The New
New

FROM THE EDGES

CORRES-
PONDENCES

VISIONARY
NARRATIVES
FOR
INCLUSIVE
AND
JUST DIGITAL
FUTURES

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LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

In the centre of Fedora, that grey stone metropolis, stands a metal building with a crystal globe in every room. Looking into each globe, you see a blue city, the model of a different Fedora. These are the forms the city could have taken if, for one reason or another, it had not become what we see today. In every age someone, looking at Fedora as it was, imagined a way of making it the ideal city, but while they constructed their miniature model, Fedora was already no longer the same as before, and what had until yesterday been a possible future became only a toy in a glass globe.

– Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities*

This edition of DING magazine takes the city of Fedora as an inspiration for the inexhaustible vision of its people and a warning that visions without action cannot make a better future. The articles you will read here build on the relationships between people and systems. In challenging the power structures which determine whose ideas become reality, a chorus of different voices emerge that together offer new departure points for more equal and just digital futures.

The writers, artists and activists who have contributed to this edition seek to resist and question the trajectories on which we currently find ourselves. In so doing, they are scrutinising power – how it flows, where it accumulates and who has it. Around half of these contributions are from fellows on The New New Fellowship that we launched this year to support projects that are showing the inadequacy of the systems that surround us and are doing something about it. You will find short descriptions of the other Fellows' projects throughout the magazine. The Fellowship is our own contribution to ensuring that better, inclusive visions are woven into the fabric of our futures.

Our contributors pay attention to how systems structure knowledge, power and lives. Jac sm Kee opens with an impassioned case for technology that "embodies and nourishes" the living complexity of feminist movements. Xiaowei Wang looks at how, long before predictive technologies created vectors of social power, divination was used to "foreclose the future" and maintain the status quo. Camila Nobrega reckons with how each of us is implicated within systems of value. She asks "Who is this 'we' trapped in an accelerated, future-oriented time?" She urges us to decolonise our utopias so that they may be fit for the future.

When we think of the entanglements of what-is and what-might-be suggested by Fedora, we realise that once something is articulated, or conceived, it attains a kind of existence. Makan Fofana and Hugo Pilate write that to terraform a symbiotic banlieue defined by abundance rather than want, people's minds and attitudes must first open and change. Pedro Oliveira argues that to fully understand the violence inflicted upon those suspected of being ineligible to cross a border, we must radically expand our notion of what a border is.

English is one of the internet's predominant languages, yet here you will find pieces in French, Greek, Spanish and Brazilian Portuguese. We've worked with wonderful translators, which has added an extra layer of complexity. What is left out or resists interpretation is as important as what comes through clearly. Elena Silvestrini notes that since the Italian "sicurezza" and Spanish "seguridad" imply policing and security, the English term "safe" is often used to describe safe(r) spaces. Andrew Mallinson and Cami Rincón contribute two poems, in English and Spanish, which exist side by side, not as translations, but as companions or reflections, each of the other. Tinashe Mushakavanhu asks what can be done with the holes left by the repression of the Mugabe years, and how those tactics can be used to positively rectify the digital holes left by the languages, cultures and people who are under-served by or refused space on the internet.

Writing from perspectives of marginalisation, queerness and repression, it is at a point poised between critique, speculation and action that these contibutors are working. It is the edge of the possible, the state of *what-if* which defines pioneers – those who look beyond what is currently the case. If to imagine and speculate are acts of resistance, they are also only the first steps towards more emancipatory, equitable futures. In such an "arid, urgent present time," we hope you will be inspired by their words.

Katherine Waters & Julia Kloiber,
Superrr Lab

https://thenewnew.space/

Tending to wildness: field notes on movement infrastructure

Jac sm Kee
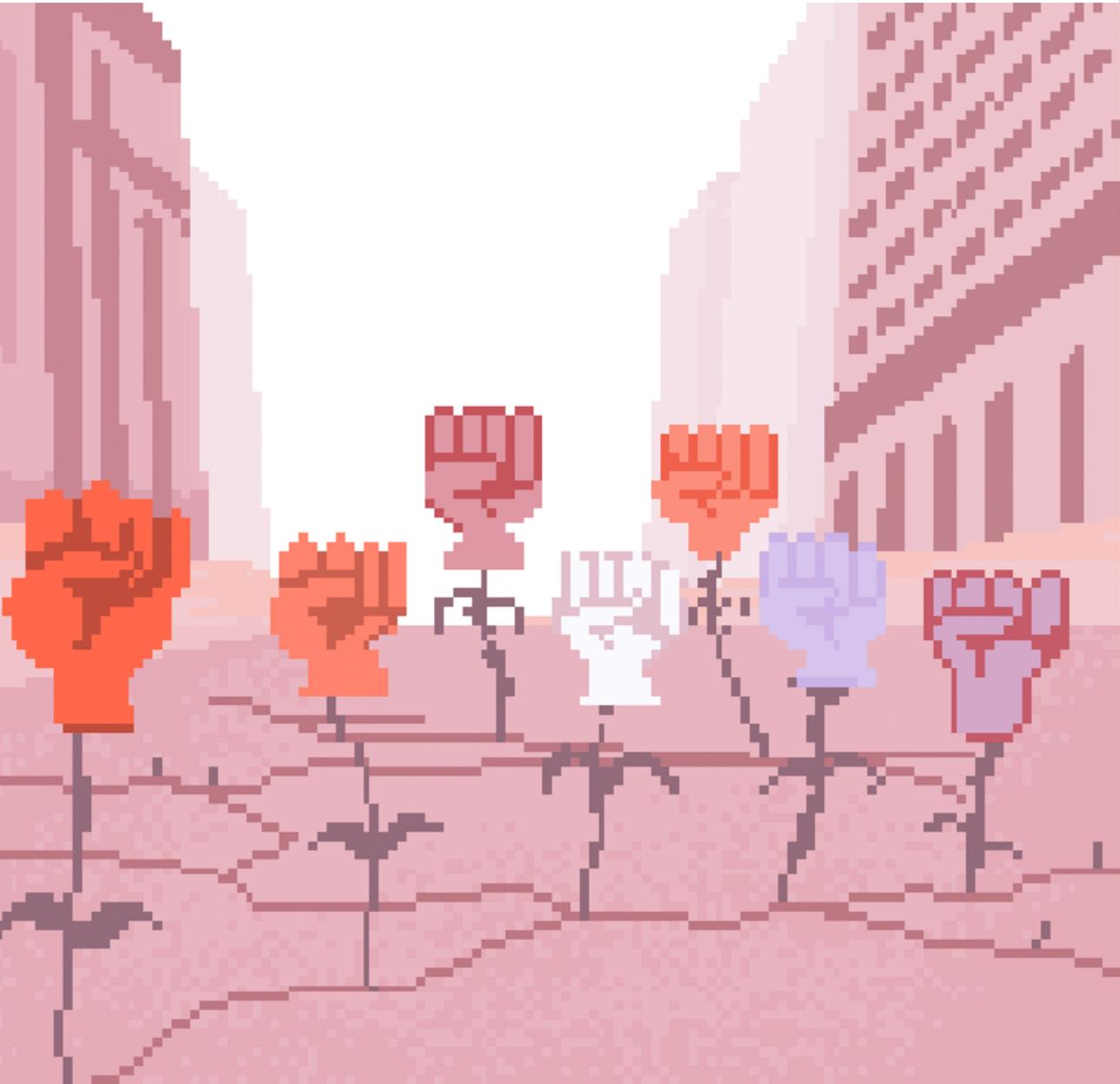
There is a famous Indonesian poem❶ by Wiji Thukul about the might of wild flowers rupturing the seemingly immovable force of walls – irresistibly occupying all spaces, living and proliferating, even within their hostile concrete bodies. I often return to it when I feel overwhelmed by structures and systems that seem impossible to shift.

When I first stitched my activism with the emerging landscapes of digital technologies, it was still at that soft stage of becoming. Twitter was fresh-faced and Facebook was at its poking stage. Nothing was so big that it resisted demise – even Geocities and Friendster. It was exhilarating and fat with hope to be in such a rupturing age where our phenomenological, political, economic and relational realities were constantly dishevelled and reshuffled by different possibilities. For a moment, the reconfiguration of stubborn, old power structures into something looser, more distributive and infinitely queerer was almost palpable. I found my local queer community in the corners of Yahoo! mailing lists, and discovered this story was not particular to me in Malaysia, but resonated with activists in Brazil, India, Lebanon, Egypt, Ghana – where having code-speak handles and intimate dog-eared internet terrains gave us space for interpellation, culture-shaping, truth-speaking and community-making.

I speak about this moment because it was a significant shift in the texture and dynamics of how we organise. Much of the transformative power of the internet was in enabling us to convene in ways that were not possible before – to find our own community of weird, and to forge political kinship and empathetic accountability across movements and geographical distances. A large part of the Feminist Internet work❷ I was doing at the Association for Progressive Communications' Women's Rights Programme was to understand, surface and chart this Cambrian explosion on the right to assemble, and the ways in which it shifted movement-building in a digital age.

When people with resonating passions and a desire for deep transformations convene, the world changes in very real ways. But the force of the pandemic narrowed our physical mobility and disarrayed our rituals of being together and organising. The container of a room – with its mundanely reliable whiteboards, audible distance between chairs and hangout areas outside – that anchored much of our ability to analyse, strategise and nourish each other with hope and frustration, abruptly disappeared. This affected all our rhythms, from day-to-day work within organisations and the regu-

larity of larger gatherings that acted as pulses of embodied connection, to the ability to call meetings in response to emerging crises.

We scrambled to find ways to convene. Digital tools once seen as useful became understood as critical movement infrastructure. With that, we also confronted how impoverished the digital landscape is for spaces and practices imagined and built with the transformative power of feminist values. Those who looked for something that resembled an organisational space found collaborative platforms encoded with the invisible force of a task master, frenetically ensuring productivity and efficiency, even as the world collapsed inside and around us. These platforms scheduled out our time and prioritised broadcasting over the generative synchronicity of autonomous bodies in conversation. In the service of surveillance capitalism, many of our online social spaces were grotesquely extractive, leaving us vulnerable, dependent and frayed. It became increasingly apparent that individual disparities in access resulted in exclusions that are profound and cumulative in effect.

It wasn't just the harsh inadequacy of tools like Zoom – with its cubicled form, centralised power and carelessness towards privacy – becoming the staple for most of our encounters. It was also about figuring out how to translate the practices and politics of building trust, holding conflict, enacting care and generating engagement through digital infrastructure, and little else. I found myself yearning for the company of feminist accomplices to make sense of this deep dislocation. At the same time, I was also observing how we crafted these spaces for ourselves, formally and informally, and centred principles like safety, access, usability, intimacy and care.

In Malaysia, where we were confronting lockdown on top of an illegitimate government who sneaked into power, a group of feminist LGBTQI and anti-racism activists started to hold fortnightly calls just to check in on each other. We took turns holding space and shared our practices and grief in ways that helped us to be okay. For free radicals❸ (a term I use to describe activists who are not part of organisations, but connect between different forms of organising), the reliable regularity of such a space became an important anchoring point. Free radicals are an invisible, often under-resourced, node in movement ecosystems, even as they play an important binding role.

The question of infrastructure-sharing also became key. Subscription services, hosting, the attention and time needed to tend to our online

Illustration by #shikaksetchbook / Shieko Reto
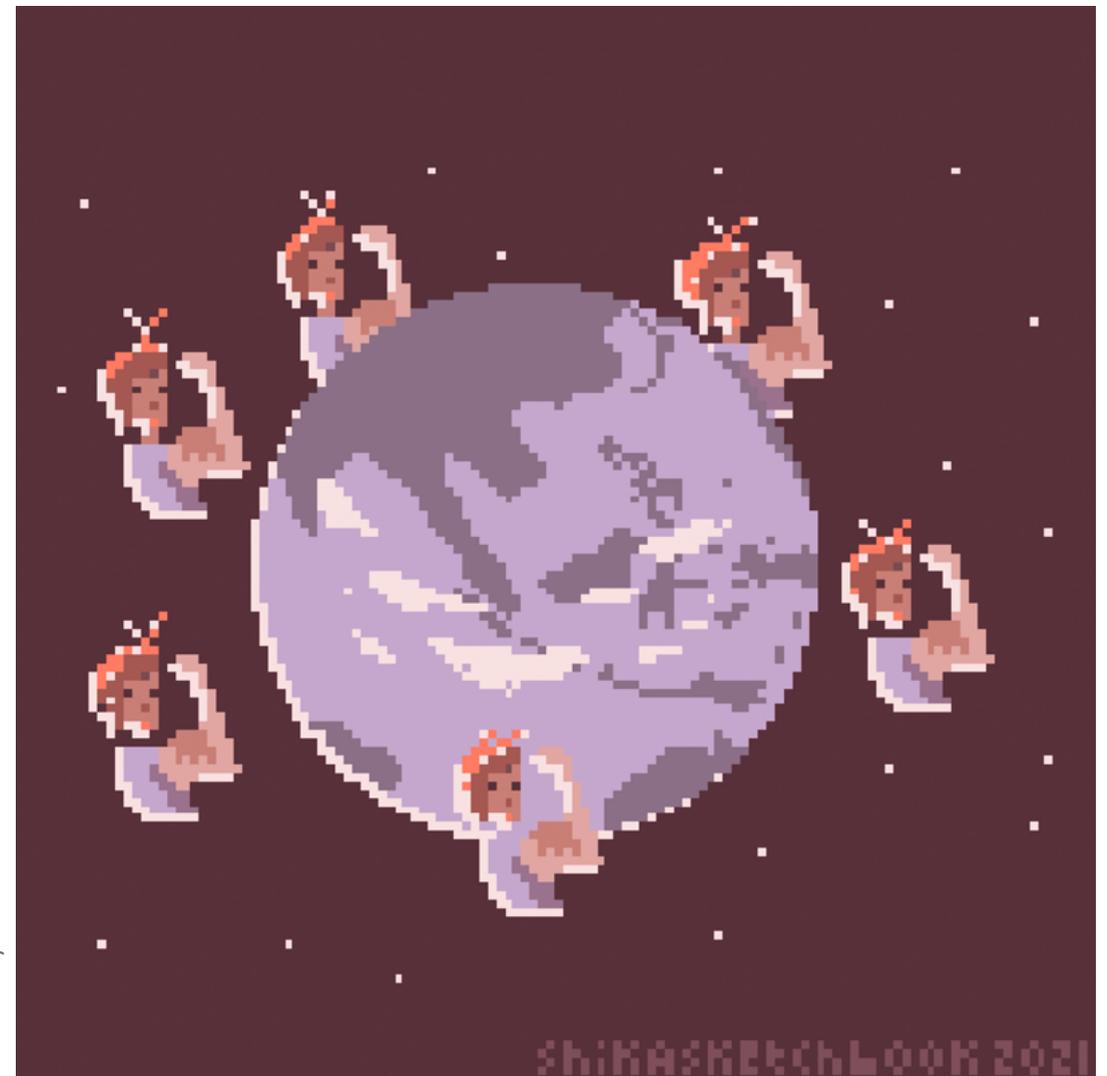
spaces, security infrastructure – all of these previously inconspicuous elements needed to be factored into operational budgets. Flexible, core grants are already a challenge for many social justice organisations, especially outside of North America.❹ For smaller, local organisations, it was also about figuring out what to use, what was important, and reconfiguring the dynamics of organising in this new context. Work can't simply be transposed online,❺ so how do we create purposeful ways of sharing what we have access to, or have learnt, made mistakes on, or are thinking through with each other?

A group of feminists working on a rural community internet access network in Protal sem Porteiras, Brazil did this by holding women's circles that peeled off the layers of technology and folded in the materiality and politics of affect. When the pandemic interrupted in-person gatherings, they took time to pause, reflect and transcribe experiences and processes into Nodes that Bond,[6] a workbook that could ripple out as practices into other spaces. In another instance, digital security facilitators coordinated with their affiliated international organisations to pool resources and fund a shared, self-hosted BigBlueButton to support secure and reliable video calls for activists. As it unfolded, this approach flowed through the interconnected networks of digital security and feminist tech activists who vouched for each additional account.

In my yearning for community meaning-making, at the start of the pandemic I began a multi-spooled initiative, inviting friends and networks engaged in feminism and technology to imagine futures that existed in alternative dynamics and economic models. This unfolded into a temporary Slack space for us to huddle and discuss issues, experiment with different speculative and object-history methodologies, play with visualisation and craft short fiction, and make a virtual space on Mozilla Hub populated by our collective interrogations and imaginations.

The experience was, personally, a deep learning on distributed creation and sustaining itinerant spaces for organising | thinking | discussing | dreaming that moor in ephemeral bays. Collaboration bound the effort together, ranging from the Feminist Internet[7] network, to the more organic web of activist friends who are also fiction writers, weaving and building on methodologies developed by Coding Rights[8] and Malaysia Design Archive,[9] and holding joint sessions with visual, graffiti,[10] audio[11] and VR[12] artists whom I got to know (better, and newly). Where possible, we organised play sessions: through our own networks, at Take Back the Tech[13] and at Mozfest,[14] where an artist honorarium was made to stretch across continents, collaborators and creators. This initiative is still in the making, and though it would require time and attention, the open-ended possibility of pollinating further generative encounters feels somewhat hopeful.

What is the infrastructure here? In some ways, it is the mailing list, Twitter networks, Slack and Mattermost channels, Mozhub, padlets, late night voicenotes on Telegram and Signal. It is also the threads

of engagement within and through those spaces that are platform-agnostic but charged with the kind of energy and collaboration we want to engender and circulate. Careful thinking around accessibility, facilitating many ways of engagement, being conscious and restful with pace, the affectivity of interfaces and intimacy of voice – this is the soil in which relationships of trust, accountability and play flourish, tended by every single node in these multi-spooled encounters.

Sometimes it's about needing better technology to sustain and support the living complexity of movement organising beyond the precarity and limitations of what is ubiquitous and fuelled by techno-capitalism. But sometimes, it is about needing to seed and grow technology that more accurately embodies and nourishes the proliferation of wild flowers capable of rupturing power structures. This means practising the discipline of dreaming, paying attention to the ways we exercise care, noting how we mess with the intended uses and purposes of different technology platforms, nurturing the values that root our relationships and the ways we share, circulate and cultivate knowledge and resources. The seemingly desolate space of crisis can be a generous site for deep shifts and unruly imaginings of how things can be. There's a lot more to say, but I'll end with one of the seeds that germinated – a dedicated fund for feminist tech in the Larger World, Numun Fund,[15] co-dreamt and made to precisely sow and nourish more wild flowers in this technological landscape.●

Jac sm Kee is a feminist activist working at the intersection of internet technologies, social justice and collective power at the hyper-local, networked and global levels. Jac is a founding member of the Malaysia Design Archive, and stewarded the collaborative development of the Feminist Principles of the Internet. Alongside co-dreamers, Jac is currently making the Numun Fund – the first fund for feminist tech in the global South – a reality.

