INTERVIEW WITH JONATHAN BELLER

THE DERIVATIVE IMAGE: HISTORICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE COMPUTATIONAL MODE OF PRODUCTION

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In your book Acquiring Eyes, *you connect a new era of abstraction—the becoming abstract of the world, when the visual has become the new arena of operations for media capital—to visual modernism/visual art in Philippines, in the assumption that the latter can help to reveal the former; and the same would work for cinema, both in Philippines and globally, in that it could be understood as a medium of abstraction—"indexing the becoming-abstract of the world as the becoming-abstract of the visual." Can you elaborate on this? Why turn to Filipino artists in particular "for guidance and inspiration in the contestation of global capital"? Why are they more apt to constitute ruptures in what you consider to be the plenitude of the visual achieved by the cultural program of the world-media system?*

Colonialism, Racism, Imperialism. The twentieth century did not just mean a new order of geographical and economic colonization that was called Imperialism, it also meant the colonization of the visible world and more broadly of the senses and the mind. That much is already contained in the notion of *Weltanschauung* ("ideology" or "worldview"). Without imperialism, the world financial system necessary to 20th century capital accumulation would have collapsed, and without the cultivation of racism and white supremacy, an emerging geopolitical communications system might have created forms of solidarity and community that would render the violence at once necessary to capital accumulation and to the reduction of "the other" inadmissible. It is clear from the work of Simmel and Bloch, that the beginnings of a colonization of the visual and sensual world was well underway early in the century. This colonization was spear-headed by the appearance of industrial objects and a built environment reformatted by the exigencies of capital expansion that included—along with the requiring a global labor force capable of working for monopoly capitalism and of servicing sovereign debt—both a rising consumerism and a remaking of colonial lives and landscapes. All the new commodities and spaces were at once available to those enfranchised by capital but their appeal and indeed

their utility depended upon the disappearance of the worker and the other. But even beyond that we must recognize that colonialism, racism and imperialism were and are already forms of abstraction—a transformation of the perception of, in the first instance, the colonizer, the racist and the imperialist, such that they perceive the external world and therefore "the other" through a framework of abstraction. The reduction of colonial laborer to a garment is a practice of abstraction. With cinema we get the full-scale industrialization of the visual that develops this framework of abstraction and makes it ever more expressive. This development of visual technologies capable of inscribing convenient fantasies on the body of the other also leads to advertising and to a new order of psycho-dynamics in both marketing and the market. These new dynamics exceeded and continue to exceed the capacity of ordinary linguistic analysis. It is problems resulting from this short-circuiting of linguistic capacity, this direct encroachment on language, on critique and on the discursive ability to produce freedom that really interested me. The Philippines is at once a case in point and a space of insurrectionary becoming. The failure of a nationalist discourse following World War II, and a renewed U.S. presence after nearly 50 years of decolonial struggle in the Philippines coincided with the rise of abstract art. The easy interpretation was that Filipinos were just following an emergent international style. I think that assertion is fundamentally as patronizing as incorrect, but even if it were correct, we should ask, why the proliferation of abstract art around the world? To what experiences was it addressed? In reality, there were at least two directions, one formalist and invested in both the history of Art and the cultural legitimacy that Art History purchased, and another direction that addressed the historical foreclosure of nationalist struggle and the actual curtailment of an ability to constitute a liberated subject in and through language. The first strain was expressed and consolidated in the Marcos driven Cultural Center of the Philippines, along with its effort to create international legitimacy for the Marcos crackdown by culture-washing—this strain later gave rise to a formalist art-for-art's-sake trend in the late 80s (Chabet). The other chord was a revolutionary one, albeit unrealized. But as I wrote in *Acquiring Eyes*, what could not be granted discursively found a visual analogue—the radical pleasure and invention of co-creation unfettered by the ideological constraints of colonialism, imperialism, white supremacy and dictatorship. The visual was becoming abstract, but the logistics of abstraction were not immediately ceded to capital. This anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist chord later found its resonance in social(ist) realism in both painting and cinema.

