

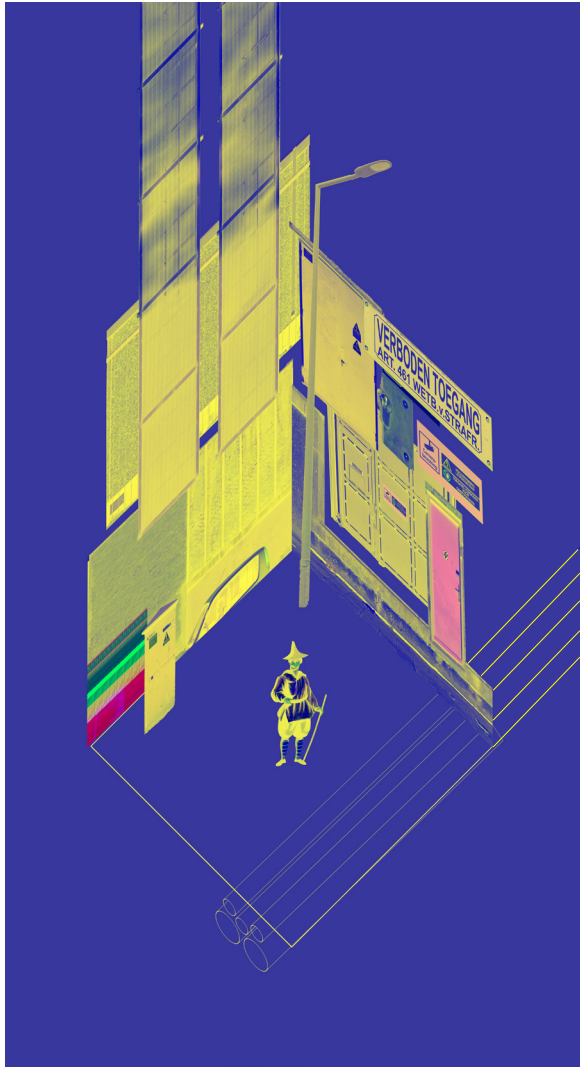
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ELECTRIC DELIGHT

TOWARDS A POLITICS OF
TRANSINDIVIDUATION

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Towards a Politics of Transindividuation

*Potentials of Alter-automation and Care for Active
Subjectivity and Meaning-Making*

ABSTRACT

The following thesis will question the role of technology in politics and its effects on the capacities of individuals to problematise their coming together with a collective. The problem of representational politics as a modern phenomenon of globalisation (temporal context) that is operating in the global northwest (distinct context) serves as a context. The text renders visible present-day alienation from political participation and questions techno-social potentials to allow for a politics of response-able transindividuation. After introducing the methodological framework of Schizoanalysis (Deleuze, Guattari), the work focuses on the cybernetics of determinate grammatisation (the agenda driven abstraction of temporal events or embodied gestures into categorial attractors), conditional necessities that determine subjective and collective beliefs, and their technological expression as automations in our daily lives. As a schizophrenisation of politics towards a liberation of desire and towards the emergence of an active subjectivity that allows for productive dissent (as political participation), the third part of the thesis elaborates the potentials of the un- and redoing our (technical) milieus to deproletarianise the individual and produce a framework for political discourse via technology. Ultimately, some final remarks will be made to summarise the above.

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[...]

We see your hands and legs are tied
In clearest breach of by-law five
And left here in this little room
In clearest breach of by-law two
And though you know that we take pains
The process of the law remains
All technicalities aside
You'll see our hands are also tied
[...]

So put your finger to the names
The only cure for fear is blame
In doing so, you're doing good
There's many called who never would
Who stuck by what they thought was right
Who disappeared by dark of night
Who disappeared into the breeze
Left no family left to grieve

There, now see, that wasn't bad
As you leave, you can be glad
That you have done your little part
To fight the monsters in the dark
But have a care, the night is cold
Take a torch before you go
And we will keep you safe and warm
That's what the torch committee is for

The Torch Committee
by Josh Ritter

PRELUDE

THE TORCH COMMITTEE

In his 2019 song *Torch Committee*, the American songwriter Josh Ritter draws a vivid picture of the titular council trialling the listener as protagonist.¹ Administering the ill-doings within a fictitious society, the board embodies judge, jury, and executioner. In pretence of occupying a merely representational role and of having to submit to restrictive bureaucratic procedures, it justifies torturous practices and assumes moral superiority. In a perfidious play of empathy for the listener, the committee manipulate them into participating in the extradition of neighbours and friends to secure their respective freedom and benefit-over-the-other. Alluding to the proliferation and consolidation of modern-day fascism, as well as the corruption, selfhood and general dysfunction of political institutions, the song embodies a sensible and critical illustration of the greed and grievance of “modern” society.

As we are steered into the participation in resource extraction, subjugation, and a type of third-degree ecocide, we – as individuals – are agreed upon to be helpless, powerless, and practically useless when it comes to inciting change, as we are diverted from ethical dissensus and reflected action. In opposition to this the political body is depicted as knowledgeable, empathetic, and just. The political body represents the collective. If we disagree with the political body, we disagree with the collective, therefore with what allows us

¹ Josh Ritter, “Torch Committee,” track 5 on *Fever Breaks*, Pytheas Recordings, 2019, compact disc.

to conquer nature, ward off death, and consume macadamia nut brittle ice cream on our couches watching K-Dramas. The idea of dissensus comes with a fear of isolation, the detournement with which political regimes absorbed the togetherness that enables us to live as the co-dependent animals that we are exerts a crippling effect on both personal well-being and ecological stability. When it comes to its bare function as a machine that is deliberating governing principles “in the name of society”, the representational character of representational politics quickly wavers. We know that the committee in Ritter’s song is tricking not only the protagonist, but everybody else that was, is, or will find themselves in a similar position, into support. Since for the committee only the effective outcome of consent is of interest, it does not matter whether this consent is of a true nature or not – as long as it can be appropriated to justify governmental decisions and the execution of state power (potestas), with all its economic interests, a manufactured consent works just as well as anything else.² It keeps the steam engine, as the social pressure machine it turns out to be, oiled and running for the subjugation of future rogues. Representative Democracy is thus perpetuated via the consent it informs, producing and being reproduced by the norm it effectuates. Hannah Arendt describes a similar socio-political mechanism in her analysis of the Eichmann trials. Arendt states:

“The trouble with Eichmann was precisely that so many were like him, and that the many were neither perverted nor sadistic, that they were, and still are, terribly and terrifyingly normal. From the viewpoint of our legal institutions and of our moral standards of judgment, this normality was much more terrifying than all the atrocities put together.”³

The loss of accountability as well as the stripping away of sensibility in media and politics, as both Ritter and Arendt explain, often result in the scapegoating and exploitation of the most marginalised and inferior – human, more-than-human, or otherwise. We systematically avoid taking responsibility for our anthropocentric, neo-colonial, and immediate crimes, inert to overcome political and social norms that are restrictive – if not harmful – whilst constantly assuring each other of our intelligence and supremacy in a celebration of techno-fixes and woke-culture. The regressivity of the molar systems we embed ourselves in and the molecular struggles that this embedding entails confronts us with the general questions of what the artifices are that cause the

2 Noam Chomsky and Edward S. Herman, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1988)

3 Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A report on the Banality of Evil* (New York: Viking Press, 1963), 264.

(re)production, support and obedience of the repressive. What is the responsibility and impact of the individual once it takes on a statistical role in a whole and what is the relevance of technology and the built environment in the negotiation of the two? Ritter is correct in his accusations, whether it is for the right reasons or not. In the following pages, I will try to make a case for that: for the world in crisis. In crisis of knowledge, of diversity, and of ecology, in crisis of value and of power. It is a crisis of politics and of desire, of the individual and the collective, and, specifically, their coming-together.

I. INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

I.1 THE POLITICAL PROBLEM

Representative Democracy and the Organisation of Selves

Ever since the Club of Rome commissioned the 1972 report about Limits to Growth, it is evident that the proliferation of power asymmetries, exploitation of labour and resources, streamlining of technological developments, and homogenisation of values that our mode of economy is comprised of not only facilitates but downright necessitates the collapse of our ecosphere.⁴ As population growth, on the one side, and an ego- and anthropocentric “get-it-all” liberalism, on the other, drastically intensify, the enslaving and exploitation of Adam (the calculable cyborg subject) and Gaia (the finite but exploitable planet earth) are pushed to an extreme. We confidently steer towards irreversible damages to the ecosystem that sustains us (self-inflicted genocide) and most other organisms (speciecide). Whilst the discrediting of a proliferating nihilism and the looming emergence of climate terrorism, alongside the question of their reasonability, reap all our attention (they are not productive but reasonable nonetheless), few show the intent to incite substantial change. In contrary: harmful economic, social, and political paradigms are actively maintained, intensifying existing hegemonies and stream-lining the diverse multiplicity of practices, values and species that is left, whilst keeping everybody “calm

⁴ Donella H. Meadows [and others]. *The Limits to Growth; a Report for the Club of Rome's Project on the Predicament of Mankind* (New York: Universe Books, 1972).

enough to carry on” as if a 2nd World War propaganda campaign.⁵ In the current globalised political apparatus we experience the surge of the ultraliberal,⁶ (micro-)fascist subject,⁷ having emerged from the convergence of consumerism and a history of individualist-propaganda (as a conceptual extension of the anthropocentric world view) that has been funding the epoch of industrial revolution (*Umwälzung*) in general.⁸ In the meantime, the boom of right-wing Politics (capital “P”),⁹ essentially non-distinguishable from the economic fortification of the neo-liberal subject, results in the fragmentation of a global political response-ability.¹⁰ What we are facing is a highly fragmented global society fore-fronting individual security against a global(ised) set of economic, ecologic, and socio-political challenges that are co-constitutive of each other. The normalisation and intensification of the ultraliberal and the far-right individualism via echo-chambers and filter bubbles results in a consolidation of a political spectrum which is fuelling lobbying across the global capitalist process (*Fig. 1*), reactively polarising, and inhibiting change.¹¹ There is no doubt that, to effectively tackle the global challenges we are facing, truly collective efforts are necessary. What is required is a fundamental transmutation of potestas to potentia¹² when it comes to the production of

5 **It is not a coincidence that the (barely published and ultimately suspended) British depression and war propaganda experienced a cultural resurgence upon the credit crash of the Global Financial Crisis ten years after its rediscovery in a second hand book store in northern England in the year 2000. The “keep calm and carry on” poster did not gain cultural traction merely due to its simplistic graphic design, but because of the underlying cynicism (relating to an emerging nihilism) with which it confronts the global polycrisis that became ever more apparent in the 2010s.**

6 **The term ‘ultraliberal’ refers to the intensifying liberal attitude that pervades the western socius, by far outgrowing what could be considered a neoliberal economical system.**

7 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 215-230.

8 Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Manifest der Kommunistischen Partei* (London: 1848), 5.

