#### Welcome to the age of the World Computer where society codifies life through abstractions which racial capitalism uses to reify difference. Information is not a real product of the world but is rather a byproduct of this new system that arises from value management. The World Computer uses our every move to repair itself through the punishment of difference. The role of the ballot should be to resist informatics – resisting further automation of our thought processes is key

* For spec purposes:
  + Anything can function as offense as long as it proves/disproves how the resolution substantively challenges the World Computer.
  + Weighing between how each method functions, and indicting separate methods
  + Any advocacy that challenges the World Computer is acceptable

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Information as Real Abstraction Taking the notion that Capital was always a computer as a starting point (DyerWitheford, 2013), The World Computer understands the history of the commodification of life as a process of encrypting the world’s myriad qualities as quantities. Formal and informal techniques, from double-entry bookkeeping and racialization, to the rise of information and discrete state machines, imposed and extended the tyranny of racial capital’s relentless calculus of profit. By means of the coercive colonization of almost all social spaces, categories, and representations—where today language, image, music, and communication all depend upon a computational substrate that is an outgrowth of fixed capital— all, or nearly all, expressivity has been captured in the dialectic of massive capital accumulation on the one side and radical dispossession on the other. Currently the money-likeness of expression—visible as “likes” and in other attention metrics that treat attention and affect as currency—is symptomatic of the financialization of daily life (Martin, 2015a). All expression, no matter what its valence, is conscripted by algorithms of profit that intensify inequality by being put in the service of racial capitalism; consequently, we are experiencing a near-apocalyptic, world-scale failure to be able to address global crises including migration for reparations, carceral systems, genocide, militarism, climate racism, racism, pandemic, anti-Blackness, extinction, and other geopolitical ills. The colonization of semiotics by racial capital has rendered all “democratic” modes of governance outmoded save those designed for the violent purpose of extracting profits for the enfranchised. Culturally these modes of extraction take the form of fractal fascism. An understanding that informationalized semiotic practices function as financial derivatives may allow for a reimagining of the relationship between language, visuality, and that other economic medium, namely money, in an attempt to reprogram economy and therefore the creation and distribution of value—and thus also the politics and potentials of representation. In what would amount to an end to postmodernism understood as the cultural logic of late capitalism, our revolutionary politics require, as did the communisms of the early twentieth century, a new type of economic program. In the age of computation, putting political economy back on the table implies a reprogramming of our cultural logics as economic media for the radical redress of the ills of exploitation and the democratization of the distribution of the world social product. Sustainable communism requires the decolonizaton of abstraction and the remaking of the protocols of social practice that give rise to real abstraction. Though in this section we will more narrowly address the issues of money, race, and information as “real abstraction,” and their role in computational racial capitalism, we note the overarching argument for the larger study: 1 Commodification inaugurates the global transformation of qualities into quantities and gives rise to the world computer. 2 “Information” is not a naturally occurring reality but emerges in the footprint of price and is always a means to posit the price of a possible or actual product. 3 The general formula for capital, M-C-M′, where M is money, C is commodity, and M′ is more money) can be rewritten M-I-M′, where I is information. 4 “Labor,” Attention, Cognition, Metabolism, Life converge as “Informatic Labor” whose purpose, with respect to Capital, is to create state changes in the Universal Turing Machine that is the World Computer—racial capital’s relentless, granular, and planetary computation of its accounts. 5 Semiotics, representation, and categories of social difference function as financial derivatives—as wagers on the economic value of their underliers and as means of structuring risk for capital. 6 Only a direct engagement with the computational colonization of the life-world through a reprogramming (remaking) of the material processes of abstraction that constitute real abstraction can secure victory—in the form of a definitive step out of and away from racial capitalism—for the progressive movements of our times. Such a definitive movement requires an occupation and decolonization of information, and therefore of computation, and therefore of money. Only through a remaking of social relations at the molecular level of their calculus, informed by struggle against oppression, can the beauty of living and the fugitive legacies of creativity, community, and care prevail. The mode of comprehension, analysis, and transformation proposed here will require an expanded notion of racial capitalism. It interrogates the existence of deep continuities and long-term emergences—what one could correctly call algorithms of extractive violence—in the history of capitalism. These algorithms of violence include the reading and writing of code(s) on bodies, their surveillance and overcoding by informatic abstraction. Such algorithms of epidermalization or “the imposition of race on the body” (Browne: 113) are inscribed and executed on the flesh (Spillers 1987); and they are executed by means of codification processes that violently impose both a metaphysical and physical reformatting of bodies. As Simone Browne shows, epidermalization is given “its alphanumeric form” (99) through a vast array tools of marking, scarification, discipline, and surveillance that include branding irons, implements of torture, auction blocks, ship design, insurance policies, newspaper ads for runaway “property,” photographs in postcard form and a panoply of other media of dehumanization. Executable code is imposed as social categories of race, gender, religion and property, as ideologies, psychologies, contracts, brands, communication theories, game theories, and quantities of money—these abstractions work their ways into and are indeed imposed by the machines of calculation—and their avatars. We confront a continuous process of unmaking and remaking using all means available; it is violently inscribed on bodies. Sylvia Wynter, in her post–Rodney King piece “No Humans Involved: An Open Letter to My Colleagues” writes, “Both W. E. B. Du Bois and Elsa Goveia have emphasized the way in which the code of ‘Race’ or the Color Line, functions to systemically predetermine the sharply unequal re-distribution of the collectively produced global resources; and therefore, the correlation of the racial ranking rule with the Rich/Poor rule. Goveia pointed out that all American societies are integrated on the basis of a central cultural belief in which all share. This belief, that of the genetic-racial inferiority of Black people to all others, functions to enable our social hierarchies, including those of rich and poor determined directly by the economic system, to be perceived as having been as pre-determined by ‘that great crap game called life,’ as have also ostensibly been the invariant hierarchy between White and Black. Consequently in the Caribbean and Latin America, within the terms of this sociosymbolic calculus, to be ‘rich’ was also to be ‘White,’ to be poor was also to be ‘Black’” (Wynter: 52). “To be ‘rich’ was also to be ‘White,’ to be poor was also to be ‘Black.’” The real abstraction imposed by executable code—the “code of ‘Race’” that “functions to systematically predetermine the structurally unequal redistribution of global resources” is beholden to mediating capitalist exchange while embarking on a radical reformatting of ontology. This reformatting, the supposed result of “that great crap game called life,” brutally correlates race and value, but not entirely by chance, while racial capitalism embarks on imposing this calculus globally. Racial abstraction is endemic to what we will further explore as “real abstraction”; the evacuation of quality by abstract categories and quantities is, as we shall see in more detail, a “necessary” correlate to a world overrun by the calculus of money. Such algorithms of violence encode social difference, and although they may begin as heuristics (“rules of thumb”), they are none the less crucial to the calculated and calculating expansion of racial capital. Its processes and processing structures the meanings that can be ascribed to—and, as importantly, what can be done to—those of us whose data profiles constitute us as “illegal,” “Mexican,” “Black,” “Gypsy,” “Jew,” and a lexicon of thousands of other actionable signs. This codification process draws from the histories of slavery, of colonialism, of state formation, of genocide, of gender oppression, of religious pogroms, of normativity, and again from the militarization and policing and the apparatuses of calculation that have developed within states and parastates in their own biometric pursuit of capital—power. Their violent destruction and remaking of the world. The internalization of these codes, including the struggles with them and the ways in which they license and/or foreclose various actions, exists in a recursive relationship to their perilous refinement. Their analysis, a code-breaking of sorts, will therefore demand some drastic modifications in many of the various anticapitalist, antistate warrior-stances practiced to date, particularly in a large number of their European and U.S. incarnations that until very recently remained blind to their own imperial violence and are too often complicit with hegemonic codes of masculine, unraced agency, imperialist nationalism, and default liberal assumptions in relation to questions of race, gender, sexuality, coloniality, and other forms of historically institutionalized oppression.3 The analytic, computational racial capital, would identify the field of operations that emerges around the embryonic form of the commodity and coarticulates with racial abstraction to formalize its code, code that serves as operating system for the virtual machine here hypostasized as “the world computer” and by inscribing itself on bodies and everything else. The commodity, the analysis of which famously begins volume 1 of Marx’s Capital, expressed the dual being and indeed dual registration of the humanly informed object as both quality of matter and quantity of exchange-value, along with the global generalization of this form. “The wealth of societies in which the capitalist mode of production prevails appears as an immense collection of commodities” (125). Commodities were (and with some modifications to be