You claim, again in Acquiring Eyes, *that "the twentieth-century emergence of the visual can be grasped in two moments that are dialectically separable—first as a realm of freedom and, second, subsequently as an arena of expropriation." According to you, this movement in the visual is one of the most significant areas of the unthought of political economy and geopolitics. It is this shift that you try to make sensible, and this unconscious that you try to make perceptible, in the abstract work of the Filipino painter H. R. Ocampo, and also in the Philippine cinema. How and why are they paradigmatic of this shift?*

H.R. wrote a serial novel called *Scenes and Spaces*, that told of a Filipino student who fell in love with his American English teacher but could not persuasively court her because he was consigned to the status of a racialized, colonial subject— not a man. This character's only solace was a series of abstract visual hallucinations that at times rose right up out of the street and interrupted the realism of the narrative. Later, when H.R. shifted from writing to painting after the War, those same descriptive passages became a series of canvases that together constituted exhibit A of Philippine modernism. One characteristic of these extraordinary works of visual abstraction is a spatial dislocation for the spectator produced by biomorphic forms that did not clearly indicate figure and ground and thus introduced a kind of intense play where viewing meant figuring the combinations to try and compose spatial conformations that made sense, or, an image. Multiple forces playing over the visual field opened it up as a space of participation and play—seeing was not a simple matter and visual object were not givens. This practice, where painter and viewer worked together to co-configure possible worlds I understood as a practice of freedom (that's what I felt at an inchoate, aesthetic level when I first looked at the canvases) — not a revolution, but some form of compensation that pursued what was in fact possible, real possibilities of aesthesis and agency within the forces of abstraction. But there too, in the visual overwritten by the forces of abstraction, there also opened a space of further colonization by imperial forces that included CIA propaganda, and that other quasi-official and far more powerful U.S. propaganda agency known as Hollywood. There was also spectacle, the spectacle of the commodity, and later the spectacle-glamor of Marcos dictatorship. These visual forces, it must be emphasized functioned at a level that exceeded the prior resolution and saturation of the psyche by the police and even by state controlled discourse. Radical cinema in the Soviet Union and visual practices in many places including the Philippines ramified the visual as a way of stimulating the imagination beyond the locked boxes of capitalist futures. In general, the visual was implicitly or explicitly

grasped as a space for the production of freedom. But this space of possibility was almost simultaneously shut down through its increasingly total saturation by commercial media, that is, by the fixed capital of communications infrastructure that colonized the visual and turned its productive potential into a factory for the production of capital itself.

In The Cinematic Mode of Production, *one can say that, in a way, you analyze precisely the retrospective overlapping of those two separate moments, as if even when cinema seemed to be working for a politics of human emancipation it was already preparing/anticipating its own capture by the capital. Your reading of the work of Dziga Vertov and Sergei Eisenstein goes in this direction: in their film practice they propose a cinematic critique and the overcoming of capital and capitalistic society, but in the end, they weren't able to fulfil their revolutionary expectations, and ended up becoming productive for, and absorbed by, the capitalistic logic they intended to subvert. What part did they play in your understanding of the cinematic mode of production as the matrix of what you call the "attention economy"—"to look is to labor", as you say—, which allows the connection between production of capital and production/consumption of images, that you are trying to address?*

Yes, the intimate relationship between the pursuit of freedom/liberation and the capture of this life-creative energy by capital is the fundamental dynamic I perceive in the industrialization of the visual. Just as Marx saw that workers built the world, and just as Negri later emphasized, innovation came from the workers and was, like labor itself, expropriated from workers as surplus value and thus as capital, and again, just as Marxist Feminists such as Federici and Fortunata demonstrated, that in the struggle to survive women gave their life energy to capitalist patriarchy in ways both unrecognized and unremunerated, spectators, in seeking their own fulfillments and satisfactions, drove an industry that would feed off of—meaning profit from—their dreams. Cut off from other avenues of freedom and in a relentless pursuit of satisfaction, they deterritorialized the factory and made the paradigmatic interface between bios and fixed capital the screen-image. Looking for fulfillment and forms of freedom became looking as labor. Remember the production of new needs is part of industrial advancement and the history of commodification. At first, with Vertov and Eisenstein (and in a kind of second moment with Pasolini, Godard, Varda, Mambéty, Brocka), the visual grasped as an open domain—only posited but not yet presupposed as space of production—offered unscripted forays into radical non- and anti-capitalist organization. The power of the imagination and of the spectator