9 **The capitalised ‘Politics’, in this thesis, refers to the set of political, juridical, and executive institutions - usually understood as politics in popular opinion - with all their connotations.**

10 **The ability to respond.** Donna Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble – Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), 2-7.

11 George Monbiot, “The new political story that could change everything,” filmed July 2019 at TEDsummit 2019, Edinburgh, video, https://www.ted.com/talks/george_monbiot_the_new_political_story_that_could_change_everything.

12 **The spinozian notions of *potestas* and *potentia* refer to different modes of power. Whilst *potestas* alludes to an oppressive *power-over* something or someone, *potentia* speaks of an affirmative *power-to*.**

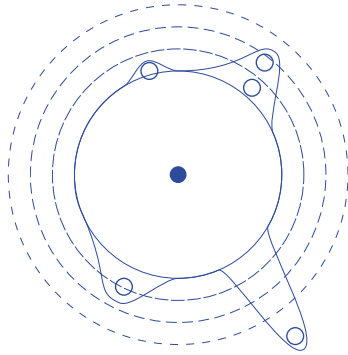
knowledges and values as well as our modes of political enunciation to allow for more diverse evaluation of decisions and the processes they emerge from based on collectively formulated, multi-faceted reasoning. Circumventing the commensurability-compulsion of the dominant value system appears fundamental if one desires to refrain from the possibility for *detournement* of originally commendable efforts for private profit motives and aims for individual and collective fabulation on resilient modes of becoming (together). This brings us to question: Where, in the evolution of our mereological organisation have we gone wrong?¹³ How might we, as individuals or collectives, steer away from the reactive subjectivity that the so-called “modernity” has been embedding into our collective codes? In short: How might we do politics?

First, we will have to render a definition of politics that allows us to venture from biased and conditioned opinions. Martin Heidegger, in *Being and Time*, defines his notion of *Mitsein* (being-with) – arguably the underlying condition of politics – as a fundamental constituent of the *Dasein* (being-there). Subjectivity and existence, for Heidegger and his scholars, is always situated and contextual (socially, temporally, and spatially), bringing to our attention the entanglement of our individual existence with matters of *togetherness*. Within the framework of this paper, politics will be understood as the coming together of *Mitsein* and *Dasein*. It is rendered as the process of organising individuals and their inter-relation, as well as the formulation and overcoming of problems that are not overcome by oneself. This will ask of us to delve on the mereological relations of individual and collective, desire and its repression, and the norms and belief systems that make up or inform repressive regimes which in turn tie desiring individuals together. In a struggle for a new politics, we have to rethink epistemological and ontological foundations that gave rise to the problematic configuration we find ourselves in today. Politics, as a fundamental characteristic of humanity, does not refer to a part-crisis of a colloquial *cluster-fuck*, but as a framework that both allowed for this situation to emerge and holds potential for change.

As a more specific concern, we will focus on the Representative Politics that is dominant in the global west. Assuming that elections are fair, equal, and free, representatives are appointed in a 4–5-year cycle to govern federal and national states via legislations that modulate with juridical institutions and executive powers. Every few years the law-abiding citizen casts a ballot in favour of a representative party or individual based on a publicised political agenda and its overlap with the individual’s desires. Proportionately convened members of a parliament negotiate their respective agendas to come to a consensus, if a majority is in favour of change, laws are passed, budgets are (re)

directed and/or policies are adjusted. As the respective political programmes vary, these adjustments are generally watered down to achieve accord. This constant pursuit of consensus, however, appears to be more paralysing than productive and becomes a-representative of its subjects as it abstracts the multiplicity of individual desires and needs into generalised political party programs. Theoretically, the quasi-absence of productive differences in politics – political programmes are adjusted and largely conservative due to the necessity to comply with the largest public body possible during election periods – pushes decision making processes into a type of limbo of minimal resonance. Practically, it results in artificial harmonisation and normalisation of thought, desire, creativity etc. to find an “agreeable middle” (*Fig 2*). An overwhelming inertia in changing the system or content is what enables the respective representative’s professional positions and payslips. The Politician is not tied to their programme but is repercussed in the subsequent election period by loss of voters if they do not meet what is promised, resulting in the moderation of promises to begin with to ensure self-perpetuation. The borrowed consent from citizens to intervene with jurisdictions and policies legitimizes the government.

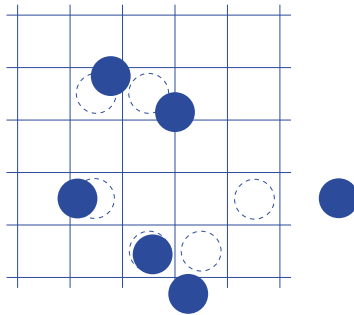
It appears that the current political apparatus is set to alleviate its subjects from the responsibility for participation in problem forming and negotiation. It is therefore urgent to search for modes of living that potentially open up the reactive subjectivity that underlies the dominant a-significant polarisation of individuals and allow for a response-able productive dissent.



*Fig. 1: The capitalist process:
ingesting value via a homogenising
transposition into exchange value*



*Fig. 2: Abstraction and normal-
isation of individual desires in
Representative Democracies and
the pursuit of consensus*



*Fig. 3: Determinate Grammatisa-
tion as the abstraction and trans-
position of values into categorical
attractors*

I.2 THE ENLIGHTENED CONDITION

Dialectic Thinking and the Crisis of Value

What is, then, the *modern condition* that appears to perfoliate every exchange executed, board meeting held, scientific research commissioned, and amicable deliberation conducted? To answer this, we need to look back to a time before the separation of the ineffable and the undeniable, trace the tectonic shift from religious to secular values, and examine its political consequences from the current day vantage point – we look back to the Enlightenment. As Hong Kong philosopher Yuk Hui posits in his 2019 article *What Begins after the End of the Enlightenment*:

*“Enlightenment was not simply an intellectual movement promoting reason and rationality, but also a fundamentally political movement. Navigational and military technology allowed European powers to colonize the world, leading to what we now call globalisation”.*¹⁴

The prior crusade of the exchange-value-system {e} in the West, that was forcibly imposed on other cultures over the course of colonial expansion, over-coded alternate valuations in the affected societies and eradicated economic relations based on gifting, sharing, or other non-profit modes of

14 Yuk Hui, “What Happens After the End of Enlightenment,” *E-Flux* # 96 (January 2019): 3-10, <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/96/>.

exchanging and organising material flows. The commensurability-compulsion $\{f(e)\}$, the inevitably perpetual value-abstraction of disparate entities X and Y that is fundamental to market economies is internalised by their subjects, destabilising valuations based on use, care, and surplus life. What is striking about Hui's analysis is that, not capital, but the underlying exchangeability of incommensurable values is both first move and endgame of the colonial-capitalist project. This exchangeability, to this day, allows for resource depletion, speculation, war and (modern day) slavery – it is the tail-end of the anthropocentric conquest of life and it proliferated to a global scale – “everything has a price”. The compatible technologies of the time – shipping and food preservation – allowed for the rapid expansion of the capitalist process (capitalisms and their associated milieus) and logos as well as the subsequent global(normal)isation of values, technologies, time, and knowledges that it demands.

The suddenly exportable technologies and norms that emerged from this abstraction and rationalisation of life result in the intensification of the monotecnological Enlightenment, the *globalised whole* with all its neo-colonial connotations, and an entropic “global axis of [space]time”.¹⁵ The *modern way* is fundamentally defined by practices of objectification that emerged from the Enlightenment. It is an organisational principle based on dialectic quantification, commensurability, and efficiency. It is the aftermath of what, as artist and writer Patricia Reed points out, changed drastically with Darwin's theory of evolution: The scientification of other disciplines and the naturalisation of necessities that, ultimately, are none, yet reify biased interpretations of contextual data as a universal, alethic necessities.^{16,17} As Yuk Hui puts it:

*“The real necessity is only a relative necessity [...] It is relative because if we ask why A is necessary, it is because B and C are its conditions.”*¹⁸

The beliefs we submit to and the necessities we deduct from them, are by no

15 **Global normalisation results in the loss of heterogeneity per se and it thus equivalent to entropic tendencies in terms of information and meaning.**

16 Stavros Kousoulas, “Ananke's Sway: Architectures of Synaptic Passages,” in *Contingency and Plasticity in Everyday Technologies*, ed. Natasha Lushetich, Iain Campbell and Dominic Smith (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2022), 163-179.

17 **Alethic (from Greek ἀλήθεια) is a non-negotiable truth, ≠ non-alethic, which refers to contextual truth that depends on conditions.**

18 Yuk Hui, *Recursivity and Contingency* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2019), 100.

means objective truths, but context dependent constraints that only due to the artificial separation of logical scales appear independent.¹⁹ Context prefigures the possible and primes the real with tendencies for certain outcomes. From this constituted possibility space, Alicia Juarrero deduces that “Context dependence is not subjective; it is objective, but relational—and induced by constraints.”²⁰

The term “modern way” is more accurately replaced by the term *Enlightened condition*. It is the proliferation and reproduction of the commensurability-compulsion that, for reasons of efficiency (cheap labour, cheap nature) necessitates globally tradable norms and values and the processual gridding of life into digital (binary) distinctions depending on an artificial objectivity that is determined by the agreement of governmental and scientific institutions.

Although there undeniably are earlier moments in human history that mark monumental bifurcations that imply efficiency qua normalisation (e.g. the domestication of crops), the norms that the Enlightenment produced seem crucial for the sustenance of urban conditions, hence allowing for us to address the question of whether said norms are beneficial for *urban* conditions and politics. To counter the impending homogeneous heat death that the Hui’s global axis of time steers towards, to localise and singularise value, Canadian philosopher Brian Massumi urges to “uncouple value from quantification” and return to a *use-value* distinction {u}.^{21, 22} This includes the reframing of systems as processes, turning away from the analysis of finite frameworks and understanding the entangled workings of *Gaia* and *Adam* as the close correlation of the subject or object, the immanent outside and the fuelling of, ingestion into, or disruption of the delineated system.²³

As the technological phyla of communication and entertainment evolved into social media, streaming services, and anonymous online forums, the gridding of values, equivalent to the scientification during to the Enlightenment, now extends its fibrous infrastructure up unto the calculation and abstraction of our libidinal investments into marketing and consumption functions, a process that over the course of this paper will be understood as *determinate grammatisation* (Fig.3). The determinate abstraction of our libidinal investment towards

19 Alicia Juarrero, *Context Changes Everything: How Constraints Create Coherence* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2023).