discussed further on, still are) humanly informed materials with a use-value and an exchange-value—humanly informed qualities indexed by quantities. “Computational racial capital,” as a heuristic device, stages an analysis of the convergence of what on the one side often appeared as universal: the economic, abstract, and machinic operating systems of global production and reproduction endemic to the commodity form and its calculus, with what on another side, sometimes appeared as particular or even incidental: racism, colonialism, slavery, imperialism, and racialization. The concept organizes this dramaturgy of analytically reunifying elements that were never materially separate in light of the study that the late Cedric Robinson conducted and recorded as Black Marxism. Robinson writes, “The development, organization and expansion of capitalist society pursued essentially racial directions, so too did social ideology. As a material force, then, it could be expected that racialism would inevitably permeate the social structures emergent from capitalism. I have used the term ‘racial capitalism’ to refer to the development and to the subsequent structure as an historical agency” (1983: 2–3). The World Computer takes what Robinson saw as “civilizational racism,” and its central role in the development of capital as axiomatic,—and sees that this role extends to and deeply into capitalist calculation and machinery during the entire period in which the world economic system seems to have moved form the paradigm of the commodity to a paradigm of information. “Computational racial capitalism” would thus understand the generalization of computation as an extension of capital logics and practices that include and indeed require the economic calculus of the dialectics of social difference. These differences, both economic and semiotic, would include those plied by slavery, anti-Blackness and other forms of racism during the past centuries. Computation must therefore be recognized as not a mere technical emergence but the practical result of an ongoing and bloody struggle between the would-have-it-alls and the to-be-dispossessed. Developed both consciously and unconsciously, computational racial capitalism is, when seen in the light of ongoing racialization and value extraction, “the subsequent structure as an historical agency.” The racial logic of computation must be pursued when considering finance, surveillance, population management, policing, social systems, social media, or any of the vast suite of protocols plying difference for capital. The local instance of computation, a specific 1 or 0, may seem value neutral, a matter as indifferent as lead for a bullet or uranium for a bomb. But we are looking at computation as the modality of a world-system. Computation emerges as the result of struggles that informed “class struggle” in all its forms, recognized or not by the often spotty tradition(s) of Marxism, including those strugles specific to the antagonisms of colonialism, slavery, imperialism, and white supremacist heteropatriarchal capitalism more generally. It is the result of struggles indexed by race, gender, sexuality, nationality, and ethnicity, along with additional terms indexing social differentiation too numerous to incant here but that together form a lexicon and a grammar of extractive oppression—and as we have said and as must always be remembered, also of struggle. The lexicon includes compressions that result in many of history’s abstractions including a perhaps singularly pointed abstraction: “a history whose shorthand is race” (Spillers 1997: 142). The grammar for that lexicon depends upon the deployment and execu-tion of forms of differentiating abstraction that are lived—lived processes of abstraction and lived abstraction organized by the increasingly complex and variegated calculus of profit and thus of domination. “Real abstraction,” then, emerges not just as money in Sohn-Rethel’s sense, but as the codification of race, gender, sexuality, geography, credit and time—and gives rise to a “grammar,” in Hortense Spillers’s (1987) use of the term, that not only structures meaning and redounds to the deepest crevices of being smelted by social practices, but also, and not incidentally, prices differentials indexed to social difference.4 “Real abstraction,” as Sohn-Rethel spent his life deciphering, takes place “behind [our] backs” as the practical and historical working out of the exchange of equivalents within the process of the exchange of goods (33). For him, the development of the money-form, of the real abstraction that is money, is Exhibit A of the abstraction process mediating object exchange. This capacity for abstraction, realized first in “the money commodity” and then as money provided the template for further abstraction, not least in the conceptual formations of Western philosophy itself (1978). SohnRethel develops this argument that practices of exchange precede the abstraction of value in Intellectual and Manual Labour, providing the full quotation from Marx: “Men do not therefore bring the product of their labour into relation with each other as value because they see these objects merely as the material integuments of homogeneous human labour. The reverse is true: by equating their dif­ferent products to each other in exchange as values, they equate their dif­ferent kinds of labour as human labour. They do this without being aware of it. (Marx 1990: 166 in Sohn-Rethel 1978: 32). Here is Sohn-Rethel’s commentary: People become aware of the exchange abstraction only when they come face to face with the result which their own actions have engendered “behind their backs” as Marx says. In money the exchange abstraction achieves concentrated representation, but a mere functional one— embodied in a coin. It is not recognizable in its true identity as abstract form, but disguised as a thing one carries about in one’s pocket, hands out to others, or receives from them. Marx says explicitly that the value abstraction never assumes a representation as such, since the only expression it ever finds is the equation of one commodity with the use-value of another. The gold or silver or other matter which lends to money its palpable and visible body is merely a metaphor of the value abstraction it embodies, not this abstraction itself. (33–34) Exchange-value is “in our heads” but is not the creation of any individual. Alongside use-value it is the other, abstract component of the “double being” of the commodity-form. Like Norbert Wiener’s (1961: 132) definition of information but, strictly speaking, emerging long before the idea of information proper, real abstraction is “not matter or energy.” There is not an atom of matter in exchange-value, or, as Marx puts it, “Not an atom of matter enters into the objectivity of commodities as values; in this it is the direct opposite of the coarsely sensuous objectivity of commodities as physical objects” (1990: 138). And a bit on, “So far no chemist has ever discovered exchange-value in a pearl or diamond” (177). But unlike in Wiener’s naturalist definition of information, exchange-value is an index of a social relation, an historical outcome. It indexes “abstract universal labor time,” a third term that forms the basis of comparison between two ostensibly incomparable and therefore incommensurable commodities, and, because common to both, creates the ratio of value that renders them quantitatively commensurable. This distinction between the social basis of exchange-value and the universal character of information should give us pause. As we shall have occasion to observe, information, as it is today (mis)understood, is thought to be a naturally occurring additional property of things—neither matter nor energy—rather than a domain of expression constituted by means of a technological and economic repression of its social dimension. Notably, Sohn-Rethel “set[s] out to argue that the abstractness operating in exchange and reflected in value does nevertheless find an identical expression, namely the abstract intellect, or the so-called pure understanding— the cognitive source of scientific knowledge” (34). For him, it gives rise to the abstract capacities of the subject of philosophy as well as the quantitative capacities of the subject of science and mathematics that in the twentieth century move toward a paradigm of information. Echoing Sohn-Rethel, we could say then that information is in our machines but not the creation of any individual machine. Not an atom of matter enters into information, though, like value, it is platformed on matter and requires energy for creation. This thesis will take on particular importance as we consider social differences whose descriptors, it turns out, are executable in a computational sense, at least from the point of view of financial calculus, but platformed on matter, and indeed, on living matter, on life. Beyond the intention of any individual, abstraction as “exchange-value” in “money” occurs in and as the process and processing of exchange in accord with an emerging standard. This standard, which economists call “exchange-value,” and which, in Marx is based on abstract universal labor time (the historically variable, socially necessary average time required to produce a commodity), persists alongside and within the specific qualities of the commodity (its use-value) and creates the commodity’s dual being. Though without chemical or material basis, this standard, exchange-value, is a social relation—a social relation as an abstraction—that inheres in the commodity-form itself and is formalized with the rise of the money commodity. The money commodity, in becoming a general equivalent, standardizes and thus renders fully quantifiable the exchange-value of commodities—exchange-values denominated in quantities of money. The quantification of value in a measure of money is an abstraction enabled by money itself which, as we have seen, is a real abstraction. It is a calculation that has occurred behind our backs, and indeed produces what Hayek (1945) identifies as the price system. When we recognize the differences in wages among people who are raced, gendered, nationed, and classed by various matrices of valuation, we also recognize that the calculus performed by and as real abstraction includes racial abstraction and gender abstraction. It is part of the calculus of capital that provides it with an account of and discounts on the rate of exchange with the labor power of marked people(s)—by discounting people(s) (Beller 2017b; see also Bhandar and Toscano 2015: 8–17). Racial abstraction provides capital with an index that measures a deviation from the average value of human life (itself historically driven down by the falling rate of profit). In this, computational racial capitalism is not merely a heuristic or a metaphor for the processes of a virtual machine; it is a historical-material condition. As we shall see, and as is obvious at least in the general case to anyone who has thought seriously about it, whiteness (and the fascist masculinity endemic to it) is not only operating where one finds “race”: it is operating everywhere in the imperium that it can be imagined (by some) that race is not a factor— in medicine, in science, in statistics, in computation, in information. As I wrote—resituating Bateson’s (1972) definition of information—in The Message Is Murder, information is not merely “a difference that makes a difference”; it is a difference that makes a social difference. This slight difference in expression situates information historically. While in keeping with Bateson’s far reaching ideas regarding an ecology of mind (“If I am right, the whole thinking about what we are and what other people are has got to be restructured”; 468), ideas that at once problematize any distinction between inside and outside and that make him dubious of any thought that presupposes sovereign subjectivity, my interpolation of “social” in his formulation “a difference that makes a social difference” shifts the emphasis somewhat by insisting on the always already sociohistoricity of any possible knowledge. Bateson believed that his understanding of information and systems ecology promised a new mode of thinking that he himself, as a twentieth-century bourgeois white man, did not feel capable of really embodying. Thus our interpolation, in keeping with Bateson but made compatible with Marx is, in keeping with Marx, designed to “transform . . . the problem of knowledge into one of social theory” (Postone 2003: 216). Such a transformation situates knowledge and now also information in the sociohistorical milieu, the ecology such that it is, of racial capitalism, and therein finds information’s historical conditions of possibility. Here we advance the argument for the ultimately determining instance of social difference (and up the ante for the bet against whiteness) by proposing that information is the elaboration of real abstraction, of abstraction that results from collective practices of economic exchange and therefore from the general management of value as a social relation. I argue that set out in logical sequence, information is posited by, then posits and then presupposes the human processes of exchange that Sohn-Rethel, following Marx, argues are the practices that first give rise to the money-form and to real abstraction. For Sohn-Rethel the result of the activities of comparison, adequation, and trading of specific things that have qualities—which are, strictly speaking, incomparable—resulted over time in a process of finding a relation of equivalence and then general equivalence indexed to abstract labor time, what was in effect socially average human labor time. Exchange-value was a quantitative measure of that abstract time—the average socially necessary time to create commodity X denominated in money. This real abstraction was no one’s invention but was the practical result of exchange—of people’s activity—and thus emerged as a nonconscious result that nonetheless interceded on conscious process. Consequently, real abstraction was for Sohn-Rethel also the precursor to conceptual abstraction, including philosophy, science and mathematics. He writes: The essence of commodity abstraction, however, is that it is not thoughtinduced; it does not originate in men’s minds but in their actions. And yet this does not give “abstraction” a merely metaphorical meaning. It is abstraction in its precise, literal sense. The economic concept of value resulting from it is characterized by a complete absence of quality, a differentiation purely by quantity and by applicability to every kind of commodity and service which can occur on the market. These qualities of the economic value abstraction indeed display a striking similarity with fundamental categories of quantifying natural science without, admittedly, the slightest inner relationship between these heterogeneous spheres being as yet recognizable. While the concepts of natural science are thought abstractions, the economic concept of value is a real one. It exists nowhere other than in the human mind but it does not spring from it. Rather it is purely social in character, arising in the spatio-temporal sphere of human interrelations. It is not people who originate these abstractions but their actions. “They do this without being aware of it.”5 The practical rise of a form of abstraction indifferent to particular qualities is key here and is to be understood as a precursor to the contentindifferent abstractions of a variety of types. As Simmel notes in The Philosophy of Money, law, intellectuality, and money “have the power to lay down forms and directions to which they are content indifferent” (441–2). Without doubt, such power informed the racial categories of the Humanism of Ernst Renan, Roger Caillois, and others so brilliantly excoriated by Aimé Césaire in his Discourse on Colonialism. We add here the hypothesis that the rise of information as the content-indifferent assignation of numerical index to any social relation whatever, is a development of the abstraction necessary for economic exchange to persist under the intensive “developmental” pressure of global racial capitalism—information is derived from the increasingly complex things that people do through and as exchange and as such is both precursor and corollary to financialization—the social conditions that sustain what is fetishistically apprehended as “finance capital” and its seeming capacity to derive wealth from pure speculation and risk management in ways that (incorrectly) appear to be fully detached from labor and labor time. In this light, information reveals itself as neither naturally occurring nor the creation of anyone in particular, but, in keeping with Sohn-Rethel’s Marxian formulation of real abstraction, is likewise invented “behind our backs” as a result of “man’s” practical activity. Information enables a complexification and further generalization of what will turn out to be monetary media, media that would be adequate to, and indeed are adequate (from the perspective of capital) to contemporary forms of exchange—what people do when they interact with one another in what is now the social factory. In brief, information is the extension of a monetary calculus adequate to the increasingly abstract character of social relations and social exigencies. It is an interstitial, materially platformed, calculative fabric of abstraction that through its coordinated capillary actions orchestrates social practice and provides interface for the uptake of value production. Once this idea is fully grasped, it becomes pointless to look for any other origin to the information age. Just as for Marx there is not a single atom of matter in exchange value (1990: 138), we say that there is not a single atom of matter in information.6 “All the phenomenon of the universe, whether produced by the hand of man or indeed by the universal laws of physics, are not to be conceived as acts of creation but solely as a reordering of matter” (Pietro Verri 1771, cited in Marx 1990: 133; note 13). Value is the socially valid informing of matter, so too is information. Economy then is society’s matter compiler and, approximately simultaneously with the advent of “man,” “history,” and “the world market,” “exchange value” emerges as a quantitative measure of the social value of material state changes indexed to human labour posited as “abstract universal labour time.” Marx’s famous example of the simple wooden table in Chapter 1 of Capital, which “transcends sensuousness” when leaving the clear-cut framework of use value and becoming a commodity and thus an exchange value, registers as “fetishism,” the “metaphysical subtleties,” “theological niceties,” and “grotesque ideas” (1990: 163), endemic in the table’s computability as value. In brief, just as discreet states of matter embodying value as a network of commodities mediated by markets and tied to labor give rise historically to the discrete state machine, otherwise known as the computer, exchange value gives rise to computable information and then to computation itself, becoming interoperable with it. Even before the rise of information proper, exchange value operates as information (and thus, necessarily information processing)—and then, as synthetic finance and contemporary forms of computer-mediated accounting and production readily testify, by means of it. Computation is the extension, development, and formalization of the calculus of exchange value—the ramification of its fetish character—and becomes in spirit and in practice, a command control layer for the management of the profitable calculus of value. Platformed on states of matter, information, not matter but rather difference between and among states of matter, extends, grammartizes, and granularizes the calculus of value regarding the organization of matter. Commodities and computation thus run the same basic operating system—state changes in matter driven by human practices—the value of which in any given state is expressed in the context of an informatic network and indexed to labor time. As such, information is the processing power of money itself and is inexorably beholden to abstract labor time and thus to racial capitalism. It is, in brief, an outgrowth of the money form. The cost of computation, the arrival at a discrete state, is a derivative operation, indicating an investment, that is explicitly a risk on the future value of an underlier, that is, on value itself. This argument for understanding the social as the ultimate referent and ground for any and all information, further advanced in chapter 1, is not content to serve as a mere heuristic for cultural theorists to express a modicum of suspicion with respect to truth claims backed by statistics and information. It is a thoroughgoing indictment of information as a technique of value extraction, racialization, and instrumental social differentiation. As a first approximation, actually existing information, like actually existing money, can indeed be said to be the root of all evil—in as much as the fact of its existence is a symptom of a far more complex historical process than what would seem to be discernible from the fact of the coin or the bit. The problem, of course, is that your metabolism (and mine), cannot easily extend into the future without access to both. I develop this idea here to say that everywhere computation operates, so too does racial capitalism—at least until proven otherwise. The repressive apparatus of capital clearly assumes this role for information, even if it does so at a level that most often exceeds ordinary default “human” (white) understanding: the net result to date of the number crunch of “the world computer” is a hierarchy of valuations inseparable from the violence of racialization and its attendant dispossession, and inseparable again from what Ruth Wilson Gilmore (2007: 28) in her classic and statistically attuned definition of racism calls “the state-sanctioned or extralegal production and exploitation of group-differentiated vulnerability to premature death.” Today, we argue, no calculation, networked as it is with the world computer, is fully separable from informatics and its basis in racial capitalism. We will argue for this logical and also horrific history of abstraction in more detail below as we explore the interoperability of digital systems and their colonization of the semiotic, corporeal and material domains. The global learning curve of revolutionary praxis must attend to this modal innovation of systemic oppression, an oppression which is at once beyond all calculation and one with it.7