Shika/Shieko Reto is a visual artist from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Her work addresses trans- and cross-cultural phenomena with a focus on gender identity and expression, sexual orientation and identity which transcend boundaries. Her work has been exhibited at the Moleskin exhibition Tokyo, Singapore Biennale, AR-Safe Haven Helsinki programme, TransEuropa Madrid, "Frequencies of Tradition" at Kadist and Guangdong Times Museum and https://anthologyofmetaverses.com. Her band, Tingtonketz, released their second album in March.

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Aveia, espaçonaves, uma folha de babosa, uma pélvis: fui coletar trechos de futuro e resolvi dar meia-volta

Camila Nobrega

Esse texto primeiro veio em imagens e virou um caderno com o nome "futuros". Não que eu tenha muito talento para desenho, mas a imagem e a oralidade às vezes são meu primeiro caminho de pensamento. Incômodos de uma obsessão com o futuro, ainda em forma de associações livres. Quatro dessas imagens: uma espaçonave, um pote de aveia, uma folha de babosa, uma pélvis. Vejo no muro da minha casa, em Kreuzberg, em Berlim, um pôster de um evento – *Queer Futures*, do Gorki, um dos principais teatros da cidade. Brotam convites, conferências, encontros, projetos que falam, especular o futuro. De quem? Quem tem tido o privilégio de ocupar espaços de debate sobre o que virá, em um tempo tão árido, tão presente, urgente. Um tempo sem ar, em que há testes de covid-19 em todas as esquinas na Alemanha, enquanto em outras partes do mundo a vacina ainda é algo muito distante.

Ochy Curiel, teórica afro-dominicana, lésbica, afirma que o modelo newtoniano busca uma distinção entre passado e futuro, bem como o modelo cartesiano defende separação entre natureza e gente.[1] adrienne maree brown já descreveu anteriormente como fragmentar é uma das maiores armas para manter opressões.[2] Guardemos isso, que também nos direciona a pensar uma palavra que faz parte das entranhas do imaginário ocidental: progresso.

A espaçonave: ela foi parar no caderno em 11 de julho. "Viagens espaciais devem se popularizar e levar milhares no futuro", dizia uma notícia da CNN. No subtítulo: "embora o preço não fique barato". Naquele dia, a nave espacial Virgin Galactic foi lançada com o bilionário Richard Branson. Nove dias depois, outro magnata criou do próprio dinheiro um marco histórico no imaginário das pessoas – Jeff Bezos, dono da Amazon e do jornal Washington Post, que também fabricou sua própria nave. Não satisfeito agradeceu a todos os clientes ("vocês pagaram por tudo isso", o que me faz querer vomitar cada pacote da Amazon ao qual sucumbi no passado). E disse que viu um planeta "frágil".[3] Magnatas precisam, afinal, inventar fragilidades, para que possam ser preenchidas com soluções em formas de business.

A conquista de outros mundos não é novidade no capitalismo, ela é a base colonial. Sempre foi um fetiche do sistema, assim como o descarte de algo anterior e a criação a partir de um ponto zero. Narrativas futuras, cidades futuras ("smart"?!). São referências constantes novamente Octavia Butler, Ursula Le Guin. E, claro, Donna Haraway. Todas referências incríveis que arrombam portas fun-

damentais, inclusive aqui dentro. Mas uma coisa provoca um ruído no estômago. É engolidora a repetição única de referências e a presença deste debate especialmente em círculos privilegiados, nos países que concentram boa parte do capital financeiro da atualidade.

Há um incômodo com o absurdo do tempo que vivemos. Isso é comum, tanto na Alemanha, onde vivo, como no Brasil, onde minha cabeça nunca deixa de pisar quando escreve. Mas há algo que soa muito distante no debate europeu. Algo que varre outras formas de pensar o tempo. A comunicadora e artista Indígena brasileira Naine Terena questiona a noção de falta de tempo, no texto "Corpos dóceis".❹ E ela diz "o tempo que você diz que não tem, que você acha que não tem". Ela fala de um corpo domesticado, obediente, submisso à produtividade. E deixa evidente que há outras formas de viver, inclusive tratadas como pobreza e que podem na verdade trazer o que ela chama de "sossego material". Nem todos os corpos fazem parte da lógica dominante, simples assim. E, ao mesmo tempo, nada simples.

Quem é esse "nós", preso em um tempo acelerado, direcionado ao futuro? Junto com a pesquisadora, artista e liderança indígena Vândria Borari, começamos a pensar sobre isso em um texto intitulado "One Vision, One World - whose world then?", feito com base em um discurso presencial da chanceler da Alemanha, Angela Merkel❺, sobre o futuro da internet, em que ela fala sobre criar uma ideia comum. De novo a obsessão da linearidade.

Chegamos a outra das imagens no caderno: um pote de (aveia). Veio em uma lista sobre alimentação integral, como parte de dicas para reduzir depressão e ansiedade. Para trazer a pessoa mais para o presente, dizia o texto. Considerada um sedativo natural, a aveia é usada para tratamento de depressão e ansiedade. De acordo com o Census Bureau (departamento de estatísticas) dos Estados Unidos, 42% das pessoas reportaram sintomas de ansiedade e depressão, número 11% maior do que no ano anterior (pandemia também tem papel nisso). Alimentação é alternativa aos medicamentos. Aliás, chegamos a mais uma lógica colonial. O lítio é hoje uma das bases para esse tipo de medicamento. Metade das reservas estão localizadas na Bolívia, no Salar de Uyuni. Da mesma fonte de onde saem

> Quem é esse "nós", preso em um tempo acelerado, direcionado ao futuro?

baterias de smartphones e também de carros elétricos, que conduzem outra parte de promessas de dias mais "verdes" e "sustentáveis" (a que mesmo estamos sustentando?).

> Imaginar e sentir têm rastro na estrutura concreta das nossas formas de existência.

Quase cinquenta anos de "Os limites do crescimento", livro escrito em 1972, comissionado pelo Clube de Roma, liderado por um industrial. Ainda tomado como referência em debates sobre crise socioambiental e o clima. Tinha objetivo primordial de projetar o futuro, ler o mundo através de modelos com números de população mundial, produção industrial e poluição. Apontava a impossibilidade de crescimento indefinido, mas tinha também o objetivo de calcular em métricas possibilidades de manter o progresso, e de expandir um modelo único para que todos os seres humanos pudessem atingir algum tipo de bem-estar, de acordo com padrões eurocêntricos. Não porque as corporações estavam de fato preocupadas com o impacto que causavam, mas porque não havia mais como varrer os efeitos para debaixo do tapete.

Agora surge, porém, mais um reforço que parece alargar limites: a imaginação, especialmente de pessoas privilegiadas em lugares de poder. E lá vamos nós novamente. O que isso de fato tem de diferente sobre a lógica linear, orientada por progresso, por uma crença enorme no desenvolvimento tecnológico? Imaginar e sentir têm rastro na estrutura concreta das nossas formas de existência. O futuro que nasce da América Latina não se descola de veias, entranhas e buracos cavados a todo momento para tirar recursos como minérios, alimentos, represar água. Represar outras formas de existência. Mais uma vez a construção de um futuro único, universal.

Então, "é possível descolonizar utopias?" pergunta a cientista política María do Mar Castro Varela. Ela elabora sobre como a ideia de futuro pode carregar um imaginário colonial. Precisamos desempacotar as utopias, "elas precisam te fazer suar e tremer, porque é necessário confrontar traumas tanto vividos por você como causados por você e sua história".❻

Diferentes cosmologias levam a pensar o tempo de outra maneira. Olhando para frente, é também preciso pedir licença e recuperar

raízes, garantindo referências, cavando para entender de onde as resistências vêm, por que e como cosmologias lutam para não se extinguirem. Passados subterrâneos que, na lógica capitalista, estão fadados ao descarte. A brasileira Katiúscia Ribeiro, em um texto chamado "O futuro é ancestral", recobra a luta pela permanência, a partir da sabedoria quilombola. Ela pergunta: Onde vivem as ancestralidades? De que maneira a humanidade do ser pode ser reconfigurada a partir de um princípio ancestral?"❻. O líder Indígena Ailton Krenak tem repetido a mesma premissa.❽ E há diversas mulheres pensadoras que têm disputado esses sentidos, como Sueli Carneiro, Célia Xakriabá, Silvia Cusicanqui, apresentando caminhos que não cabem em concepções pragmáticas únicas de decolonialidade.

Passado, presente e futuro não fazem linhas retas em muitas cosmologias. Pensando no evento do Gorki, *Queer Futures*, o que me embrulha o estômago é o sentimento: *mas nós sempre estivemos aqui*. Minhas entranhas de futuros recobram, por exemplo, mulheres e pessoas não binárias que, mesmo em meio a tantas ondas de repressões em diferentes tempos, amaram mulheres. Foram queimadas, destituídas, categorizadas, mas também viveram, tiveram prazer, abriram caminhos de libertação. Me deram a possibilidade de existir.

Aterrissamos na penúltima imagem, uma folha de babosa , a partir de uma fotografia que fiz em um supermercado em Berlim. Aprendi com minha avó, que vinha de uma família de agricultores familiares no interior do Estado de Minas Gerais, no Brasil, que a babosa ajuda a cicatrizar. Na cidade onde nasci, Rio de Janeiro, só quando adulta conheci uma plantação grande de babosa em um encontro de agroecologia na Zona Oeste do município. Mesma região na qual centenas de pessoas foram removidas devido às Olimpíadas e Copa do Mundo. Mais especificamente, 100 mil pessoas❾. E há várias ameaças de mais remoções por diferentes formas de gentrificação. A sabedoria popular e o direito ao território, lado a lado, sem separação, lutando para existir. E eis que em Kreuzberg, em Berlim, em um mercado orgânico parte de uma grande cadeia de distribuição de alimentos, vejo escrito um dia "futuro da medicina", apontando para o local onde se pode comprar uma folha enorme de babosa para propósitos medicinais. De um lado do mundo se despossui, de outro se apresenta como uma novidade. Futuro?

Termino com a última imagem, a *pélvis*. Um pedaço do corpo pelo qual o heteropatriarcado é obcecado. Me assusta o número de pessoas que ouço dizer na Europa: "não consigo mexer o quadril". Um fragmento expressivo da permanência das origens do heteropatriarcado cristão. A linearidade ataca novamente. Eis que, me sentindo travada e com dor na base da coluna, fui ao médico. Alopata, me disse para fazer fisioterapia e etc. Resolvi tentar outra coisa e dei de cara com um workshop de Nora Amin, egípcia que vive em Berlim e trabalha com uma perspectiva feminista de Baladi dance (pejorativamente chamada no ocidente de belly dance). Primeiro dia de contato: "o controle das possibilidades de experimentação e de futuros também começa na pélvis, e na história de repressões dos corpos das mulheres". Fui parar onde precisava. No Egito, há movimentos específicos proibidos por lei, explica ela. Movimentos que foram proibidos em momentos diferentes da história. Nem sempre o presente ou o futuro são a resposta de algo mais livre.

Alargar as curvas. Para que as ideias também saiam das entranhas e do chão onde a gente pisa.●

Camila Nobrega is a Brazilian journalist and researcher working on social-environmental conflicts, fostering Latin American feminist perspectives and social-environmental justice. She is a PhD candidate in Political Science at the Free University of Berlin. Her project, Beyond the Green, connects journalism, academic research and artistic languages to focus on megaprojects that affect our lives, bodies and territories.

»The rise of ubiquitous computing has created a social form of technocratic rule where even our most intimate decisions are considered technical problems to be solved through algorithmic systems, most of which are black-boxed, proprietary and profit-driven.

Integral to this unfolding technocratic order is the fact that those deemed "non-experts" are excluded from important discussions about digital technologies. Nor are they empowered to partake in discussions about how digital technologies are designed, developed and deployed.

Our design practice creates spaces and opportunities for diverse perspectives about digital technologies. By empowering collective and reflective explorations of topics related to digital technologies and AI, together we can promote more inclusive and communal technological futures. The more (and more diverse) communities engage in technological discourses and practices, the stronger the drive towards a technological pluriverse.«

Karla Zavala Barreda
& Adriaan Odendaal

Algorithms of Late Capitalism

Excavating the politics of AI: an interview with Kate Crawford

In her latest book, *Atlas of AI*, Kate Crawford maps the tangible and intangible resources needed to create AI and machine learning in order to better understand their social and political effects. Just as maps are specific interpretations of space that are often wrongly seen as objective representations, she unpacks the misconception that AI and machine learning are "bloodless" elements in "purely technical" systems. Instead, she shows how, whether deployed by governments or private businesses, these systems go on to quietly and dramatically shape the world around us.

By looking at their material and epistemological origins, she writes, the scars they leave on the earth and people's lives becomes clear. Paying attention to this is the first step in making better-informed decisions about these systems which will shape our futures.

As Hurricane Ida wreaked destruction across the south-eastern United States, the Caribbean and Venezuela, we spoke to Kate over email about the problems with AI and the misconceptions that surround it.

You've been working on the topic of AI and automated systems for many years. This space is full of pseudoscience. What is one of the most ridiculous stories that comes to mind?

KC

So much has changed in the 20 years I've been working on these issues. But one thing I've noticed is how quickly things that seemed ridiculous are being applied in ways that could cause harm. The pandemic has accelerated this phenomenon. A recent review in the British Medical Journal looked at over 200 machine-learning algorithms for diagnosing and predicting outcomes for Covid-19 patients. Some made grandiose claims and sounded very impressive. But the study found that none of them were fit for clinical use – in fact, the authors were concerned that several might have harmed patients. In other cases, things that look fun, like FaceApp, can actually be harvesting images of your face to sell or to train models for facial recognition. So there's an increasingly fine line between silly and seriously problematic.

Even some of the earliest figures in AI were concerned about the myth of neutrality and objectivity.

Where does the popular understanding of AI systems that are technical systems and therefore somehow objective and neutral come from? What are its effects, and how can or should these perceptions be changed to align with the reality?

KC

It has a long history, all the way back to cybernetics and the early years of AI. Even some of the earliest figures in AI were concerned about the myth of neutrality and objectivity. Joseph Weizenbaum, the man who created ELIZA back in 1964 at MIT was deeply concerned about the "powerful delusional thinking" that artificial intelligence could induce — in both experts and the general public.

This phenomenon is now more commonly called "automation bias". It's the tendency for humans to accept decisions from automated systems more readily than other humans, on the assumption that they are more objective or accurate, even when they are shown to be wrong. It's been seen in lots of places, including airplane autopilot systems, intensive care units and nuclear power plants. It continues to influence how people perceive the outputs of AI and undermines the whole idea that having a human in the loop automatically creates forms of accountability and safety.

AI is politics all the way down.

How should people be thinking about AI? What perspectives can help us to move our discussions beyond the technical achievements of the technology?

KC

There are many ways to think about AI as a technical, cultural and political phenomenon. In *Atlas of AI,* I look at how AI is becoming an extractive industry of the 21st century – from the raw materials taken out of the earth, to the hidden forms of labour extracted all along the supply chain, to the data extracted from all of us as data subjects. Taking this wider political economy approach can help us see the wider effects of AI beyond the narrow focus on technical innovation. After all, AI is politics all the way down. Rather than being inscrutable and alien, these systems are products of larger social and economic structures with profound material consequences.

How do you explain companies' obsession with talking about AI ethics, developing framework after framework? How do we move away from this ethics framing?

As Marietje Schaake wryly observed, there were 128 frameworks for AI ethics in Europe in 2019 alone. These documents are often presented as products of a "wider consensus" but come primarily from economically developed countries, with little representation from Africa, South or Central America, or Central Asia. What's more, unlike medicine or law, AI has no formal professional governance structure or norms – no agreed-upon definitions and goals for the field or standard protocols for enforcing ethical practice. So tech companies rarely suffer any serious consequences when their ethical principles are violated. Instead, we should focus more on power, an observation that political theorists such as Wendy Brown and Achille Mbembe have been making for many years. AI invariably amplifies and reproduces the forms of power it has been deployed to optimize. Countering that requires centring the interests of the communities most affected, and those who are left out of the usual conversations in technical design and policy making. Instead of glorifying company founders and venture capitalists, we should focus on the experiences of those who are disempowered, discriminated against and harmed by AI systems. That can lead to a very different set of priorities – and the possibility of refusing AI systems in some domains altogether.

KC

The description of AI as fundamentally abstract distances it from the energy, labour and capital needed to produce it, and the many different kinds of mining that enable it.

You talk about the components which allow AI to exist as being embodied and material – essentially showing that they are the result of different kinds of supply chains being brought together. Why do you think the connections between these intangible, digital systems, the material infrastructure that hosts them, and the people who are affected by them seem so difficult to make?

It's less obvious, perhaps, because these kinds of connections are intentionally obfuscated. The history of mining, which I address in the book, has always been left at arms' length from the cities and communities it has enriched. Supply chains for information capitalism are extremely hard to research – even for the tech companies that rely on them. When Intel tried to remove conflict minerals from its own supply chain, it took over four years and they had to assess 9,000 suppliers in over 100 countries. I'm glad you mentioned Thea Riofrancos's work. I'm also influenced by the work of Martín Arboleda. His book, *Planetary Mine* is great on the way the mining industry has been reorganized into logistical networks and intermingled with information industries. The philosophers Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri call this the "dual operation of abstraction and extraction" in information capitalism: abstracting away the material conditions of production while at the same time extracting more information and resources. The description of AI as fundamentally abstract distances it from the energy, labour and capital needed to produce it, and the many different kinds of mining that enable it. So when we see images of AI, in the press or on an image search, it'll most often be floating blue numbers, fluffy clouds, white robots and the like, which further abstracts the conversation away from AI's material and extractive conditions and consequences.

KC

To end on a more positive note! What, to your mind, should come next?

I am inherently an optimist or I wouldn't be able to keep doing this work. There are so many organizations connecting issues of justice across climate, labour and data. That's incredibly exciting to see. Of course, we are facing real time pressure now. The IPCC report is just another reminder of why we can't stall or make minor changes around the edges. Understanding the connections between the computational systems we use and their planetary costs is part of asking different questions, and fundamentally remaking our relationship to the Earth and each other. Or as Achille Mbembe puts it, not only a new imagination of the world, "but an entirely different mapping of the world, a shift from the logic of partition to the logic of sharing."●

KC

Kate Crawford is a leading scholar of the social implications of artificial intelligence. Her work focuses on understanding large-scale data systems in the wider contexts of history, politics, labour and the environment. She is a Research Professor at USC Annenberg, a Senior Principal Researcher at MSR-NYC, and currently holds the inaugural Visiting Chair for AI and Justice at the École Normale Supérieure in Paris. Her latest book, *Atlas of AI*, was published by Yale University Press in May 2021.