was linked to the power of the people. But, as mentioned above, such an interface offered many productive efficiencies for capital and for its capitalists, and again, control of the means of production was decisive—not only did cinema and new visual technologies turn worker-spectators sensual labor/attention/subjectivity/desire into the universal value-form of capital though what were at first rather crude processes of value abstraction including ticket sales, Nielson ratings and advertising, they also reformatted and radically delimited linguistic capacity and opened the imagination to capitalist programs and indeed to capitalist programming. It is because of this overturning of the power of vision, that I gave my essay on Eisenstein the (tragically) ironic title "The Spectatorship of the Proletariat."

In your text "The Cinematic Program", you analyze three films, Through a Lens Darkly: Black Photographers and the Emergence of a People *(Thomas Allen Harris, 2014),* Citizenfour *(Laura Poitras, 2014),* Norte: The End of History *(Lav Diaz, 2013), and, regardless of their temporal, aesthetic and experiential differences, you tend to approach them as programs; in fact, according to you, their relevance depends on the possibility of reading them as "platforms for the instrumental organization of information, platforms that are also algorithms with regard to information processing." What do you mean by program in this context and how do you distinguish it from the programs run by what you call the capitalistic world-media system?*

Those films bind elements indexed to the life-world in new arrays—despite their differences as you note. This of course, could be said about most films, though the newness of any particular array and/or archive and/or grammar of indices is often more limited. Some films are highly formulaic, some films are just white films. My point of speaking in this way was to recognize the changed context of the media environment, to announce, in short that what we thought were films were really far more than we had previously understood and have indeed become something else in their very development and saturation of the representational, political and financial worlds.

While I stand by what I wrote in that piece, the one word I might change is my saying that the films are "platforms"—this designation makes sense from the point of view of provisioning a place to speak from or an arena of socio-semiotic exchange. However, now I might refer to films as social derivatives: films are wagers on a particular semiotic structure and create a heuristic device for perceiving the world, which today also means acting in the world. The category of social derivative asserts that they are also bets on productive

power—forms of wagering that have both capitalist and non-capitalist dimensions. Furthermore, this component, the financial component of representation, has been developed naturalistically by the reactionary forces of capital but can and I think must be developed by those invested in or simply desperate for liberation.

When you ask me to distinguish among programs, we could roughly say that currently all programs are more or less reproductive of white-supremacist capitalist heteropatriarchy—therein lies the distinction, that is, in the "more or less." Certain programs are scripts for the next generation of extractive violent relationships while others script for counter-narrative, solidarity, communitarian affect and sense, and revolutionary structures of feeling and acting. They are made by and for people who in bell hooks' terms want their looks to change reality. Radical looking and what can be built with the consolidation of radical looks takes place within the basic media-environment which has become programmatic (or, in Ken Warks terms, game space), bound, as it is, by rule-sets and codes, most of which we only glean. These algorithmic processes of what I call computational racial capitalism have their own cultural logic, one that is ultimately inseparable from the financial logic built into the fixed capital that is media architectures.

You state: "If representation persists in its first function of sense-making while also being sublated as a means of cybernetic incorporation, if, in short, we have traversed a divide between image and interface (page and screen, photograph and cellphone), such that all that was mobilized by and as cinema has melted into computation and the distinction between humanism and informatics has collapsed, then the role of the film user, whether director, actor, spectator or critic, has become one of two things: functionary or programmer (and not photographer as in Vilém Flusser)." Can you detail your appropriation and dislocation of these Flusserian categories? Do programmers, as in the case of the directors of the above-mentioned films, automatically become encoders of anti-totalitarian agencies?

