, what makes them commodities is not the need people have for them or, obviously, their use. Rather, it is their economic function, their role in capitalist exchange. Similarly, the fact that messages can retain a relation to understanding in no way negates the centrality of their circulation. Indeed, this link is crucial to the ideological reproduction of communicative capitalism. Some messages, issues, debates are effective. Some contributions make a difference. But more significant is the system, the communicative network. Even when we know that our specific contributions (our messages, posting, books, articles, fi lms, letters to the editor) simply circulate in a rapidly moving and changing fl ow of content, in contributing, in participating, we act as if we do not know this. This action manifests ideology as the belief underlying action, the belief that reproduces communicative capitalism (Zizek 1989). The fantasy of abundance both expresses and conceals the shift from message to contribution. It expresses the shift through its emphases on expansions in communication – faster, better, cheaper; more inclusive, more accessible; highspeed, broadband, etc. Yet even as it emphasizes these multiple expansions and intensifi cations, this abundance, the fantasy occludes the resulting devaluation of any particular contribution. Social network analysis demonstrates clearly the way that blogs, like other citation networks, follow a power law distribution. They don’t scale; instead, the top few are much more popular than the middle few, and the middle few are vastly more popular than the bottom few. Some call this the emergence of an “A list” or the 80/20 rule. As Clay Shirkey summarily puts it, “Diversity plus freedom of choice creates inequality, and the greater the diversity, the more extreme the inequality” (Shirkey 2003).2 Emphasis on the fact that one can contribute to a discussion and make one’s opinion known misdirects attention from the larger system of communication in which the contribution is embedded. To put it differently, networked communications are celebrated for enabling everyone to contribute, participate and be heard. The form this communication takes, then, isn’t concealed. People are fully aware of the media, the networks, even the surfeit of information. But, they act as if they don’t have this knowledge, believing in the importance of their contributions, presuming that there are readers for their blogs. Why? As I explain in the next section, I think it involves the way networked communications induce a kind of registration effect that supports a fantasy of participation.

#### The history of revolutionary labor movements across American and global history proves the revolutionary possibility found in mass organization of labor, but to understand the strike as an economic and political formulation within the context of communicative capitalism, we must come to terms with the financialization of the strike – through the mass production and consumption of media like Disney’s “Newsies”, or the use of Striketober headlines to sell more newspapers, the World Computer has adapted to the strike by selling it, killing its potential to meaningfully challenge the armatures of racial capitalism. The strike has lost its power, and this is because the code always already has control of its communicative implications – only a theory that conceptualizes the expansion of labor to communication can revitalize the potential of strikes.

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Jonathan Beller, “The Spectatorship of the Proletariat” Boundary 2, 22(3), 171, 1995 // sam

Because today capital "thinks" several cycles in advance of itself, or, to put it another way, because it has several historical stages of its own development simultaneously available to itself that can be utilized in varying proportions, one could well argue that isolated labor strikes are made productive for capital and that phenomena such as the general strike or Samir Amin's "de-linking" are impossible.' The argument for the productive value of the strike for capital would not in itself necessarily be to ignore what Jacques Derrida has recently called "Marx's injunction."2 In discussing the capitalization of the resistance to capital, given perhaps its most dramatic form in and after 1989, one might still hear the ghostly admonitions of the "specter of Marx," which, for Derrida "reaffirms the question of life and death." Furthermore, one might hear the moans and intimations of such an absent presence without oneself becoming as dead as Marxism is purported to be. Though this essay is in no way directly concerned with the viability of the labor strike per se, it is most definitely concerned with the objective of the strike, that is, the reappropriation of historically sedimented human labor (the means of production) by disenfranchised individuals and groups. Such reappropriation of historically sedimented labor and of living labor, I suggest, is, in fact, going on all the time; it is endemic to social change. As Antonio Negri argues, in endeavoring to establish the subjectivity of labor in history, not only does labor produce capital, but labor, in its resistance to capital exploitation forces structural and technological innovations in capitalism. Though this is surely the case, we have lacked, since the advent of cinema in particular, a specific theory that accounts for the development of certain new regimes for the production of cultural and economic value via mental activity; we do not yet know how to account for the present-day dynamics of value production and appropriation that operate through the conversion of mental activity into social force. The capitalization of mental activity is an enabling factor in capital's ability to continue all previous forms of violation. By looking at the recycling of the resistance to capital by capital (the making productive of the strike against capital by capital) our affective production of hegemony may be foregrounded, and possibilities for the disruption of coercion and exploitation may be foregrounded as well. Toward those ends (and perhaps to the surprise of some), I would like to discuss the development of mass media during the time of early modern cinema, more specifically, those particular developments that can be found to crystallize in Sergei Mikhailovich Eisenstein's 1924-1925 film The Strike.3 For it was here, precisely, in revolutionary cinema, that capital's encroachment into the visual sphere met with resistance. And yet, in spite of its intentions, The Strike, like capital itself, participates in producing a new regime of the sensorium by advancing an increasing integration of machines and culture, of labor and perception. We can use The Strike to mark an emergent sociohistorical change in the character of what Marx called "sensuous labor" and, by direct implication, to mark as well a new strategy for the production and appropriation of value. To talk here about the political economy of the reorganization of society in terms of the simultaneously economic and cultural value necessary for the reclaiming and restructuration of communicative pathways (media), and of sexual identities, of groups, of subjects, of time, and of institutional power, et cetera, and the management of the world of objects, in short, social organization in general, would be to get far ahead of the task at hand, in spite of the fact that these are the terms in which such a discussion will ultimately take place.4 As a prelude to new possibilities in a discussion of culture and economy, I have set myself the task of showing how what might be thought of as the political economy of organization comes into being.

#### The strike isn’t just a material conflict between the workers and the boss, but rather a confrontation between organizational structures – the algorithms of the World Computer and racialized capitalism, the scab, the boss, the police inevitably conflict with the algorithms of the proletariat. However, the algorithms of the proletariat are necessarily distinct in that they are formulated through revolutionary movement – movement that is always already a form of communication – put simply, the strike is reliant on how we move and how we communicate, and only an examination of how we formulate revolutionary communication can overcome the financialization and sale of the strike that makes revolutionary workers movements impossible.