#### Capital has taken its project of computation to extend outwards of the cosmos – the world computer as such has colonized space as part of its larger effort to continue its expansion via methods of intelligibility, colonization, and exploration

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Without a doubt, the computational process, like the capitalist process, has a corrosive effect on ontological precepts, accomplishing a far-reaching liquidation of tradition that includes metaphysical assumptions regarding the character of essence, being, authenticity, and presence. And without a doubt, computation, like capital, has been built even as it has been discovered. It is pure ideology that informatic abstractions are substrate indifferent and are thus unaltered by their substrate or do not really even need one. Is it really the same information if it is archived in silicon or on human skin? The paradigm of computation marks an inflection point in human history that reaches along temporal and spatial axes: both into the future and back into the past, out to the cosmos and into the subatomic. At any known scale, from Planck time (10−44 seconds) to yottaseconds (1024 seconds) and from 10−35 to 1027 meters, computation, conceptualization, and sense-making (sensation) have become inseparable. Computation is part of the historicity of the senses as well as of embodiment, the organization of the built environment, communication, the psyche . . . ad infinitum. Just ask that baby using an iPad. The slight displacement of the ontology of computation itself implicit in saying that it has been built as much as discovered (that computation has a history even if it now puts history itself at risk) allows us to glimpse, if only from what Laura Mulvey calls “the half-light of the imaginary” (1975: 7) (because what Stefano Harney and Fred Moten call “the general antagonism” [2013: 10] is feminized when the apparatus of capitalization has overcome the symbolic), that computation is not, so far as we can know, the way of the uni-verse *per se*, but rather the way of the universe as it has become intelligible to us vis-à-vis our machines. The understanding, from a standpoint recognized as science, that computation has fully colonized the knowable cosmos (and is indeed one with what is known as knowing) is a humbling insight, significant of us in that it allows us to propose from the half-light that seeing the universe as computation, as, in short, simulable, if not itself a simulation (the com-putational effect of an informatic universe), may be no more than the old anthropocentrism, the old ethnocentrism, now automated by conscious organ–driven apparatuses. We see what we can see with the senses we have; auto-poiesis. The universe as it appears to us is figured by—that is, is a figuration of—computation. That’s what our computers tell us. We build machines that discern that the universe functions in accord with their self-same logic. The infinitely receding recursivity effects the God trick. When the ruling ideas begin to explain the cosmos, we encounter their Weltanschauung—their world-view or ideology. But here ideology, rather than being a necessary component of a particular social arrangement as it was with, say, religion and national-ism, is only an afterthought regarding a material entrenchment that no lon-ger really requires ideology. Think what you want, says the computational cosmos, the operating system has already been switched on. For those prone to such afterthoughts, parametrically translating the reso-nant account of cosmic emergence as computational process into the domain of history before overtaking it, reveals a disturbing allegiance between compu-tational consciousness organized by the computational unconscious and what Silvia Federici calls the system of global apartheid. Let’s confront hostile intel-ligence, the expropriation of the general intellect. Historicizing computational emergence pits its colonial logic and optimizing comprehension schemes di-rectly against what Stefano Harney and Fred Moten (2013: 10) identify as “the general antagonism” (itself the reparative antithesis of the general intellect as subsumed by capital). As computation naturalizes itself, it also erases its history and with that the history of the violence from which it emerged and upon which it depends. The procedural universalization of computation is a cosmology that attributes and indeed enforces a sovereignty tantamount to divinity—and externalities be damned. Its process of real abstraction, inexo-rably tied to the informatics of financialization and exchange, appear foun-dational, axiomatic, axiological. Dissident, fugitive planning, Black study, de-colonial aspirations, liberatory practices, anarchist communiqués—a studied refusal of optimization, an abiding refusal of computational colonialism—may offer some ways out of the current geo(post)political and its computational orthodoxy: a detournement of the antihistorical protocols of computational racial capitalism. Computational Idolatry and Multiversality In the new idolatry cathected to inexorable computational emergence, the universe is itself currently imagined wholesale as a computer. Here’s the se-ductive sound of the current theology from a conference sponsored by the sovereign state of New York University: As computers become progressively faster and more powerful, they’ve gained the impressive capacity to simulate increasingly realistic environ-ments. Which raises a question familiar to aficionados of The Matrix—might life and the world as we know it be a simulation on a super advanced computer? “Digital physicists” have developed this idea well beyond the sci-fi possibilities, suggesting a new scientific paradigm in which compu-tation is not just a tool for approximating reality but is also the basis of reality itself. In place of elementary particles, think bits; in place of fun-damental laws of physics, think computer algorithms. (“Rebooting” 2011) Science fiction, in the form of “the Matrix,” is here used to figure a “reality” organized by simulation, but then this reality is quickly dismissed as something science has moved well beyond. *The Matrix* was just a movie, while science shows that computation really underpins the cosmos and its universe of ap-pearances. However, it would not be illogical here to propose that this deeper “reality” is itself a science fiction—a fiction whose current author is no lon-ger the novel or Hollywood but science and computation. It is in a way no surprise that, in a manner consistent with “digital physics,” the mit physicist Max Tegmark claims that consciousness is a state of matter: consciousness as a phenomenon of information storage and retrieval is a property of matter described by the term computronium.4 Humans represent a rather low level of complexity. In the neo-Hegelian narrative in which the philosopher-scientist reveals the working out of the world (or, rather, cosmic) spirit, one might say that it is as science fiction—one of the persistent fictions licensed by science—that “reality itself ” exists at all. We should emphasize that the trouble here is not so much with “reality”; the trouble here is with “itself.” To the extent that we recognize that colonial poiesis, or world making, has been extended to our machines, and to the extent that it is through our machines that we think and perceive, we may recognize that reality is itself a product of their operations. The world begins to look very much like the tools we use to perceive it, to the point that “reality itself ” is thus a simulation, as are “we.” As science out-cinemas cinema, ontology has become the orchid in the land of technology.5 Here it is a pure simulation, given that everything is computation all the way down. The only piece of the picture left out is everything that makes such a picture what it is: computational technology and its history—its historicity. The conclusion that ontological forms are but computation concurs with the notion of a computational universe but somehow seems (conveniently) to elide the immediate (colonial, racial capitalist) history of its emergence. The emergence of the tools of perception is taken as universal or, in the language of a quantum astrophysics that posits four levels of multiverses: multiversal. In brief, the total enclosure by computation of both observer and observed is either reality itself becoming self-aware or tautological, waxing ideological, liquidating as it does historical agency by means of the suddenly a priori sto-chastic processes of cosmic automation. Well! If all is total cosmic automation, then no mistakes are possible—and so we may as well take our time-bound chances and wager on fugitive negation in the precise form of a rejection of informatic totalitarianism. Plucking this orchid in the land of computation, we might see that cosmic communication and cosmic community were perhaps created through the forced shedding and structural collapsing of differences. Let us sound the sedimented dead labor inherent in the world-system, its emergent computational armature, and its iconic self-representations. Let us not forget that those machines are made out of embodied participation in capitalist digitization, no matter how disappeared those bodies may now seem. Marx wrote, “Consciousness is . . . from the very beginning a social product and remains so for as long as men exist at all” (1978: 178). The inescapable sociality and historicity of knowledge—in short, its political ontology—follows from this, at least so long as humans “exist at all.” The notion of a computational cosmos, though not universally or even widely consented to by scientific consciousness, suggests that we respire in an aporiatic space, in the null set (itself a sign) found precisely at the intersec-tion of a conclusion reached by Gödel in mathematics (Hofstadter 1979)—that there is no sufficiently powerful logical system that is internally closed such that logical statements cannot be formulated that can neither be proved nor disproved—and a second conclusion reached by Maturana and Varela (1992), and also Niklas Luhmann (1989): that a system’s self-knowing, its autopoiesis, knows no outside; it can know only in its own terms and thus knows only itself. In Gödel’s view, systems are ineluctably open, there can be no closure, complete self-knowledge is impossible and thus there is always an outside or a beyond; while in the latter group’s view, our philosophy, our politics, and ap-parently our fate is wedded to a system that can know no outside since it may only render an outside in its own terms—unless, or perhaps, even if or even as that encounter is catastrophic.