20 Ibid, 60.

21 Brian Massumi, *99 Theses on the Revaluation of Value: A Postcapitalist Manifesto* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2018), 4

22 Ibid, 7.

23 Ibid, 9.

a globalised, commodifiable resource, urges us to find new practices to gain back control over the political-libidinal-complex that is necessary for contingent desiring, productive dissent, and the implementation of politics that assist in trans-individuation. This thesis seeks to investigate practices of collective care, as a fundamentally situated (countering global normalisation), perpetually maintained and emergent (countering the dialectics of the Enlightened Condition) and potentially just (countering representative modes of politics) engagement that allow to learn to problematise the coming together of individual, technology, and collective. These three core terms are relevant for the further understanding of the text:

Desire:

The Deleuzian notion of desire describes an excess of libidinal energy (\neq lack of X).²⁴ It defines the intentions of the individual and therefore informs the social. It is a “more basic political concept than power”.²⁵ It is the driving force for becoming, and simultaneously organises systems of repression, as multiple desiring subjects jostle.²⁶

Care:

Care is an axiological attentiveness to fragility and an attunement to one’s surroundings.²⁷ It is closely related to practices of maintenance and is product and producer of sense-ability. Care requires perpetual engagement and high energetic investment for low immediate gratification. It is itself a revaluation of currently un(der)valued labour and is practiced in relation to our social and material environments.

Belief:

Belief is a constructed, non-alethic²⁸ universe of reference that informs an individual’s desires and their modes of acting upon them.²⁹ Social codes, value systems (e.g. {e} or {u}) and political responsibilities fall under this – just as much as religious and other spiritual universes of reference do.

24 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem and Helen R. Lane (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983).

25 Daniel Smith, “Immanence and Desire: Deleuze and the Politics” *Stasis* Vol.7 #1 (July 2019), 135. <https://doi.org/10.33280/2310-3817-2019-7-1-124-138>.

26 Ibid.

27 Jérôme Denis, “Ecological Reparation: Ethnographies and Maintenance”, filmed November 10th, 2021, *Ecological Reparation*, video interview. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ebBsxOxu_LL.

28 Patricia Reed, “The Valuation of Necessity,” in *Block Chains and Cultural Padlocks*, ed. Jesse McKee (Vancouver: 221A, 2021), 123-169.

29 Gregory Bateson, *Steps to an Ecology of Mind* (Northvale: London: Jason Aronson Inc., 1987), 315-344.

I.3 ARCHITECTURE OF POLITICS

Problem Statement

As the architectural profession is concerned with the manipulation of constraints within the technological milieu (e.g. built environment), the designer's capacity to intervene with the framework for politics is evident. Hands-on implementations of equitable ambitions, however, often regress to struggles of participation and inclusion that are merely re-enforcing dichotomies between planners and users, human and more-than-human, or nature and culture, resulting in the reproduction of power-relations or, at best, a slight shift in cartesian subject/object definitions that are ultimately incapable of performing differently than the processes they emerged from. Possibly shifting the issues at hand, these struggles are absorbed by the capitalist process and turned against substantial change in the (re)valuation of value. It is therefore crucial to stay abstinent from molar structures – due to their tendency to function according to the dialectic logic of the Enlightened condition and the resulting mono-technological³⁰ globalisation – and to concern ourselves with local, molecular frameworks to organise togetherness that are not bound to repeat the relation of an oppressive entity X and oppressed entity Y via determinate grammatisation.

30 Yuk Hui, "One Hundred Years of Crisis," *E-Flux* #108 (April 2020), 2-9. <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/108/>.

As theoreticians within and outside the architectural field are uncovering the potential of collective practices (such as Commoning), we ought to underline the political capacities of such practices in their potential to aid in of trans-individuation and the proliferation of potential and information. Sharing our stocks of energetic and material flows as well as their administration, and, with it, sharing responsibilities for the maintenance and determination, not only necessitates individual engagement with external and political matters, but requires the careful in-vestment³¹ of libidinal and kinetic energy into the intensive bonds that constitute the material conditions they are entangled with.

In search for a politics that assists in response-able transindividuation I put forward the following research question:

How can practices of collective care – as modes of spatial and social engagement that intervene with the (preindividual) milieu via productive dissent – liberate desire from determinate grammatisation and aid in the individual's capacity to problematise the coming together of itself and a respective socius?³²

The following sub-questions arise:

How do dominant systems of beliefs determine our desires?

How and why might an individual (change its beliefs to) participate in the formulation and overcoming of problems via the engagement with its surroundings?

What is the correlation of technology (e.g. the built environment) and the construction/maintenance of beliefs?

31 **The word investment is hyphenated to underline the endothermic vector of kinetic and libidinal engagement.**

32 **Practices of collective care serve as a mode of desiring production that potentially opens up discourses and productions of production, creating subjectivities that are aware of the resilience of metastable politics and hence become response-able participants.**

I.4 A SCHIZOANALYTICAL APPROACH

Method

Discovered by Deleuze and Guattari over the course of their collaboration on the two volumes on Capitalism and Schizophrenia (*Anti-Oedipus*, 1972; *A Thousand Plateaus*, 1980), the following research will be conducted according to the methodological framework of *Schizoanalysis*.³³ The approach aims to counter Freudian psychoanalysis in its rigidity and essentialism. Deleuze and Guattari implicitly render the psychoanalytical approach as conceptually instable, as it is deemed to be fundamentally dogmatic and inert to significant change to the poles that constitute the oedipal relations. It is thus not flexibly applicable and is operating within a cartesian (“enlightened”) ontology.

Schizoanalysis, according to the authors, aims to take the schizophrenic, the sick, out of its repressive milieu: In and of itself the schizophrenia is not condemned, but rather understood as a potential. The schizophrenic, as Deleuze and Guattari formulate, has the “the ability to constantly break free from the dominant emotional controls”.³⁴ As a condition the schizoid “not-making-sense”, as opposed to the paranoiac “making-too-much-sense”, allows for the recording of paradox within the socio-political framework and

33 Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*.

34 Ibid, 75.

semiotic inconsistencies. The schizophrenic becomes “sick”, only as they are confronted with oppressive apparatuses, such as social norms and psychotherapeutic clinics, and withdraw into a catatonic state. As a machinic – rather than structural – process, desiring-production and social-production become inextricably linked to each other.³⁵ The schisms, in the case of an analysis of the synapses of individual and collective, are the contradictions immanent to the multiplicity of desiring subjects themselves.

The research will uncover the workings of dominant, non-productive systems of belief, value, and desire via a counter cartographic approach that aims to render visible the abstract effect of technological and political systems that shape our milieus. As an anti-methodological approach of unlearning a qualitative-quantitative binary – among others – it opposes common research and representational methods. Instead, it acknowledges the irrationality of rationality (and vice versa) as a potential for reframing the value ethics that co-constitute politics. The same way that Guattari continues to elaborate on *Schizoanalysis* in his later works, (*Fig. 4*) the research will take into consideration the reciprocal effects of Technology (Φ), Universes of Reference (U), Existential Territories (T), and Flows (F).³⁶

The counter cartography transposes contextually determinate systems (U, T, F) into material expressions/conditions (Φ). These are then *schizophrenised* by carefully disassembling the material condition towards an ambiguity that invokes alternative engagement by individuals.

In parallel the relation between technology/territory (Φ ,T) and the individual will be investigated in comparing the schizophrenic identity of the capitalist process with practices of care. Via assessing the different degrees of energetic investments that are required from individuals or external resources (F) according to degrees of automation, I aim to identify the role of de- and alter-automation in shifting systems of belief (U).

Ultimately, this research is not only conducted to substantiate my own design project. I hope to find a possible angle on the permutation of a social ontology via engaging with desiring differently and to explore the potential of architecture in the mediation of the individual and the collective.

35 Smith, “Immanence,” 129.

36 Félix Guattari, *Schizoanalytic Cartographies*, trans. Andrew Goffey (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 17-45.

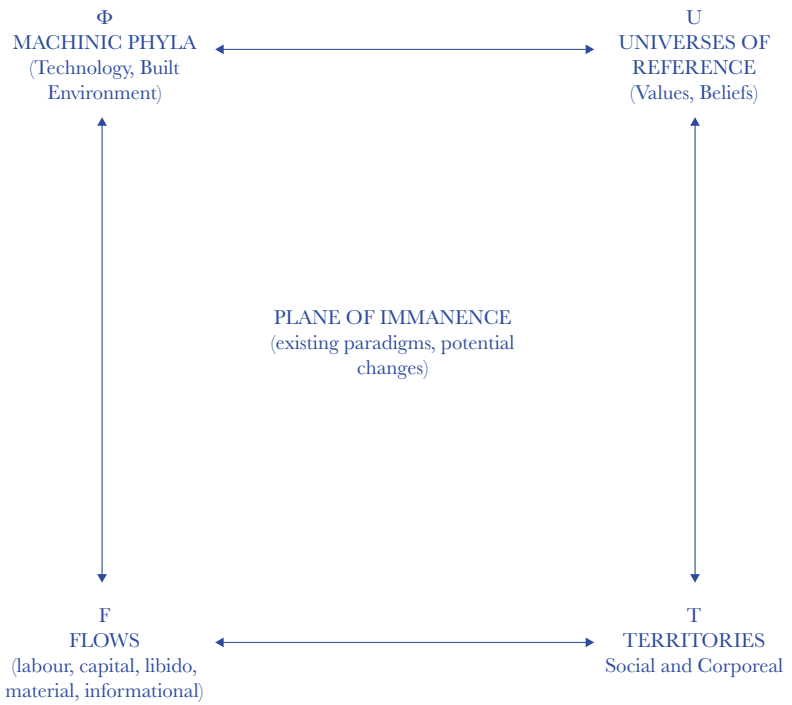


Fig. 4: Plane of Immanence, based on Guattari's "Schizoanalytical Cartographies"

II. DETERMINATION OF BELIEFS

II.1 DETERMINATE GRAMMATISATION

The determinate grammatisation to which the capitalist process subjugates subjectivity regulates the societal engagement in productive political assemblages, what philosopher Bernard Stiegler comes to describe as symbolic misery. The “loss of individuation that results from the loss of participation in the production of symbols [meanings, values]”³⁷ is taking shape as the hypersynchronisation of the subject and a continuous alienation from contingent desiring-production.³⁸ This dissociation from its symbolic, desiring dimension entails the production of subjects that are incapable of informing political problems or agendas, are incapable of critical positioning and acting in dissent.

To elaborate: Stiegler deploys his concept of symbolic misery on the basis of the technological modifications to our environments serving as a tertial retention system. Extending Husserl’s notions of the primary and secondary

37 Mark B. N. Hansen, “Bernard Stiegler, Philosopher of Desire?,” *boundary 2* vol.44 #1 (February 2017): 173. <https://doi.org/10.1215/01903659-3725929>.