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Lenin's words stressing the importance of organization are quoted at the opening of The Strike: "The strength of the working class lies in organization. Without organization of the masses the proletariat is nothing. Organized it is everything. Organization means unity of action, unity of practical operations." Following this organizational directive, The Strike sets out to catalog various moments in the organization of the revolutionary proletariat at the same time as it strives itself to be a moment in the organization of the revolutionary proletariat. It constructs a continuity between the past and the present, and portrays the proletariat's revolutionary role in the reorganization of society. Indeed, the opening of the film is staged as the struggle between two communicative regimes that have at stake the resolution of a schism between two competing models for the practical organization of the workers and the state. The capitalist owners, for their part, have telephones, the power structure of the factory itself, and spies who report back to management. Ultimately, the owners can depend on the state in the form of police and military power for the enforcement of their hold over the workers. The capitalists, along with their managers, machines, spies, and police, form an entrenched organizational network. It is a living architecture of power. Meanwhile, the workers have for themselves only what they can create out of the conditions of their existence. In the fantastic shot sequence showing the interlocking components of the czarist state and the regime of private property, a factory foreman, who early on believes trouble to be brewing, calls his superior, who then calls his superior on up to the capitalist owners and the military police. As the call goes up the ladder of command, talking heads listen to a phone in one ear while picking up a phone for the other ear in order to send the message on up the line. It is here that the film not only shows the technological immediacy of the connections between capitalist industrial management and other forms of state power but suggests that peoples' functions within that mediating network are determined by their position in the organizational array. In a certain way, the telephone has more agency than its user-at least when its users are capitalists or the lackeys of capitalists engaged in the oppression of forces (workers) that threaten to transform the organizational integrity of their systems. This telephonic medium functions somewhat like cinema does in the hands of Eisenstein. The bureaucrats' heads mechanically transmit the message just as the capitalists and their state can do nothing but attempt to suppress the strike. The telephone cable, thin as it is, embodies tremendous organizational force. That the call reaches its final destination at the military commander, who has at his disposal the public records (maps of the city and images of spies whose photographs immediately begin to move), goes to show that the call for coercive counterrevolutionary force will animate already existing structures on its way back down the hierarchy toward its oppressive realization. Unaware of impending defeat, the workers use their life-energy to organize by word of mouth, by pamphleteering, and under the cover of art. During leisure time by the water, the handsome leaders argue and plot while reposed on an anchor. Their fraternal bond forged in working together for a common cause is perhaps, for Eisenstein, the libidinal core of a revolutionary society. We get several shots of men in repose taking advantage of "leisure" time to organize. Sitting among a tremendous mountain of piled iron train wheels, the workers, planning yet again, seem to draw inspiration from a material intimation regarding base and superstructure: rolling stock cannot roll without its wheels. In a factory bathroom, they are again conspiring until, upon the unwanted entry of the boss's foreman, they tear down their pants and face the urinals or sit on the pots in individual stalls- "innocently" going about their business. And under the superimposed cover of an accordion that opens and closes as if breathing a message in and out, we see bands of workers and their families walking, singing, and talking among themselves as a title states "spreading the word." On printed leaflets, too, the workers call for an immediate strike. This is the organization of the workers' countermovements. They are building revolutionary consciousness and a revolution. In solidarity with the workers' use of their own spaces and creative force to assemble a strike, The Strike organizes the myriad movements and patterns of daily life to orchestrate a message. However, this message is not only meant to be understood, that is, it is not, as the above paragraph might seem to imply, merely a handbook of revolutionary activity. As the capitalists and the workers attempt to outmaneuver each other using their networks of organization and communication, it becomes clear that in the case of the workers, it is movement itself that is their medium of communication. They express themselves in the concrete reorganization of their surroundings. This reorganization is, as it were, the film-language of The Strike. The placing of things in motion is the form of this society's expression. Capitalists orchestrate movement according to their interests, while workers try to orchestrate their own form of movement. To move differently in a society of highly regimented motion is already to express something else. Alternative motions may defy, or even exceed, the dominant social order. Indeed, it is the workers' goal in The Strike to rip the factory out of the capitalist's network of organization and control, and to incorporate it into their own. They move to make its moving parts move for them. In The Strike, the reorganization of movement (space and time) is made eloquent. Set apart from the capitalists, who are caricatures, and their spies, who are named for animals, the humans who appear as "The People" (whom, in Eisenstein's films, Roland Barthes notes, are "always lovable" 9) are the only ones able to exercise autonomous agency. In moving for themselves, the people claim their humanity. It is as if revolutionary movement itself begins to reverse Marx's description of the animalistic conditions imposed by capitalism, in which "what is animal becomes human and what is human becomes animal."10 For Marx, the animalistic conditions of the workers' lives under capitalism exist because all of the workers' creative energy (human labor) belongs to the capitalist. Though in their exploitation of workers the capitalists behave inhumanely, they appropriate the human attributes of the workers whom they have caged. The worker, in being able only to reproduce his or her own subsistence, is reduced to an animal, as "an animal only produces what it immediately needs for itself or its young .... An animal produces only itself whilst man reproduces the whole of nature."11 However, the workers' movements, organized for revolutionary change, produce something beyond immediate subsistence and reveal that it is the capitalists and their lackeys who, through their lack of agency, are capable of producing only themselves. The workers' movements in The Strike reveal the capitalists' animal nature. It is as if the spell that turned the workers into animals by freezing their humanity in the objects they made and that now cage them could be broken through the reorganization of movement. In Eisenstein, humanity remains a specter, while the world is under capital's enchantment. It is not for its own sake that I have raised the animal/human dichotomy present in Eisenstein, Marx, and, as will become important for us shortly, the imaginary of this period. Because capital was, in fact, producing animality, Eisenstein's concern with the relationship between animals, humans, and social organization was, at the turn of the century, part of a widely debated problematic. This constellation of capital, animality, and humanity suggests the powers of metamorphosis latent in the communicative aspects of movement, since reorganization potentially breaks the spell of capital, of animality. The important point here is to see the conjunction of capital and animality with the process of communication. For Eisenstein, communication arises as a result of the organization of production and functions as a form of production. Furthermore, it transpires directly in the movement of materials. That movement is itself communication is made most explicit in a scene in The Strike that occurs once the work stoppage is under way and some of the workers in the foundry refuse to join. An angry mob of striking workers picks up the raw materials of what will soon be a hail of cobblestones and, heaving them, breaks jagged holes in