I'm not sure where that line appeared (perhaps also "The Cinematic Program?"), but the answer to your last question is no. There is nothing automatic about inscribing revolutionary social codes, organizing radical practices of seeing and acting, or writing radical social derivatives. Like interventions in the past, creating political change requires canniness and planning, as well as the ability to strike hard and spontaneously. Advertising, fashion, mass media and what we call social media are superb at appropriating even the most radical gestures and desires. Radical programming in the sense that I mean here, re-

quires a revolutionary praxis that is neither reproductive of capitalism nor nullified. For Flusser this would be new information, since the camera is for him a computer and the technical image a form of information. However, Flusser's sense was that technicity, namely the technical image, had overwhelmed or exceeded capitalism, making both labor and ownership as well as Marxism and its (discursive) concerns irrelevant—and even bringing about something like an end of linear time, an end of history. There is much to explore in these ideas, particularly about the transformation of linear time by computation and the transformation of the properties of objects, labor and ownership by informatics, but one of the missing pieces in Flusser's analysis was that this process of photographic incorporation was an extension of capital logic to such an extent that capital's computational logic had fully infiltrated computation—had indeed expressed itself as what was developed and became known as computation.

In your text, "Cinema, Capital of the Twentieth Century", you establish a parallel between what is cinema for Deleuze and what capital was for Marx. Why choose the lens of the Marxist concepts, namely those of extraction of value and wage labor, in order to approach and criticize the Deleuzian categories of the movement-image and the time-image? At the same time, inspired by Flusser, you propose "a third regime of the image", where we are no longer in front of an image, but inside a program. How does it connect to the Deleuzian previous categories of images and to your own conception of the possibility of a cinematographic resistance to the capitalistic perceptual order?

Why choose the lens of Marxist concepts? Because they have greater explanatory power than all other epistemological frameworks? [Laughs] What else can I say? Of course, such an assertion of the superiority of the Marxist dialectic remains only an assertion if it cannot be demonstrated. A praxis of conceptualization attentive to the historical origins of not only the objects of analysis but of the categories of analysis—the ultimate socio-historical inseparability of object and category—is also, presumably at least, attentive to the historical implication for a set of consequences following upon the constitutive act of conceptualization. Even "history" is historical. Marxism, I have always thought did not, in the field of culture, require a distinction between the aesthetic and the pragmatic, and was no less discerning for all that. In the best cases, it was and is (or at least should be) more discerning than competing modes of interpretation because it attended to material conditions of possibility for even the most elaborate forms of fantasy and fabulation. As far as critique goes, Said's *Orientalism* comes to mind as does all the work of Gramsci

and Fredric Jameson, and indeed much of the Marxist critical tradition—particularly if one includes Marxist feminists and black Marxism (Cedric Robinson). But beyond that and returning to your earlier questions with respect to the visual, for me, Deleuze's recognition that "Cinema" had consequences for philosophy and that it pushed philosophy to develop new concepts was symptomatic of a material transformation in the conditions under which conceptualization and indeed social organization took place. Clearly technically mediated material organization at an industrial scale was and remains a social phenomenon that cannot be separated from economy. "Cinema, Capital of the Twentieth Century" asserted that Deleuzian philosophy was symptomatic of a mutation in capital, and that cinematic relations became the new paradigm for the formatting of production and distribution. Most obviously today the reformatting of capitalist production and distribution involves the screen, but also attention economy and the generalized industrialization of the visual. In "The Programmable Image", I have gone so far as say that the visual is a medium of information processing and of informatic labor. So, returning to the historical record, my reading Deleuze from a Marxist perspective in 1993-4 actually meant that the very first conceptualization of attention economy as a development of capitalism—a notion that for all its seeming impossibility at the time became a reigning paradigm after the rise of the internet, came about from the application of a Marxist lens.

Flusser, who we know was not a Marxist, wrote at the end of *Towards a Philosophy of Photography* in 1983, that a philosophy of photography was the only revolution left open to us. One gets a sense here that he would have been satisfied with a world where everyone sat around reading (and understanding) his books. I do not think he was as passive as all that, and he was right to perceive that so much of political thinking was outmoded or rapidly becoming so because of deep transformations in media infrastructure. He was right also, I think, to see that what he called "playing against the camera" was a kind of prerequisite for liberation. But though he may not have missed the fact that one may play against the camera with or without a camera, he seems to have missed the fact that there were strategies of conceptualization and acting (in short resources in and of the people) beyond the horizon of his own discourse that could be admitted such that all who played against the apparatus did not have to identify either as philosopher or photographer. These may have been his ultimate categories but they were not the ultimate categories.