38 Ibid, 172.

retention of information³⁹ by a third, external memory, is what enabled a “trans- generational process [of] collectively conserving, accumulating and hence perpetually stabilizing and transforming lessons of individual experience”.⁴⁰ In other words, our capacity to transduce detailed knowledge over generations (as opposed to the general knowledge conserved in genetic codes), as externalized (exosomatised) information, is what allowed for the evolving of knowledge across the spatio-temporal limitations of the subject. A deprivation of the capacity to ingest or inform the technological milieu, equates the loss of participation as described. Not only does this the lack of participation in the production of a collective techno-logos result in the selective determination of causal relations, but it separates the individual from its capacity to form a type of protention (anticipation) in regards to the technological milieu. Without the participatory production of technology and its meaning, a participatory organization of the respective developmental vector is impossible. As the application of technology – such as tools etc. – is a practice to provoke a reliable future, the production of future outcomes depends on the intentions of the ones capable of applying technology. A technological literacy is key for the capacity to anticipate future outcomes and to problematise or engage in dissent.⁴¹ The animating force that is necessary for anticipation is the intensive difference between an experienced problem and a generated image of the future that emerges from and via applicable technology. The technology of architecture poses constraints that can either facilitate or disallow for future unfoldings, delineating lines of individuation and potential change.

Grammatisation, the abstraction of temporal events or embodied gestures into categorical attractors, reduces consciousness and complex thought to textbooks, manifestos, technical norms or user-profiles, that later-on are reinterpreted when internalised and processed.⁴² The determinacy that governs systems of grammatisation that are constituted by the non-alethic necessities we submit to, however, is threatening the production of diverse futures. The targeted manipulation of affects that inform our desiring-complex, a short-circuiting of the pre-individual milieu (and its immanent potential) therefore

39 **Edmund Husserl coins the two forms of retention as primary (immediate, present) and secondary (the just-past), similar to listening to music: the current note (primary) only makes sense in the context of previous musical impressions (secondary)**

40 Bernard Stiegler, *The Neganthropocene*, trans. Daniel Ross (London: Open Humanity Press, 2018), 17-18.

41 Johannes E.M. Schick, “Images of the Future: Anticipating, Fabulating and Inventing with Bergson and Simondon,” *Culture Unbound* Vol. 13, #3 (2021): 86-90, <https://doi.org/10.3384/cu.1689> .

42 **An inevitable implication of the tertial retention system and a price we have to pay to ensure the communicability of complex thought.**

lead to the (re)production of a calculable, plastic desiring subjects:⁴³ The rigidity and prefiguration with which we condition the actualisation of our desires within the exchange-value-system does not allow for contingent, productive trans-individuation, but steers towards the homogenisation and turning-a-significant of our libidinal expressions and subjectivity. As Australian media and culture theorist McKenzie Wark continues: Our tertial protention and ability for contingent and independent desire – independent from marketing stimuli and propaganda schemes – is impaired by the absolute pervasion of our lives by a commensurability-compulsion and programming for surplus-value extraction. As the capitalist process is taking charge of our desiring complexes in a loop of financial surplus oriented grammatisation, we are facing a new level of alienation and proletarianisation on a global scale: We are used to not owning land, we are used to not owning material production, and now we have lost ownership over what arguably is our most intimate capacity: our libidinal investment.⁴⁴

43 Hansen, “Bernard Stiegler,” 174.

44 McKenzie Wark, *Capital is Dead, Is this Something Worse?* (London: Verso, 2019).

II.2 THE MAKING OF GODS

Political Organisation and Myth-Making

The coming together of desiring subject and restrictive socius poses us with a problem: As part of our effort to crystallise the individual's relation towards its *Umwelt* (its associated milieu) our evaluation, at least partially, will always remain speculative and imposed. Tracing other's desires and intentions across a milieu that we, as spectators, value differently according to the affordances we can register, can never fully assess the situation. The lens of subjectivity that distorts any arguably objective recording remains. Intervening with the technical normativity that co-constitutes systems of valuation allows us to modify the constructed images that produce collective and individual anticipations, but the individuality of percept and belief perpetuates. It is here that Gregory Bateson's *Cybernetics of the Self* aids us. Reflecting on the psychotropics of alcoholism and the mechanism that *Alcoholics Anonymous* appropriates to achieve comparably high success rates in curing addiction, Bateson emphasises the relation to an external higher power (e.g. the bottle or a god) that the bettering of the addicted is depending on.⁴⁵

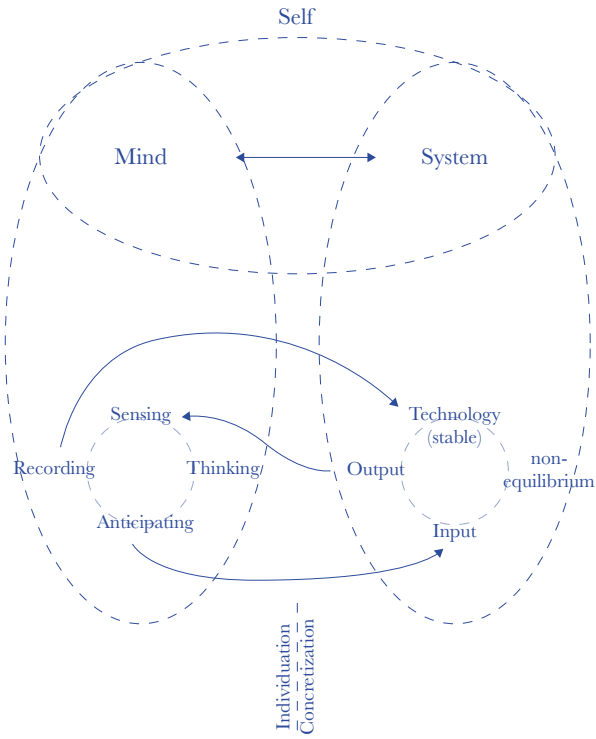


Fig. 5: The self as a synopsis of mind and system, based on Gregory Bateson's "Steps to an Ecology of Mind"

The synopsis of associated system and the mind of the individual holds the potential and agency for change.⁴⁶

The ingenuity in Bateson's observations is that, due to the partial detachment of a mind from its respective system, the problem we are concerned with in identifying individual desires is the same problem the individual experiences in the formulation of its own situated desires: As the individual remains incapable of comprehending a rational, objective exterior, (whose possible existence does not concern us right now) it generates a myth to substitute objectivity. The same way that we cannot assume superiority over our *Umwelt* and its causal chain, no one else can. In order to overcome what we might call the *limits of the mind*, a belief emerges that explains or negotiates inconsistencies. Given that reasoning becomes a product of the reading of one's environment, our best chance to engage with a desiring subject is to engage with the constructed beliefs that it submits to, the restrictions that these beliefs co-constitute, and the question of how we can spatially intervene with the Myth-making faculties of humankind that sit on the intersection of intellect (thinking) and instinct (feeling).⁴⁷

Taking a reading of a given political situation via the lens of the Bergsonian Myth-making we can identify virtual and actual constraints that affect our engagement and behaviour: Social codes and juridical limitations, economic dependencies and value systems are beliefs – non-alethic necessities – that are just as artificial as the bottle or the god are. The emergence of the specific collective belief is ultimately rooted in the political: In order to tap into the potential that lies in collectivity (and ensured biological survival), the grammatisation of political opinion and individual intentions has always negotiated *parts* and *wholes*. The determinate manipulation of said grammatisation according to surplus value extraction, however, is a more recent phenomenon. The power of grammatisation lies, as such, not in its presence or absence, but in its appropriability. In order to schizophrenise politics and make it resilient to the multiplicity that it arguably should organise, we need to become sensible to the intention and intensity behind the abstraction taking place: The appropriation of the abstract goes two ways, one motivated by the manipulation of others (potestas) and one by the malleability (interpretability, vagueness) of the sign (potentia). Altering ontological relations, altering the

46 **Brian Massumi later comes to call the occupation of potential “acting politically”, as the alter-priming of collective action is what causes shifts in collective organisation.** Brian Massumi, “Histories of Violence: Affect, Power, Violence - The Political is not Personal,” Interviewed by Brad Evans, *Los Angeles Review of Books*, transcript, 2017, <https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/histories-of-violence-affect-power-violence-the-political-is-not-personal/>.

47 Bateson, *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*, 315-344.

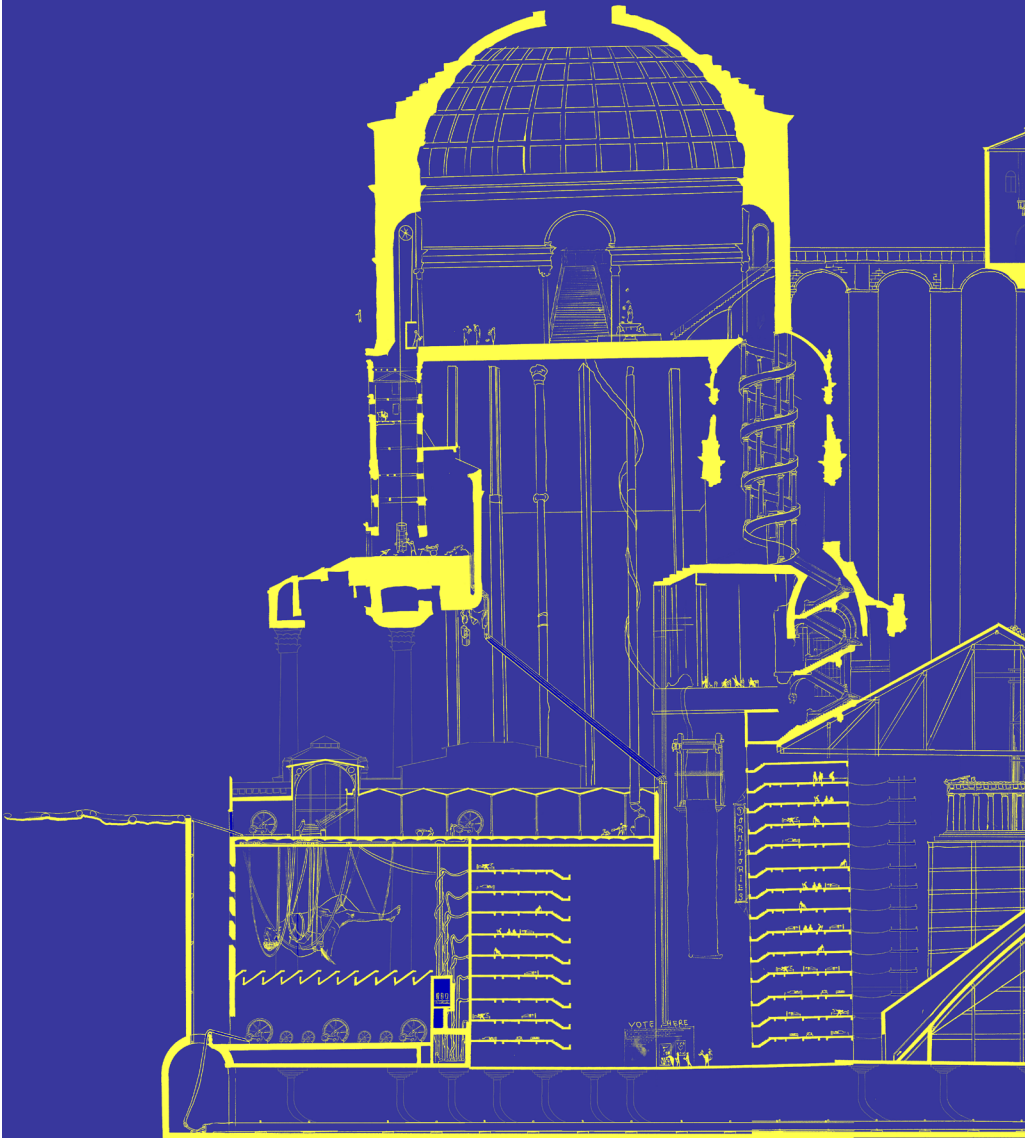
constraints that the milieu imposes on individual and collective via relaying affects, modulating the chutes and ridges of the epigenetic landscape that prime future unfoldings and with it the constructed beliefs that govern collectives, we can intervene.