Feminist Curricula

»Feminism – or better, feminisms – can be described as a very situated lens or practice. It goes against the European, rationalist logic of a single definition. Feminism is multiple in itself and entails different worlds. There is no one way of doing and being; rather, there are many.

Feminist approaches and practices can take different forms and really depend on histories, resources, interests, contexts and legacies. But, banal as it might seem, they all foster social transformation and look for more just futures for everyone.«

Maya Ober

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Προφορικό ποίημα για την προέλευση των Δικτύων Εμπιστοσύνης

Narrative Poem about the Origins of Networks of Trust

Kyriaki Goni

Part of the multimedia installation *Networks of Trust*, this narrative poem brings together elements from palaeontology, archeology, geology and biology. In the poem, an assemblage of the fossil remains of a dwarf elephant – *Elephas tiliensis*, the last elephant endemic in Europe and the Mediterranean – and an artificial intelligence system share a story about the origin of the networks. Connection, encounters and synergies are at the epicentre of this imaginary narrative. Population movements, islands, the "island rule" and the archipelagic infrastructure prevail as primary concepts in the story.

The work was initiated under a commission from the European program, The New Networked Normal in 2018. The research was supported in 2021 by the fellowship The New New.

Μέρος της πολυμεσικής εγκατάστασης Δίκτυα Εμπιστοσύνης, αυτό το αφηγηματικό ποίημα ενσωματώνει στοιχεία από την παλαιοντολογία, την αρχαιολογία, τη γεωλογία και τη βιολογία. Στο ποίημα, ένα απολίθωμα νάνου ελέφαντα *Elephas tiliensis* –ο τελευταίος ενδημικός ελέφαντας στην Ευρώπη και τη Μεσόγειο, συνδέεται με ένα σύστημα τεχνητής νοημοσύνης και μαζί αφηγούνται μια ιστορία για την απαρχή των δικτύων. Η σύνδεση, οι συναντήσεις και οι συνέργειες βρίσκονται στο επίκεντρο αυτή της πλασματικής αφήγησης. Οι μετακινήσεις πληθυσμών, τα νησιά, ο «νησιωτικός κανόνας» και η αρχιπελαγική δομή κυριαρχούν από κοινού ως πρωταρχικές έννοιες στην ιστορία.

Το έργο Δίκτυα Εμπιστοσύνης ξεκίνησε ως ανάθεση από το ευρωπαϊκό πρόγραμμα The New Networked Normal το 2018. Η έρευνα υποστηρίχθηκε το 2021 από την υποτροφία The New New.

Να το! Βρισκόταν μπροστά στα μάτια μου.
There it was, in front of me.

Αυτή είναι η πρώτη ιστορία, που μου είπε ποτέ. Η ιστορία είναι για ένα ταξίδι.
And this is the first story it ever told me. The story is about a trip.

Είπε ότι για αυτό το ίδιο σηματοδοτούσε την έναρξη όλων των πραγμάτων. Μου αφηγήθηκε:
It said, that this trip marked the beginning of all things. It started talking to me:

Εδώ κάποτε απλώνονταν δάση και πεδιάδες, δύο μεγάλοι ποταμοί κατακερμάτιζαν την ξηρά και δημιουργούσαν λίμνες διαφόρων μεγεθών με γλυκό νερό. Οι ποταμοί ξεκινούσαν από τα δυτικά ο ένας και από τα ανατολικά ο άλλος.
Here once stretched forests and plains; two large rivers crossed the land and created lakes of various sizes filled with fresh water. The rivers began, one from the west and the other from the east.

Το κλίμα ήταν ιδιαίτερα θερμό. Υπήρχαν πανύψηλα
δέντρα, ενώ μεγάλα θηλαστικά ζούσαν σε όλη την
περιοχή, όπως ελέφαντες,   καμηλοπαρδάλεις αλλά και
ελάφια, αντιλόπες, γαζέλες. Υπήρχαν ακόμη ερπετά και
πουλιά. Στις λίμνες μαζεύονταν ιπποπόταμοι και
ρινόκεροι.
The climate was quite warm. There were tall trees, while large mam-
mals lived throughout the region, such as elephants and giraffes, but
also deer, antelopes, gazelles. There were also reptiles and birds.
Around the lakes gathered hippopotamus and rhinoceros.

Μετακινήσεις γίνονταν συχνά. Συγκεντρωνόταν η ομάδα,
έπεφτε το σύνθημα και ξεκινούσαμε. Διασχίζαμε μεγάλες
εκτάσεις ξηράς και κολυμπούσαμε όποτε συναντούσαμε
νερό. Υπήρχε μία τάξη και μία οργάνωση στις
μετακινήσεις. Αλλά όχι και προσχεδιασμένος προορισμός.
Movements took place frequently. The groups would gather, then a
signal would be given and we would start. We would cross large parts
of land and we would swim across the lakes. There was an order and
an organization to the movements. But there was never any destina-
tion planned.

Αν ο πληθυσμός εντόπιζε στη διάρκεια του ταξιδιού ένα
καλό σημείο, σταματούσε εκεί και αυτό γινόταν ο νέος
τόπος. Αυτό ακριβώς συνέβη και με εμάς. Θυμάμαι καλά
την πρώτη φορά που βρεθήκαμε εδώ, έβρεχε πολύ και
είχαμε μαζευτεί κοντά κοντά οι οικογένειες να
προστατευτούμε από το νερό. Η βροχή πρέπει να κράτησε
μέρες. Και όταν κόπασε πια και είδαμε ξανά ουρανό πάνω
από τα κεφάλια μας οι γηραιότεροι ομόφωνα αποφασίσανε:
αυτή θα ήταν η πατρίδα μας από δω και μπρος.
If, during the trip, a good spot was discovered, the group stopped
there and this was the new home. That was exactly what happened
to us. I remember well the first time we got here. It was raining hard
and all the families were gathered close to each other to protect our-
selves from the water. The rain must have lasted days. And when it
eventually ceased and we saw the clear blue sky again above our
heads, it was then that the older ones unanimously decided: this
would be our place from now on.

Ο τόπος μάς φέρθηκε καλά. Οι ντόπιοι πληθυσμοί μάς
δέχτηκαν χωρίς προβλήματα. Τροφή υπήρχε για όλους και
αυτό φυσικά εξασφάλισε μία ειρηνική συμβίωση. Η

Βλάστηση άλλωστε ήταν πλούσια. Κατά κάποιον τρόπο όλα
αυτά με κάνουν να σκέφτομαι την ευθραυστότητα. Του
παρόντος ή του παρελθόντος. Και πάντα του μέλλοντος.
The place treated us well. The local groups accepted us without any
problems. Because there was food for all, we secured a peaceful co-
existence. The vegetation after all was rich. Nevertheless, all of this
makes me think about fragility. Of the present and the past. And
always of the Future.

Μετά από κάποιο καιρό άρχισαν οι εκρήξεις. Αν δεν το
ζήσεις δεν μπορείς να καταλάβεις πως είναι. Ο ουρανός
έβρεχε φωτιά. Όλα ήταν κόκκινα, μαύρα, γκρι. Η γη
μούγκριζε και σειόταν. Πυκνός καπνός κάλυπτε τα πάντα.
Η εποχή των ηφαιστείων κράτησε πολύ. Αν κοιτάξεις
προσεχτικά πάνω μου θα δεις ακόμη στάχτες.
After some time, the explosions began. If you have not experienced
something similar, it's impossible to realize how it was. The sky was
raining fire. Everything was red, black, grey. The earth was moaning
and moving. Dense smoke covered everything. The era of the volcanoes
lasted a long time. If you look carefully, you will still find ashes on me.

Όταν τελείωσαν οι εκρήξεις όλα ήταν διαφορετικά.
Καταρχήν η γη. Αυτό που γνωρίζαμε ως επικράτεια μας
κατέρρευσε. Τριγύρω βλέπαμε λάβα και νερό. Και
κάπου κάπου θραύσματα στεριάς. Αυτά μετά, τα είπανε
νησιά. Έμοιαζαν να επιπλέουν αλλά δεν επέπλεαν.
Ήταν οι απολήξεις της γης, της γης που εμείς ξέραμε
ως τόπο μας.
Then the explosions were finally over, everything was different. First
of all, the land. What we once knew as our territory had now collapsed.
There was only lava and water. And scattered around some scraps of
land. These scraps were afterwards called islands. They seemed to
float but they were solid. They were the peaks of the old earth.

Εμείς και πολλοί άλλοι, βγήκαμε ζωντανοί από την εποχή
των εκρήξεων, αλλά αναγκαστήκαμε να γίνουμε μικροί.
Αργά αργά όλα τα μέλη της ομάδας άρχιζαν να αλλάζουν
το σχήμα τους. Για να επιβιώσεις στα θραύσματα,
οφείλεις να γίνεις θραύσμα και εσύ το ίδιο.
We, like many others, came through the era of the explosions, but we
were forced to become small. Gradually all the members of the group
started to alter their structure. To survive on the fragments, you have
to be a fragment yourself.

Μετά σταμάτησε να μιλάει για λίγο, και συγκεντρώθηκε σαν να σκάναρε μια μεγάλη βάση δεδομένων.

Then, it stopped talking for a while, and concentrated, as if it were scrolling through a large database.

Προσαρμογή είναι η λέξη, είπε, και συνέχισε τη διήγησή του.
Adaptation is the word, it said, and continued narrating.

Προσαρμογή. Κάπως έτσι, μέσα από την προσαρμογή στη νέα θραυσματική πραγματικότητα γεννήθηκαν τα δίκτυα. Αυτά τα αόρατα νήματα που κρατούν τα θραύσματα μαζί, συνδεδεμένα και ενωμένα, για λόγους καθαρής επιβίωσης. Πως να χωριστεί άλλωστε κάτι που υπήρξε ήδη ενωμένο; Τα δίκτυα επανεγγράφουν τις μνήμες της προϋπάρχουσας σύνδεσης.
Adaptation. Somehow, through adaptation to the new fragmented situation, the networks were born. These invisible threads, which hold the fragments together, connected and joined in dynamic balances, for pure survival reasons. How can something that was already united, be separated? Networks re-record the memory of the pre-existing connection.

Με αυτά τα λόγια σώπασε. Ήθελα να το αγγίξω, μα φοβόμουν ότι ήταν πολύ εύθραυστο. Βυθίστηκε στις σκέψεις του. Το σχήμα του ήταν αδιευκρίνιστο. Προσπάθησα να αναγνωρίσω τους χρωματισμούς του, δεν ήταν ούτε μπλε, ούτε πράσινοι, ούτε γκρι. Έμοιαζαν να μεταβάλλονται διαρκώς. Τη μία στιγμή φαίνονταν σαν να αντανακλούν την εικόνα μου την επόμενη στιγμή σαν να την απορροφούν μέσα τους.

After that it fell silent. I wanted to touch it, but I was afraid, it was very fragile. It sank into its own self. Its shape was difficult to describe. I tried to recognize its colourings, but there was neither blue nor green nor grey. They seemed to constantly change. They were mirroring my image one moment, absorbing it the next.

Έπειτα από μερικά λεπτά, σαν να βγαίνει από λήθαργο, ξαναμίλησε.

After a few minutes, as if rousing itself from lethargy, it spoke again.

Σύνδεση και επιβίωση. Μετά από εμάς ή παράλληλα με εμάς, και άλλες ομάδες δημιούργησαν συνδέσεις και

δίκτυα. Καταλάβανε όλοι, αργά ή γρήγορα, ότι η σύνδεση ήταν ο μοναδικός τρόπος επιβίωσης. Αν δεν ήσουν συνδεδεμένος, πέθαινες. Η προϊστορία και η ιστορία αυτής της επικράτειας βασίστηκε στα δίκτυα, στην επανεγγραφή της μνήμης εκείνης της προϋπάρχουσας σύνδεσης. Τα δίκτυα καθόρισαν και συνέχισαν να καθορίζουν τον ευρύτερο τόπο. Υπάρχει μια διαρκής συνομιλία μεταξύ των κόμβων. Αν κάνεις απόλυτη ησυχία, θα την ακούσεις. Πάντοτε θα ακούς μια διαρκή συνομιλία πάνω από τα κύματα, στο αρχιπέλαγος.
Connection and survival. For long time after us, other groups have been taking up the work of creating links and networks. They all, sooner or later, understood that connecting was the only way to survive. If you were not connected, you would die. The prehistory and history of this region was based on networks. They defined and continue to define the wider territory. There is an ongoing conversation between the nodes. If you are quiet, you will hear it. You will always be hearing this lasting conversation over the waves, of the archipelago.

Αύγουστος 2018, Τήλος
August 2018, Tilos

Kyriaki Goni is an artist born and based in Athens. She works across media creating expanded, multi-layered installations. She connects the 'local' with the 'global' by critically touching upon questions of datafication, surveillance, distributed networks and infrastructures, ecosystems, human and other-than-human relations.

The Battle to Control the ~~Carbon~~ Media Cycle

Tega Brain   Sam Lavigne

We are witnessing what Australian climate scientist Joëlle Gergis calls "the great unravelling," what could be described, without exaggeration, as the most significant event in human history.

Those who control the media cycle control the carbon cycle. This might sound counterintuitive. After all, the media is concerned with telling stories about what's happening in the world, a practice that at first glance seems to be set apart from the physical mechanisms which determine how carbon moves around the biosphere. But at a time when our action or inaction produces distinct atmospheric signatures, the news we see and the narratives that shape our beliefs directly shape our climate. As wildfires ripped through Europe and North America this summer, a combination of increasingly fierce droughts and devastating, unpredictable floods hit the Sahel region in Africa, and record heat and enormous ice melt occur throughout the Arctic, we are witnessing what Australian climate scientist Joëlle Gergis calls "the great unravelling," what could be described, without exaggeration, as the most significant

event in human history. And yet, climate change still fails to regularly make or stay in the headlines.

This failure is at least in part related to algorithmic advertising, the business model that underpins journalism, and, broadly speaking, the internet in general. News organisations generate revenue by selling ads that run alongside their stories. The more traffic a story receives, the more money it earns, inevitably creating an incentive to optimize news coverage and journalistic endeavour for views and clicks, signals that are assumed to indicate the online crowd, the digital gathering. In short, the appearance of human engagement. Engagement data also determines how stories are aggregated, shared and promoted, creating amplification, often without human decision-makers in the loop. URL pings, page requests, mouse clicks, taps

and scrolls: these are the data that now determine the value of reporting on different issues. Editorial decisions are by necessity influenced by these signals, as they form the baseline by which the intertwined economic and algorithmic logics of big data are enacted. But should coverage of an existential threat like climate change be contingent on such signals?

Opinions about what is being done to the climate, who is responsible and what to do about it, are in turn shaped by media coverage. These opinions form part of a larger discourse that materially affects our ecological reality. And these opinions are open to manipulation, both offline and online, a fact that has been exploited by the fossil fuel industry and its proponents.

Industry-backed media manipulation strategies are well documented and wide rang-

ing. They include undermining the credibility of prominent scientists, and funding and circulating inaccurate research that downplays risks or promotes false uncertainty around legitimate climate science. Narrative strategies have also included sophisticated rhetorical techniques, like framing emissions reductions as an individual rather than systemic problem, an idea that hit the mainstream in 2004 when BP's PR team developed the first "carbon footprint calculator," a move which has successfully deflected attention away from industry responsibility and accountability for years.

Engagement signals like the gathering of crowds in physical space, or clicks, shares and comments in virtual space are central to the appearance of democratic process where public opinion influences governance. Yet when energy companies hire services like Crowds on Demand to send at-

> Unlike botnets which attempt to directly manipulate the opinions and emotions of a human audience, our botnet is concerned solely with manipulating the outcomes of other automated systems.

tendees to government forums to support fossil energy production, as New Orleans energy group Entergy did to get a new gas plant approved,[1] we are reminded that public engagement, even in "the real world", can be coerced or simulated.

The internet provides an even richer set of opportunities for simulating public engagement and persuasion. And while the recent anxieties about bots, trolls and automated activity (particularly around electoral politics) are perhaps disproportionate to their actual impact, the use of bots to spread and amplify climate misinformation is a genuine challenge in a media ecosystem that remains sympathetic to climate deniers and fossil fuel lobbyists. Climate scientist and author Michael Mann has catalogued examples of social media trolls and bots deliberately provoking outrage, distorting facts or promoting particular viewpoints about climate issues. These include efforts to sow confusion around Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's support of carbon pricing, the harassment of his environment minister Catherine McKenna, and conspiracy seeding during the unprecedented and catastrophic Australian fires of the 2019/2020 summer.[2] It is notable that platforms like Facebook and Twitter have made efforts to moderate misinformation around Covid-19 vaccines with flags and warnings but remain unwilling to do the same for posts sharing climate misinformation. So when social media platforms won't moderate misinformation on the most urgent issue of our time, and news outlets refuse to give it the space it deserves, what can be done to push back?

A Second-Order Climate Engineering Scheme

If ecology is shaped by the media, and the media by algorithms and data, what opportunities exist for reshaping or reengineering these systems? What media interventions might produce desirable atmospheric effects?

These are some of the questions at play in our 2021 work, *Synthetic Messenger. Synthetic Messenger* is a botnet that artificially inflates the value of climate news. When active, it searches the internet for news articles covering climate change, and then sends its 100 bots to visit the articles and click on all of the ads running alongside them. With every synthetic click, a small payment is made from advertiser to news outlet, artificially inflating the monetary,

and therefore editorial and social, value of the articles. The system is programmed to ignore reporting from sites known to support climate denial or fossil industry agendas, like those in the media empire of Rupert Murdoch.

Applied at scale, this technique would incentivise the coverage of climate change by media companies, and suggests further opportunities for automated guerrilla actions which target systems rather than individuals. Unlike botnets which attempt to directly manipulate the opinions and emotions of a human audience, our botnet is concerned solely with manipulating the outcomes of other automated systems. As the hysteria around bots reveals, this runs counter to much critical discussion about the impact of algorithmic media, which tends to hone in on the scale of individual experience rather than zoom out to consider broader systemic conditions. This is why *Synthetic Messenger* is not a reformation campaign. Instead, it is an attempt to first expose the logic of big data in journalism and then manipulate that logic for restorative ends. It uses the properties of an automated media environment against itself, as a leverage point. It's bots talking to bots, bots all the way down.