the windows of the foundry. There is no doubt about what they are doing in making the stones fly: they are sending a message that even an animal could understand- "Get out!" That the movement of material is made expressive in Eisenstein is only slightly less extraordinary than the fact that it actually occurs via the dematerialization ofthe movement of material. But this dematerialization of material movement is the moment that goes beyond the mere meaning of the film in the sense that I indicated previously and marks its significance for the reorganization of the material and the materiality of signification. It is here, in the abstraction of material movement away from materiality, and in the ensuing phenomenological and visceral effects, that the cinematic mode of production comes into full presence. From now on, perception will be more or less consciously engineered according to the protocols of circulating materials. Because The Strike is itself a materialization of the movements that have begun to inhere in social organization as language, it is the materialization of a "language." Language is, however, as inadequate a term as meaning, inasmuch as what is accomplished in The Strike is less the speaking about something and more the transferring of its very motion, the transferring of revolutionary movement. In "The Third Meaning," Roland Barthes uses Eisenstein stills to arrive at a concept of the filmic, which surpasses the realm of the signified. For Barthes, "the third meaning," that which he calls "the obtuse meaning," is that which exceeds language-a "signifier without a signified."12 In his words, "the third meaning -theoretically locatable but not describable-can now be seen as a passage from language to significance and the founding act of the filmic itself."13 I am suggesting that "filmic" encounters take place in a translinguistic environment, which at once utilizes thought and is beyond it. Cinema is a technology for the organization of the scene of this encounter-let us provisionally call this space the space of the Real. Material reorganization of the world of capital and animality is, for Eisenstein, designed to produce psychic reorganization, physical reorganization, and, hence, social reorganization. That this organizational force materializes in, and as, the dematerialization of material movement only suggests that there is a new kind of energy for the transformation of the material organization of society-steam! The gaseous film in all its airy immateriality extends the circulation of movement beyond its immediate place and time and into the arena of its employment-the social and the sensuous.

#### Alternative algorithms are possible – the form of communication ensures movements fail in radically combatting capital, but direct engagement with media and the communicative form can escape the trap of communication by creating ways of thinking and being that are outside of the code.

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Given the sea change in the nature of languages and images themselves—their wholesale transposition and transformation from a means of representation to a means of production— the difficulty here is both with the substrate of communication (its bits) and with the us-versus-them perspective:, we want to ban advertisers but today we must also confront the disturbing possibility that we are them. Remember, “they” program “our” language and “our” imagination, “we” speak “their” thought—indeed, that is our work, or rather our labor. What to do with the fact that “we have seen the enemy and he is us?” One could say, one could want to say, “I don’t care who you are: if you live in the first world, if you live in the Global North, then fuck you! You ain’t no victim, even if you’re sick.” But who would be saying that? Probably some other Northerner, writing about how culture or the Venice Biennale, as if it were, could or should be more than a lavish spectacle of global suffering staged for a cosmopolitan elite. As capital’s nations, banks, armies, schools, languages, newspapers, and films did to its colonies and colonial subjects, the current institutions from states to computer-media companies do to “us”: they command us to make ourselves over in capital’s image for their own profit through networked strategies of expropriation and dispossession. “We” do it to ourselves, and our representations of self and other are designed to sell a version of ourselves back to ourselves so that we can perform further work on what is now the raw material for the next iteration of images. Therein lies our ontological lack, an ontological lack of solidarity and of even the possibility for solidarity. Therein lies the desire for and indeed necessity to become a plantation manager—the word is overseer. Though it is beyond the scope of this essay, this digital neocolonialism that practically commands global Northerners to in one way or another accept Nazism and genocide with their cappuccino could be understood as being on a continuum with the internal colonization of Europe by the German banks—which depends of course on the distributed production of a kind of neoliberal “realism” that Mark Fisher (2009) called “capitalist realism,” and was only ever a hair’s breadth away from fascism. This fact of our investment in and by advertising, the conversion of the sign to what I call the “advertisign,” poses a genuine problem for theory— indeed an unprecedented one. This problem is particularly evident considering the material conditions (class, nationality, education, race, language, etc.) of the participants in the would-be counterhegemonic theoretical discussions of culture and policy that presuppose the books, computers, schools, and institutions that sustain these. Those within the circuit of these discussions have already passed through a homogenization process which programs them in compatible systems languages. Without submitting ourselves and our own aspirations to radical critique, without conducting a Gramscian inventory of our ostensibly internal constitutions, we run the risk of merely trying to set up a competing corporation with a new business model. The revolution will not be televised; decolonization will not be a brand. Any would-be anticapitalist “we” runs this risk of coopting and cooptation from the get-go, particularly if it does not think about the materiality of social production from top to bottom: class, yes, but also race, nation, gender, sexuality, ability, geolocation, historical stratification. The world’s postmodern poor, the two billion–plus living on two dollars a day, also labor to survive in the material landscape organized by the post-Fordist social factory its anti-Blackness, its Islamophobia, its endless and mutating racism and imperialism. However, from the standpoint of capital, the role of those at the bottom is to serve as substrate for image-production and semiosis; not only in factories, cottage-industries, subsistence farming, and informal economies, but also as starving hordes; “irrational,” criminalized or surplused populations; subject-objects for policing, encampment, and bombing; desperate refugees; and even as voids in the idea of the world—as sites of social death. Forgive me, but I’d wager that no one capable of understanding these words can claim full exemption from the indictment they issue regarding structural complicity with the production and reproduction of everyday life. Humans are troped (via discourse and the screen) to organize military production, national policy, internment camps and prisons, bourgeois imaginations, museum shows, corporate strategy, and market projections. Let us clearly state here that any program that does not admit this excluded planet into dialogues that vitiate the monologues imposed by capitalist informatics and advertisigns is still floating in the realm of the ruling ideas and therefore participant in murder. These ruling ideas are the ones whose density and weight, whose material support and very machinery, threaten to further crush the late-capitalist poor out of not just representation but out of existence. This erasure and disposability, imposed by systems of informatic inscription designed to absorb every output of sense, is the achievement of the advertisarial relations endemic to computational racial capitalism. When information is an advertisement for itself that presupposes the operating system of the world computer as virtual machine, banning what we recognize as advertising on the internet, even if an excellent beginning, is just not adequate to address these issues of representation, social justice, planetary and climate racism, and emancipation. To summarize: the forms of sociality which are the conditions of possibility for the online, informatically organized relations—best characterized as advertisarial—run through every sector and register of planetary