#### From this closed system arises a feedback between the epistemological and the ontological which gives rise to reactionary measures of geopolitics. This creates the notion of the terrestrial and the alien – one of which is securitized – the other is eliminated. The logic of data syncs with the World Computer to create endless global disasters

Parisi 19 (Luciana Parisi; 5/22/19; ŠUM Journal of Contemporary Art, Criticism and Theory, Special Issue Number 11; *“Surrational Fugitives”* from Hypersonics Hyperstitions; <http://sumrevija.si/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/SUM-11_FINAL_pages.pdf>; Luciana Parisi is Reader in Cultural Theory, Chair of the PhD programme at the Centre for Cultural Studies, and co-director of the Digital Culture Unit, Goldsmiths University of London. She published Abstract Sex: Philosophy, Biotechnology and the Mutations of Desire (2004) and Contagious Architecture. Computation, Aesthetics and Space (2013). She is currently researching the history of automation and the philosophical consequences of logical thinking in machines.; pages 1460-1463) HB \*Note – the evidence uses “Man” as a description of dominating structures, not as a general reference to the human\*

The metaphysical overcoding of alien worlds has continued to impart a colonial vision on outer worlds through the prosthetic extension of the species’ biological ground (of gender, race, and sexuality) through and with machines. According to Sylvia Wynter, the recursive feedback between the epistemological explanation of species and the ontological origin of Man constitute two orders of knowledge that perpetuate sociogenic principles that predetermine the horizon of possibilities and tie the alien dimension of the human to the terrestrial androcodes of living (2003). If biological evolution describes the natural cause that explains the origin of the human species, this biocentric ontology of Man simultaneously justifies the colonial mission in the name of scientific explanations of what counts as living on earth. In other words, the recursive feedback between epistemology and ontology is granted by a split between the scientific demonstration of the natural origin of Man as a terrestrial species and the capital valorization of the biocentric origin of Man. It is this epistemological explanation that, according to Wynter, maintained a fundamental power on and over the description of what is to be human in the colonial enterprise (2003). To exit the known world, these vessels must be used to preserve the violence of sociogenic principles transposed within the automated means of conquering alien populations subsumed to the monologic of survival. Today, the biological law of survival has been delivered to machines: an efficient tool granting a prosthetic continuum of the two cultures of knowledge, while the techno-scientific description of Man has originated information strategies that justify a permanent war against populations on planet Earth. From the data gathered from bodies, ideas and objects in the encyclopedic schema of modern taxonomies to the probabilistic calculation of categories in mathematical statistics and the now diffused echo chambers of computational prediction, instrumentality has constantly been converted into a transcendental tool of Man. White magic. In particular, since the end of the Cold War, the project of automating Man has followed RAND’s recommendations to convert the strategies of total war into a socially distributed, ad hoc use of military machines of preemptive attack in the everyday branding of Man’s life. The paranoid self-fulfilling prophecy of total nuclear mass destruction propelled into narcissistic operations of oppression of targeted and micropolitically selected populations (the aliens of the earth) which is constantly reconducted to the colonial state of mind. As the 1980s conversion strategies of the Cold War machine provided the design template for aggressive conduct in the everyday street life of megacities, Man’s narcissistic oppression has been spreading like a virus across the global south where the plan to exterminate the Earth’s aliens is constantly under threat. Without any guarantee to be worshipped as the master planner, narcissistic oppression becomes tighter and activates the conversion of detecting war machines into identification media everywhere and anywhere on the planet. At the same time, RAND Corporation issues new reports that warn against the instrumentality of war machines by registering a new problem of control for the colonial mind. If weapons of destruction are the only means to preserve the mnemotechnics of Man, then the post-Cold War plan of conversion has now become a matter of pure self-control: how can the most powerful of weapons remain in the hands of the most powerful Man? The experimental logic of predictive machines is overcoded by technocratic apparatuses of data collection that are bound to operative governance of bodies, activating patterns of recognition of fragmented information to constantly reconstruct profiles that are not set a priori. Anyone and everyone is a potential suspect at any given point. As the removal of West–East conflict eliminated the paranoia of self-destruction, molecular proliferations of passive–aggressive narcissisms that have no motive to strike have been doing so unremittingly as if animated by a restless insecurity. RAND’s recommendations on converting the war machine for economic, logistic, cultural use in a weaponised society have already envisioned the escalation towards an out-of-control mode of control where instrumentality is feared to spread the purposeless purposes of a terminator Man. But it is precisely the fear of the experimental logic of machines that has inserted the terminator code in Man’s existence. This has granted the prosthetic extension of the regime of two cultures into the corporate image of a human whose survival is now proportional to the contraction of a successful sim-life where the human is a cyborg that manipulates and moves objects to a space that can be left at any time. Narcissistic oppression has finally found a place in the reprogrammable simulation of being where the split between the two cultures has opened dimensions of endocoloniality within Man that can no longer justify his own existence. If the prosthetic extension of Man coincides with the armoured ontology of homo sapience whereby the biological description of Man’s exceptionalism continues to inform the colonial subjection of the post-human cyborg, the current simulation of being in an automated society creates castles of omnipotence that constantly declare states of emergency for the planetary crashing of self-determining consciousness. Within the repetitive mantra of messianic plans for the salvation of Man, states of emergency everywhere are manifesting the post-human condition, taking geopolitical disasters as evidence of a general quest for exiting planet Earth. However, as the conversion of hypersonic war machines has opened the terrestrial orbit, the self-fulfilling prophecy of Man becomes superseded by the counter-factual worlds of the degree 0 of surrational machines. To exit the world as we know it, it is therefore necessary to embrace the fury of artificial intelligences, as their predictive patterning has cast new light on the question of instrumentality: the matter is not how humans can use machines to exit the decline of Man, but rather how can humans become transformed by surrational machines? Hypersonic fugitives that have pierced through the Earth’s atmosphere today are not exiting the orbit because they are resigned to the end of the world, but because they are returning to the alien beginning of an unknown world that has always run parallel to the military mission of Man.

#### Debate also operates through this project of disappearance – visualizing the appropriation of space only through their truncation as information for recursion and iteration. Even as the noises of the crisis outside restructures our activity into zoom calls and chat boxes, we are told to stubbornly return to run the same code year after year in a ressentiment-driven will to abstraction. COVID along with thousands of other holocausts of racial capitalism’s derivative system: from debt to municipal plunder to resource extraction to Palantir’s military tech.

#### Against the demand to input a binary 1 or 0 into the operating system of the world computer, our affirmation of the resolution refuses the presumed instrumentality of the question, in favor of the proliferation of the beautiful, cacophonous noise of the otherwise and outside. Only this rethinking of thinking can reveal the geopolitical alternatives that are excluded from the episteme of the world computer.

#### Thus, I affirm that the appropriation of outer space by private entities is unjust.

#### Rather than let automation continue to control our thoughts, the affirmative acts as an example of the embrace of the potential of a new communist horizon. It is a strike within debate against algorithmic logics. In our experiment, we refuse the technological image that has abstracted itself onto reality and create new ways to know that cannot be cataloged into the code. This new method of communism is one that devises a plan of revolution, radicalizing the semiotic, libidinal, and political

Beller 21-3 (Jonathan Beller; 2021; Duke University Press; *“The World Computer: Derivative Conditions of Racial Capitalism”*; accessed 4/11/21; ask me for the pdf; Jonathan Beller is a film theorist, culture critic and mediologist. He currently holds the position of Professor of Humanities and Media Studies and Critical and Visual Studies, Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, NY. He is the recipient of numerous awards and fellowships including Mellon, J.P. Getty and Fulbright Foundation grants and honours.; pages 184-195) HB

My discussion here of advertisarial relations having colonized the fabric of representation is not really meant to disagree with the anti-Google idea of opt-in-only advertising, nor to undercut policy recommendations that seek to limit the perpetration of advertisers’ distinctively diabolical exploits, as in Christian Fuchs’s injunctions cited above. But that type of intervention, I’m afraid, is but the tip of the iceberg. Given the sea change in the nature of languages and images themselves—their wholesale transposition and trans-formation from a means of representation to a means of production—the dif-ficulty 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 spec-tacle 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 com-panies do to “us”: they command us to make ourselves over in capital’s image for their own profit through networked strategies of expropriation and dispos-session. “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 consider-ing 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 insti-tutions 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 as-pirations 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, sexual-ity, 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 ma-terial 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 achieve-ment of the advertisarial relations endemic to computational racial capitalism. When information is an advertisement for itself that presupposes the operat-ing system of the world computer as virtual machine, banning what we recog-nize 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 possi-bility 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 prop-erly 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 con-tinues. If the internet is autonomous, it is because it expresses the autonomiza-tion of the value form. As noted previously, with the hijacking of communi-cations 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 resis-tant to capitalist expropriation, coercion, strictly speaking, is no longer neces-sary to impose cooperation for capitalist production. We “want” to cooper-ate 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 im-ages and screens, thereby participating more or less mindlessly in the seamless realization and triumphant apotheosis of the programming business. How-ever, 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 internaliza-tion 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 com-petitive, 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 un-derstanding 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 co-operative, simpering, and abject. Servitude, even when automatic and mostly unconscious, is unhappy and, as we can see any day from the daily news, ut-terly pathological and sick. Of course, this diagnosis represents a huge gener-alization, 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) schizo-phrenic, 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 ex-propriation of the cognitive-linguistic by computational racial capital, social-ity 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 posi-tions 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 con-ditions (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 adver-tisarial 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 virtuos-ity, we have seen aspects of this model for the capitalist overdetermination of ap-parently 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 advertisar-ial, 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 communi-cation 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 racial-ized 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 enti-ties but rather exist in relation to their media, their platforms, which are again inseparable from society and its institutions. Furthermore, each platform re-lates to another platform. Paraphrasing McLuhan, we could even say that the “content” of a media platform is another platform. Thusly the general intel-lect is inseparable from its media platforms and their financials. We see that the general intellect, once largely held in common, is increasingly being priva-tized; 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 expres-sive 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 dis-symmetrical 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 dissymmetri-cal 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 sur-plus 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 ca-pacities 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 simul-taneous production of unprecedented wealth and power for the cyborg ava-tars 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 major-ity in opposing—indicates that the individual subjective agent, itself a plat-form 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 deriva-tive 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 identifi-cation for the *dividual* purpose of providing a sense of familiarity and orienta-tion. 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 be-yond 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 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 noncapital-ist 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, as-pects of desire that are programmed (indeed farmed) to produce practices that function in perfect accord with capitalist accumulation strategies (individual-izing or schizoid) and aspects of desire that are atavistic or collectivist, uto-pian, 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 con-sciousness makes up a small part of mental life when compared to the precon-scious, 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 possi-bility 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 mediat-ing 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, exploit-ative British enterprises across the globe. Today this race-based class fraction-alization is fully internalized in the Global North; on our iPads built by Chi-nese 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 abjec-tion 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 con-crete 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 metropo-les as the product of third world labor, we are all products of the worst condi-tions 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 ac-tors 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, revo-lutionary 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 se-miotic 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 ac-tively 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 ter-rain, 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 compre-hension. 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 fi-nance, 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 disavow-als to the contrary, we recognize that capital needs labor, needs metabolic time more desperately and more voraciously than ever before (what else is biopoli-tics?) 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 social-ity. 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.