Within the scope of this thesis, I am identifying cybernetic systems of automation that are concerned with myth-making, emergent norms, and effects on individual engagement.

The Automated Abstraction Machine (Fig. 6)

The Automated Self (Fig. 8)

As both of the above are concerned with the subject's alleviation from energetic investment and response-ability, a closer look at the concept of automation is necessary.



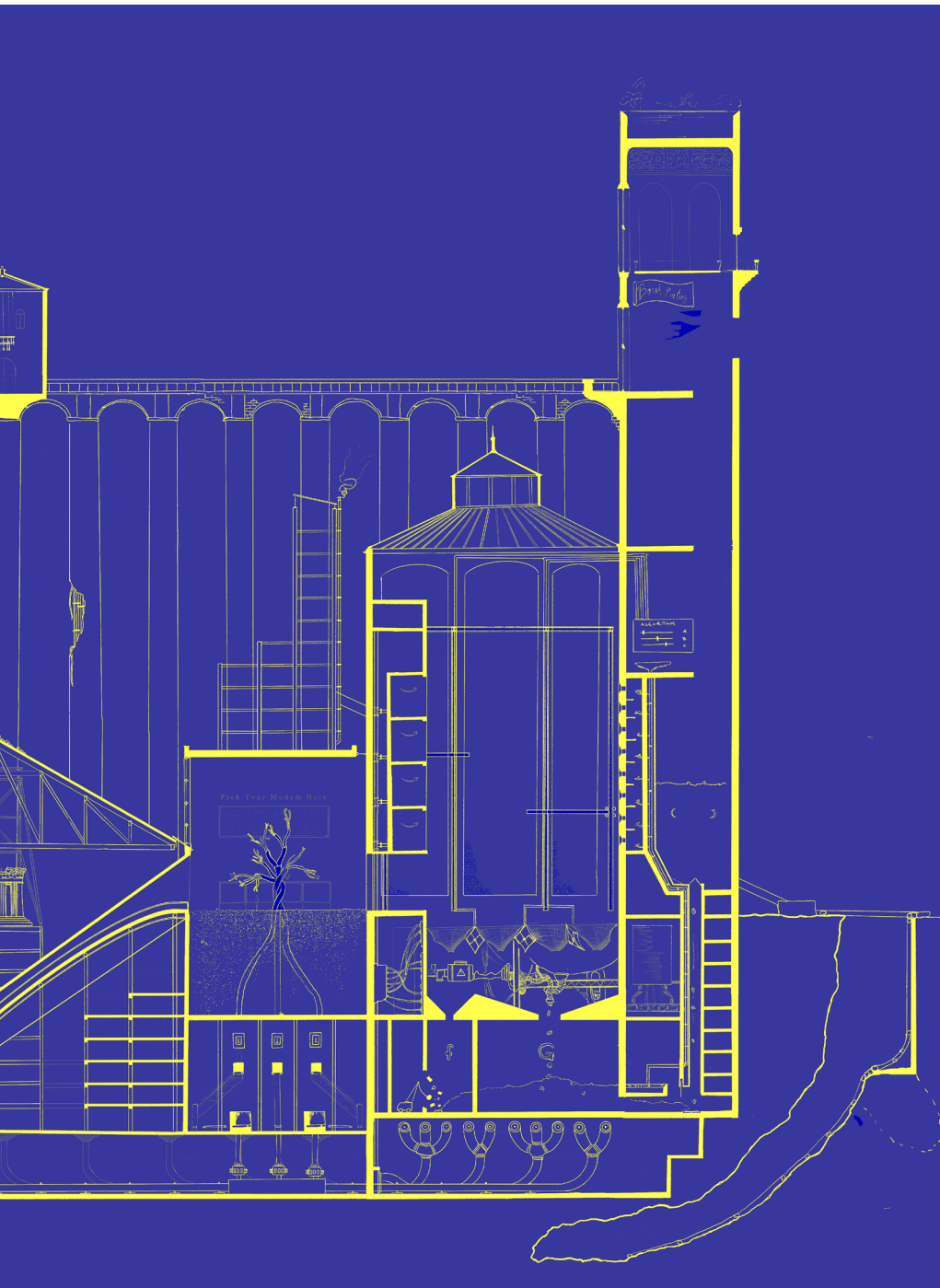


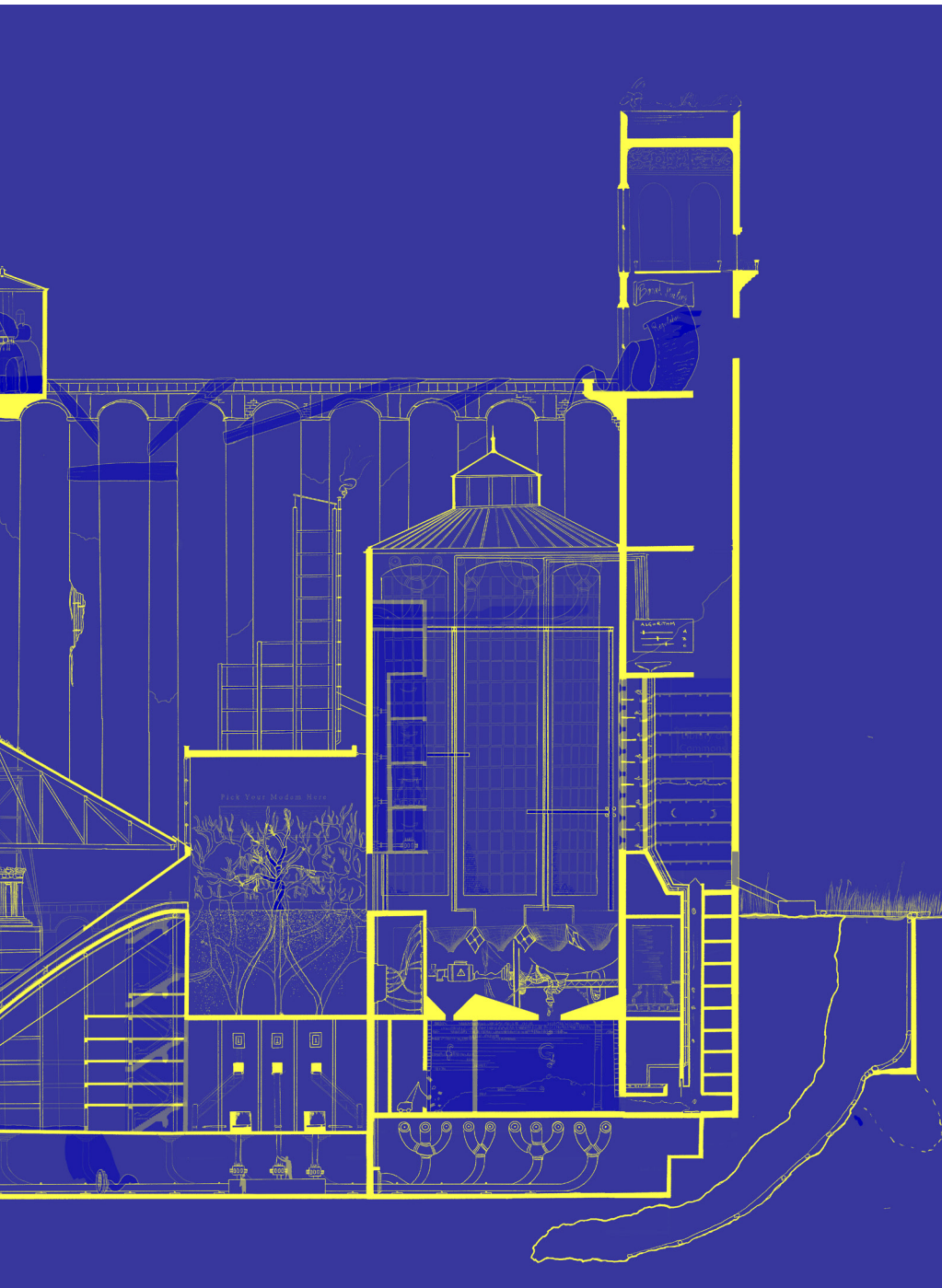
Fig. 6: The Automated Abstraction Machine depicts a selection of technologies and cybernetic circuits that constrain individual libidinal and energetic investment into the production of and care for a participatory politics. The commodification of value {u}, the proliferation of immediate gratification, and the isolation of the individual from the collective were key criteria. The digital grammatisation, which feeds algorithmic control over libidinal investment (right) and political economy amplifies individual alienation from the product (environment) and solidifies a technofeudalist system, which gains control over the political apparatus. The gatekeeping of political institutions that ensures the perpetuation of the representational myth, (left) further stratifies the hierarchy that emerges from the economical paradigm.