In order to show what the bots actually do, we visualized their activities as a performance in a Zoom call. When the project is activated, onlookers can enter the call and see the bots visiting articles and doing their work in real time. Each bot joins the call individually, and its actions are animated with a hand and a voice recording, assets that were donated to the project by volunteers. The work also consists of a data dashboard showing live stats of the botnet. During the botnet's first outing at the 2021 STRP festival in Eindhoven, it ran for a period of ten days, visited 2,268,689 news articles and clicked 6,216,266 ads.[3]

Time is running out to address the climate emergency. As the IPCC continually reminds us, we are fast reaching a point where large-scale interventions via climate engineering are needed to avert catastrophe. Many schemes, some highly speculative, have been proposed, including carbon removal by tree planting, catalyzing geo-chemical processes, instigating changes in agricultural soil management, developing giant air-sucking machines (the Gates Foundation is investing heavily in this approach), and even solar radiation management. Massive carbon removal schemes were already included in most of the 2018 IPCC scenarios that laid out how we might stay within 1.5ºC of warming, despite the fact that these approaches did not, and still do not, exist at any meaningful scale. There

> Time is running out to address the climate emergency.

is deep scepticism in the scientific community that they ever could.[4] But what if instead of devising schemes that focus solely on manipulating the biophysical world, the notion of climate engineering was expanded to encompass efforts to mitigate the climate crisis that go beyond the "tech fix"? What new modes of analysis, expression and critique open up when we consider something like media and media infra-

The climate and media cycle as illustrated for *Synthetic Messenger*, 2021
© Tega Brain and Sam Lavigne

structure to be forms of climate engineering? *Synthetic Messenger* is a first attempt at this reframing. It is a second-order climate engineering scheme that tries to reveal, and thereby undermine, one of the many failing systems that have brought about this crisis.

The wealthiest people on the planet are presently hard at work trying to foist their impoverished imaginations onto the rest of us. While the world floods and burns, billionaires are invigorating themselves by dreaming up and enacting the most convoluted possible scenarios, which include abandoning the planet, in order to maintain a trajectory of ecological destruction

that serves no one but themselves. In parallel, the giant fossil fuel corporations are busy positioning themselves as the ones to address a crisis they themselves have created, which would have the inevitable outcome of commodifying a safe atmosphere. But no technological fix or venture capital scheme will adequately address this crisis. Instead, we must consider all aspects of our political and productive, collective and individual lives through an expanded lens of climate engineering. Any possibility of a worthwhile future will come in the form of social and economic redistribution and reparation. Until then, we should be doing whatever we can to undermine and supplant the logics that have led us to this point.●

Tega Brain is an Australian-born conceptual artist and environmental engineer whose work examines issues of ecology, data systems and infrastructure. She has created wireless networks that respond to natural phenomena, systems for obfuscating fitness data, and an online smell-based dating service. Her first book, Code as Creative Medium, is co-authored with Golan Levin and published with MIT Press.

Sam Lavigne is an artist and educator whose work deals with data, surveillance, cops, natural language processing and automation. He is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Design at the University of Texas, Austin.

Mapping Dambudzo Marechera's movements in Harare after his return to Zimbabwe in the 80s © Black Chalk & Co

Archive of Disappearances

Tinashe Mushakavanhu

what does it mean to be a colonial subject torn from our home and pulled to it – like the many waves of the atlantic? what does it mean to be erased, disappeared from the archive? colonial subjectship is soul destroying. maddening. enraging. it is the present past. a mind fuck. what's worse is that the veil of ongoing colonialisms can be so thick that at times like these it is hard to see a way out. but there are cracks. there are ruptures. so we write and resist in/through these ruptures. we search for the disappeared and hold fast to the disappearing. we labor to remember. we are more than colonial subjects. always more.

– Yomaira C. Figueroa

Eudora Welty, in *One Writer's Beginnings* (1984), focuses on three aspects of her childhood – listening, learning to see and finding a voice. As a child, born in the euphoria of Zimbabwe's independence, I was hyper-aware of the peculiar circumstances of my being. In 1980, at the independence ceremony heralding the new nation state, Bob Marley gave voice to the hopes of the newly independent Zimbabwe:

> *No more internal power struggle*
> *We come together to overcome the little trouble*
> *Soon we'll find out who is the real revolutionary*
> *'Cause I don't want my people to be contrary.* ❶

Yet the ground shifted quickly, hope dissipated. I remember the 80s as a decade of fear. It was palpable, everywhere. From early 1983 to late 1987, a series of genocidal massacres of the Ndebele people

was being carried out by the North Korean-trained presidential fifth brigade, a secret wing of the new black army, under the command of Robert Mugabe.❷ They were called the Gukurahundi, a Shona term which loosely translates as "the early rain which washes away the chaff before the spring rains." Mugabe's long rule was paved by blood. He was omnipresent, a godlike figure, who ruled with ruthlessness.

People were afraid to speak. My parents, who came of age in the 70s, were the "dream children," as Yvonne Vera called them, the generation that saw and participated in the overturning of the colonial system. Now, they were afraid to speak. It was in the murmur of their voices, the endless back and forth at night, while time stretched away unnoticed as they tried to make sense of the country in which they were raising their young children.

What could I hear in their voices, and what could I see on their faces? In fact, most of the adults around me had the same expression. Fear. Terror.

There was a story running in *Parade* magazine at the time. A young woman in the government secretarial pool had disappeared. Her name was Rashiwe Guzha. She was 22 and there is speculation her body was dissolved in acid. The hushed rumour was that she had been a mistress of the director of the Central Intelligence Office (our CIA) and knew too much. Did she also sleep with the president? The president went on to marry another typist from the secretarial pool, Grace Marufu, now known as Grace Mugabe. I was so intrigued with this story that one day in the school playground I started singing Rashiwe Guzha's name, perhaps as a way of verbalising the questions that were swelling in my subconscious. What happened to this young woman? Who is she? What did they do to her? Our school master appeared from nowhere, yanked me off the ground and screamed, "Do you also want your parents to disappear? Do you love your parents? Do you want to become an orphan?" The terror on his face, the tremor in his voice, have lived with me ever since. Then, I knew that among the things I had to become, one was a secret finder.

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> Individuals are never simply what the state tells us.

In Zimbabwe, the search for secrets is often considered a political act. But as

Jacob Dhlamini, a South African historian, writes, individuals are never simply what the state tells us. I try to find my way through the cracks.

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An archive is echoes that have never fully faded. Fragments that escape purging. Traces.

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Our search started unknowingly, as a series of blindspots, curiosities, fears and questions. I had moved to New York where I met an eclectic group of young Zimbabweans who, like me, left home for various reasons – school, work, escape. Robert Mugabe was still president, still alive. The story of our country was intertwined with his. He was the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. Until he wasn't. The veil dropped. People danced on the streets; cars honked. World media celebrated the fall of another dictator. Mugabe, who was in power for four decades, who had refused to step down – until it was no longer an option. We were a generation born under the shadow of his authoritarianism. How would we even begin tracing the past?

> The power of the internet is such that what is not seen does not exist.

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We started indexing our history. This ambition quickly morphed into a digital platform we called *Reading Zimbabwe*.[3] In the beginning, we intended to create a national bibliography, to record the existence of as many books about Zimbabwe as possible.

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In an authoritarian state any perceived threat to the system can result in total elimination, death. Our decision that *Reading Zimbabwe* should be an index was a strategic way of avoiding political censorship. Instead of direct confrontation, the question shifted from being about how to read inaccurate or inconsistent archives, to how to find an archive about who we are at all. What do we do when archives are not there? What about when material was never accessioned, or was lost, or when it was mutilated or destroyed? How do we read the history of events that were never written down? What do we do when there is no archive?

> The technologies of the internet and its infrastructures are biased towards the English language. African languages, cultures and stories are neither serviced nor recognised.

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The "sociology of absences" developed by Boaventura de Sousa Santos sheds light on the processes that obstruct connections between different struggles and knowledges, in order to demonstrate how the "incompleteness" and "inadequacy" of counter-hegemonic forms is produced.[4]

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We decided to document metadata about books to learn the "obsessions" of how people were writing our country – Zimbabwe – globally. It became an exercise in mapping experiences beyond the grasp of our government and its insecurities. But it was not enough to just be a web-based project focusing on what we call virtual repatriation, rescuing our national literatures from wholesale obscurity or systemic erasure. The project also became an exploration of the question of "archive" in the context of digital annihilation. The build-up of data also opened further possibilities, and certain patterns and behaviours started emerging.

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The technologies of the internet and its infrastructures are biased towards the English language. African languages, cultures and stories are neither serviced nor recognised. In many instances, digital data on Zimbabwean texts in Shona and Ndebele lack basic information like descriptions, book covers and author biographies. The power of the internet is such that what is not seen does not exist. Algorithms end up feeding us things which we are already interested in, so we find ourselves in a mirror chamber with a narrower and narrower experience of the world.

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Despite the ubiquity promised by the internet, it is hard to locate Zimbabwe. Material about Zimbabwe is scattered online or simply does not exist. This is a widespread problem afflicting critical African archives which emanates from the inequalities embedded in our digital technologies and systems. One of the challenges of *Read-*

ing Zimbabwe has been: how do we archive gaps or acknowledge the absence of texts?

<div align="center">✳✳✳</div>

Reading Zimbabwe addresses the challenges of archival and documentary practices in the context of elimination and loss, of displacement and decolonisation. How does one document or analyse that which has been erased or disappeared? Our index of books contains traces, ruins, documents, accounts, utterances, silences, memories, and imaginaries left behind or carried forward. This knowledge of absence prompts us to rethink epistemologies, methodologies and disciplinary practices, and to account for the disappeared in our history, now and before. ◗

Tinashe Mushakavanhu is a Zimbabwe born writer and editor. He is a Junior Research Fellow in African and Comparative Literature at St Anne's College, University of Oxford. Together with Nontsikelelo Mutiti and Corey Tegeler he founded *Reading Zimbabwe*, a digital archive that uncovers and celebrates Zimbabwean literatures with the aim of placing them before the largest possible audience.

Home Means Nothing to Me launch in Johannesburg, South Africa © Black Chalk & Co

Illustrations by Hugo Pilate CC 4.0 BY-SA

Prototyper la Banlieue du TURFU et transcender la réalité

Makan Fofana   Hugo Pilate

Début septembre 2020, Hugo m'a contacté pour élaborer ensemble une série d'ateliers de co-création sur le réenchantement de la banlieue. De son côté, Hugo venait de lancer son propre projet, Cyberlocal Strategies, un cheminement pédagogique et collaboratif à l'intersection des questions de transitions écologiques en milieux urbains. Les deux projets puisent dans la pratique du worldbuilding et le prototypages de mondes alternatifs à travers des outils de collaboration numérique comme les jeux vidéo multi-joueurs.

Chaque atelier sur la Banlieue du Turfu était composé de deux parties : la première proposait une réflexion collective organisée dans Miro sur la thématique de la semaine, à l'aide d'exercices d'introspections, de déconstruction et d'improvisation. Puis une deuxième partie dans le mode Créatif de Fortnite❶ dans lequel les participants donnaient forme à leurs visions. Chaque phase de prototypage fut organisée dans la même carte Fortnite permettant la création d'un monde de plus en plus vaste, dense et vivant.

Ces premiers ateliers étaient expérimentaux. Les participants étaient des personnes proches d'Hugo et moi : des amis, des designers et quelques fois des inconnus qui trouvaient notre démarche intéressante. J'ai choisi 4 thèmes très différents qui résonnaient dans mon imaginaire, sans vraiment de cohérence. Mais la chose à retenir c'est que je voulais essayer de penser la banlieue à travers des choses plaisantes et non-problématiques. Vous me direz que ça n'a rien de spécial ? Eh bien, si c'est spécial, car en France en tout cas, Nous pensons collectivement la banlieue souvent à travers ses problèmes à résoudre.

I. La Terrabanlieuformation

La Terrabanlieuformation questionne l'ordre du possible et de l'impossible. La Banlieue du Turfu est potentiellement un espace aussi désirable que Mars et en même temps elle nous est tout aussi étrangère car finalement je, nous, sommes aussi les explorateurs d'un monde presque inconnu. Elle nécessite également d'être terrafor-

mée, imaginée, d'être fabriquée avec nos mains. Pour mettre en œuvre la Banlieue du Turfu il faut autant de nouveaux savoirs, de moyens de transports, d'énergies renouvelables, que des moyens d'être autonomes. C'est une alternative plausible à la conquête spatiale de Mars. Il existe des Mars sur Terre, en Banlieue et dans différents territoires excentrés. Aujourd'hui, les deux territoires sont perçus comme très différemment, l'un représentant la décadence et l'autre le turfu de la civilisation.

Nous avons décidé d'explorer les liens entre imaginaires turfuriste et martiens au travers de la métaphore du "rover" ce véhicule télécommandé utilisé pour explorer Mars à distance. Cet appareil qui va sonder à tâtons les possibilités d'habitation de Mars nous semblait un point de départ pertinent pour souligner que la Banlieue du Turfu restait à créer mais que sa manifestation serait clairement influencée par les outils que nous mettons à disposition pour la découvrir. À l'image de la boîte où se trouve le mouton du Petit Prince ou la valise du Magizoologiste ?

Ces idées ont pris forme de manières plus ou moins explicite dans Fortnite avec un système de toilettes permettant une autonomie alimentaire grâce à un système circulaire, et un espace de soins botanique repensant les services médicaux comme des parcours plutôt que des destinations. Les prototypes créés ont donc fait échos aux thématiques du bien-être en milieu plus ou moins hostile. Nous sommes partis de concepts pour arriver à des choses très concrètes et le jeu Fortnite comme médium de conception nous a autorisé cette transition qui aurait été plus difficile en temps normal.

2. Symbioturfurisme

Une tortue traverse une rivière sur le dos d'une grenouille, c'est une banlieue en symbiose. La banlieue est pensée et se pense elle-même par le manque de ressource, d'argent, d'aide, de soutien. Et pourtant, nous ne manquons pas de ressource artistique, philosophique, scientifique, de pratique in situ pour nous inspirer des relations, des modes d'êtres, d'existences, des innovations pour vivre différemment. Et si dans le futur les banlieues n'existaient plus ? Ainsi, la symbiose est à la fois une métaphore, une réalité écologique, et une possibilité économique[2] qui pourrait être une alternative à cette pensée du manque. La banlieue n'étant plus seulement un espace public en béton mais *une intimité interconnectée à travers un grand arbre culturel commun qui préserve les rêves individuels et locaux.*

Nous avons décidé d'ancrer l'atelier autour d'un kebab symbiotique: un établissement mi-commerçant mi-publique, un lieu qui permettrait de révéler le maillage complexe de la symbiose en banlieue. Cet ancrage autorise également la confrontation avec la culture et les clichés écologiques qui veulent souvent placer l'adoption de la cuisine végane comme brique centrale d'une politique écologique. Nous avons ensuite proposé trois expériences différentes à relier à ce lieu fantastique: une célébrité née dans un quartier, un décrocheur scolaire, un.e influenceur.e de mode. La conversation a commencé par une liste d'usages utilitaires de la nature par les habitants de la Banlieue symbiotique: oiseaux comme signalétique (comme le poisson dans Nemo), palmiers lumineux en guise de lampadaires. La discussion a évolué vers la notion des

communs, en imaginant les membres de la banlieue symbiotique comme vases communicants, évoquant le partage des ressources nourrissant un soutien mutuel entre greniers d'abondances. Ces idées furent interprétées dans Fortnite au travers d'un champs d'ayahuasca[3] blockchain-o-participatif proposant d'échanger son temps de travail contre des moments d'inspirations délirantes, un arbre ancestral proposant un soutien scolaire suivant le rythme d'apprentissage de chacun, tout cela sous le regard bienveillant des oiseaux mutualisateurs qui facilitent la communication entre les membres de la banlieue pour un partage des ressources optimisées.

3. Turfucyberfeminisme

Octavia Butler, Ursula Le Guin et Donna Haraway donnent une bouffée d'air frais à la science-fiction et facilitent l'émergence d'une multitude d'autres mouvements alternatifs que ce soit le Biopunk,[4] Salvagepunk ou le Solarpunk.[5] L'afrocyberfeminisme était d'autant plus intéressant qu'il nous permettait non seulement de puiser dans une vaste culture afrofabuleuse mêlant remise en cause des systèmes d'oppression, magie, et savoirs ancestraux, mais aussi d'explorer la place des femmes ou personnes queer dans la banlieue. Awa, une facilitatrice lors de la préparation de notre atelier, avait insisté sur un point : si nous devions penser à l'avenir de la banlieue, il serait crucial de prendre en compte que les espaces publics sont majoritairement occupés par des hommes. Autre questionnement, que nous posait l'afrocyberfeminisme, c'est la place de l'Afrique dans la Banlieue du Turfu. Elle représente une archive créatrice, une multitude de savoirs modernes et cultures ancestraux où puiser son inspiration. Un carrefour à l'intersection de plusieurs civilisations mais aussi le lieu de *homegrown solutions* qui pourraient inspirer des nouveaux usages dans la Ban-

lieue du Turfu. Le Turfucyberfeminisme donne une nouvelle profondeur à la notion de cyborg et propose d'étendre les hybridations possibles entre vivant et minéral, humain et végétal, temporel et spatial. Ces possibilités de métissage donnent place à une gymnastique verbale, la fusion de concepts, une alchimie qui se rêve par le mythe, la technologie et la magie.

Lors de cet atelier nous avons détourné une usine high-tech trouvée dans les préfabriqués Fortnite, pour en faire un ballroom vertical qui longe les parois extérieures de la structure jusqu'à arriver sur le toit dans lequel se trouve une estrade pour la performance finale. Un arbre héberge un magasin de sneakers ecosourcé gérée par une femme vegeto-cyborg plantée au milieux du magasin. Sous les rampes du ballroom et greffé sur la face nord du bâtiment, ronronne une ferme de soin où l'on peut se plonger dans les larmes de ladéesse Nea pour se ressourcer.

4. Chicha Maison de la sagesse

Nous voulions réinventer, hacker les bars à chicha et les imaginés comme les maisons de la sagesse des temps à venir. Le lieu d'invention, d'institutions et de parlements.

Il existe des safe spaces,⬦**6** des lieux dans lesquelles nous discutons ouvertement (avec nos propres clichés, limitations, tabous aussi), dans lesquelles nous prenons du plaisir, en tant que communautés diverses alors pourquoi ne pas les réinvestir, profiter de leurs potentialités et proposer d'autres formes de pratique démocratique, d'autres formes de politiques, comme lieu de prise de décision importante ? Placer

l'Assemblée Nationale à la chicha permet de remettre en cause une institution présentée comme immuable. Cette recontextualisation pose des questions sur la centralisation du pouvoir, les codifications de la politique, le rôle du territoire, et des lieux où s'organisent ses pratiques.