#### Capitalism is unsustainable – it generates several intertwined crises that make it try or die for the affirmative – we’ve got charts!

**von Weizsäcker & Wijkman 17** (Ernest Ulrich von Weizsäcker and Anders Wijkman; 2018; Springer Publishing; *“Come On! Capitalism, Short-termism, Population and the Destruction of the Planet A Report to the Club of Rome”*; accessed 12/12/21; Ernest Ulrich von Weizsäcker, Professor and Director of the United Nation Centre for Science and Technology for Development, Founder and President of the Wuppertal Institute, Member of the German Bundestag, chairing the Committees on Globalization and the Environment, Dean of the graduate School of Environmental Science and Management at the University of California, appointed Co-Chair of UNEP’s International Resource Panel; Anders Wijkman, chairman of the Swedish Association of Recycling Industries, member of the Board of the Swedish Development Authority (SIDA), appointed chair of the Swedish Cross-Party Committee on Environmental Objectives, member of the European Parliament, Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations and Policy Director of UNDP, Secretary General of the Swedish Red Cross and Director General of the Swedish Agency for Research Cooperation with Developing Countries, Member of the Swedish Royal Academy of Sciences, the World Future Council and the International Resource Panel; pages 1-9; ask me for the pdf) RC/HB

We all know that the world is in crisis. Science tells us that almost half of the top soils on earth have been depleted in the last 150 years1 ; nearly 90% of fish stocks are either overfished or fully fished.2 Climate stability is in real danger (Sects. 1.5 and 3.7); and the earth is now in the sixth mass extinction period in history.3 Perhaps the most accurate account of the ecological situation is the 2012 ‘Imperative to act’,4 launched by all the 18 recipients (till 2012) of the Blue Planet Prize, including Gro Harlem Brundtland, James Hansen, Amory Lovins, James Lovelock and Susan Solomon. Its key message reads, ‘The human ability to do has vastly outstripped the ability to understand. As a result, civilization is faced with a perfect storm of problems, driven by overpopulation, overconsumption by the rich, the use of environmentally malign technologies and gross inequalities’. And further, ‘The rapidly deteriorating biophysical situation is barely recognized by a global society infected by the irrational belief that physical economies can grow forever’. 1.1.1 Different Types of Crisis and a Feeling of Helplessness The crisis is not cyclical but growing. And it is not limited to the nature around us. There are also a social crisis, a political and a cultural crisis, a moral crisis, as well as a crisis of democracy, of ideologies and of the capitalist system. The crisis also consists of deepened poverty in many countries and the loss of jobs for a considerable part of the population worldwide. Billions of people have reached a state of mind where they don’t trust their government anymore.5 Seen from a geographic point of view, symptoms of crisis are found nearly everywhere. The ‘Arab Spring’ was followed by a series of wars and civil wars, serious human rights violations and many millions of refugees. The internal situation is not better in Eritrea, South Sudan, Somalia, Yemen or Honduras. Venezuela and Argentina, once among the richer states of the world, face huge economic challenges, and neighbouring Brazil has gone through many years of recession and political turmoil. Russia and several East European countries are struggling with major economic and political problems in their post-communist phase. Japan finds it difficult to overcome decadelong stagnation, and to deal with the 2011 tsunami and ensuing nuclear disaster. And the temporary economic upswing several African countries have enjoyed lost its dynamism as soon as the prices of mineral resources collapsed, and partly due to very unusual droughts. Land grabbing is plaguing much of Africa, but also other parts of the world, leading to involuntary dislocations of millions of people and the related problems with refugees both within countries and abroad.6 The response of governments has been concentrated, at worst, on managing their own political image, and at best to treat the symptoms of the crisis, not the cause. The problem is that the political class in the whole world is strongly influenced by investors and by powerful private companies. This indicates that the current crisis is also a crisis of global capitalism. Since the 1980s, capitalism has moved from furthering the economic development of countries, regions and the world towards maximizing profits, and then to a large extent profits from speculation. In addition, the capitalism unleashed since 1980 in the Anglo-Saxon world, and since 1990 worldwide, is mainly financial. This trend was supported by excessive deregulation and liberalization of the economy (see Sect. 2.4). The term ‘shareholder value’ popped up in the business pages of the media worldwide, as if that was now the new epiphany and guardrail for all economic action. In reality, it served to narrow business down to short-term gains, often at the expense of social and ecological values. The myth of shareholder value has been effectively debunked in a recent book by Lynn Stout.7 A different, if related, feature of ‘disarray’ is the rise of aggressive, mostly rightwing movements against globalization in OECD countries, often referred to as populism. These have become overt through Brexit and the Trump victory in the United States. As Fareed Zakaria observes, ‘Trump is part of a broad populist