life. The internet, while recognizable as an effect and a cause of the current form of planetary production and reproduction, cannot be considered in isolation as a merely technical platform or set of platforms if its historical role is to be properly understood. To take the internet as an autonomous technological force results in a species of platform fetishism that disavows both the histories and material conditions of its emergence, conditions that are, in short, those of screen culture and racial capitalism; this is to say that it, the internet, is the very means by which the capitalist suppression of global democracy (which is emphatically, economic democracy as well) has been accomplished and continues. If the internet is autonomous, it is because it expresses the autonomization of the value form. As noted previously, with the hijacking of communications and semiotic infrastructures by racial capitalism, the medium is the message and the message is murder. To ban advertising on the internet would be a good start —but what if the whole thing is advertising? One reading of what I have said thus far might suggest that, given the expropriation of the cognitive-linguistic, our volition is overtaken by capital logic; and given our inability to cogitate in any way that is genuinely resistant to capitalist expropriation, coercion, strictly speaking, is no longer necessary to impose cooperation for capitalist production. We “want” to cooperate productively, our desire—which, from the dispossession of even language and mind constitutes ourselves as subjects in the media ecology of the capitalist technical image, that is, in and through the organization of digital information—is itself an iteration of capital, a script of becoming predestined to become capital. The old language scored by the new image machines and their extractive algorithms locally organizes cooperative subjects who want to cooperate with vectoral capitalization. We want to provide content in order to derive currency and survive. Our solidarity on the internet produces more internet. Thus, in a certain way—and particularly since we no longer properly have any thoughts of our own—we all collaborate in a world organized by images and screens, thereby participating more or less mindlessly in the seamless realization and triumphant apotheosis of the programming business. However, I am sorry to have to report that the dystopian vision here is not quite as bucolic as even this already dreary picture of unwitting and irredeemable pulverization and servitude. While I do see that representation and semiotics have been increasingly flattened à la Orwell and Marcuse by a vast internalization of the apparatuses of oppression (in which “thought” is the [productive] thought of the [capitalist] Party and “repressive desublimation” is an engine of capitalist-fascist production) the “old problems” like the hierarchy of class have not gone away; neither have racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, and fascist nationalisms ceased playing their roles to create vectors of privilege for white male–identifying aspiration. Indeed, most thought today, such that it is, is all about maintaining hierarchical society. The thinking runs thus: capital is nature, capital is eternal, capital is information is nature. Or, in a more pedestrian mode: human beings are naturally acquisitive and competitive, economic growth and technological advancement mean progress, this tech provides, or almost provides, a color-, gender-, and religion-blind society, and so on—and one must advance one’s place in it by any (crypto- or not-so-cryptofascist) means necessary. Of course, there exists better thinking out there. Mia Mingus: “As organizers, we need to think of access with an understanding of disability justice, moving away from an equality based model of sameness and ‘we are just like you’ to a model of disability that embraces difference, confronts privilege and challenges what is considered ‘normal’ on every front. We don’t want to simply join the ranks of the privileged; we want to dismantle those ranks and the systems that maintain them” (Mingus 2011, cited in Puar 2017: 16). However, there is broad-band, ambient programming that facilitates assuming neo-liberal and full-on fascist subjective sovereignty. This programming seeks triumphant brushes with plenitude (communion with the big Other, as distinct from the racial or otherwise other, becomes the ego-ideal), and this same programming is violent, competitive, hateful, mean-spirited, and alienating when embraced —at the same time that it is also cooperative, simpering, and abject. Servitude, even when automatic and mostly unconscious, is unhappy and, as we can see any day from the daily news, utterly pathological and sick. Of course, this diagnosis represents a huge generalization, but despite its broad-brushing lack of subtlety we may find that such a schizoid oscillation between entitled adjudicator and abject supplicant sums up the contours of your average reality television show or comments section on YouTube. It is Bateson’s (2000) and Deleuze and Guattari’s (1977) schizophrenic, caught in the double-bind, who has become the capitalist norm—the one who struggles to negotiate in the form of contradictory signals the aporias of hierarchical society, while reproducing it, and all the while experiencing their own psychic dissolution as an injunction to create.3 With this schizoid capture in mind, let me then develop my question about the internet—“What if it is all advertising?”—in the framework of post-Fordist production. The argument is that, in the context of virtuosity and the expropriation of the cognitive-linguistic by computational racial capital, sociality itself has become advertisarial, a ceaseless waging of capitalized exploits designed to garner attention and value for oneself and one’s capitalists. This situation represents—indeed imposes—a derivative logic, a logic in which every action is a hedge, a kind of risk management devoted to maximize a return. In addition to the fractalization of fascism, in which agency is manifest as a profile that has aggregated the attention of others, advertising has worked its way into the sign itself, into the image, and into data visualization, and it has generated the advertisign. All signs become points of potential cathexis, derivative positions on the underlier that is social currency and ultimately value. This new type of sign is not simply the brand but also an element of vectoral language (Wark 2007): functionalized words in a production channel, engaging in the micromanagement of desire, the production of new needs, and the capturing of the imagination, all in order to induce linguistic and behavioral shifts in the attention of others while aggregating their attention for oneself—turning their heads with an interface. This combination of the manipulation of market conditions (that is, everyday life) through techniques of risk management is no longer merely the province of advertising but of so- called human interactivity (what was once just communication and before that culture), now become advertisarial through and through. From Smythe’s claim in the “Blindspot” essay (1977) that all leisure time has become labor time, to Virno’s (2004) notion of virtuosity, we have seen aspects of this model for the capitalist overdetermination of apparently unremunerated time before. However, here—with the financialization of expression—we clearly grasp that the financialization of everyday life means also the convergence of semiotics and financial derivatives. Given the thoroughgoing intensification of vectoral, and in fact matrixial, signs, we need to investigate its implications in the context of a discussion of radical media practice. I will make two additional points here before shifting gears and turning at the end of this chapter to what I identify as an aesthetics of survival—an aesthetics that emerges from within the matrix of advertisarial, schizoid capture. The final chapter of this volume will endeavor to extend aspects of such socioaesthetic forms, those resistant to computational racial capitalism, to new notions of radical finance and the possibility of platform communism. If, as was already becoming true in the cinematic mode of production, the dominant means of representation have become the dominant means of production, the questions of and models for political agency are radically transformed, and the urgent need to decolonize communication and decolonize finance presents itself. Future communication will require a cybernetic approach, and, as we shall argue, this cybernetic approach will necessarily be financial, though it will be reaching toward a different order and different mode of production. Like communism, because it will need to be communist, it will see economic transformation of the material relations of production