How did your research evolve from a systemic view of cinema as a technology for the extraction of value from human bodies, and therefore, "for the capture and redirection of global labor's revolutionary agency and potentiality", into the idea/thesis of computational capital, as elaborated in The Message is Murder, *where you present information as the general form of commodity, encoded in the logistics that organize the world we live in?*

Flusser was key here. His understanding of the camera as a computer, as, in short, an apparatus that functioned as a result of programmed materials—what he called thinking extended into matter (the sciences of optics, chemistry, but also the distribution channels of images that drove the development of the camera)—helped me make the connection between cinematic images and data visualization. It was algorithms all the way down. Or rather, the algorithm, because of its capacity to automate thinking, became a kind of culmination of the ramification of nearly every human activity by the linear thinking that was writing and reason—a culmination that also opened a new world. Deleuze himself was aware that there was a "third" type of image, beyond the movement and time images that was the video image, and we might surmise, the coming wave of digitization/computation-images. My contribution beyond making this connection that photography, cinema and computation were all related forms of capitalist production, was also in recognizing that these relations were not isolated or autonomous emergences, but deeply imbricated in the historical emergence and expansion of capital—to the extent that one could not think about the emergence of technology as an autonomous terrain.

Ultimately this sense that desire to think about cinema, photography or computation as stand alone media was a desire to engage in platform fetishism—and thus an active disavowal of their fundamental roles in the developmental history of both capitalism and globality—led me, in an essay called "The Programmable Image", as well as in *Message* and in my forthcoming book to rewrite the general formula for capital. From Marx's M-C-M′ we get M-I-M′, where M' is more money than M, and C is what we recognized as the commodity while I is what we call information. This is not to say that the commodity no longer exists or that information is not, generally speaking a commodity, but rather that the form of the commodity and of its production have radically changed since the industrial period and even since the period I characterized as the cinematic mode of production. In "the computational mode of production", our life energy is given over to shifting the state of discrete state machines regardless of activity or remuneration. Value is extracted through our dissymmetrical relation to computation: as we contribute more to the ar-

chive of fixed capital than we receive in terms of social utility. There is far more to say about these relationships of course, and I will try to deepen this analysis in my forthcoming book to be called either "Computational Racial Capital", "The Computational Mode of Production", or "The Derivative Condition".

According to you, we see through capital, we talk the language of capital and our political agency doesn't really exist because it is limited to what one can see and say inside this "computational system", this meta-data society. Our performances, are commanded and scripted in advance, even if everyone is now able to program images and the authorship seems to have been democratized. We reencode images, we modify their code, but it still is a pre-designed praxis. We don't do it voluntarily, but because we have to, to exist socially, economically, etc., and, in the end, the circulation between the sensible and information (=commodity) works as screen labor, as you put it. Are the Foucauldian notions of archive *and* episteme *of any use to you, when dealing with this new order of intelligibility of our contemporary experience?*

It is not that we have no agency, it is that our agency is under siege by regimes of extraction built into the very fabric of thought, sensation and semiosis. I have said before something to the effect that it is a great failing of human history to not see Marx's decodification of the commodity form as on par with Newton's decodification of gravity. So, we get this automatic, if systemically convenient refusal to understand that historical action is at the basis of all semiotic categories. We see through capital and yet we do not see that we see through it. Just as we see through exploitation and slavery—these are the conditions of our seeing and of the seen. Foucault's analysis, brilliant and informed as it was, was antipathetic to Marxism—for some good reasons particularly if we keep in mind the orthodoxies of the time and also what were considered the significant domains of inquiry (not the psyche and even less, sexuality and gender, and although it was not his interest, race), but the Marxist baby was, in the case of Foucault, thrown out with the proverbial Marxist bathwater. Today it feels almost obvious that the Foucauldian analysis of archive, episteme and biopower is being subsumed by the history and continuing emergence of capitalism, of the forms of capital. Archive, episteme, bio-power? Why not database, program, and cybernetics, provided of course that we do not forget that each of these replacement terms are also financial propositions or exploits, meaning to say means for the extraction of value and also, sites of struggle. Here we will find that productive embattlement that Foucault was so exemplary in both recognizing and deciphering, but we will

also see that these dynamics of biotic interface with discourses, images, architectures and machines were on a convergence course not only with cybernetics but with social-media (written with the hyphen), meaning, full financialization and what I have recently been calling "the derivative condition."