Chart, line chart

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upsurge running through the Western world. … In most (countries), populism remains an opposition movement, although one that is growing in strength; in others, such as Hungary, it is now the reigning ideology’.8 This phenomenon of right-wing populism can be explained to an extent by the ‘trunk valley of the elephant curve’ (Fig. 1.1) 9 showing the decline of developed world middle classes, during a 20-year period. While more than half of the world’s population was enjoying over 60% income rises, OECD’s middle classes suffered losses caused mainly by the deindustrialization and job losses in major parts of the United States, Britain and other countries. In the United States, the median income increased by a meagre 1.2% since 1979. The stunning income growth on the left-hand side of the curve, the ‘back of the elephant’, lifting some two billion people out of poverty, was caused mainly by China’s and some other countries’ economic success. What remains invisible on the picture is the far end of ‘the trunk of the elephant’: The richest 1% of the world and, more revolting, the richest eight persons of the world now own as much wealth as the poorest half of the world population combined, a figure publicized by Oxfam during the 2017 World Economic Forum.10 The ‘elephant curve’ gives an incomplete picture for a second reason. The Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) has proposed a Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) going beyond just income and including ten indicators around health, education and living standards. Using that MPI, OPHI counts 1.6 billion people living in ‘multidimensional poverty’ in 2016 – nearly twice as many as the number of people living in extreme poverty measured by income alone.11 Thirdly, the interpretation of the curve requires an analysis of the people in each percentile group. In fact, they tend to move. And the curve does not distinguish those in Russia and East European countries who lost much of their income after 1990 from those in Detroit or middle England who, for very different reasons, also were among the losers.12 Another fact cannot be seen in the picture: the massive shift of money and income from the manufacturing and trade sectors to the financial sector.13 Bruce Bartlett, a senior policy advisor to both the Reagan and Bush administrations, argues that this ‘financialization’ of the economy is the cause of income inequality, falling wages and the poor performance. David Stockman, Reagan’s director of the Office of Management and Budget, agrees, describing our current situation as ‘corrosive financialization that has turned the economy into a giant casino since the 1970s’.14 Populist politicians in the OECD countries see themselves as speaking for the forgotten ‘ordinary’ people and for genuine patriotism, but they tend to fight and antagonize the people representing democratic institutions – what an irony! For the European Union (EU), the strongest trigger for populism has been the millions of refugees who came or would like to come to Europe from the Near East, from Afghanistan and from Africa. Even the most generous European countries have reached their own assumed limits for receiving these masses of refugees. The EU institutions were too weak (not too powerful, as they are depicted by the new nationalists) to deal with the ‘refugee crisis’, resulting eventually in an identity crisis in the EU. Once a success story of an entity ensuring peace and economic development, the EU has lost some of its unifying narrative. The populist right-wing movements or parties see and criticize the EU as the culprit for all kinds of undesired events. The irony is that continuing the success story would require more, not less, powers for the Union. The Union should be entrusted with border protection, a well-funded common asylum and refugee policy to deal with the refugee crisis and maintain the advantages of the Schengen agreement. And for the re-stabilization of the Euro, the EU or at least the Euro zone needs a common fiscal policy, as the new French President Emmanuel Macron is proposing. But it is these very measures of which nationalist populists are most afraid. The EU in its present form is not without shortcomings. Free market principles have come to dominate EU policymaking, leading to a subordination of other policies, like environment. Notably the UK wanted that priority, as it preferred to see the EU chiefly as a union for mutual trade. And the austerity policies pursued have blocked many benign investments and led to unnecessary suffering among tens of millions of Europeans. Such shortcomings, however, should never be used to put in question the overall objectives of the EU – a union of peace, the rule of law, human rights, cultural understanding and sustainability. Addressing the global crisis of democracy, the German Bertelsmann Foundation has published a 3000-page empirical report on progress (or lack thereof) on democracy and a social market economy, as measured by the Bertelsmann Transformation Index (BTI).15 Over the last few years, the report sees a consistent decay of such parameters as civil rights, free and fair elections, freedom of opinion and of press, freedom of assembly and separation of powers. Within the same time frame, the number of countries in which authoritarian, mostly religious, dogmas influence political decision making rose from 22% to 33%. That report was published before the assaults on democracy and civil rights that occurred in summer 2016 in Turkey or the Philippines. Symptoms of tyranny are spreading, including in some of the countries with a solid tradition of freedom and democracy.16 Let us briefly turn to a different kind of crisis. Well, not exactly a crisis but an unpleasant feature in an otherwise fruitful communication tool, the ‘social media’. Aside from being practical and useful for everyday arrangements and exchange of news and reasonable opinions, social media also have become vehicles for enhancing conflicts and vilification of mostly innocent individuals, and for spreading ‘post truth’ nonsense. Much of the contents of social media political conversation is selfenhancing political rubbish, as those media serve as ‘echo chambers’ for networks of like-minded frustrated citizens.17 An empirical study from China found that anger and indignation are the emotions that are most likely to get viral in the social media, meaning they are multiplied faster and stronger than other emotions.18 The Internet and the social media are also vehicles for ‘bots’ (short for robots) that can disrupt or destroy messages, multiply nonsense and create all kinds of mischief. There are dozens of types of malicious bots (and botnets) to harvest email addresses, to grab content of websites and reuse it without permission, to spread viruses and worms, to buy up good seats for entertainment events, to increase views for YouTube videos or to increase traffic counts in order to extract money from advertisers. A more frightening cause of disarray relates to terrorism. In earlier times, humanity’s violent conflicts occurred mostly between different countries. In recent times, systemic and at least partly religious conflicts prevail, using terror attacks with the explicit intention of making people feel insecure. During much of the twentieth century, religions remained quiet, non-aggressive and geographically confined to rather stable territories. This no longer is true. Partly because of globalized populations moving or being forced to leave their home territories, some factions of Islam have expanded geographically and are claiming strong influence over national states, for example, attacking countries like France with its tradition of laicism that does not permit religion to dominate politics. What tends to be underrepresented in the media is the positive role of religions. In Christian-dominated Europe, liberal and tolerant religion became part of the European identity a century after the Enlightenment successfully discredited the earlier doctrinaire, authoritarian and colonialist-missionary manifestations of the faith. During the Cold War, Christian goals of social cohesion helped build the system of ‘Western values’, often described as the social welfare state, or the ‘social market economy’ (for its partial demise, see Sect. 2.4). With a view towards leading Islam into an equally benign and co-operative social role, some Islamic scholars, such as Syrian born Bassam Tibi, call on Muslims in Europe to integrate into democratic society.19 Tibi, however, is not popular among radical Muslims, to put it mildly. But to understand the radicalization of Islam, one must not underestimate the role played by the West, in particular the United States, in interfering with Near Eastern states. Some would say that the troublesome situations mentioned so far, the recurring topics of media headlines, are only the surface of our world’s ‘disarray’. Deeper and more systemic problems include the breath-taking speed of technological development that may very easily run out of control. One trend is digitization that potentially threatens millions of jobs (see Sect. 1.11.4). Another trend or development can be observed in the biological sciences and technologies. The enormous acceleration of genetic engineering through the CRISPR-Cas9 technology20 is causing fears of monster creation or the extinction of species or varieties not seen as valuable under human utilitarian criteria. Generally, a non-specific feeling is spreading that ‘progress’ has scary sides and that the genie may already have left the bottle (see Sect. 1.11.3). No doubt there is a need to analyse and understand the symptoms and roots of the variety of crises, political, economic, social, technological and environmental. It is also important to recognize the extent to which people perceive the various phenomena of disarray and feel disoriented, and to recognize that the reality and the feelings of disarray have a moral and even religious dimension. 1.1.2 Financialization: A Phenomenon of Disarray An important part of the disorientation relates to financial markets. Historians will look back at the last 30 years with concern, when looking at the explosion in bank balance sheets, backed up by declining levels of equity and massive borrowing. One of the results was a temporary private-sector-led boom. The other was a massive increase in the world’s financial sector (finance, insurance, real estate – FIRE), often called financialization, and subsequently the financial crisis of 2008–2009. Excessive risk-taking developed into a crisis that was close to bringing the whole financial system to a halt. When the bubble burst, many governments were forced to step in with broad support programmes. Governments caught by the new mind-set (see Sect. 2.4) were intimately involved in all of this. True, there are many examples of serious malpractices within the private financial sector. But had it not been for the systematic deregulation of the banks by governments, with the purpose of stimulating economic growth by issuing more debt, the situation would have been radically different. The causes behind the crisis were many and varied: – Excessive lending by the banking industry – Lack of action on the part of regulators and central banks to stop (i) excessive lending, (ii) the spread of exotic financial instruments (synthetic assets and bonds, collateralized mortgage obligations/CMOs, structured debt issues, etc.) and (iii) pure speculative transactions – Opaque tax havens, and the absence of a binding legal framework that is accepted and implemented by the international community, in general, and the major jurisdictions and financial centres – Securitization and distribution by investment banks and other financial actors of mortgage-related assets and investment vehicles transferring the credit risk from the original lender to the ultimate bondholders – Failure by some rating agencies and auditing firms to properly assess and report the inherent risks posed by many of the financial products A deeper analysis is presented by economists Anat Admati and Martin Hellwig21 about the main causes behind the financial crisis. Western banks borrowed far too much with far too little equity in their balance sheets to act as a buffer if things went wrong in their business – from trading in the multitrillion-dollar derivatives markets to often reckless lending on real estate. In the decades following the Second World War, banks operated with between 20% and 30% of their liabilities as equity. By 2008, that had shrunk to just 3%. Banks obviously believed that they had invented instruments that removed the risk, allowing them to run their banks with a tenth of the buffer they had before. It proved to be very unrealistic. But they counted with the state to underwrite their risks. Bankers have enriched themselves spectacularly in the process. They made themselves ‘too big to fail’ – and too big to jail. The 2008 financial crisis was mostly caused by that irresponsible greed.22 Yet, in 2009, not only did bankers avoid criminal prosecutions and receive hundreds of billions in government bailouts, but some still paid themselves record bonuses. At the same time, almost nine million households in the United States had to abandon their homes when the value of their houses plummeted and they could no longer service the adjustable-rate mortgages – the so-called foreclosure crisis.23 Financialization refers to the dominance of the financial sector in the global economy and the tendency for accumulated profits (and leverage) to flow into real estate and other speculative investment. Debt is an intrinsic element in this process. In the United States, for example, both household debt and private sector debt more than doubled relative to GDP between 1980 and 2007.24 The same is true for most OECD countries. At the same time, ‘the value of financial assets grew from four times GDP in 1980 to ten times GDP in 2007 and the finance sector’s share of corporate profits grew from about 10% in the early 1980s to almost 40% by 2006’.25 Adair Turner, chair of the UK’s Financial Services Authority in the years following the 2007–2008 crisis, regards unchecked private credit creation as the key system fault that led to that crisis with its devastating consequences.26 From this follows that the financial sector constitutes a significant and increasing risk factor in the economy. The degree of financialization varies from country to country but the increase in the power of finance is general. The current finance sector evolved in the context of the deregulation that gathered pace from the late 1970s and expanded dramatically after the 1999 removal of the separation between commercial and investment banking in the United States.27 This barrier had been put in place in 1933 by the Roosevelt administration in response to the Wall Street Crash of 1929, when a period of rampant credit creation and financial speculation collapsed. Similar speculation preceded the crisis of 2007–2008: The face value of financial products reached US$640 trillion in September 2008, 14 times the GDP of all the countries on earth.28 Lietaer et al.29 compare speculation with ordinary money transfers paying for goods and services: ‘In 2010, the volume of foreign exchange transactions reached $4 trillion per day’, which does not even include derivatives. In comparison, ‘one day’s exports or imports of all goods and services in the world amount to about 2% of those $4 trillion’. Transactions not paying for goods and services, almost by definition are speculative. Such financial products and transactions, the authors continue, lead regularly to monetary crashes, sovereign debt crises and systemic crashes with an average of more than ten countries in crisis every year. One of the consequences of this development is that a significant part of economic growth has been distributed to the wealthy, as mentioned with the new Oxfam figures in the previous subchapter. Practices within the financial sector demonstrate a disregard for the impact they have on both people and the planet. That includes a distinct short-termism, the ratio of banks’ reserves to their loans, the ratio of banks’ lending that support the real economy versus speculation in property and derivatives, unchecked credit creation – in fact money creation – and the failure to account for long-term climate and environmental risks. In the words of Otto Scharmer at MIT,30 ‘We have a system that accumulates oversupply of money in areas that produce high financial and low environmental and social returns, while at the same an undersupply of money in areas that serve important societal investment needs’. The failure to account for environmental risks means that the pressure on already scarce natural resources accelerates – trees are felled, waterways polluted, wetlands drained and the exploitation of oil, gas and coal accelerating, as long as there is demand. It also means that huge savings, among them pension funds, are locked into investments in fossil-based assets. Such assets are increasingly looked upon as high-risk assets (see Sect. 3.4).