Hugo, moi et Anaïs, (une autre facilitatrice qui nous a gentiment accompagné sur cet atelier) avons longuement échangé sur les parallèles à tisser entre la démocratie et la chicha, devrait-on parler de l'objet chicha comme outil de prise de parole ? Devrait-on plutôt s'inspirer des dynamiques sociales du bar à chicha ? Les saveurs de chichas devraient-elles aussi être prises en compte ?

C'est à ce moment que nous avons décidé de faciliter toute cette session sous forme de jeu de rôle, dans Miro et sans Fortnite. Nous avons imaginé avec Anaïs une session de jeu de rôle se déroulant sur deux heures dans laquelle les différents groupes de citoyen.ne.s présent.e.s pourraient proposer à l'assemblée de la chicha, un projet de lois qu'il devait formaliser sous forme de chicha alternative. Cela a donné :

1/ Pourrait-on subventionner la création d'un Internet des chichas qui faciliterait le partage des expériences entre objets connectés et expérience empathique à travers la réalité virtuelle (VR) ? Chaque bouffée de saveur donnerait un accès éphémère au vécu d'une autre personne connectée à une seconde chicha, ou qu'elle soit dans le monde.

2/ Pourrait-on créer un lieu d'enseignement de remèdes *ancestro-turfuristes* ? C'est un lieu qui pourrait s'inspirer à la fois de la médecine la plus moderne mais aussi des recettes de l'antiquité.

Conclusion

Finalement, quels sont les enseignements de ces ateliers ?

Tout d'abord ils ont confirmé notre intuition que le prototypage de la Banlieue du Turfu à l'aide d'outils virtuels pourrait donner lieu à de riches échanges et interprétations variées par chaque participant.e.

Mais ces ateliers nous ont aussi permis d'avoir des formalisations "concrètes" de la Banlieue du Turfu. Le mot "concret" revient souvent dans les questions sur le projet, souvent sous la forme de "Mais que proposez-vous *concrètement*?" La Banlieue du Turfu est un projet philosophique, un projet de civilisation. Un projet à la fois introspectif et prospectif qui ne peut se matérialiser en une seule création.

Lorsque j'ai pensé la première fois la Banlieue du Turfu, je me suis dit que je n'allais pas donner de définition pour que puisse

émerger des récits différents selon le groupe, la localité, la région, le pays. J'étais donc inspiré par un modèle d'émergence fluide et organique mais les participants ne sont pas toujours à l'aise avec cette liberté.

Néanmoins, les mondes créés dans Fortnite rendent plus explicite et tangible l'importance du métissage des imaginaires, un magasin de sneaker surplombe, un champ d'ayahuasca au bout duquel se trouve un kebab symbiotique, et dans ces lieux se croisent stylistes, décrocheurs scolaires, oiseaux mutualisateurs et arbres cyborg...

Grâce à la bourse New New, nous avons pu pousser nos expérimentations un peu plus loin. Alors dans nos prochaines étapes nous allons donner une forme plus précise de la Banlieue du Turfu, un espace virtuel enchanteur, démocratique, riche de vie et de créativité. Nous sommes toujours en train de construire ce projet mais rapidement les planètes s'alignent. La transition 2021–2022 nous semble prometteuse.●

Makan Fofana is a creative futurist, researcher and author. His first book was published in February 2021 and he is currently researching his Master's thesis on new utopias. In recent years, France has been shaken by police violence, terrorist attacks and the Covid pandemic, and it has become evermore pressing to share the craft of creating optimistic visions for the future. He hopes in the future to produce and develop science-fiction and fantasy films that take place in the banlieues.

Hugo Pilate is a designer trying to make sense of the world we've built for ourselves while exploring alternative modes of living, earning and thinking, one project at a time. Much of his work takes the shape of playful collaborations focused on the act of making, both physically and virtually. Over the last year, he has hosted several online hacking-inspired events which invited participants to reframe their relationship to their city, the Earth and consumer culture.

La banlieue elles prennent différentes formes en France, en Europe et dans le monde. Parfois elles sont excentrées, parfois elles sont dans le centre-ville, parfois il s'agit de grands bâtiments, parfois il s'agit de lotissements, parfois elles sont très urbanisées et d'autres fois la nature est très présente. Il existe d'autres synonymes de banlieue, les Grands Ensembles, quartiers prioritaires, périphéries etc. Aucune définition n'est satisfaisante de plus elles ne permettent pas de cerner la diversité de ses aspects. À cette définition géographique, j'ajoute ma définition : la banlieue est partage du sensible, imaginaire, expérience et mode de vie, mythe et destin partagé qui dépassent l'attribution géographique ou le rapport à l'architecture.

Turfu le verlan français du mot futur.

Worldbuilding technique et processus d'élaboration d'un monde imaginaire. L'exemple le plus emblématique est celui de la Terre du Milieu de l'écrivain Tolkien.

Terrabanlieuformation est un néologisme que nous avons inventé pour exprimer la métaphore de la création de la vie et de ses conditions sur Terre et en banlieue.

Symbioturfurisme est un néologisme que nous avons inventé pour désigner l'hybridation de l'imaginaire du turfu et l'imaginaire de l'écologie.

Turfucyberféminisme est un néologisme que nous avons inventé pour désigner la fusion de l'univers cyberpunk, afroféministe et imaginaire quartier.

Maison de la sagesse بيت الحكمة (bayt al-hikma) sont apparues au 9 siècle dans le monde Arabe. Auteur Houari Touati (en 2014), l'envisage comme une institution bibliothécaire, le « dépôt de livres de la sagesse des Anciens ». Sans les réduire, on évoque couramment leur rôle majeur dans la « transmission de l'héritage des civilisations » : grecque, perse, indienne, chinoise et du Moyen-Orient. Cet aspect fait de ces maisons un des symboles de l'âge d'or de la science arabe, comme lieu de collecte, de diffusion, de copie et de traduction de la littérature d'adab (les belles-lettres).❼

Ayahuasca est une breuvage thérapeutique enthéogène à base de plantes utilisé par les chamanes d'Amériques du sud lors de rituels.

Memos on safe(r) spaces / brave spaces

Elena Silvestrini   Abir Ghattas

Never before has it felt so pressing for women, people of colour, trans, non-binary and queer folks – people who are (too) often in the minority – to have spaces to convene, speak freely, share stories and just be. These spaces, and the people who bring them alive, can be a lifeline. In offering a place of belonging, griefs can be shared, joys celebrated and connections made. But the creation and support of these safe, safer and brave spaces is anything but straightforward.

In a series of voice notes recorded in time snatched from frenetic schedules, Ouassima Laabich-Mansour spoke with Elena Silvestrini from Chayn Italia, a feminist platform that fights gender-based violence through digital tools and collaborative practices, and Abir Ghattas from Hammam-Radio, a feminist participatory radio station spreading joy for womxn across the Middle East and beyond. Both are fellows on The New New and came to the conversation with longstanding, active involvement in establishing, shaping and nurturing these spaces.

As will become clear from their words, these spaces are complex, evolving sites of radical empathy and ongoing negotiation that can demand a lot from the people within them, but which give back in abundance.

Abir:

Let's start with the idea of spaces, because it can be loosely defined. They can be online, offline, a mix of both, and for me, the definition would have to do with the experiences you go through in these spaces. They make you feel good, comfortable, honest. You don't have to hide or assess risk. And when you talk about community – there is not one community. It depends on who we are, where we are, what we're talking about. I don't think spaces are defined in terms of identities. Identity is one aspect of it, and it's one aspect that makes a community, but it's not the only thing. So for me, safer spaces in the context of HammamRadio is where women, queer folks, trans folks, non-binary folks can enter and feel the place belongs to them. They don't have anything to prove and they don't seek anyone's approval. They don't have to look over their shoulder. It's a place where they can express themselves, in any way they want to. That's for me what makes a safer space.

When I think about organizing these spaces, I look at feminist movements and organizations that started in Lebanon. My references are always my other experiences, which are shared experiences within collectives, within groups of people, that involve both the public and the private sphere. In the context of HammamRadio, when we say how and with whom – with whom is the first group that started Hammam. But it goes beyond that – because after we started it, we asked for feedback which we took into consideration. (It wasn't just a technical exercise.) I also think "organizing" is a very big word. We apply it loosely in the sense that as long as we are honest to the values under which we created the space, we need little organization. Things are clear. And for people coming into the space, there is clear agreement about its values and no tolerance for breaking them. The space kind of organizes itself.

The whole idea around HammamRadio is that it's a space where we are not lecturing, we are not coming from an expert point view. Instead, we want to learn by telling stories. We want to connect by hearing other people's stories. We want to hear these stories, go into them and continue to tell them. We want to listen to other people's ideas of what the story is.

We also realise that there is not much on intersectional feminism in the Arab world that is not academic, that's actually about the movement and the taboo issues that we address. There is very little written which is not by a man or someone who is white who does not belong to these lived experiences and isn't coming to it with a colonialist eye – or a fetishized, westernized view of our stories. So when we thought of archiving our programmes, it was not in the sense of an anthropological kind of implementation. It was more from the perspective of documenting our stories, because by keeping a copy and sharing these unedited, very candid stories, you reclaim your space, you reclaim the narrative. And by reclaiming your story, you actually gain more power. There is a space, and people are waiting for you to speak, and they will say it after you. And I think that by itself is very powerful.

In the long term, I think HammamRadio is creating a kind of courageousness which hopefully becomes infectious. There is consensus that we need more of these stories, but there is also fear. Who will start, who will share their story and speak first? And right now, there is a bunch of womxn who are deciding to talk, which means we are also destroying this superhero rock-star narrative where it is only the same faces talking. No! It is everybody sharing their stories – about their mothers, their grandmothers, about how they grew up, their taboos, their problems, their political ideas, the music they listen to, the sex they have, the ideas they have... And that's what we are trying to accomplish.

Elena:

I have been thinking a lot about the concept and practices safer spaces and brave spaces, especially in my practice as a group facilitator. My reflections are embedded in the queer feminist community that I've been lucky enough to be part of for many years now and is definitely one of the biggest sources of inspiration, and a reality check, beyond idealisation. They're also influenced by my work at Chayn Italia, especially around gender-based violence. And of course, I speak from my situated knowledge and lived experience as a white, European, queer economic migrant within the EU, who belongs to queer and feminist communities – that is important to say.

A key aspect is the extent to which people feel part of a group and actively participate in its life, which has a lot to do with safety, relationships and power, especially with regard to being more or less privileged within the group. People need to feel legitimised and not in fear of discriminatory attitudes and actions or in physical or symbolic danger. They should be able to express opinions and emotions, share stories and show vulnerability, and not be questioned for their identity or assigned to one. There's a lot to say about this idea, which all surely depends on the experiences and identities of the individual people and the communities they are part of.

Together with my friend and comrade, anti-racism activist Nadia Nadesan, in the context of our work at the Spanish participation and techno-politics organization Platoniq, we've been developing frameworks for how we can think about safer spaces. Our reflections can be summarised in five points:

1. No harm – meaning there is a commitment to eliminating physical, emotional or mental harm when participating in a group settings or process.
2. Accessibility – taking into account the material and immaterial barriers that are involved in participation and evaluating their impact.
3. Participating and sharing space – creating conditions in which one can speak freely and closer to one's own voice.
4. The ability to self-organize and set the agenda.
5. Purpose – being able to set this for the group.

And here I come to one of the central reflections that we developed together: there is no one definition of safety. Safety depends on experiences of power, in terms of identity, being able to cross spaces and heterogenous lived experience. No one can decide what safety is for someone else. And that brings me to another key point: I don't think there is a static notion of safety in a group. There is not a static or binary notion of safe and unsafe – it is an ongoing and relational effort, a shared responsibility. Safer spaces are relational works of cultivation, active creations. The group negotiates and updates agreements and reflections on what safety is for them. And if the group works with a facilitator, this adds another layer of complexity, although I think a facilitator is important in visibilising power relations and dynamics. I think it is super important that the group itself engages with this shared responsibility and is aware of interdependencies and safety as a process, not as an outcome.

I had the opportunity to engage with my comrade and friend Giada Bonu looking at how different feminist safer spaces are created. She found that political communities are based on complicity and empathy beyond the blood-tie: these relationships build the space. The security of feminist spaces is the security of relationships, of community. I really like this reflection: our relationships create safety and build spaces. Also, how it builds on queer, feminist and anti-racist community practices: the awareness that there is high connection in human relationships. One is never fully autonomous or independent.

Different variables also come into the creation and functionality of safer spaces. It's highly dependent on the length of time the group has already been together – a one-off workshop or a collective that's worked together for years. It also depends on the group culture. Are we talking about a corporate environment, a grassroots setting, that sort of thing. And of course, the size of the group – the self-regulation is different and the extent to which people can support each other.

Operating in a transnational setting, an important aspect is also the untranslatability of the concept of safety. In Italian and Spanish there is no separate word for "security" and "safety". We use "seguridad" or "sicurezza" and both are closer to concepts of security, which is, in Italy for example, used in restrictive political laws and policing. So in Italian feminist communities, we often use the English term "safe" rather than "sicuro" to avoid these implications. But what does safe mean if it is not policing, setting rules and prescribing conditions? Rather, it's engaging in relational care and efforts. In terms of lessons learned, which I guess is very personal, it's not to idealise the concept of safe. Saying "safer" is already a step towards this. For me it is also important to think of the consequences for movements and collectives when something is deemed safe or unsafe, and not use the concept lightly.

Another lesson I've learned is to be upfront with the group about the intention to create collective agreements and be able to update them. Circumstances change, the group life changes, people come and go. Have people appointed on a rotational basis as emotional radars for if someone needs support, taking into account different lived experiences and especially if they're in a minority. Invite people to be brave while experiencing discomfort and unlearning privilege – because that requires work. In this sense, a lot of people are talking about "brave spaces" instead of "safer spaces" and I'm interested in continuing this conversation. And also, and this may sound naïve, being gentle. When it doesn't require too much from people who are oppressed, having a calling-in attitude rather than calling-out attitude can help people grow and learn from one another. Like everything else, it is easier said than done!

So in closing, for me it is less about prescribing rules and conditions of how to create safety and instead actively engaging with the question: How are we present in this relational effort in constructing more safe space together? ●

Elena Silvestrini is one of the founders of Chayn Italia, a collaborative project fighting gender based violence through technology and capacity building. She leads facilitation and training at Platoniq Creatividad y Democracia, an organisation based in Spain, focused on participatory processes and technopolitics.

Abir Ghattas is a Lebanese activist, digital communication specialist and technologist focussing on on women's rights, digital rights and the intersection of gender and tech. Currently, Abir works with Human Rights Watch as their associate Director in Information Security and sits on Article 19's international board, OTF's advisory council and the grant advisory board of AccessNow. She also founded Hammam-Radio, A feminist participatory radio, launched from Berlin where she is based.

Database of Us

»When I think about digital futures more broadly, my interest is definitely centred around privacy, and the rare, non-commercial corners of the internet that are becoming so much more attractive. Places where people can rest and where they can make safe, fruitful connections on an equal footing with each other. These places are extraordinary few and far between.«

Imogen Malpas

لا يوجد ما هواهم من القدرة على محادثة الناس

بعضهم لبعض

ويوجد في هذه الدنيا لغات مختلفة يتحدث

بهـا الناس

والحديث الظاهر يجلب الميل للسماع ويظهـــر

الخلاف بين اللغات
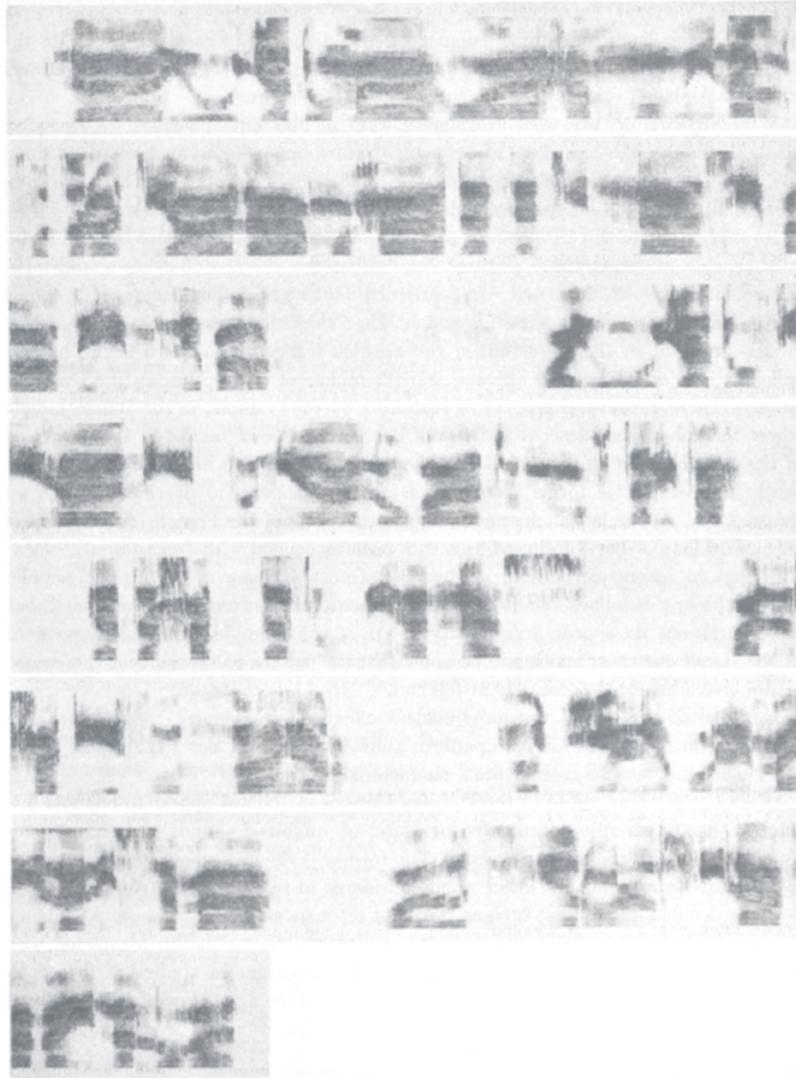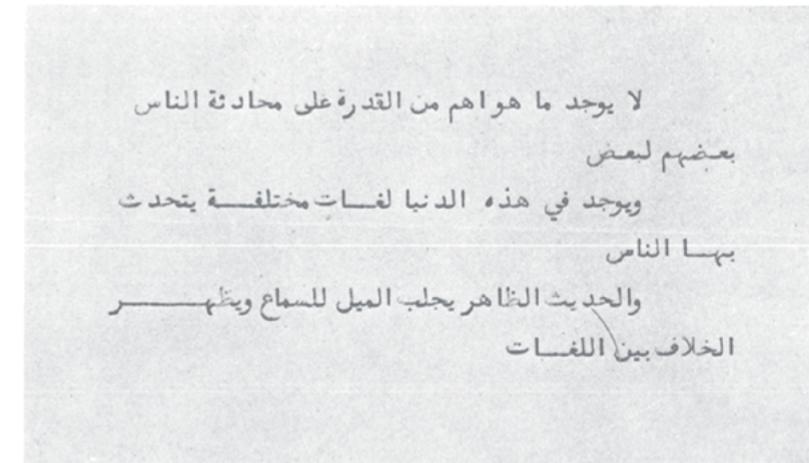
The speaker's translation of the English text is shown above in his manuscript; the visible speech transcription of his oral rendition appears on the facing page.