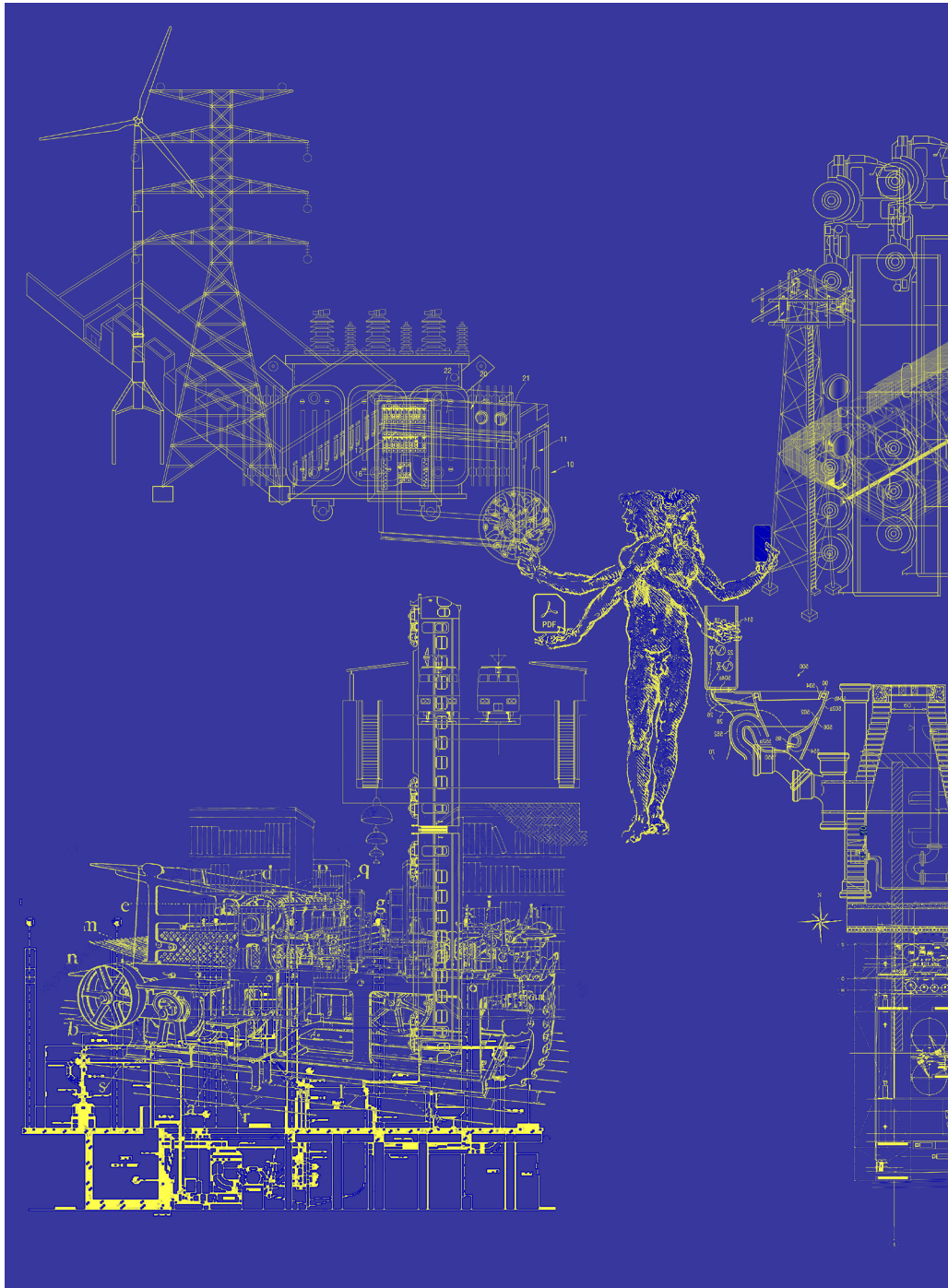
The respective architectural expressions were chosen according to their cultural and historical connotations, resulting in a patchwork of spatial configurations that represents flows and cuts as they are experienced corporeally and schematically.

Important to note is, that, although architectural analogies have been drawn (from), the cuts, flows, and territories of algorithmic governmentality and political alleviation emerge from and with very real spatial and material implications. Distances generated between individuals and problems have material expressions that can be altered in order to allow for alternate engagements.

Drawing from Raunig's notion of the dissemblage, as well as an ethics of care via the lens of technical normativity, the synthesized drawing is care-fully dis-assembled, deterritorialising or breaking established circuits and beliefs to different extents via modulating their material expressions to provoke alternative engagement of the individual. The overlay and breaking of the architectural artifact of drawing, allows for indeterminate readings of the image and a schizophrenising (making ambivalent) of the information that can be obtained. For me, as well as for others, this offers malleable and multiple perspectives on the dissemblage, producing a base for the future design methodology.







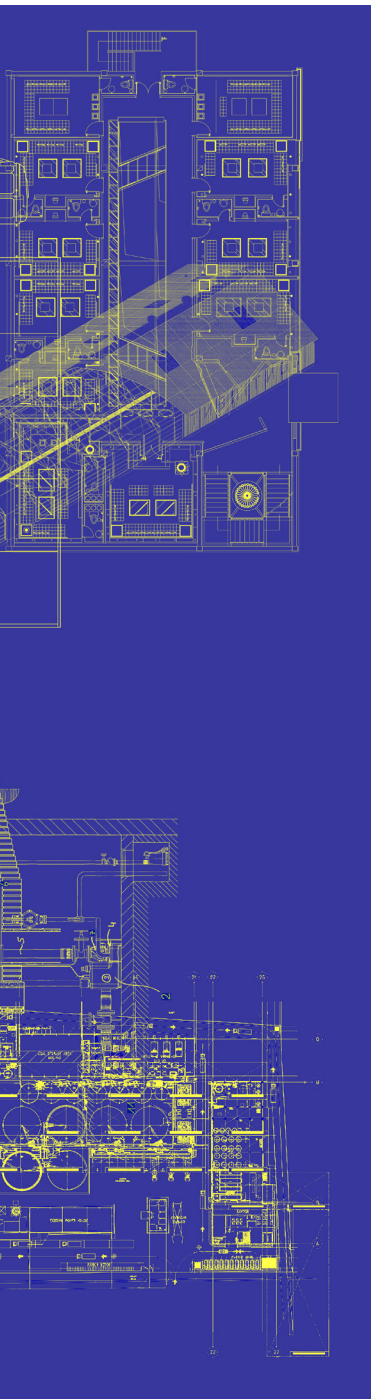


Fig. 7: The Automated Self depicts the alienation that the individual experiences due to an intensifying automation ("smoothing") of our every day lives. Problems that demand energetic investment are outsourced beyond a sensible environment and dependent on global and local infrastructures that facilitate the transduction of energy between and drawing from systems external to the individual.

In the complexity and physical opacity and distance of said infrastructures, original problems become illegible and incognisable - ultimately not-problematisable - for the individual.

II.3 THE AUTOMATED SELF

Technical Normativity and Politics

The term *automation* refers to the outsourcing of our energetic investment – kinetic, psychic or otherwise – into technological edifices or systems that are to an extent self-regulating and self-operative, allowing for the mitigation of energetic input that must be delivered to complete a specific task. Although the production of an automaton often demands a higher grade of energetic input than the task it aims to automate, automations are aiming to minimise later demands and engagement to break free time, material, and energy that can in turn be appropriated for other tasks.⁴⁸

As these automations are characterised by their respective input-to-output-conversion, we lean on cybernetic theory to clarify: What emerged in post-war continental philosophy with figures such as Norbert Wiener and Gregory Bateson, is concerned with specifically the complex feedback loops of affects and expressions (intensities) that automations emerge from. The auto-corrective systems that produce said automations ultimately are macro-scale cybernetic circuits with their own inputs, outputs, and biases. A sys-

48 For reasons of clarity, the term **automaton** is used to describe a singular system/technical object in which automations are actualised/materialised. **Automation**, in opposition, refers to the process of automating something or a process that is automated. The automaton carries out the automation.

tem or set of constraints and relations thus possesses both, a type of memory (as the constraints it is comprised of are products of previous feedback loops) and a type of consciousness (with preferences and intuitions due to a designed path of information).⁴⁹

The auto-corrective systems that crystallise in systems of automation and automatons – what in first order cybernetics can be understood as a *mind* – are by no means *closed*. Bateson reminds us that there is no absolute interiority to a system observed: The feedback loop of outputs and inputs, the *mind*, only becomes the *self* (also understood as identity) once it is situated in a specific context. This applies to both technical artifacts, as well as the individual. Once a subject knows that the information that is necessary to produce a change in the mind (state) is transduced and fundamentally altered by an external condition it passes through, it can occupy its full potential.⁵⁰ It is the contextuality and affective nature – the sense-ability – of input and output of a system (e.g. an individual or a collective), that determines action.

The relation of human and hammer, for example, is constituted by the hammer- and human-ness of each. Without the thing, the individual will not hammer, neither will the thing without the individual. The cross-pollination of identities, emergent potential, degrees of automation and of engagement produces a possibility space of the hammer-human-system. Whether the Batesonian *mind* or Juarrero's *identity* – the modulation of entities that make up each other's milieu and systems is what delineates the virtual.

A cybernetic reading of the individual's and collective's embedding in their *Umwelt* reframes the technological condition of the human as a technological conditioning. Given the rapidly progressing alienation from our technological milieu throughout the industrial age, a consecutive alienation from our libidinal investment via the continuous commodification of affects in the digital turn seems less of a surprising development. Bridging the two, however, allows us to view the problem of reactive subjectivity in a new light: If automation via technology is the base condition for both our libidinal and cognitive alienation and disinvestment, we might need to reassess technology regarding the quality of said automations. It seems that within the Enlightened condition, technological phyla accelerated towards a concretisation that not only renders the technological artifact itself too fragile to adapt to unforeseen circumstances and inputs, but renders us incapable to engage with the original problematic the artifact is attempting to "solve". We need to reassess what we

49 Raymond Ruyer, *Neofinalism*, trans. Alyosha Edlebi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016), vii-xxi.

50 Gregory Bateson, *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*, 323.

deem productive and unproductive technologies, what we deem *working* and *broken*, in order to tackle the abstract determination and grammatisation of desires and capacities that is framing our political and societal engagement. If “norms and values are continuously produced negentropically”⁵¹ (malleable myths in the Batesonian sense), decay and dis-assemblage might just be a way to address the determinate grammatisation of affects that give rise to the problem of reactive subjectivity in the first place.

51 Kousoulas, “Anankes Sway,” 165.

III. SCHIZOPHRENISATION OF SPACE AS POLITICS

III.1 THE HARD WAY

Alter-Automation and Care

Both, decay and dis-assemblage, are deterritorialising modulations of material relations. To avoid absolute chaos, however, life is a process of organising, maintaining and caring for things to counter this heat death.

This project of life, the project of the Neganthropocene, as formulated by the late Bernard Stiegler, spins from Martin Heidegger's neologism of *pensée* (penser/thinking + panser/caring). The epiphylogenetic (tertia) memory that is the environment holds a crucial role in potentialising and stimulating the caring of a desiring individual, according to Stiegler:

*“[It is] a trans-generational process collectively conserving, accumulating, and hence perpetually stabilizing and transforming the lessons of individual experience. It is for this reason that the noetic soul [...] is a struggle of tendencies: this soul's potential for elevation depends on the desire to know, requiring the constant undertaking of practices of care and learning made possible by exteriorised memory [...]*⁵²

Our capacity for (trans-)individuation, thus depends on our ability to retain

information from the tertiary retention system that is our environment. As the Enlightened Condition imposed a “bifurcation of nature that splits feelings, meanings and the like from hard-core facts”,⁵³ a re-naturalisation of our relation to our tertiary retention is necessary to achieve de-alienation. A shift in the understanding of the scientific and technological assemblage, away from the *object*, towards a notion that implies the social and political interest that they emerge from, demands from us to be more careful in the production of said assemblages.⁵⁴

Care and maintenance are often understood as interchangeable. It is important, however, to make the distinction between maintenance – an act of care and a recurring praxis of exchanging energetic flows (the body of the worker is worn out by the act of maintaining) – and care as an axiological attentiveness to fragility, an attunement to one’s surroundings.