and reproduction as essential to the revolution. It will draw on the repressed and extracted cognitive-linguistic resource of the racialized and otherwise marginalized and configure ways to make our voices matter both as meaning and as tools for the reorganization of the material world and the social relations therein prescribed. Language and images are neither inside nor outside; they are part of the general intellect—currently they are at once media of thought and of capital. We also know that languages and images are not isolable, meaning that they are not and have never been stand-alone entities but rather exist in relation to their media, their platforms, which are again inseparable from society and its institutions. Furthermore, each platform relates to another platform. Paraphrasing McLuhan, we could even say that the “content” of a media platform is another platform. Thusly the general intellect is inseparable from its media platforms and their financials. We see that the general intellect, once largely held in common, is increasingly being privatized; the very media of our thought belong to someone else. This expropriation of the media commons is precisely the precondition of the real subsumption of society by capital. It is an extension of the ongoing expropriation begun by primitive accumulation and money as capital, and it has been accomplished through the financialization of media as platforms of extraction. The ramification of mediation by computation and information has resulted in its convergence into formats offering derivative exposure to underliers that are the expressive vitality and futurity of our communication. We therefore no longer have any organic relation to the materials for thought itself (sincerity has become a myth, at least in the medium-term of most circles)—the words, images, and machines we require to think, to express ourselves, to interact, and to know have been ripped from the species and privatized via the longue durée of dissymmetrical exchange. We work on the words and images, but as numbers they belong to someone else. The media themselves have become forms of capital—forms of racial capital—and our usage of these media means that we work to add value that valorizes capital, for the capitalist and within a relation designed as much as possible to guarantee that our creative acts necessarily occur as dissymmetrical exchange with capital. I write this book in a discourse that does not just not belong to me because it is shared, but in a discourse that is increasingly the property of a set of institutions— publishers, journals, universities—that all have their eye on the bottom line. The means by which we most intimately know the world, ourselves, and our desires (our images and words) are themselves vectors of capitalization intent upon converting our very life-process into surplus value (which is to say value for capital). We need strategies that will seize the means of production and create a reverse subsumption of affect, intellect, knowledge, capability, communication, and community. When all media have converged as economic media, it is economic media that must be re- engineered. Again, I think this subsumption of cognitive and affective capacity, the quasi-automating (scripting) of productive labor for capital, is what Stiegler means by the proletarianization of the nervous system—which would include the proletarianization of the pathways of feeling and thought. Our affective capacities are put to alienated and alienating work in the social factory, and their product too is alienated, producing ever-intensifying and ever-accumulating dispossession and disempowerment as the dialectical antithesis of its simultaneous production of unprecedented wealth and power for the cyborg avatars of the great media conglomerates. Intellect and emotional intelligence, the product of thousands of years of species- becoming, is being strip-mined so that extraction machines may continue their furious innovation to further discount people. I write this book aware of the pressure to think it just right, to at once extend thinking in order to command attention and produce new needs, but also to delimit it, to control myself, and to put the reins on whatever counterpower may rage within my body, because academia can tolerate only so much “bullshit” and no more. Yes sir, I’ll be careful not to cross that line, but a word to the woke: the bullshit is the best part. From a historical perspective, this encroachment on the means of representation—that Banksy and I and a billion others join the silenced majority in opposing—indicates that the individual subjective agent, itself a platform for sociality that developed with the rise of capitalism (as the subject who relates to other subjects in the market, the bearer of the commodity and thus its thought), is nearly defunct. As has been noted previously, in a world where life processes are stripped, ripped apart, rebundled, and sold as derivative exposures, the individual subject is an outmoded technology despite the fact that it still appears as a skeuomorph in certain updated technosocial apparatuses—like the latest forms of films, games, influencers, and versions of national politics that proffer invitations to momentary individualistic identification for the dividual purpose of providing a sense of familiarity and orientation. While palliative for some in small doses, such individuality is no longer a viable (which is to say, sustainable) fantasy. The real thought is that of the infrastructure, of the AI that codes our meat and scripts our sheets. Sure I take up the mantle for a few moments each day to appear as the agent of this text, suiting up as the operator of an intellect that might be adequate to the informatic shit-storm of racist, capitalist, imperialist, patriarchal, for-profit assaults, but then I drop off into an ocean of petty concerns, food shopping, and home repairs. And even when I say “I,” to perform as the nexus of all this insight, I also know that it’s hardly me talking. I’m just curating at the gates of shit that needs to be said, and hopefully titrating to let the right stuff through. That’s part of my politics though Dog knows that I could create a more lucrative named-professor type profile with just a little more discipline, a bit more self-interested adherence to the protocols of the academy’s factory code. Instead, there is the effort to overturn, to be or at least to live something beyond being the scribe of the world computer, to at once witness the drama of the emergence of the intelligence of commodification, testify to its outrage, and intimate the possibility of its overthrow. Such would be the art of this text, practiced at the limits of disciplinarity and of subjectivity, guaranteed by nothing and no one. The expiration of the subject form, imminent since the subject’s first intimation of mortality—and made structurally mandatory by Freud and especially, with the full-blown rise of the sign at the moment of it radical marginalization by visuality, by Lacan—is not necessarily a cause for lament, despite the increasingly intense fading of its incalculable beauty, its sad reduction to cliché. From a political perspective, it means that within each concrete individual body the presumed continuity of the individual is riddled with contradictory and indeed unassimilable indicators; it means also that there exists in differing quantities and qualities capitalist and noncapitalist striations or sectors. Hallways of emptiness, but also hallways of love. Like bundled assets, the mind-body is tranched by executable logics organized by a calculus of risk available to investors. There are, to be a bit simplistic, aspects of desire that are programmed (indeed farmed) to produce practices that function in perfect accord with capitalist accumulation strategies (individualizing or schizoid) and aspects of desire that are atavistic or collectivist, utopian, communist, or maybe even just plain lonely, and, in short, subprime. In reality, of course, desire is more singular than even such formalizations might indicate. Insert your favorite snippet of poetry here. Hortense Spillers in “All the Things You Could Be by Now If Sigmund Freud’s Wife Was Your Mother” (1997) invokes “the Dozens” and the music of and like that of Charles Mingus (152–3), to make present an “interior intersubjectivity”(140) testifying to the rich unaudited psychic life of what might today be called Blackness. There are vast resources beyond the easy resolution of hegemonic hermeneutics whether deployed by institutionally validated psychoanalysis or compressed by current systems of informatic extraction. In agreeing with Freud that consciousness makes up a small part of mental life when compared to the preconscious, the unconscious, dreams, and so on, but in rejecting the normative assumptions and disavowals (including his own