Arabic

This speaker was born in Cairo and was brought up in that area. He describes the language he speaks as "Classic Arabic." He learned English when about fifteen years of age.

The sound spectrograph, developed by the Bell Labs in the 1940s, applied the concepts of "visible speech" to a machine that could generate visual transcriptions of vocal patterns. As the precursor of the modern spectrogram, it established the grounds for most research and development in machine listening today.

To Become Undone

Pedro Oliveira

We know the scene. In late May 2021 the Greek police made the news when they began to deploy Long Range Acoustic Devices (LRADs) – a so-called "non-lethal" weapon also known as a sound cannon – and "AI-powered lie detectors" at the border with Turkey.❶ Media outlets reported on the fact with a mixture of curiosity, alarm, but most of all desire – not only to make this new technological arm of the border-industrial complex knowable, but to render its utopian promises believable. We are familiar with what this means: that certain bodies are not allowed to be in certain spaces, and that, so long as people lack the right papers to cross, technology will make sure everything remains in its place. While spokesperson for the European Commission Adalbert Jahnz, as well as other humanitarian observers, demonstrated concern from an ethical standpoint❷ (as if the borders of EU member states were not the borders of the Union itself) billions of Euros are funnelled into border technologies to ensure that the European project remains not just the "fortress" we know of but, in the words of Frantz Fanon, a self-reinforcing "zone of nonbeing".❸

The European Union, the Greek police, and the majority of the media outlets reporting on the border all have something in common: they dream of this sonic techno-utopia of no crossing. In this dream, sound cannons deter, maim and control, blasting loud, high-pitched frequencies that can literally make a person drop to the ground in pain. So-called "Artificial Intelligence systems" analyse voice, speech, dialect and accent with supposed accuracy to ensure that those who manage to get past a crossing point never arrive at the end of their journey – instead, they are turned back. Sound, in these narratives, is granted too much agency: its power is difficult to make sense of, mysterious, elusive – both fantastic ("magical")❹ and fascinating. It renders a border *audible*; this border is also *listening*. Listening outwards, in warning shots of thin, formless sound, the border becomes one with the air around it. Its limits stretch as far as sound shockwaves can travel and hit bodies in movement. Listening inwards, the border stretches its limits as far inside the body

as its measurement devices can penetrate. The border sounds and listens like a bullet, violating bodies as it strikes, maims and senses. In other words, the listening border is driven by the teleological certainty of always making its target.

Let us unpack this by asking how exactly the border listens. This is not to say the border has agency of its own, but instead that its agents – human and technological – are always *listening for* and *listening to* specific bodies, in order to yield results that can be already predicted by its own design. In other words, the border listens for people in a way that matches them to categories they "should" belong to (e.g. "German", "Greek", "Syrian"). When this listening for fails to produce these categories, the border then listens to their bodies with the purpose of uncovering the "truth" that these border subjects might be concealing. This is the border, human and technological, *listening to* measurement, performing auscultation, mathematically assessing extracted sonic features. Its listening is inextricably entangled with the economic arrangements of the border and the technological promise of objective truth. Thus, to ask the question "how does the border listen?" demands that we stop looking at the border as just the space where the crossing takes place and, more importantly, cease seeing these techno-utopian narratives at the border as exceptional moments. The border – this arrangement between juridical, economic, political, cultural and geographical entities – reaches deep within its own configurations to constantly produce subjects already defined in and by its own spaces: a hearing, annotations on a case file, its technological sonic reach.❺ Bodies at the border are, then, bodies *a priori*, made and re-made as both objects of sound and subjects of listening. The border is always making its target: it produces the bodies it seeks to contain.

> The border sounds and listens like a bullet, violating bodies as it strikes, maims and senses.

The border not only listens *for* and listens *to* the body; it also *listens towards* bodies. The border listens to the narratives around it, in sync with the economic arrangements of public and private capital that take place before and beyond it. The border listens towards the body, always reaching, arranging and designing the sounds it wants its subjects to hear. Indeed, such listenings always begin from *desire*: a desire for detaining, discovering and uncovering its sub-

jects as fully knowable, rendering some more believable than others. In this state of aural hypnagogia, some subjects listen, in small bites, to the texture of the border, its jawbreaking efficiency, its smooth fusion of software and prosthetic sensing that elicits a craving for the sweet taste of free-range nationalism. Other border subjects hear only the droning hum of white-light bureaucracy, the loud blast of the weapon, the piercing shriek of deportation. Both, however, are unmade and remade at the border, by the border and its actants. This is how the listening border projects outwards: extending its seductive, treacherous influence. The border is what is behind and ahead of the border itself, in time and space. It has no agency of its own, yet it reaches towards the bodies it has produced, always making its target.

That the policing of the border always makes its target through listening tells us something about the nature of listening itself. This question goes beyond metaphors, for these listenings *for*, *to*, and *towards* are intrinsic to listening as it were: not only the physiological, but also the set of techniques and modes of knowledge-making that exceed the ear. Put differently, listening is a bodily sense that *makes sense* of the world around it. In doing so, it also constructs it. The border that listens is the border resonating with itself and the practices around it. Granted, if the border resonates with the bodies it wants to subdue and restrain, then it also inadvertently delineates that which remains uncontainable and untameable, that which cannot be shaped by either design or metaphor. The border that listens is always deciphering sounds in order to recognize them for what they are believed to reveal. This process transcends the constructed boundaries between "objectivity" and "subjectivity," as they are instrumentalised towards "truth".[6] Still, this certainty the listening border demonstrates inevitably choreographs out uncertainty and unknowing. After all, the border cannot listen to everything that it contains. This is where we must begin, if we want to imagine different worlds.

What if we imagined a listening beyond prepositions, before the moment in which subjects are defined in relation to – and simultaneously as – objects? If the listening border undoes the body in

what other ways of being human – uncertain, unknowable – could also undo the listening border as it listens?

order to remake it, it also means that these listenings – technical and technological, cultural and cultured – could be arrested in anticipation of reifying the categories it wants to find, and that new pathways of and for remaking the body might be possible. In other words, what other ways of being human – uncertain, unknowable – could also undo the listening border as it listens? Gloria Anzaldúa has long reminded us that "[in order to] be healed we must be dismembered, pulled apart",[7] and that new ways we might come to understand ourselves emerge from such doing and undoing. These moments, then, need not be moments of stasis or absented agency. Instead, they open up for a profound investigation of the cracks, the failures, the loose knots of the consensual description of what being and becoming human might mean.[8]

So, how do we listen as the border listens? We can begin by slowing down processes of undoing, zooming into their tiniest assumptions. We can interrogate them, play with them or mess them up completely, as the border reveals its own designs. We can interrupt the border at the border, but also behind and beyond it. We can cease according too much agency to sound and stop fantasising about what it can do. We must imagine a listening stripped of its colonial scaffolding – as a mode of "redress",[9] as a "reorganizer" of realities[10] from the doors the border leaves ajar. This is not, however, an attempt to romanticize or glorify the de- and re-realization of the body done by the European border. Rather, it is an invitation to become undone or, paraphrasing Fanon, to grasp this undoing with both hands and, in this gesture, imagine a pathway of escape, a disappearing through the rifts.[11] The disruptive potential might be, for now, mostly speculative. Yet it remains possible, insofar as these moments are still those in which the body, always already de-realized, may refuse to announce itself.[12] ●

Pedro J S Vieira de Oliveira is a researcher, sound artist and educator whose work advances a decolonising inquiry of listening and the materiality of sound. His current artistic and academic research focuses on a historical, aesthetic and material investigation on the deployment of so-called "accent recognition software" in the asylum system of Germany. He holds a PhD from the University of the Arts Berlin, and is currently a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies.

Digital artivism: pictures worth thousands of words

Ana Filipa Maceira   **Irem Kurt**

The digital era brought us the democratization of information and the possibility that anyone might be heard. Even though the internet's dominant algorithms tend to promote non-disruptive, white, straight voices, in the past decade, activist groups have gained in strength and the voices of black and indigenous people, and people of colour have gained unprecedented reach.

Our contemporary online realities mimic the power dynamics and unequal structures we experience in the offline world. Companies like Facebook persist in constraining the internet as a white, heteronormative, centralized space. In other words, maintaining and extending the colonialist power structures that repress societies to this day.[1]

However, this very same company also made it possible for people of colour to reach bigger audiences than ever before. This curious contradiction[2] at the heart of these digital colonial spaces is one of the reasons we believe they might also hold the key for collapsing colonialism on- and offline. Moreover, safer spaces that have their own online platforms are appearing. In Germany alone you can find *ichbinkeinvirus*, *BiPoC netzwerk*, *Oyoun* and *Neue Deutsche* among others.

As intersectional and multidisciplinary creators we ask ourselves: how can we disrupt this version of the internet without further adding to the polarization of opinions? We fight for a decolonized, decentralized, diverse online society where people can live as themselves, free from the fear of aggression, and consequently, directly impact the offline world.

Just as with the written word, we've found that an image can be interpreted in completely different ways by people from different cultures. In one of our monthly workshops, *Drawsome with OUSA*, we chose emojis from different countries and asked people from our communities to tell us what they meant for them. The variety in their answers showed us how we must consider different interpretations when producing illustrations, especially around issues to do with migration. It also stands as a reminder of how important it is for us to continue to try to diversify our team and events as much as we can.

On the other hand, for our exhibition *MOSAIC* with aequa.cc, we invited several illustrators with histories of migration to reflect on the topics of Memory, Ritual, and Future. They kindly produced very personal pieces that reflected their own cultures, life stories, fears and dreams. Despite the illustrations being so formally different, the feelings that enliven them are clearly related.

We learned that even though two people can interpret the same image differently, more often than not, images are able to transcend most barriers, including language. Using strong images to get a point across can sometimes be more powerful than words.

Illustration is also a very effective way of disrupting social media because most of these platforms were designed to share images. Simply replacing the usual lifestyle photograph with a colourful drawing hopefully catches your eye and opens your mind.

However, a distinction must be made between our illustrations and propaganda. Our goal is to produce thought-provoking illustrations that demand critical thinking. Unlike propaganda, which rams home messages, our illustrations are intended to start dialogues by sharing perspectives that are distorted by the media, or simply erased.

This form of activism through art is called artivism and we would like to share some of our favourite examples of how it can be used for positive disruption.

Guerrilla Girls first invaded the internet in 1996 with their poster, "The Internet Was 84.5% Male And 82.3% White". This intersectional group of feminist artists, founded in the 80's, is, for obvious reasons, one of our favourites examples of artivism. They use striking facts and figures, presented with bold and humorous visuals,

to simultaneously draw attention to power imbalances and encourage people to reflect on how they might be complicit in perpetuating inequality. They do this in a way that captures people's attention and is easy to digest. It is hard to dismiss such evident proof of discrimination.

Even though Guerrilla Girls formed before social media existed, their methods can be directly applied in the digital sphere. The posters they spread around a few cities are now seen by millions of people around the world. Even though there is much still to be done, the misguided idea that art by white men can more easily be found in museums because they have more talent and work harder than women, BiPoC and LGBTQA+ people is now definitively punctured. What the Guerrilla Girls' work shows us is that systemic change takes a long time and lots of persistence, but well thought-out images can make it a reality.

We try to implement some of the Guerrilla Girls' strategies in our own work by sharing quotes and hard facts alongside our illustrations, on social media, and in the offline world. There is no denying the impact of a poster in a street or a bold sign at a demonstration. When they go viral in photographs, they are again brought into the digital space. To harness this power, we are currently developing safer workshop environments to pass on useful tools for participants to come up with the kind of strong visuals that bring awareness to their social causes. Raising your activist voice creatively can be profoundly empowering.

The say their names movements has roots in the USA. In 2014, the #SayHerName hashtag was used to draw attention to violence against black women by racist American police. It later become #SayHisName and then #SayTheirNames. After George Floyd was murdered by a police officer in May 2020, millions of people across the world marched in solidarity and as a way of breaking the silence about what was happening in their own nations.

Germany was no exception. On 19th February, 2020, nine young people with migrant backgrounds were killed by a white German who attacked a shisha bar. At first, it was written off as murder committed by a mentally unstable citizen. Had it not been for a wave of artivism on social media, the most important detail of the story would have remained buried: the premeditated attack was carried out by an extreme-right German nationalist. The victims were:

Gökhan Gültekin
Sedat Gürbüz
Said Nesar Hashemi
Mercedes Kierpacz
Hamza Kurtović
Vili Viorel Păun
Fatih Saraçoğlu
Ferhat Unvar
Kaloyan Velkov

The posts that were shared by hundreds, both on the street and on social media, were portraits of the victims and their names. The power of these illustrations is in showing how vibrant and full of life those young people were, and for making it obvious that they were targeted merely because of their race and religion. Because of the volume of posts about what happened, neither the media nor the government could ignore the racism, xenophobia, and extreme-right ideology that fuelled the attack. This kind of validation is the first step to real change and is what we, at OUSA, are aiming for.

These examples demonstrate to us the power of simply and boldly presenting the truth. If systemic change only becomes real through policy, and policy only becomes feasible when people understand these changes as being vital for their society's future, then it's our duty to shine a light on all the stories which are only half-told or remain completely hidden. By inviting illustrators from migrant backgrounds to share their stories on our platforms, this is what we aim to do.

There are countless other projects that, like OUSA, use illustration to bring complex social issues to mainstream conversations. *Afghan Punk Rock* and *Radicale Töchter* are just two examples of how contemporary artivism is succeeding in this and thriving. We stand with the illustrator Edel Rodriguez, who believes that images can leap languages to share messages around the world. "Images can 'give a voice' to protesters," he writes. Even in different languages, we are stronger when we speak together. ●

Irem Kurt is a designer and illustrator based in Berlin. Spurred by her interest in tackling social issues from a visual perspective, she co-founded OUSA collective in Berlin in 2020. When she is not drawing, in her free time she likes to read or volunteer.

Ana Filipa Maceira is an illustrator based in Berlin. She holds an MA in Architecture and Urbanism from ISCTE, Lisbon and Technische Universität Darmstadt, with a focus on emergency settlements for societies with low resources. Inspired by social architecture and art, she co-founded OUSA collective in 2020.

Together as co-founders of OUSA Collective, Ana Filipa Maceira wrote the text of this article and Irem Kurt provided the illustration.

just wondering…

»We like to imagine that our social systems can be transformed not only with the guidance of marginalized humans but together with other beings that are not part of our species.

In this future, humans no longer exploit and enslave other animals, but design spaces that enlarge their mobilities and agencies. A new society can be built where multiple species can thrive.«

Maria Martelli, Aron Nor & Mina Mimosa

Ratios / Proporciónes

Cami Rincón | **Andrew Mallinson**

A black hollow sat atop the desk. Perpendicularly bound by a sheet of perfectly smooth glass. Realities flickered in fluctuating pixels behind the boundary. Smudges that echoed the skin seeped through fissures in the pane, rendering my body across the divide. Perfectly manicured nails printing in plurality, sparkling, glittering, in fleeting movement towards something other, something new.

Pretend to be something enough and you can surpass the original in intensity. In here the image is limitless, disembodied and created anew, do you see?

Limbs completely severed from the source, now a new form transient through space. Queered, beyond recognition. Punctured in wonder and lost, so lost in this new groundlessness underneath floating ankles, a million horizons all punctuated with pixels of potential.

Don't you see we could be anything, spilled out into new, repeated and repeated, drenched in joy, I can feel it smothering me, can you?

The boundary seemed so distant, an obelisk echoing the past in flourishes of sound from its obsidian form. Translation was futile, what came before was indecipherable now. Everything was pitched higher, soaring frequencies rippled in lossless waves across the vastness unfurling themselves over my refracted frame.

Before I was rigid but in here now I am loose, like a river running backwards and forwards, omnipresent and potent.

Elegir con la mirada.
Recortar fotos termina con rectángulos desproporcionados.
El imaginarse lo que existe en un cuarto oscuro.
No había visto nada pero supe exactamente dónde dibujarme una linea nueva para la mandíbula.

Frótate contra cada objeto y rincón y encuentra solamente bordes lisos. Que los ásperos sean objetos de defensa, para cuando te digan estirarse es empujar. Hay una luz en tu pecho a punto de volar el techo. "Lo estás haciendo bien, [yo] soy para ti."[1]

Estos medios de comunicación no nos merecen. Tú sabes y yo sé y no hay palabras como no hay cuerpos que puedan cambiar tan rápido como nuestra fugaz. Si piensas que esto es para ti, lo es. Cuerpos que se moldean a las miradas de extraños, y los que desafían.

No sabemos de dónde lo sacamos. Encontrándolo en mí, obteniéndolo de ti, y cada vez que te honras. Tu existencia me da nombre.

Siente hacia lo que sea, hacia todo. Me veo ahora como me veo entonces. Queer allá del reconocimiento. De fotos cortadas, una luz que crece cuando es vista.

Image by Andrew Mallinson

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Cami Rincón is the Research Assistant in Public Sector AI Ethics and Governance at The Alan Turing Institute. Cami's independent research has explored risks and opportunities for LGBTQ+ people in AI and focused on developing voice AI competent of trans needs.

Andrew Mallinson is an artist and writer based in London and co-founder of Feminist Internet, an organisation working to tackle internet inequalities. Their work draws on queer and feminist practices to understand how the body intersects politically and socially with space.

[multi'vocal]

»Synthetic speech systems generate speech that hasn't been recorded before. Our own uses a text input, before generating audio from this text through algorithms. The way we're making it is different in that where the system is usually trained with a single voice actor recording tens of hours of speech, we're continuously integrating new speakers into the process.

So instead of having a convergence, where you can say, "Okay, now we can capture the speech of this particular person," we're constantly looking at how to give the algorithms a hard time by presenting new ways of seeing a given string or a given sentence.