The act of maintaining is geared towards sustaining stability. One that maintains seeks to re-stabilise an object of discussion in functioning, condition, time. Maintenance, a negentropic force per definition, aims to counter the natural decay and dispersion of energy, materials, relationships, systems and, according to the second law of thermodynamics, virtually everything.⁵⁵ Although this negentropic struggle is only partially successful in restoring a preceding status quo, it is important to note that the underlying motivation is the sustaining of a given set of relations and distributions, a reproduction of condition *X*. The prolonging of material life spans, relationships etc. (systems) is limiting the amount of energy that is needed to produce the original system by regularly injecting small amounts to avoid a drastic non-equilibrium between the original and the actual, producing value and discarding discard and surplus value extraction along the way. The greatest potential of maintenance, however, lies in its inability to ever fulfil its purpose properly: constraints will never be the same outside of the laboratory condition, once a micro-repair has been conducted – times have changed. The maintained is hence subject to recursivity that, along its looping on itself, is subject to contingent events and changes. The maintained, no matter how dedicated the layman, skilled the artisan, or intellectual the engineer, will never be the same. The constraints that maintenance is not apt to overcome are the ones that the inevitable progression of time enforces.

53 Maria Puig de la Bellacasa, “Matters of Care in Technoscience: Assembling Neglected Things,” *Social Studies of Science*, Vol. 41 #1 (February 2011), 87, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40997116>.

54 Ibid, 86.

55 **Whilst maintenance is not part of thermodynamics, the entropy it emerges from/against is. Whoever maintains, thus, is involving themselves in a negentropic struggle that aims to return to a preceding status quo.**

Care, on the other hand, is a perpetual praxis that evokes maintenance. Whether someone cares exclusively for their own good or for what they do not know out of “good nature” is a qualitative difference in caring. An awareness of fragility and context, however, is fundamental to the ability to care.⁵⁶ The ability to care is what we are concerned with if we are to open-up to each other, demanding a shift in the ethical paradigm. To foster an ethics of care is to foster one’s sensibility to sound, touch, taste, seeing, smelling, sensible to emotions of attraction and repulsion, of liberty and constraint, and as sense-ability, it is a thinking-in-affects. It is a process that involves objective judgement as much as emotional capacities, potentially reintegrating fact and belief in a post-enlightenment society.

The origins of an ethics of care can be traced back to feminist and environmental ethicists in the 1980s. Carol Gilligan, considered as one of the originators of the ethical theory, reacts in her 1982 book *A Different Voice* to the normative psychological theory of Lawrence Kohlberg’s *Stages of Moral Development* of children. Gilligan criticises the *Heinz Test*’s grammatisation and biased evaluation of moral development, we can now call this the test’s *enlightened conditioning*.⁵⁷ Kohlberg’s theory valued the capacity to solve moral dilemmas on the spot via the almost mathematical evaluation of an immediate lesser evil, disregarding the “narrative of relationships that extends over time”.⁵⁸ The test was primed to prefer a historically conditioned male perspective of “rational problem solving” and abstraction of value, over-seeing the potential and critical relevance of an attunement to fragility and the unfolding of long term developments. This split of fact and emotion, of

56 **Also the fragile egocentric is attuned to context due to their context, not due to themselves.**

57 **Moral Development Test conducted on children to qualify pre-adult development stages, according to Lawrence Kohlberg, 1981) The children are posed with a moral dilemma: Heinz’ wife Amy is sick. There is medicine at the local pharmacy, but Heinz cannot afford it. Should he steal the medicine? The evaluation of the test was set up to prefer answers that stressed the interchangeability of material goods, such as money and medicine, as opposed to the non-interchangeable value of life. (Yes, he should steal the medicine). These answers were tentatively to be found in young Boys. Girls tentatively answered no, referring to the unfolding of events in the future that potentially lead to worse scenarios (Heinz could go to jail whilst Amy gets sick again and the pharmacist could be pushed into precarity). Girls, since they have been historically conditioned into a role of the care-giver, thus argue according to a moral compass that is relational and temporal, as compared to the male perspective to solve problems efficiently. The Heinz test resulted in labelling of Girls as morally less developed, leading to Gilligan’s criticism. **please note that the categorisation of genders is part of both Lowenhaupt’s framework as well as Gilligans critique**

58 Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women’s Development* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), 28.

observation and relation, has been dominating ethico-political paradigms for centuries. To be equipped to respond to the entangled complexity of crises, to allow for a politics of trans-individuation, the relational thinking of an ethics of care, of a feminist ethics, is key to destratifying the ethico-poietical schism.

The situatedness that an ethics of care demands, allows for us to make further conclusions: The entanglements and affects rendered visible by an analysis or design must always be of a molecular nature, acting on the level of the trans-individual, the milieu and the *Mitsein*, the intersection of the desiring subject with the socius, and the actualisation of “technological assemblages [that] are not just objects but knots of social and political interests.”⁵⁹

An ethics of care assists us on the front of grammatisation: The desiring-machine, plugged into the sense-machines, plugged into the memory-machine ultimately leads us back to the desiring-complex being its own gauge valve: The inevitable abstraction that is taking place within the desiring-complex (and in the transduction of information between the machines), results in pre-suppositions and selective sensing constituted by an external regime of desire (run by other desiring-machines).⁶⁰ Desiring begins to desire its own repression as it encounters the social-machine. The multiplicity of desiring individuals and collectives problematizes desire and the grammatisation of affects. Once an understanding of the differently desiring subjects under similar constraints is developed, an understanding of desire production, grammatisation and, specifically, determinate grammatisation by external entities that alter desire production and transmission, can be developed.

To allow for the transmitters of this *transversal* desire to be liberated from de-valuation (transposition into {e} and determinate grammatisation), we ought to find ways to affectively and inducingly problematise subjectivity on a level that is situated between the individual and the collective, on the level of the transmission and tertial retention, on the level of the environment. Gerald Raunig’s definition of the *dividual*, the inherently situated individual that, without its context, simply *is not*, seems appropriate. The notion of the dividual, however, reconfigures our conception of assemblages, shifting actor-network-theory closer to the problem of the One and the Many as it stresses the equivalence in importance of both part, whole, and (specifically) relation. The answer to avoiding the short-circuiting of transindividuation and of desiring-production by external regimes lies in the de- and re-fragmentation of the *dissemblage*, that consists of metastable relations, perpetually

59 Puig de la Bellacasa, “Matters of Care in technoscience,” 86.

60 **One might think about the selective retention of visual and atmospheric characteristics in police suspect interrogations.**

transforming, transgressing and transposing.^{61, 62} Significant and embodied experiences that potentially break from the alienated subject, always affect the dividual. Acts of care that re-integrate producer and product, situated right at the intersection of desire and politics, individual and collective, of mind and system, can then occupy the role of our myth-making faculty. It seems, that only an overly intensive engagement with the material, social and ecological milieu, a “maximum effort, minimum reward” attitude that does not rely on the outsourcing of energetic investment that a monotecnological globalism perfected to offer, a reintroduction of the collective problem (as Yuk Hui noted it) that produces cosmotechnological adaptations in the need to be overcome, is as productive for the de-alienation from our technological milieus, as they are for the emergence of a politics of trans-individuation.⁶³ The breakdown of a political economy that (the break-down) produces a metabolic rift between the libidinal economy and the available fulfilment of desires (which barely potentializes the production of {u}),^{64,65} a rift from which a type of dividual synaptic economy can emerge, is necessary. It demands the automating-otherwise, automating-together and automating-with, an altering of our relationship with our tools and environments. We need to question which tools (the glass, the spanner, the house, the infrastructure) serve the purpose of becoming, and which ones ultimately produce their own ends. In short: We need a Thesian Ship that has no professionals to fix it for us, but which demands us - as bricoleurs.⁶⁶

61 Stiegler, *The Neganthropocene*, 18.

62 Gerald Raunig, *Dissemblage: Machinic Capitalism and Molecular Revolution* (London: Minor Compositions, 2022).

63 Hui, “One Hundred Years.”

64 Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*.

65 John Bellamy Foster, “Marx’s Theory of the Metabolic Rift: Classical Foundations for Environmental Sociology” *American Journal of Sociology* Vol. 105 #2 (September 1999): 366-405, <https://doi.org/10.1086/210315>.

66 Claude Levi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind*, trans. unknown (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1962).

III.2 BREAKING THINGS THAT WORK

The Bricoleur and Productive Luddism

As we look towards the *working* automata⁶⁷ that cause the hyper-alienation of subjects, we ought to take into consideration the varying scales that these are at work. The automated economic and political system that serve as the framework for this thesis and are generally considered *working*, are only doing so for and towards a certain outcome of a predefined scope. As a machine, they work towards what they are intended to work towards, insensible to other complications, problems, and potential damages, insensible to contingent information. Much alike the small-scale automata that make up our immediate surroundings, ranging from smartphones over power tools to the arguably banal flushing toilet, the instantaneousness with which gratification (fulfilment) is presented to the (desiring) individual in a trade-off for a serious valuation continuously intensifies. The concretized machine, inept to absorb contingent events, reveals itself to be unproductive on a larger temporal scale, reproducing events, at best.

67 **Although the historic automaton describes a closed machine that operates according to a predetermined set of instructions, I here refer to the recursive automating effect of automations. A cybernetic understanding of the automaton is necessary, one that takes external input and entanglements, as well as the possibility of an adapting system consciousness into account.**

The reason for the ease with which we engage in such automations is plain biological conditioning. The conservation of energy and its carrier molecule Adenosine Triphosphate (ATP) that fuels our bodies and brains allows for a reliable anticipation of a future in which the metabolism does not come to an abrupt stop. The less energy we spend, the better. As care and maintenance are practices which fundamentally challenge the workings of surplus value {e} production that aims to cater to this attitude, we can understand why their practice is productive: Their value lies not in the conservation of ATP but the conservation and proliferation of potentials over a long-term unfolding of events, much like Gilligan argued in her critique of Lowernhaupt's Heinz Test.

In order to stimulate the desiring subject to participate in politics, we need to design constraints that stimulate the formulation and overcoming of collective problems. When the Luddites protested the automation of their craftsmanship in the early 19th century with the destruction of cotton looms and wool shearing machines, they did so out of a reactionary fear of technological development.⁶⁸ As opposed to the non-productive destruction of a tool, a conversion of the concretized machine into a productive constraint entails its re-evaluation in terms of the dissemblage, it entails a sensible dis-assembling to a level of abstract functioning which allows for the appropriation and repurposing by the dividual, a morphing into a *part-subject of transversal desire*.⁶⁹ As Yuk Hui states about the working of machines in *Notes on technical normativity*, “disasters [...] are not the result of the breaking down of machines, but rather of their perfection”.⁷⁰ As to properly assess machines (and our technological modifications of our surroundings), from stoves, to buildings, to political systems and global energy networks, we need to invert our notions of the *broken* and the *working* and understand the abstract broken machine as potential-inducing to our (cybernetic) selves that proliferates the capacity to problematize as it re-introduces the collective problem to our automated lives.