Jewishness) that situate Freud and the psychoanalytic discourse that will become part of European and U.S. bourgeois society, Spillers recognizes a vast store of mental life and the possibility of listening anew. However, when speaking of politics now, we therefore necessarily speak of the abstract forms available for the conceptualization and deployment of concrete emergences whether referring to haecceities that are innumerable or collective forms of existence and psychic life actively mediating between “the one” and “the ‘masses’ ” (141). Let us listen anew. Acknowledging that we ultimately and if possible immediately want to “marry our thought” (Wynter 1994b: 65) to the wealth of subaltern forms of life and the care of the bios, allow me then to put the situation of the post- Fordist subject thusly: in Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism, Lenin (1939) showed how imperialist dividends complicated class issues in England, since many people, otherwise part of the working class, got a share of the dividends of imperialism by clipping the coupons of their investments in racist, exploitative British enterprises across the globe. Today this race-based class fractionalization is fully internalized in the Global North; on our iPads built by Chinese slaves from blood metals extracted from the Congo, we may momentarily feel like biomorphically unmarked nobles in the global cosmopolis; while on the job market or when simply seen in our raced and gendered embodiments, we are abjects. Materially and intellectually we are nodal points on a global network. The signal oscillates between narcissistic megalomania and utter abjection and can be affected by a billion parameters taking us from melancholia to outrage. Thus, even the concrete individual is composed of class fractions, race fractions, gender fractions. In the form of signs, we clip coupons that validate our investments. The language of object-identification, we observe here, cannot really keep up with the fluctuations resulting from the throughput of code as we work to identify and disidentify our agency. Can we audit a different mode of emergence, a different futurity than one inexorably overcoded by capital? Of course this is still somewhat simplistic and also class-specific, as many (billions even) never get to participate as an enfranchised global citizen in any aspect or moment of life, even if the lived experience of these same billions is radically overdetermined by the class(es) from which they are excluded.4 The gilded poverty of the enfranchised, as opposed to the mere poverty of the rest, is now a measure of connectivity. A more complete view is that we are the product of the world system and thus everything we are has been produced vis-à-vis globalization, and therefore everything bears the trace of the system in its entirety (again, in varying proportions). This conceptualization of concrete individuals (bodies) as global communitarian products forced to varying degrees into templates of individualized risk by capitalist states, is not to erase class; however, it suggests that, just as Fanon saw the great European metropoles as the product of third world labor, we are all products of the worst conditions prevailing in the Global South and around the planet. Global inequality is internal to our being. It is us. How then does one (such a one who is relatively enfranchised by the derivative language of texts such as this one) inventory those relations and produce them as formations of solidarity rather than as disavowed residuum? Is there another data-sphere, a communist one? Can we build communist interfaces, networks, and finance? How would we register, track, amplify, and render actionable the communitarian affinities, solidarities, obligations, and debts, the resources in the wake of too many genocides to count, that in actual practice underpin the official economy, collective life, and whatever authentic hope is left to our species? Perhaps we have arrived at a question worthy of theory: Is there, could there be communist algorithms? Communist derivatives? Derivative communism? We are looking for that path. To add to my point about the shifting, distributed character of political actors—that goes so far as to suggest that we can no longer think only of actors but rather must think of vectors and fields in addition to thinking of the resources developed in cultures of survival—I will make a second observation. A political intervention in the advertisarial relations that have this planet heading toward environmental doomsday requires not only revolutionary policy but revolutionary culture. (I defer further discussion of a third requirement, revolutionary finance, to the final chapter.) This culture must take into account that, for many on this planet, Armageddon is not the future but an ongoing constant. My call here (which should not be entirely unfamiliar, as it gives petit bourgeois intellectuals something important to do) is to (re)politicize semiotic and affective structures and practices, including and perhaps especially those we might control, for example our own utterances—our expression. Of course, to call them “our own” seems to contradict what I’ve said about the expropriation of the cognitive- linguistic and the intensification of aphanisis by visual, verbal, and digital media derivatives, but it is here precisely that we confront one of the significant material contradictions of our time: who or what speaks in us? This question, which I shorthand using the phrase the politics of the utterance and which you can experience palpably right now (as you endeavor to think), seems to me to insist that our idea-making must actively produce its solidarity with the dispossessed. We must struggle for the radical constellation. The question concerning the politics of the utterance, asked here in a strange passage of this text through a beyond-academic terrain, a moonless forest the traversal of which may or may not at this point lead us back to the plot, also raises the question of becoming, as well as the questions of agency and of action within the capitalist image— programmable images, racializing and racist images that, in the terms we have set out, are functionally omnipresent. Continuous media throughput has generated a capitalist imaginary structuring both language function and imaging processes, coordinated at scales and by calculative logics that exceed individual comprehension. Though the occasion is upon us, we must struggle for space and time to think. We must open a spread on which to bet against the dominant order. We glimpse, and we feel, that to insist upon the unremitting relevance of both culture-making and of cross-cultural transnational solidarity helps to avoid platform fetishism because it sees the internet and its machines not as a set or collection of autonomous technologies but as a historically emergent system of value-expropriative communication and organization, built directly upon older but nonetheless contemporaneous forms of inequality, including but not limited to historically emergent techniques of gendering, racialization, and imperialism, and embedded in the living flesh of the world. All of this calculative interconnectivity and networked agency implies, contradictorily, in fact, that the internet is not all advertising—but neither is advertising all advertising. It is also murder and struggle. Banksy knows that. The advertisarial relation is the programmatic relation encrypted in the apparatuses of capital: the war of each against all, taken all the way from finance, computation, and surveillance to the speech act and the imagination in accord with the autopoietic algorithm of the distributed Leviathan. Marx himself saw capitalism as vampiric, and today’s processes of capitalization are even more totalitarian, more widely distributed, and more blood-, life-, and indeed soul-sucking than even in prior eras—though such comparisons don’t do those killed by past iterations of capitalism any good. Despite the disavowals to the contrary, we recognize that capital needs labor, needs metabolic time more desperately and more voraciously than ever before (what else is biopolitics?) and, furthermore, that it wages war on life-time on all fronts, in order to secure labor power, its product and basis, at a discount. The pyramids of inequality become internal fractals, and even as the base broadens, the tip with the all-seeing eye (that is not a subject) ascends ever higher. We do not yet know what can be destroyed or indeed built with the massive appropriation of Banksy’s rocks, but we do know that at present there is total war against our using them to build anticapitalist, nonhierarchical, horizontal, solidary sociality. The refusal or détournement of capital’s encroachment is itself a creative act. Perhaps we have only begun to glimpse what a total refusal might achieve.