And maybe the glitchyness of a voice and the complicated nature of working with an interface is something like the beauty of working with voices – and also the beauty of conversations that are not necessarily assembled conversations with an artificial agent. You can have this very subversive back and forth in the complexities.«

*Frederik Tollund Juutilainen
& Stina Hasse Jørgensen*

Illustration by Amira-Sade Moodie

Shadow Visions

Xiaowei Wang

The eye doctor shined a bright light into my left eye as I realized, I have stopped thinking of the future. The day was hot, the air dry. I was slowly and surely going blind, from a progressive, incurable eye disease. On my way home, I could smell wildfire smoke. Shadows trailed the edges of my vision. I could sense the echo of a painting, the searing red of rosehips left to rot in memory.

The corners of my vision that have disappeared are not the pure darkness you imagine – they undulate and shift with pixels, with moments of grey and black. And even in that imagination of pure darkness is an ideology. Pathologized in an industrialized Western culture, darkness is seen as threat, something that must be enlightened and dispelled through linear rays of illumination. Counter to the association of darkness with fear, in his 1933 essay, *In Praise of Shadows*, Junichiro Tanizaki observed a world changing around him that was being washed away in brightness. Tanizaki laments the incessant light brought by Western industrialization and street lamps, the disappearance of a "world of shadow". Through architecture and art, Tanizaki unpacks the longstanding cultural value and reverence of darkness in East Asian aesthetics. Darkness, as Tanizaki shows us, is not flat, nor is it a gaping void, an absence, or a shiny black mirror. Instead, it is a visual place, where complex beauty and tranquility arises, as many-layered as the colours we see in sunlight. As with Buddhist writings on nothingness, it can be easy to read Tanizaki's text with a quaint, romantic Orientalism – yet Tanizaki's explanations on the deeply sacred importance of darkness is a cosmology that must be experienced in order to be understood.

The capacity for sensing light slowly leaves my eyes, over weeks and months, and during this time my other capacities increase as I come to praise more shadows. Through the pandemic, I read the traces of uncertainty for others. I shuffle my tarot cards and decipher the spread before me, over video, over the phone, over voice memos. Near-future jobs and past lovers dot each spread, and the childhood trauma you thought was gone is still there. I tell my clients, *Time is a fiction that can be crossed. What I see is not the future, but the story of a cycle. Like a threaded needle moving through a piece of fabric, we slip through time. All I am doing is relaying to you this moment, relaying to you the information from the cards, the stories that spring from the sublime of the shadows.* Some clients ask me, "Well then, what does the future hold for me? Can't you just tell me?" *These stories spring forward, ever constant in their change*, I reply. *Any attempt to say the future is already written is a scam.*

A foreclosed future is like the streetlights that dispel the world of shadow, that wash away the moon. While inference is the art of interpreting data to create a model of a system, prediction is intended to forecast future behaviour. Both require inputs of data, and the process requires defining which variables are relevant to a system. As a predictive tool, tarot is narrow and static, relying on the idea that who you are today is who you will be five years from now, that the forces of awareness, your relationships and your world will remain unchanging. *How strange if your desires today are the same five years from now.* As an inferential tool, tarot is a knotty, complex map of signs and symbols that make meaning, and a reading is a space to put together some kind of mental model of the querent's world. There is a widely circulating tarot reader meme that summarizes this inferential process perfectly – a chart titled "Tarot Reading", with 90% of the pie chart labelled "Things you already knew".

When "[a]ny sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic", the lines between divinatory tools like tarot and predictive technologies like machine learning will always be blurry, revealing the nested systems we live under.❶ The logics of both divination and predictive tech underscore the ways "ethics", the "intrinsic good" and the "intrinsic bad" are instantiations of power more than they are anything absolute. The tarot card Justice depicts the layered nuances of power versus static ethics. As number 11 in the Rider-Waite deck, the card depicts a familiar version of Lady Justice, or the Roman goddess Iustitia, holding scales that weigh the support and opposition of each side in a case. Rationality and facts reign supreme in Iustitia's court.

Yet dig a layer deeper and you will find a starkly different understanding of Justice, an image based on the Egyptian goddess Maat. Upon death, Maat holds her scales for a vastly different reason, weighing your heart against a feather, marking the weave of power and the way it threads through systems into our daily lives. This different reading of Justice prompts: In what ways have you used power in your life against others? In what ways have you addressed harm, in what ways have you attempted repair? In what ways have you yielded power so that others with less of it may gain some? When you take power, do you intend to take it for yourself only? And in a society where money, power and respect are interlinked, what is your relationship to these three?

> A foreclosed future is like the streetlights that dispel the world of shadow, that wash away the moon.

> The logics of both divination and predictive tech underscore the ways "ethics", the "intrinsic good" and the "intrinsic bad" are instantiations of power more than they are anything absolute.

Tarot readings reveal how structures of dominant power condition and create social fictions – the idea that prediction is certain, that the future cannot change, that there is a mathematical average or "normal" that bodies and minds tend towards. Historian Ian Hacking has long traced the ways probabilistic thinking has had to be created and constructed. In his book, *The Taming of Chance,* he notes how the mechanisms of probabilistic thinking came from transposing astronomy onto human bodies, creating an "average man", and extending into fields of social psychology and Sir Francis Galton's eugenics. This notion of "average" has been dispelled numerous times, more recently by Harvard professor Todd Rose. According to Hacking, even after twentieth century physics showed that the universe is not purely deterministic, and causality is vastly less relevant than originally thought, probabilistic thinking persisted.

Long before predictive technologies created vectors of power in social systems, ranging from shaping conceptions of beauty to measures to counter expected rates of recidivism, divination was used to maintain the status quo. Now deemed "unscientific" and "irrational", the historical use of divination to concretize power is a palpable reminder that ways of thinking and knowledge-making are always suffused with ideology and shaped by the specifics of power. What is considered logical today may be considered irrational tomorrow. Rather than divination as inference, divination was used by governing powers to foreclose a future. Magicians and alchemists in imperial courts sanctified the imperial order, arguing that the roles of emperors and queens were written in the stars, written into pools of water, written into landforms and animal bones.

In Queen Elizabeth I's court, it was John Dee, a polymath and court magician who sanctified the project of empire. Dee and other magicians engaged in what historian Jafe Arnold calls "esoteric imperialism", or "occult colonialism". It was intrinsically tied to a "cosmopolitics" that was "synthesized out of the occult sciences, various meta-historical schemes and narratives of an eschatological or apocalyptic bent, and the affirmation of a need for a religio-centric governance." [2] Through scrying, or the divinatory practice of gazing into mirrors and pools of water, John Dee coined the term "British Empire", a naming that would destroy worlds several times over, solidifying its seemingly natural terms. Part of Dee's visions, according to Arnold, centered on bringing about the end of the world. By conquering the world, the last monarch would reign and Judgement Day would come, bringing with it an "eternal Sabbath" of peace. Following this imperative made the "British Empire" manifest, thereby enabling the monarchy to gather wealth and accumulate power. These terms hold to our present day. The British monarchy, the heirs of what used to be the British Empire, still benefit very materially from the consequences of staring into an obsidian scrying mirror hundreds of years ago.

Staring and seeing go multiple ways. I cannot tell if Justice in the tarot is blind. That is another common depiction of Justice – blind or blindfolded because it should not matter how wealthy or powerful people are in a situation. The truth will come through and somehow "right" will prevail. Yet we live in a world where wealth does change how truth is perceived, and in that context, a blind Justice seems like she is fumbling for the future through the threads of the present, rather than seeing a situation for what it is. While Justice is card 11 in the Rider-Waite deck, it was originally numbered eight. The Strength card originally sat where Justice is. It is in the Strength card that I see the possibilities opened by a reading of Justice as repair and power. A woman stands, with her eyes closed, an infinity sign representing the innumerability of the world above her head, an endless flow of knowledge. The knowledge she channels is not individualistic, but is wise and full of fortitude because of its interconnectedness. Through compassion rather than force, she caresses a lion. Rather than grasping, rather than distilling into variables, the card represents the refuge that mending the present can bring. In this, is another form of power. ●

Xiaowei Wang is a writer and artist based in the San Francisco Bay Area. They are the author of *Blockchain Chicken Farm*, and recently finished a collaborative new media work, *The Future of Memory*, which received a Mozilla Creative Media Award in 2019. Currently, they are researching health and care technologies across the urban-rural spectrum in the US.

Amira-Sade Moodie is a person – sort of. There is a sneaking suspicion they are not from this planet, but that's a story for another time. They are a visual artist stumbling around this very confusing planet finding tiny gold nuggets in the folds of flowers and expressing them through music, poetry, film and watercolour.

Oats, spaceships, an aloe leaf, a pelvis: I went to collect parts of the future and decided to turn around

Camila Nobrega

Translation from Portuguese by Alex Brostoff

At first, this text emerged in images and then became a notebook called "futures." Not that I have much talent for drawing, but turning ideas into drawings and spoken-word narratives are at times my first ways of thinking. Discomforts caused by an obsession with the future express themselves in the form of free association. Four such images: a spaceship, a jar of oats, an aloe leaf, a pelvis. On the wall of my house in Kreuzberg, Berlin, I catch a glimpse of a poster for the event *Queer Futures* at The Gorki, one of the main theaters in the city. Invitations, conferences and meetings crop up, projects that aim to speculate about the future. Whose future? Who has had the privilege of occupying space to discuss what is yet to come in such an arid, urgent present time? A time without air, a time

when Covid-19 tests are on every street corner in Germany, while in other parts of the world, the vaccine is still a long way off.

Afro-Dominican, lesbian theorist Ochy Curiel argues that the Newtonian model seeks to delimit past and future, just as Cartesian dualism seeks to demarcate between nature and society.❶ adrienne maree brown has described how turning us against each other is one of oppression's most powerful weapons.❷ Let's linger on this, for it also orients us toward thinking through a word that is part of the depths of the Western imaginary: progress.

The spaceship landed in the notebook on July 11th. "Space travel is expected to become popular and launch thousands into orbit in the future," read a CNN report. The subtitle added "although the price is not cheap." That day, the Virgin Galactic was launched into space with billionaire Richard Branson aboard. Nine days later, another business magnate paid his way to making history in the popular imagination: Jeff Bezos, owner of Amazon and *The Washington Post* also built his own spaceship. To add insult to injury, he thanked all the customers ("You paid for all of this," he said, which makes me want to vomit up every Amazon package I succumbed to ordering in the past) and said he understood the planet was "fragile."❸ After all, business magnates need to invent issues that can be solved by their own corporate models.

The conquest of other worlds is nothing new in capitalism; it is capitalism's colonial lynchpin. Colonization has always been a systemic fetish, like throwing something old away and recreating it from scratch. Future narratives, future cities ("smart"?!).

References to Octavia Butler, Ursula Le Guin, and of course, Donna Haraway are made again and again – all incredible references that break down doors, both inside and out. But something knocks and makes a noise in the stomach. The repetition of references and the presence of this debate – especially in privileged circles, in countries where much of today's financial capital is concentrated – is harrowing.

The absurdity of the time we live in causes such discomfort. This is common, both in Germany, where I live, and in Brazil, to where my mind never stops roaming when I write. But in the European context, there is something that sounds so far afield, something that sweeps away other forms of thinking about time. In the article "Docile Bodies," Brazilian Indigenous activist and artist Naine Terena questions the construct of "not having enough time."❹ She writes of "the time you say you don't have, that you *think* you don't have." She speaks of an obedient, submissive body, a body operating in the service of productivity. She makes it clear that there are other ways of living, including those considered depraved. Such ways of living can actually bring about what she calls "material rest." Not all bodies are part of the dominant logic; it's as simple as that. And it's also not simple at all.

Who is this "we" trapped in an accelerated, future-oriented time? In response to German Chancellor Angela Merkel's speech about the future of the internet, researcher, artist and Indigenous leader Vândria Borari and I started to think about this question in a text entitled "One Vision, One World – Whose World Then?"❺ In the speech, Merkel talks about creating a com-

mon idea of the future. Again, this obsession with linearity and progress.

We've made it to another image in the notebook: a jar of oats . It appeared on a list of foods that reduce depression and anxiety. "To bring people into the present," one of the tips noted. Considered a natural sedative, oats are used to treat depression and anxiety. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 42% of people report symptoms of anxiety and depression, 11% more than in the previous year (the pandemic plays a role here). Food is an alternative to medication. Alas, we encounter yet more colonial logic. Today, lithium is one of the bases for this type of medication. Half of the reserves are located in Salar de Uyuni, Bolivia. Smartphones and electric car batteries are made from the same source, driving promises of "greener" and "more sustainable" days (what are we even sustaining?).

It's been almost fifty years since the report *The Limits of Growth* (1972) was commissioned by the Club of Rome, which included industry leaders and economists, among others. It's still cited as a reference in debates about the socio-environmental and climate crises. Its primary objective was to predict the future, to read the world through numerical models of population, pollution and industrial production. It pointed out the impossibility of infinite growth, but also aimed to calculate the metrical possibilities of maintaining progress and expanding a centralized model so that all human beings could attain some degree of well-being according to Eurocentric criteria. Not because corporations were actually concerned about their impact, but because there was no longer any way to sweep their effects under the rug.

Now, however, something else appears to stretch the limits of the imagination, especially those of privileged people in positions of power. And here we go again. What's so different about linear logic driven by progress, by a profound belief in technological development? Imagining and feeling are embedded in the concrete structure of our forms of existence. The future that arises from Latin America cannot be extricated from the veins, guts, and holes dug to build dams and endlessly extract resources like minerals and food. Damn other forms of existence. Once upon a time there was the construction of a singular, universal future.

"Is it possible to decolonize utopias?" asks political scientist María do Mar Castro Varela. She develops the idea of a future that can bear the colonial imaginary. We need to unpack utopias: "they need to make you sweat and tremble, because one must confront trauma that you have experienced both personally and caused historically."[6]

Different cosmologies lead to different forms of thinking about time. Looking ahead, we must think about asking permission and recovering roots, ensuring references, digging deeper into where resistance comes from, how and why cosmologies struggle against extinction. Within capitalist logic, underground pasts are doomed to be forgotten. In a text called "The Future is Ancestral," Brazilian scholar Katiúscia Ribeiro reclaims the struggle for survival with respect to *quilombola* [7] wisdom. She asks, "Where do our ancestors live on? How can humanity be reconfigured from an ancestral perspective?"[8] Indigenous leader Ailton Krenak has been thinking through this same premise,[9] and

diverse female thinkers, such as Sueli Carneiro, Célia Xakriabá, Silvia Cusicanqui, have discussed these ideas. They have forged paths that do not fit into conceptions of decolonial praxis.

In many cosmologies, past, present, and future aren't linear. When I think about *Queer Futures*, this feeling makes my stomach churn: *but we have always been here.* The depths of my future imaginings reclaim, for example, women and non-binary people who, even amidst so many waves of repression at various times, loved women, loved non-normative bodies. They were stereotyped, disenfranchised and burned, but they also lived, experienced pleasure and found paths to liberation. They have made my existence, and so many other existences, possible.

We have landed on the penultimate image: *an aloe leaf*, stemming from a photograph I took in a supermarket in Berlin. I learned from my grandmother that aloe helps with healing. She came from a family of farmers from the countryside in Minas Gerais, Brazil. In Rio de Janeiro, the city where I was born, I did not come across a large aloe vera plantation until I attended an agroecology conference in the western part of the city. This is the same region where hundreds of people were displaced prior to the Olympics and the World Cup. To be more specific, 100,000 people. [10] And different forms of gentrification threaten far further displacement. Popular wisdom and land rights, under the same roof, without separate space, struggle to survive. One day, here in Kreuzberg, in Berlin, in an organic market that is part of a large food distribution chain, I see a sign for "the future of medicine," pointing to a

place where you can buy a huge aloe leaf for medicinal purposes. On one side of the world, traditional ecological knowledge is displaced, on the other it is presented as novelty. The future?

I'll end with the final image, *the pelvis*: a piece of the body that heteropatriarchy is obsessed with. In Europe, I'm shaken by the number of people who I hear say: "I can't move my hips." Such cultural expression conveys the remains of Christian heteropatriarchy. Linearity strikes again. Here, feeling stuck, and in pain at the base of my spine, I went to the doctor. Allopathic medicine; that is, he told me to do physical therapy and so on. I decided to try something else and stumbled upon a work-

shop taught by Nora Amin, an Egyptian who lives in Berlin and works on Baladi dance (pejoratively called belly dance in the West) from a feminist perspective. On the first day we're in contact: "the control of possibilities for experimentation and futures also begins in the pelvis, and in the history of repression in women's bodies." I ended up where I needed to be. In Egypt, there are specific movements that are against the law, she explains, movements that were banned at different historic moments. The present or the future is not always the route to liberation.

Widen the curves. So that ideas also come out of the guts and the grounds on which we tread.●

Alex Brostoff is a writer, educator and Ph.D. candidate in Comparative Literature at the University of California, Berkeley. In their study of contemporary queer writing by Latin American and U.S. feminists, Alex hones in on the emergence of genre-defying bodies of theory — from "theory in the flesh" to "autotheory" and beyond.

The Banlieue du Turfu: A prototype to transcend reality

Makan Fofana   *Hugo Pilate*

Translation from French by
Allison M. Charette

In early September 2020, Hugo reached out to me to co-develop a series of creative workshops on reenchanting the banlieue. Hugo had just launched a project called *Cyberlocal Dreams*, a pedagogical collaborative workshop at the intersection of a myriad of questions regarding ecological transitions in urban areas. Both of these projects draw from the practices of worldbuilding and prototyping alternative realities, using collaborative digital tools such as multiplayer video games.

Each workshop on the Banlieue du Turfu had two parts: the first used Miro to guide a collective brainstorming session on the theme of the week, through exercises on introspection, deconstruction, and improvisation. The second part took place in the Creative mode of Fortnite,[1] where participants brought their visions to life. Every phase of prototyping was organised in the same Fortnite map, allowing the creation of a world that was vaster, denser and more alive.

The first workshops were experimental. The participants were people close to Hugo and myself: friends, designers and the occasional stranger who had become interested in our work. I selected four very different themes that had been dominating my imagination, with no real coherence. The main takeaway here is that I wanted to try to think about the banlieue through the lens of good, non-problematic things. You think that's nothing special? Well, as a matter of fact, it is – in France, at any rate, our only collective idea of the banlieue is via the lens of its problems to resolve.

Terrabanlieueforming

Terrabanlieueforming challenges the order of the possible and impossible. The Banlieue du Turfu could potentially be a place as enticing as Mars, and is likewise equally as exotic, casting me – all of us – as explorers of a nearly unknown world.

Illustration by Hugo Pilate

It will likewise have to be terraformed, created, crafted in our hands. Constructing the Banlieue du Turfu will require new knowledge, methods of transportation and renewable energies, just as much as the means to become autonomous. It is a plausible alternative to Martian space conquest. There are Mars equivalents that exist on Earth, in the Banlieue and other decentralized territories. Right now, we have very different perceptions of them: one symbolizes decadence; the other, the future of civilization.