The Message is Murder *also addresses the connection of computational capitalism and racial capitalism: "With intensified violence, the lived categories of race, gender, sexuality, nation, religion, disability, and others are all mobilized, calibrated, and recalibrated across micro and macro domains, as logistics of extraction and control." This constant reading of people as data and meta data, this quantification of qualities and attributes of life, show that our lives, thoughts, body practices and gestures are captured by computational devices as a means of social control. Would you agree that this matrix of control can be seen as a biopolitical machine, in the sense of Agamben, a way of separating life from its puissance? That the digital recording of historical, social and political identities, that you refer to, pushes further his vision that the dominant political life of our time is the bare life, meaning a life that everywhere separates the forms of life from their unity in a form-of-life?*

Except that biopolitical really means cybernetic and "bare life" is only conceptual—only a concept—and must, as I argued (or at least insisted) somewhere, be written with quotation marks. That is, one must apprehend "bare life" with the quotation marks if one does not want to perpetuate exactly the same violence of inscribing ideas upon bodies that nearly every other representational and informatic practice functioning today partakes of. The quotation marks acknowledge at least that "bare life" is not an ontological reality, but an idea that results from the operation of concepts—a condition that results from the operation of concepts, including the operation of the analysis that produces its object. In brief, "bare life" is an instrumental category designed to do work in a conceptual system. More granularly it is a heuristic device and more technically, it is an algorithm. It is a poetic gesture (of dubious merit, I might add), not an ontology. We need to get beyond the notion that we scrape away the techne and/or the history and reveal the organism in its truth. All self-consciously post-structuralist thought was aware of this recession of the real, but while the politicians have taken some (American?) version of deconstruction to heart and turned the deconstructive state into a fascist war machine, the philosophers have been inclined to forget its lessons regarding the violence of the letter and of abstraction. The "truth" is that the theorist digs through the simulations of life until they exhaust

the resolution of their analysis in an object that gives the analysis closure. In your example, the bio-political separation of forms of life from "their unity in a form-of-life" wants to displace the historico-technical result with the ontological reality—one concept with another, at least I think that's how it works. It wants to do so for legitimate reasons, I recognize, but such a move is dangerous because it is itself a constitutional act for the founding of a would-be political agent, and it also implies the possibility of transcendence at the level of analysis, when the only overcoming of a patho-logistical, technological armature that is indicated by its omnipresence in processes of representation that themselves include the seeming fact of omnipresent information, will be through history and praxis. This riff may sound overly complicated, but it boils down to questioning the poesis of seeming ontologies. This poesis can be an act of violence, as in racialization and the constitution of race and ethnicity as ontological categories, or of liberatory transformation, as in the current recuperation and expansion of the category of blackness. The "truth" is, sometimes it is impossible to know all the consequences of any foray into meaning and thinking—therein lies the risk, for one person's poetry may be someone else's camp—but it is key to know that identification of any sort is an act, an action, really a series of actions that in one way or another (re)make the world.

Can you tell us a bit about your recent research and activism concerning the possibility of "a non-capitalist computational communization" as a way of finding alternatives to the financialization of everyday life that defines our contemporary experience?

A recognition of the derivative condition of informatic life is also a recognition of a capitalist logic working in every partitioning we describe by the term information. Information is not only, as I wrote in *Message*, a difference that makes a social difference, it is a difference that makes a financial difference. What this means is that in every discernible act of information transfer, in every computable semiotic gesture, the seeds (the logistics) of an extractive logic are at work. "Information" implies the violence of abstraction, and that abstraction is violent because it is inseparable from capitalization—from, as Bob Meister might say, collateralization.