#### Thus, we advocate that a just government should recognize the universal right of workers to engage in communicative strikes. This is not a demand for legal recognition, but rather a form of radical self-governance that asserts the only governing body that can regulate us is ourselves – we’ll defend a communicative strike that transforms the terms of communication by creating communist algorithms, allowing for the only possibility of genuine communicative space.

#### As a response to the instrumentalization of all thought by the World Computer, the 1ac seeks a radical constellation found in a strike against communicative labor – this is articulated via a refusal to move right, and instead dare to imagine new ways of being, one that builds movements by weaponizing the affective technologies of communicative spaces against the World Computer. We are going on strike – don’t cross the picket line.

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Jonathan Beller, “The World Computer: Derivative Conditions of Racial Capitalism”, Duke University Press, 2021 // sam

The autonomization of intentions by fixed capital in the form of apparatuses, and experienced by responsive screeners as searches, clicks, binge watching, forms of knowing, forms of suspense, forms of abjection, and forms of interest, makes this informatic landscape more precarious, the metagame more complex. Our condition of wagering on information is not a choice (just as one does not have a choice but to live and strive on a polluted planet plagued by environmental racism); it is a derivative condition, and my expressing it in these words, words admittedly calibrated and nuanced in alignment with my will to a certain polemical endpoint, is radically overdetermined by the material conditions of our existence, my own existence, and the planetary subjugation of life. I am not alone here in what I call the derivative condition—which is why so many of us are talking about the same things: new economy, anti-racism, decolonization, radical care, refusal. Contemporary media forms are edited compositions that function as a kind of protocolized wager to strategically manage the volatility of living that is imposed by the transnational, transsubjective economy. Films represent a bundling of resources in expectation of a return. Creating non- and postcapitalist returns requires that the underlying protocols of financialization endemic to dominant media are rewritten. We must strike against the mode of abstraction and extraction of our progressive values that currently underlies computationally modulated representation and refuse the conversion into their opposite, that is, into capital. This concern demands that we seek the means to democratize the authorship of derivatives so that postcapitalist and communist derivatives can be written and so that communist and postcapitalist futures can be wagered. We need to expand the power of the social derivatives authored by the disenfranchised masses. We want to write a future that we can collect on and we don’t want to be paid in dollars. What do we want? Justice! When do we want it? Now! The financialization of everyday life and the rise of the world computer means that decisions and indeed metabolism are subject to a relentless calculus of optimization from all quarters. Our radical social movements need to engage this calculus and, as much as possible, transform it to better enable antiracist, antifascist, anti-imperialist outcomes. And we need to do so without replicating the current violence. The reigning imperative is to apportion resources and calculate returns, but there are better ways to engage necessity than those that have already been tried by Hollywood, advertising, social media, Wall Street, and national-fascist politics—all of which do their accounting by collapsing all values into the monologue of the value form indexed by money. As we may intuit, these prevailing methods create fractal fascism

; yet it must be possible to mitigate the violence that is the current condition of our being. Accordingly, my words here are a digitally mediated wager and an invitation to you to wager along these lines by enticing you to pay attention—perchance, to dream. And even though I am asking you to valorize my wager (it is not mine alone) with your attention and hence your risk, to execute the program (or multiple programs) of my thought (it is not mine alone) with your thought, of course, to commit your resources to recompose economic media, I speak and write—just as others make films—with a huge debt to those who came before and to those who now sustain me, with a need to survive, and with the clear knowledge that the vast majority of the world will blithely ignore me. I transmit what I have received or gleaned and you receive it with the cognitive capacities others have helped you to build. And I write what is written with the faint hope that my now unavoidable addition to the negentropy of climate changing, white, capitalist, heteropatriarchal, global semiosis will successfully transmit, alongside the inevitable costs borne by the people and creatures of a forlorn world running on blood computing, some potent strategy crystals derived of struggle—and thus will also be a catalyst, a small contribution to emerging forms of antiracist, antisexist, anti-imperialist emancipation. This change in the character of the world—a world in which precarity is on the rise, war has become permanent, some people are richer than the richest kings in history (with just five men owning more wealth than half the world), and justice is scarce indeed, “our” world, now understandable as a network of networks resulting also in camps and genocide as the other side of the visible personas that are our politicians, celebrities, and microcelebrities—could not have come about without the cinema. Some might be surprised to hear me say this, and, to be clear, I am not saying that cinema is to blame for the financialization of daily life (no more, and perhaps less, than was the computer’s precursor, the Hollerith punch card famously used by IBM to aid Hitler in undertaking the Holocaust), but I am saying that the rise of the attention economy organized by screen cultures is in no way incidental to the encroachment of brutal financialization on all aspects of existence, just as today’s computational armatures are inseparable from the global organization of a world in which genocide, incarceration, forced migration, permanent war, child labor, and endemic poverty are the norm. Blood computing interfaces by means of the screen. With the rise of cinema as an extension of the logistics of capital, images outpaced words and, slowly but surely, marginalized the power of speech and imposed an extractive paradigm of information and digitization such that expression itself became a financial instrument. Broadening their attentional capacities spectators produced their expressions for the ambient market organized by social media. The industrialization of the visual realized by cinema’s bringing of the industrial revolution to the eye meant also the colonization of the mind and the senses by the emergent protocols of value production