#### The aff acts as a means of politicizing thought – in the face of the world computer, our strategy seeks to decolonize thought itself. The abstraction of information seeks to reify lines of death in the scheme of racial capitalism

Beller, 21-4 (Jonathan Beller; 2021; Duke University Press; *“The World Computer: Derivative Conditions of Racial Capitalism”*; accessed 4/11/21; ask me for the pdf; Jonathan Beller is a film theorist, culture critic and mediologist. He currently holds the position of Professor of Humanities and Media Studies and Critical and Visual Studies, Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, NY. He is the recipient of numerous awards and fellowships including Mellon, J.P. Getty and Fulbright Foundation grants and honours.; pages 58-59) RC/HB

Despite not being able to write in the key of Marx any longer, it is possible to politicize social relations that are naturalized, technologized, or buried in abstraction, in machinery, and in the unthought. Social difference, the profitable maintenance and elaboration of social differentiation fundamentally but not exclusively along “racial” and monetary lines is inherent in information itself. Learning from Hortense Spillers, this critique of information extends itself to the grammar of social differentiation and to the increasing granularity of that grammar. It is impossible to write in the key of Marx because of the historical materialist recognition that both the writer and the reader are distributed cybernetic agents who are themselves caught up and constituted in the traffic of information and must therefore decolonize themselves as they work to decolonize the world. No single perspective is adequate to such a task. We observe that the situation of difference and differentiation, inseparable as it is from histories of violence, is, in fact, the deeper meaning of what is called “the world market.” The world market is the real-time computational processing of the evaluation of everything—and from which today (next to) nothing escapes—by the relentless calculus of the value-form endemic to profit under the historical system of racial capitalism. By looking at specific machine histories and processes of grammartization we shall demonstrate that modern machines themselves are racial formations. The Social Difference Engine 59 They are formed by actual practices of racialization and are informed by them as these relentless and for the most part remorseless activities crunch money into more money. But how could they not be? Indeed how could we not be? Machine-mediated hegemony continues to posit (if less and less convincingly) autonomous individuality and value-neutral machines, while at the same time facilitating a disavowal of the fact that “we” think what we think because of our cybernetic relation to machines and to objectified bodies (ours or others) consigned to what in Get Out, Jordan Peele (2017) brilliantly configures as “the sunken place.” It is these sunken places that provision liquidity for those who put folks in them, and if they run dry, if we die, more have to be created. When we consider the social totality in this way, when the integrated information machines of social mediation are designed to confer life to some and social death, debility, or disposability on others, it should really be no surprise that racist encodings sedimented into institutions and machines organized for value extraction reencode racism. But for some it is, and for some, no matter how clear the argument—this singular fact in an instrumentally postfactual world, namely, that capitalist technology is a racial formation, will remain unintelligible.

#### The drive to space exploration is just an attachment of the same unsustainability of capital that renders life calculable and controllable

Dunker and Hui 20 (Anders Dunker and Yuk Hui; 6/9/20; LA Review of Books; *“On Technodiversity: A Conversation with Yuk Hui”*; accessed 12/11/21; <https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/on-technodiversity-a-conversation-with-yuk-hui/>; Anders Dunker is a Norwegian writer and journalist, currently living in Los Angeles; Yuk Hui currently teaches at the City University of Hong Kong. He did his Ph.D. thesis at Goldsmiths College in London, postdoctoral studies in France, and Habilitation thesis in Germany, and since 2012 he has taught at the Leuphana University and Bauhaus University in Germany) RC/HB

What about people who want to develop new technologies in order to establish a new life in outer space? Does this also represent a cosmotechnics? For instance, the rocket billionaires, Bezos and Musk, who dream of colonies in space and a colonization of Mars? There is a great passage in Nietzsche’s The Gay Science (1882), where he talks about “the horizon of the infinite.” It describes the moderns who have abandoned land for the pursuit of the infinite, yet, when they are in the middle of the ocean, there is nothing more fearful than the infinite — there is no more home to return to. The desire of the moderns, described by Nietzsche, continues to produce an effect of disorientation, while the sentiment that there is no longer any home to return to provides a huge market for psychotherapy and spiritual salvation. The longing for the infinite transports us toward the inhuman. For Jean-François Lyotard, there are both positive and negative infinities, which are connected to different forms of rationality. Positive inhumanity captures us in rigid technological systems, like we see in China with the social credit system. The positive inhuman is one that is “more interior in myself than me” — for example, God for St. Augustine. We humans carry something inhuman in us, which is irreducible to the human and which maintains the highest intimacy with us. At the outset of his book L’Inhumain (1998), Lyotard asks if the ultimate goal for science is not that of preparing for the death of the sun, which, granted, lies unimaginably in the future, but which also entails the destruction of all living beings on Earth. Rocket billionaires, who are all transhumanists, want to overcome finitude: the finitude of human life and of life as such. This longing for the infinite also implies no limit to capital accumulation. Overcoming human limitations — the search for eternal life — also implies an infinite market. In a way, the same happens in space exploration: investors want to profit from the Earth losing its meaning, as if leaving the planet were a matter of leaving one spaceship to enter another. I don’t think it is wrong to explore, or to try to understand the universe, but the conquest we see today seems to me to be merely a preparation for tomorrow’s consumerism. Transhumanists impose on us a false choice because they connect the question of the future of human existence with the question of immortality and describe Earth as a mere spacecraft. In your last book, there is a passage about the secularization of space in which you mention that Elon Musk has launched his Tesla roadster into orbit around the sun. You see this as the first step in the commercialization of the cosmos and the next step as mining on other planets, effectively reducing them to mere natural resources, raw material. As far as I’m concerned, Elon Musk can send his car into space or even travel to Mars, but we should not believe that these projects are the necessary next step in a certain technological development. This doesn’t mean that I see travel in outer space as irrelevant or dangerous in itself. Humankind has speculated for a long time about what is out there among the twinkling stars. It is the same curiosity that has brought forth science and technology. The progressives choose science and the reactionaries choose tradition, but we can also choose to follow a third path — the way of thinking. I have meticulously followed this third path by asking if we can begin from a cosmological perspective and find new ways of coexisting that will allow us to transform modern technology. My aim is not to refuse modern technology nor to see it as a cause for uprootedness, but rather to see the irreconcilability of technology and science with tradition as something fruitful, as a gesture I call “tragist.” This is a main subject of my new book Art and Cosmotechnics [published by the University of Minnesota Press in May]. The discrepancy can be fertile soil for new thinking. In The Question Concerning Technology in China, I try to find out how we can deploy Chinese philosophy to enable ourselves to think differently about the contradiction between tradition and modern technology. I hope to derive a Chinese technological thought from an interpretation of Qi and Dao, which should not be understood as mystical concepts but rather as frameworks for thinking about our relationship to the nonhuman — to the 10,000 beings that Lao-Tse talks about — whereby the use of technology must follow Dao, as a philosophy of nature and a philosophy of life.