Knowing that the informatic world is on a continuum with financial derivatives, that is, with techniques of wagering on the future value of an underlying asset, exhorts us to seek ways of collating information and collateralizing networks that will not reproduce extractive and exploitative ways of life. Arguably today, no acts of representation can es-

cape this encroachment and penetration of information and computation. Even our thoughts are processing signs and images that have been preprocessed a thousand times in the dialectic between machine and bios. What this intercalation means to me is that what has become the universal medium of sociality needs to be rethought and redesigned. I am talking, of course, about its ur-medium, the thing that like it or not puts all life into new orders of relation, namely money. It is to be remembered that Communist revolutions and anticolonial independence movements, and even social movements and migratory movements seeking reparations for colonial and imperialist legacies, were also focused on retaking the means of production, and often times on questions of sustainability which meant economy. Much of today's politically driven culture-making has forgotten the question of economy because of the seemingly untranscendable permanence of capitalism.

This account of the historical result that is the inseparability of the bio, the semiotic, the techno and the financial is an elaborate but perhaps still necessary way of underscoring the potentials in what Akseli Virtanen has long called designable economy, or "economic space", and in what is more generally described as "blockchain technology" or "crypto-currency". Of course, I recognize that it may be disappointing that such a grand and perhaps grandiose account of historical process would seem to have its next key play in a domain that already overwrought by greed and trend. However, the key insight here is that it has become possible to break the monopoly, or at least the oligopoly on the issuance of derivatives. "Blockchain" (and I use this word here to indicate an emerging set of secure, verifiable, decentralized computational strategies of archivization and not the environmental destruction currently necessary to Bitcoin's "proof of work"), allows for anyone to issue a derivative contract, that is, to issue a money-form related to the specific qualities of any project or venture. While we are a long way from full implementation of such potentials where a new currency for a new project might be issued with the same ease and canniness resultant in an Instagram post, this emergent tech, itself a response to totalitarian state forms and unilateral control of the money supply, promises to accomplish three things. First, like the internet's opening of publishing and other forms of transmissible expressivity to the multitudes, "crypto" may break the stranglehold of centralized national economies. Imagine millions of currencies—at least. Where today everyone is a worker, tomorrow, everyone may be an issuer. Second, and in my view, even more importantly, designable economy allows for and indeed demands, that new social projects have built in equity structures: why work for a wage when you can have an

equity stake in the projects and activities that you devote your life to? Third, financial imagination will develop as a component of formerly extra-economic endeavors, such that these endeavors (often thought of as the most valuable activities of human beings including art and care are supported for their own sake, that is for their qualities). Such changes, the demand for recognition and remuneration of stolen or "free" labor, are the result of long term struggles against the totalitarian protocol of the capitalist state, and are at present only nascent. They are even now in danger of state-cooptation and what may be worse because less visible to innovators themselves, technocratic ambitions, along with the rampant if garden variety get rich quick schemes. Emphatically, these technologies, which in my view are new media, are in actuality emergent social relations; they will not realize their potentials to democratize both economy and representation, and to protect the liquidation of qualities of life by exploitative financial abstraction, without the design capacities and historical knowledge of social movements, antiracist activists, LGBTQ orgs, anti-imperialists, social justice groups, and all those fugitives from capitalism and slavery who are seeking liberation from oppression and who do not want to become oppressors themselves. The decentralization and democratization of finance and thus of economy could mean a communization of the social product. It is an outcome, fraught with peril and in no way guaranteed. In fact, given what the U.S. did in Iraq after 2001 to protect the dollar, we can observe that some of the dangers are radically external, that is, from states along with their police and their banks, and some are radically internal, since thinking and co-creating financially may also enable the encroachment of an uncontrolled and uncontrollable financial logic on the precious little that currently escapes it and can be valued for its own sake. But given the scale and complexity of our computationally sustained, financially interdependent globe, democratically programmable economies and communist derivatives seem necessary if political aspiration for radical social change is not to remain in its current state of capture by capital—slated to become value-productive "content" for a world-media system that feeds off the volatility of hierarchically imposed precarity. Currently blockchain and crypto is where cinema was in 1900. To succeed the techno-social relations these new forms express need to emerge dialectically, that is, subject to critique at every moment by the revolutionary becoming of a global, anti-racist, anti-imperialist, anti-hetero-patriarchal communism, a communism increasingly free of prejudice and freeing itself from injustice. A long road indeed, but one I am trying to walk down with open eyes.