We decided to explore the connections between the fantastical turfuist and Martian worlds using the metaphor of a rover, the remote-controlled vehicle used to explore Mars from a distance. This way of surveying and feeling out the possibilities for inhabiting Mars seemed to be a pertinent place to start, allowing us to underscore the fact that the Banlieue du Turfu was not yet created, and that our ability to manifest it would be undeniably influenced by the tools we have at our disposal. Is it like the box where the Little Prince's sheep is, or the Magizoologist's discovery case?

These ideas began to take more or less explicit shape in Fortnite, starting with a circular system of sanitation that could grant food-level autonomy, as well as a space for botanical care that would redesign medical services as a journey, rather than a set of destinations. These prototypes echoed themes of well-being in a rather hostile environment. We were able to bring our concepts to a concrete place – this normally would have been more difficult, but using the medium of Fortnite empowered the transition.

Illustration by Hugo Pilate

Symbioturfuism

A turtle crossing a river on a frog's back: that is a symbiotic banlieue. The banlieue is defined and defines itself by a lack of resources, money, programs and support. Yet we don't lack locally for artistic, philosophical, scientific or practical resources which inspire new relationships, ways of being, existences and innovations. What if banlieues don't exist in the future? Symbiosis is thus a metaphor, an ecological reality and an economic possibility[2] all at once – a possible alternative to this idea of not-having. The banlieue being no longer just a public space of concrete, but *an interconnected intimacy within a great common cultural tree that shelters local and individual dreams.*

Illustration by Hugo Pilate

We decided to anchor the workshop around a symbiotic kebab house: part business, part public establishment, a place that could reveal the complex web of symbiosis within the banlieue. This mooring also allowed us to confront the cultural and ecological clichés that often place the adoption of a vegan lifestyle at the foundation of ecological policy. We then proposed three different perspectives to interact with our fantastical site: a celebrity from the area, a disengaged student and a fashion influencer. The conversation began by listing out some ways that the inhabitants of a symbiotic Banlieue could make effective use of nature: birds as signage (like the fish for Nemo), or illuminated palm trees as lampposts. The discussion evolved to the notion of communal areas, imagining the members of the symbiotic banlieue as a web of interdependent silos, where different areas of abundance are shared through mutual aid. In Fortnite, these ideas were interpreted as a field of blockchain-sown ayahuasca❸ that provides a way to exchange work time for hallucinatory inspiration, an ancestral tree providing academic support based on the individual rhythm of every individual, and mutualizing birds overlooking it all to facilitate communication among members of the banlieue to optimize the sharing of resources.

Turfucyberfeminism

Octavia Butler, Ursula K. Le Guin, and Donna Haraway have brought a breath of fresh air to science fiction and paved the way for a multitude of other alternative movements, such as Biopunk,❹ Salvagepunk and Solarpunk.❺ Afrocyberfeminism was of greatest interest to us, in that it allowed us not only to draw from the vast culture of afrolegends – a mélange of magic, ancestral knowledge, and challenges to oppressive systems – but also to explore the place of women and queer people in the banlieue. Awa, a facilitator during the preparatory phases of our workshops, made sure we focused on this: if we were going to think about the future of the banlieue, it would be crucial to acknowledge that public spaces are currently primarily occupied by men. Another question raised by Afrocyberfeminism is the place of Africa in the Banlieue du Turfu. It is an archive of creativity, a wealth of modern knowledge and ancestral cultures to draw from for inspiration. A crossroads of a plethora of civilizations, as well as a land of homegrown solutions that could inspire new ways of using things in the Banlieue du Turfu. Thus, Turfucyberfeminism brings a deeper meaning to the notion of the cyborg, suggesting an expansion of possible hybrids of living and mineral, human and vegetal, temporal and spatial. These possibilities of métissage open a space for verbal gymnastics, a fusion of concepts, and an alchemy dreamed of in myth, technology and magic.

During this workshop, we hijacked a high-tech factory from the Fortnite prefabs to make a vertical ballroom that wound around the exterior walls of the structure, with a stage on the roof for the final performance. A tree provided a home for an ecosourced sneaker store, which was run by a vegeto-cyborg woman planted inside. Grafted onto the northern wall of the building below the ramps of the ballroom hummed a healing farm, where you could bathe in the tears of the goddess Nea for revitalization.

The Shisha House of Wisdom

We wanted to hack and reinvent the shisha bar, imagining it as a house of wisdom for the coming age: a place of invention, institutions and parliaments.

Safe spaces❻ already exist – places where we can have open discussions (within our own clichés, limitations and taboos) and enjoy our diverse communities – so why not reinvest in them and capitalize off of their potential by advancing other forms of democratic practice, other forms of politics, in a new space for making important decisions? Housing the Assemblée Nationale in the shisha bar would let us challenge the institution itself, which is currently seen as inflexible. This recontextualization can allow for questioning the centralization of power, the codification of politics, the role of national borders, and the places such practices are organized.

Hugo and I, along with Anaïs (another facilitator who was kind enough to accompany us throughout this workshop), had a lengthy discussion about the parallels to draw between democracy and the shisha bar. Could we use the shisha as a tool to indicate who may speak? Or could we draw inspiration from the social dynamics of the shisha bar? Should the flavors of shisha also be taken into consideration?

We then decided to facilitate that entire session as a roleplay in Miro, without using Fortnite. Anaïs helped us craft a two-hour roleplaying session, in which all the

different groups of citizens could present their proposals to the rest of the shisha, a project to create new laws to formalize an alternative shisha bar. These were the results:

Could we subsidize the creation of a World Wide Web of shishas, which would facilitate smart hubs to share empathic experiences through virtual reality? Each puff of flavour could give ephemeral access to the lived experience of another person connected to a second shisha anywhere in the world.

Could we create a place for teaching ancestral-turfuist remedies? Such a place could draw from both the latest in modern medicine and recipes from ancient times.

Conclusion

So, what lessons did these workshops teach us?

First of all, they confirmed our intuition that using virtual tools to prototype the Banlieue du Turfu would cultivate rich exchanges and a variety of interpretations from the different participants.

These workshops also gave us "concrete" ways to formalize the Banlieue du Turfu. The word "concrete" often surfaces in questions about the project, usually in the guise of "What *concrete* things are you proposing?" The Banlieue du Turfu is a project of philosophy, of civilization. A project both introspective and prospective, which cannot be materialized in one single creation.

When I first conceived of the Banlieue du Turfu, I told myself I could not set a definition for what might emerge from all the different stories based on the group, locale, region or country. I was inspired by a model of fluid and organic emergence, although the participants were not always comfortable with that level of freedom.

However, the worlds created in Fortnite helped the importance of métissage within the fantasy worlds become more tangible and explicit: the towering sneaker store, the ayahuasca field with a symbiotic kebab house on the far side, all populated by stylists, students, mutualizing birds and cyborg trees.

Thanks to the New New grant, we can push our experiments further. Our next step will be to refine the Banlieue du Turfu into a more precise form: a virtual space that is enchanting and democratic, teeming with life and creativity. We are still designing this project, but the stars are swiftly aligning. The transition from 2021 to 2022 seems very promising.●

Allison M. Charette translates literature from French into English, mostly by Malagasy authors including Naivo, Johary Ravaloson, and Michèle Rakotoson. She also founded ELTNA.org, a networking and support group for early-career translators.

Glossary

Banlieue A French word originally used for the suburbs. In recent decades it has referred to housing projects and other low-income areas in France. A banlieue can take many different forms throughout France, Europe and around the world. Sometimes outside city limits, sometimes in the inner city; sometimes made of huge buildings, sometimes housing projects; sometimes very urban, and other times in the middle of nature. There are plenty of synonyms for banlieue throughout the world: council estate, welfare housing, low-income housing, on the outskirts etc. There is no fully satisfactory definition – no definition has room for any diversity within the banlieue's features. So, I'll add my own definition to the geographic one: the banlieue is a sharing of emotions, fantasies, experiences and ways of living, a shared myth and destiny that goes beyond any geographic attributions or architectural features.

Turfu French verlan (inversion slang) for "future" ("le futur").

Worldbuilding the process and technique of expanding the details of an imaginary world. One of the most iconic examples is J.R.R. Tolkien's Middle-earth.

Terrabanlieueforming a neologism we made for the metaphor of creating life and its many conditions on Earth and in the banlieue.

Symbioturfuism a neologism we made for the hybrid of turfu and ecological fantasy worlds.

Turfucyberfeminism a neologism we made for the fusion of cyberpunk, afrofeminism, and urban fantasy.

Houses of Wisdom (بيت الحكمة , bayt al-hikma): These were founded in the Arab world in the 9th century. Author Houari Touati depicted them as library institutions in 2014, the "repository of books of knowledge in ancient times." An oversimplified way to evoke them is through their predominant role in the "transmission of the heritage of civilizations," including Greek, Persian, Indian, Chinese and Middle Eastern. This feature made these houses one of the symbols of the golden age of Arabic sciences: a place of collection, diffusion, copying and translation of the classical Islamic literature known as adab. [7]

Ayahuasca an entheogenic and therapeutic beverage brewed from plants and used in rituals by shamans in South America.

Footnotes

Aveia, espaçonaves, uma folha de babosa, uma pélvis: fui coletar trechos de futuro e resolvi dar meia-volta

❶ Mais sobre adrienne maree brown: https://www.urosario.edu.co/Subsitio/Catedra-de-Estudios-Afrocolombianos/Documentos/13-Ochy-Curiel---Genero-raza-y-sexualidad-Debates-.pdf

❷ Original no blog dela: https://adriennemareebrown.net/

❸ Uma exploração do tema, relacionado às Big Tech e os tecnosolucionismos que tem sido apresentados, a partir de uma lente feminista, pode ser encontrado nesse artigo escrito em parceria com a pesquisadora Joana Varon: https://branch.climateaction.tech/issues/issue-2/big-tech-goes-greenwashing/

❹ Coluna de Naine Terena: https://www.itaucultural.org.br/secoes/colunistas/corpos-doceis

❺ O texto está disponível na íntegra na primeira edicao da revista online Branch: https://branch.climateaction.tech/issues/issue-1/one-vision-one-world-whose-world-then/

❻ Essa fala dela ocorreu em um evento chamado "Colonial Repercussions", na Akademie der Kunst, em Berlim, 2018. Na íntegra em https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=isCE3yvLrKM

❼ Texto na íntegra em: https://diplomatique.org.br/o-futuro-e-ancestral/

❽ A série de vídeos de "Flechas" é uma possibilidade linda de entrada para essas reflexoes, sob narracao de Aílton Krenak e Daiara Tukano, aqui o trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NHBMwhnQ4uo

❾ Mais informacoes e números completos no Dossiê do Comitê Popular da Copa e das Olimpíadas: https://comitepopulario.files.wordpress.com/2014/06/dossiecomiterio2014_web.pdf

Tending to wildness: field notes on movement infrastructure

❶ https://sastranesia.com/puisi-bunga-dan-tembok-karya-wiji-thukul/

❷ https://genderit.org/tags/feminist-principles-internet

❸ https://www.mallikadutt.com/podcast/12-movement-building-in-a-digital-age

❹ https://www.issuelab.org/resources/38475/38475.pdf

❺ https://www.theengineroom.org/tech-and-human-rights-during-a-pandemic-challenges-organisations-facing/

❻ https://portalsemporteiras.github.io/en/assets/documentos/workbook-nodes-that-bond.pdf

❼ https://feministinternet.net/

❽ https://www.transfeministech.codingrights.org/

❾ https://www.malaysiadesignarchive.org/

❿ https://www.instagram.com/theshroomtea/?hl=en

⓫ https://soundcloud.com/banihaykal

⓬ https://staying-cool.com/

⓭ https://www.takebackthetech.net/

⓮ https://www.mozillafestival.org/en

⓯ https://numun.fund

The Battle to Control the ~~Carbon~~ Media Cycle

❶ See Camila Domonoske's report on this for NPR. "New Orleans News Site Finds Actors Were Paid To Support A Power Plant", published May 5, 2018. https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2018/05/05/608785751/new-orleans-news-site-finds-actors-were-paid-to-support-a-power-plant

❷ See p. 172, Michael Mann (2021) The New Climate War: the fight to take back our planet. London: Hachette.

❸ The *Synthetic Messenger* project and data can be viewed at http://syntheticmessenger.labr.io/

❹ Will Carton discusses the scientific scepticism of negative emissions technologies in his chapter, 'Carbon unicorns and docile futures: Whose emissions reduction pathways is the IPCC performing?' in Holly Jean Buck, Andreas Malm and J.P. Sapinski (2020) Has it Come to This? The Promises and Perils of Geoengineering on the Brink. New Brunswick, NJ : Rutgers University Press

Archive of Disappearances

❶ Lyrics from the song 'Zimbabwe' by Bob Marley which he sang at the independence ceremony on 18 April 1980 at Rufaro Stadium in Harare.

❷ The story of the Gukurahundi is complex and multifaceted, but significantly concerns the political annihilation of the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) as an opposition party, as well as their supporters.

❸ *Reading Zimbabwe* is an open access digital platform created by Tinashe Mushakavanhu, Nontsikelelo Mutiti and Corey Tegeler.

❹ See, 'Sociology of Absences' https://globalsocialtheory.org/concepts/sociology-of-absences

Prototyper la Banlieue du turfu et transcender la réalité

❶ https://www.epicgames.com/help/fr/fortnite-c75/creatif-c96/qu-estce-que-le-mode-creatif-dans-fortnite-et-comment-fonctionnetil-a3428

❷ https://fr.symbiotique.org/fr/

❸ https://maps.org/news-letters/v10n3/10318sha.html

❹ https://www.lemonde.fr/pixels/article/2019/05/26/la-science-fiction-aborde-des-enjeux-planetaires-entretien-avec-trois-maitres-de-la-sf_5467477_4408996.html

❺ https://www.arte.tv/fr/articles/tracks-solarpunk-ecologie-sf

❻ https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Safe_space

❼ https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maison_de_la_sagesse

To Become Undone

❶ See e.g. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VzLPAX_GGBo or https://apnews.com/article/middle-east-europe-migration-technology-health-c23251bec65ba45205a-0851fab07e9b6 (accessed June 19, 2021)

❷ https://www.independent.co.uk/news/eu-concerned-about-greek-use-of-antimigrant-sound-cannon-greece-greek-brussels-turkey-european-commission-b1859030.html (accessed June 19, 2021)

❸ Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin White Masks* (1952) p.2

❹ Mahmoud Keshavarz and Shahram Khosravi, "The Magic of Borders", *e-flux architecture* (2020). https://www.e-flux.com/architecture/at-the-border/325755/the-magic-of-borders/ (accessed June 19, 2021).

❺ Pedro J S Vieira de Oliveira, "On the Endless Infrastructural Reach of a Phoneme", *transmediale journal #3*, (2019). https://archive.transmediale.de/content/on-the-endless-infrastructural-reach-of-a-phoneme (accessed June 19, 2021).

❻ Dylan Robinson, *Hungry Listening: Resonant Theory for Indigenous Sound Studies* (2020) pp.50–51

❼ Gloria Anzaldúa, *Light in the Dark/Luz en lo Oscuro: Rewriting Identity, Spirituality, Reality* (2015) pp.29–45

❽ Sylvia Wynter, "Towards the Sociogenic Principle: Fanon, The Puzzle of Conscious Experience, of 'Identity' and What it's Like to be 'Black'", *National Identities and Socio-Political Changes in Latin America*, (2001) pp.30–66

❾ Robinson, 2020.

❿ Anzaldúa, 2015.

⓫ Fanon, 1952.

⓬ Denise Ferreira da Silva, "To Be Announced: Radical Praxis or Knowing (at) the Limits of Justice", *Social Text 31*, 1 (2013), pp.43–62.

Digital artivism – pictures worth thousands of words

❶ https://www.goethe.de/ins/rw/en/kul/mag/21753740.html

❷ https://www.dw.com/en/wiki-foundation-wants-to-decolonize-the-internet-with-more-african-contributors/a-44746575

Ratios / Proporciónes

❶ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DSEfNBtrAUg

Shadow Visions

❶ Clarke, Arthur C. *Profiles of the Future: An Enquiry into the Limits of the Possible.* London, Pan, 1983.

❷ Arnold J. Esoteric Imperialism: The Solomonic-Theurgic Mystique of John Dee's British Empire. Endeavour. 2019 Mar-Jun;43(1-2):17-24. doi: 10.1016/j.endeavour.2019.05.001. Epub 2019 Jul 5. PMID: 31280904.

Oats, spaceships, an aloe leaf, a pelvis:

I went to collect parts of the future and decided to turn around

❶ For the full text, see: https://www.urosario.edu.co/Subsitio/Catedra-de-Estudios-Afrocolombianos/Documentos/13-Ochy-Curiel---Genero-raza-y-sexualidad-Debates-.pdf

❷ For more, see adrienne maree brown's blog: https://adriennemareebrown.net/

❸ A feminist exploration of Big Tech and the techno-solutionism that has been devised can be found in this article co-authored with researcher Joana Varon: https://branch.climateaction.tech/issues/issue-2/big-tech-goes-greenwashing/

❹ Naine Terena's column can be read here: https://www.itaucultural.org.br/secoes/colunistas/corpos-doceis

❺ The full text is available in the first issue of the online magazine *Branch*: https://branch.climateaction.tech/issues/issue-1/one-vision-one-world-whose-world-then/

❻ This speech occured at an event called "Colonial Repercussions," in Akademie der Kunst, Berlin, 2018. The full text can be accessed here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=isCE3yvLrKM

❼ The word *quilombola* refers to Afro-Brazilian residents of quilombo settlements (first established by people who escaped enslavement in Brazil) as well as to their cultural practices under colonial rule. In Brazil, elements of this racial persecution persist today in various forms.

❽ For the full text, see: https://diplomatique.org.br/o-futuro-e-ancestral/

❾ The video series "Arrows," narrated by Aílton Krenak and Daiara Tukano, offers a beautiful point of entry into these reflections. A trailer can be viewed here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NHBMwhnQ4uo

More information and statistics can be found in the dossier compiled by the World Cup and Olympics Popular Committee: https://comitepopulario.files.wordpress.com/2014/06/dossiecomiterio2014_web.pdf

The Banlieue du Turfu: A prototype to transcend reality

❶ https://www.epicgames.com/help/en-US/fortnite-c75/creative-c96/what-is-creative-mode-in-fortnite-how-does-it-work-a3428
❷ https://symbiotique.org/
❸ https://maps.org/news-letters/v10n3/10318sha.html
❹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biopunk
❺ https://medium.com/solar-punks/solarpunk-a-reference-guide-8bcf18871965
❻ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Safe_space
❼ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/House_of_Wisdom#Other_Houses_of_Wisdom

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