endemic to attention economies. Thus, the media of expression became work-sites and mediation became work: the dominant means of representation become the dominant means of production; screens did not only represent work; they became deterritorialized factories, interfaces of value creation and value extraction, mediated by expression’s machinic conversion into information. Thereby, those of us who would express a version of the world or ourselves, along with those of us who are forced to do so, became workers in the deterritorialized factories of the media. Without such a thesis of interface as worksite, we cannot fully grasp the world-historical significance of the rise of screens and screen cultures. The image is a derivative and also a work-site. The derivative is an attractor, appealing to a particular form of attention or interest in a larger market. As a risk instrument it binds attention, and other resources, to a narrative or image or other structured outcome that requires risk. Take money, a network derivative on a national economy that is also a medium and, in a weakly perceived but increasingly important way, an attention aggregator. Market-makers offering designer risk instruments parse and granularize that attention as they broker “positions.” There is more here, but anon. As with the workers before us and still beside us, and very likely also within us, our labor—wage-labor in the traditional workforce, attentional labor with cinema, and now informatic labor with the derivative machines of computational media—is remunerated to our disadvantage or, oftentimes, unremunerated, just plain stolen (see Beller 2016b). Some of us cooperate by dutifully consuming images and creating posts on social media, some of us sing our laments in books, films, poems, music, command performances, and gossip, and some of us try to disconnect, check out, disappear, or get sick, while those who control the networks, either through arms, states, banks, surveillance, or communications infrastructures (which are all linked, in any case) exercise obscene power as they profitably ride the waves of social volatility with cold indifference and near total impunity. The big authors, brokers, attention brokers, trading platforms of all types, profit on our investments—on our efforts (aesthetic or financial) to eke out a little more from the precarious global economy. Just as financial derivatives can hedge out market direction and trade on pure volatility, social media derivatives can hedge out political direction and trade on volatility. It is for this reason that Mark Zuckerburg’s bogus “neutrality” makes him a supporter of white supremacy and of fascism. Nearly every act or non-act becomes a signal, becomes information, becomes a pathway from M to Mʹ (money to more money) for someone—for some market-maker or platform owner. The result of hedging our direction is the stripping of the purchase of expressive power on reality by profiteering capital along with the consequent accumulation of wealth for the few and the accumulation of precarity and pain for the many. What is ultimately valorized is the value form of racial capitalism. The generalized movement of financialization into media of expression —the financialization of expressivity, along with the racializing and genderdifferentiating grid of intelligibility that functions under the cloak of everyday understandings of “digital culture” and whatever remains of “reality”—is an intensification of the af ective power of capital and a deployment, harnessing, and development of the semiotics of the valueform. All innovation is an experiment in messaging, an arbitrage on the current organization of information and its access to ever-cheapened labor power—labor power cheapened by the messages written with it and on it. Cinema asked spectator-workers to accept the social currency it offered in exchange for their otherwise unremunerated care—their interest. We risked our time and our love. It was a precursor to social media and their platformbound currencies of likes and other infrastructures of reputation and relation. This thoroughgoing assault on cultural qualities by economic quantity is an advanced stage of what Adorno and Horkheimer meant by “the culture industry.” However, it is not simply that mediation and therefore intelligibility itself has become financialized but, rather, that mediation and intelligibility have themselves become means of further financialization and the subsumption of formerly extra-economic domains (see Beller 2006b). Media forms are deterritorialized factories in which spectators—and now “content providers”—work, utilizing our affective, attentional, and neuronal-metabolic capacities. We provide interest to capital, we provision its liquidity as we struggle to ward off dispossession and improve our lot. The qualities of our interests are converted directly into quantified interest, brokered and monetized on attention markets to return dividends (interest) to shareholders and banks. That is our product, the result of our desire. The algorithmic overdetermination and functionalization of all these forms of attention is intensifying. The convergence of media formations with computation, such that nearly all media today are effectively computational media, also marks a deeper and more granular convergence with financial calculus—an ever more precise mobilization of the machines and metrics of capture. It is a machinic convergence of computation, finance, and value-capture that only increases the efficiency of machines, their knowledge: the knowledge and capacity sedimented into and as fixed capital. With the algorithm, with AI, “computational capital” means that almost all social activity is ultimately wagered in relation to an ambient calculus of value that most, if not all, planetary denizens are forced to game from their statistically overdetermined, algorithmically striated, informatically encoded locales. The world computer: “Because you are x, you might become y.” “Computational racial capital” means that the codification of social difference has become an increasingly central part of the strategies of value capture practiced by capital-media: ways of discounting folks by means of representations that look like nation, gender, or race, read like jurisprudence, military strategy, and ontology, watch like reality TV, and feel like everything from right and objectivity to microaggression and murder—depending upon which side of the risk profile you’re on. Racialization is an ongoing process of coding and recoding, while “race” and racism continually morph to create a volatility with read-write ontologies that can be profitably harvested. Discounted by the regimes of representation and truth that are imposed by financial calculus, we ply from within our tranches the informatic space of screened images and processed worlds seeking a green new deal and or a red and green revolution for our attention, aspiration, dreams—our creativity, our work. Where once “liberals” could defend technological neutrality while harvesting our pain, the cat is out of the bag. Anyone who claims that technology is neutral can today easily be recognized as a fascist