68 Gavin Mueller, *Breaking Things at Work: The Luddites Are Right About Why You Hate Your Job* (London: Verso, 2021).

69 **The dividual, as opposed to the individual, refers to an embedded subject in relation to others.**

70 Yuk Hui, “Notes on Technical Normativity” in *Technological Accidents, Accidental Technologies* (Rotterdam: V2, 2023.) 162.

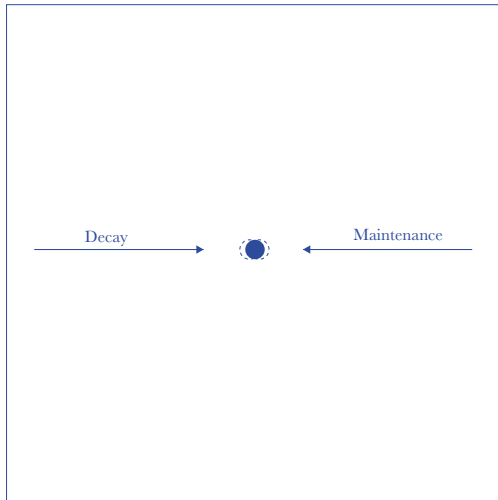


Fig. 8: Maintenance and Decay as counteracting and stabilising forces

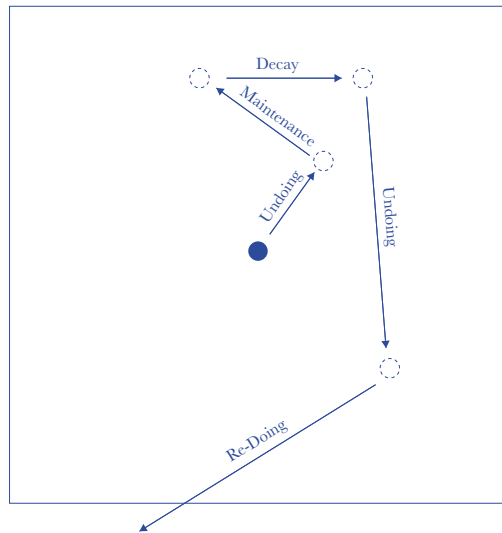


Fig. 9: Decay, Maintenance, Undoing, and Re-doing as ways to challenge technical normativity

To illustrate: Belgian artist Francis Alÿs produced a short video of Afghan and British troopers dis- and re-assembling their weapons during the deployment of the British in Afghanistan in 2013.⁷¹ The two sides of the split-screen video simultaneously engage in the undoing of the harmful tool, the killing automaton that is both means and end. After the machine guns are made ambiguous, broken in their original functioning, the troopers reassemble them. The art piece is ably titled *Sometimes doing is undoing and sometimes undoing is doing*. The undoing of the war tool results in the production of peace and vice versa. Critically, the relation of parts of the machine gun produces what is the killing tool. Once dismantled, the potentials are endless: barrels, grips, triggers, and coils are not inherently deadly, they can be appropriated for water systems, safety handles, life vests and suspensions. The doing by undoing can result in doing-otherwise.

In Alÿs' video the troopers pause for a moment once the weapon has been dis-assembled, before putting the pieces back together in their original configuration. The dis-assembly is usually part of an act of maintenance. The gun is taken apart, cleaned, and put back together, restabilising the killing tool. (*Fig 8*) It is specifically in this very moment though, the moment of deterritorialisation, which holds potential for change. Once undone, the system of the gun is fundamentally unstable, allowing for modification and creative reinterpretations of existing materials and technical elements.

The moment of maintenance presents us with the decision of what is worth to be maintained, shedding unnecessary flows of material and energy. The undoing of harmful systems and objects allows for their appropriation for alternative uses. (*Fig 9*) The restabilisation of these harmful systems remains an active process, one which we can decide against.

71 Francis Alÿs, "Sometimes Doing is Undoing and Sometimes Undoing is Doing," video artwork, 2013. <https://francisalys.com/sometimes-doing-is-undoing-and-sometimes-undoing-is-doing/>.

III.3 TOWARDS A NEW COSMOTECHNICS

Pharmacology of the Hyper-Object

With the physical and cognitive distance that global infrastructure introduced between the individual and the problem, we can return to Stiegler's notion of symbolic misery. The alienation from and of technology and alongside it the alienation from the capacity for protention, appears to be depending on the infrastructure that allows for the rapid transmission of information – such as electrical impulses, voltages, data, affect – far beyond the sensible milieu. The lure of automation, thus, expands the distance between the individual's anticipatory horizon and the problem – a type of dark energy that is produced just as it is tethered by the expanding cables, shipping routes and satellites of global trade.

Hence, symbolic misery does not only circumscribe the loss of participatory value production, but the loss the sensible, the recordable, the comprehensible. Etymologically, the Greek *syn-ballô* (“throwing together”) supports this claim: The lack of individuation that automated and externalised desire production equates, emerges from the lack of our throwing-together with the problem, from the absence of encounter.

The moment of maintenance, however, allows for us to mobilize the paranoid automaton and suggest a line of flight that cures its own sickness. A pharma-

cology of the hyper-object that relates urban subjects, reiterating on the relations of the dissemblage via partial schizophrenisation, transmuting edifices of alienation into open liminal machines that oscillate between schizo-paranoid poles and allow for perpetual de- and reterritorialisation via immediate engagement and long-term investment of energy.

To recover from the symbolic misery that is proletarianisation, we thus need to bridge what is distant, uncover what is out of sight, and appropriate the problem via the solution, the former being proletarianisation itself, the latter the hyper-object that causes it.

We need to sense-able-ise the abstract automaton and register its potential as an action-inducing part-subject of the technological dissemblages that make up our environments and constitute the immanent potentials for change.

IV. FINAL REMARKS

To summarise: The determinate grammatisation that is product of a dialectic thinking that has proliferated from the Enlightened condition functions as a constraint regime for individual desires. The alienation that subjects experience from both each other and their technical milieus results in the solidification of ultra-liberal, reactive subjectivity which inhibits processes of transindividuation and politics as a mechanism to formulate and overcome collective problems in a productive and potential-inducing manner.

Problematising the coming together of individual and collective is synonymous with problematising the technological milieu and system through which the individual and socius communicate, formulate, negotiate, and fulfil their desires. The role of the (associated) milieu in the (trans)individuation of (the) subject(s) operates on the basis of transversal desire, the formulation and fulfilment of which is anticipated and achieved via technological means.

It is hence urgent, in the pursuit of a politics of transindividuation, to de-alienate the subject from its knowledge to produce desire and for the individual to be susceptible to the desires of others. The participatory production of space and intentions for it serves as a potential means to achieve a dividual, transversal desire production which breaks from the efficiency based global-normalisation of values which causes the global collective challenges we face today.

As a method, I propose the sense-ablisation and care-ful engagement with our milieus as a collective doing-others (undoing, redoing, letting decay, maintaining, re-pairing) of material conditions to foster potential-inducing transversal desire production and the capacity to problematise the intensive differences and relations that inform our collective becoming.

EPILOGUE

ALGORITHMIC CITIZENSHIP AND SPATIAL PLANNING

The determinate grammatisation of identities and values that is taking place via social media platforms, financial bodies, network carriers and news outlets is attended by private corporations as much as governmental institutions. In the context of the Netherlands – where this thesis has been conceived – digital and algorithmic recording of the socio-economic activities, health conditions, leisure demands (and so forth) of citizens is common practice. As the Dutch government aims to perpetually “optimise” (rationalise, make-more-efficient) the organisation of its subjects it steers towards the general automation of “civil services”, leaving the individual deprived of even the smallest encounter *due to* political matters.⁷² As an offspring of *surveillance capitalism*, algorithmic governmentality is the automation of the “processing” of citizens, resulting in a deepening gulf between response-able politics and the current Political. As Lila Athanasiadou discusses in her article on *Gentrification, Colonialism and Urban Echo Chambers*, the Dutch government (alongside others) began to outsource its demographic analysis and calculations of potential profit to the algorithmic assessment of current and potential inhabitants. The application of colonial logics - the exploitation and extraction of land and resources, the latter of which largely experienced a shift from material resources to (digital) labour - in the valuation of a *terra nullius* that is to be developed according to

72 **One might think of the *Toeslagenaffaire* that resulted in the collapse of the Dutch government in 2021**

the city's and investor's interests results in inequitable urban environments, marginalizing locals that the dialectic processing of the digital algorithm labels "undesirable".⁷³ The cybernetics of this process, generally described as gentrification, rely as much on the deterioration of a specific area as it does on the financial investment that is done by public funding and private equity to "improve" it. The municipal support for such developments is uttered in vision-plans, zoning laws and infrastructure projects, leading the way for the profit extraction whose promise initiated the loop. Intentional absence of maintenance becomes a tool for profit extraction that the professionalisation and monopolisation of maintenance potentializes. As locals are deprived of the knowledge of how to maintain and professional maintenance is absent, a neighbourhood falls in disrepair. Encountering the racial and socio-economical bias of a governing algorithm, the residents build distrust towards a governing entity and lose their interest to be invested in Public affairs.⁷⁴ The transition between social networks, institutions, and foundations to public institutions and infrastructure appears to spark an anaphylactic shock of political participation and investment.

The neighbourhood of Afrikaanderwijk, situated in the South of Rotterdam, is a prime example for such a case: After the racial profiling of the Rotterdamwet and disinvestment of the municipality (which still holds a monopole to the maintenance and organisation of public infrastructure) residents organise themselves for leisure, sustenance, and after-school care, among others. As to challenge the proletarianising effect of hyper-objects, such as algorithmic planning, determinate grammatisation of libidinal investment, and the automation of life, I propose the collectivisation of the local electricity grid in Afrikaanderwijk.

As a super-automation (powering further automatons and externalising energetic investment itself), and a political space (formulating and overcoming a collective problem) that is currently reproduced without participatory decision making, it holds potential to render sensible the super-material dimension of proletarianising global infrastructure. It is a necessity that produces collective discourse which, once uncovered from tar mats, plastered walls, and barbed wire fences, allows for the problematisation of automation, the coming together of individual and collective via participatory care and repair, and a becoming literate and response-able of technological and political-libidinal entanglements.

73 Lila Athanasiadou, "Gentrification, Colonialism and Urban Echo Chambers" in *Space of Technicity – Theorising Social, Technical and Environmental Entanglements*, ed. Robert A. Gorny, Stavros Kousoulas, Dulmini Perera and Andrej Radman, (Delft: TUDelft Open, 2024), 51-72.

74 **The capitalised Public refers to the services and spaces provided by the Political (institution)**

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