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Post-Planetary Capital

Space Is No Object

The techno image and the regulations of critique

Now dream-theories of deregulated zones that might operate as bunkers from which to orchestrate the downfall of capital are annihilated – often ironically, by the methods and principles of their own critique. The dominance of our horizon with "crisis narratives" that emerge from this failure of opposing capital in any simple mode of its overcoming is also coming to an end. Ironic identifications with capital have been rife in culture to the point of their naturalisation, where narratives of complicity with an over-stylized hysterical and kitsch version of capitalistic totalitarianism further entrench 'critique" as the mark of our narcissistic self-consciousness. Culture has told us about our abstract directionless dreams, the failure of these already aimless hopes and narrated back to us the tradition of this vicious circle that fantasizes both of knowledge and freedom. The space of future is a loss.

The hopes for a revolutionary politics remain in turmoil and the question of how to reengage existing systems of productive relations towards different social political, economic and cultural behaviors still and often compel these ideas towards a nostalgia for crisis, rotating upon a crisis of nostalgia towards mythologies of free space. Through the work of El Lisitsky, Flusser and a brief review of recent Accelerationist critiques this essay asks what is it to actualize a logic of a progressive Modernity of the techno-image that might be retooled as distinct from capitalistic principles? And how is the thought and image of space as material *without object*, that is a real that is incapable of propositional content construed in this endeavor?

1. The observation that capital is extensive might appear to make it an omnipotent fact in our lives as well as the definition of our destiny. This is because there is no space to which capital can be contested from.

2. The promise that Modern technological advances and innovations could nullify the prevailing inequalities of human existence in a new horizontality are the kinds of dreams that Gene Roddenberry would dream. This dream is over.

3. The possibility that technology (that is, the constructed means by which we communicate and live) and its immanent promise of equality can be distinguished from the core of capitalistic values lingers as a question for us. But it is a question that has little torque when we know that the hopes and plans for a technology that can exceed capital often conjure particular contradictions that serve to underscore critique as a support for the conditions of a capitalistic status quo- reifying relative difference, clinging to self-consciousness and valorizing the duality of the ambiguous and committed image.

But if technology evaporates a concept of space and images are no more free than any other form of techno-power and instead are operations of rational technologies then the role of the image, critique, freedom and interpretation demands re-thinking.

The Void

The collapse of Modern technological progress with the global thrust of capitalistic accumulation prefigures a crisis of space that has structured the fate of left wing critique. We have all encountered the idealism that identifies space as the theoretical guarantee of the negation of, or bulwark to the ruthless efficiencies of an organizational power that would quantify *the everything*. The inhabitation of planetary space by corporations, governments and individuals seems to the last nail in the coffin for this theory, because it serves to actualize the scope of capital in spectacular fashion. Here capital's ability to quantify and value over objectless space confirms the logic of the same capitalistic processes in derivatives markets and HFT economics. The myth of a pre-political or transcendental free space anchors the spread of capital; it is this that capital devours and produces, exposing its contradiction and its idealism. But this need not be the paranoiac tale of a dark and infinite capital, moreover, this colonization reminds us that space was never free in the first place because the technology of thought already organized and colonized it with the thought of freedom that would be purchased as the myth of the pre-political or pre-capitalist moment. If such an untainted or unfettered concept of freedom is untenable as the means to ground any force that would disrupt the consistent abilities of the systems of capitalistic drive, then we must examine the conditions of a critical politics again and our comprehension of freedom without designating the relation that freedom is purchased at the level of concept free space. This is one task for this essay, at least, to ask the question if and how an understanding

of image-techno-spatial dynamics can afford the forms of difference to the dominance of capital that is without objectifying space (in a singular, non-representational and mythic abstraction) as the skyhook for such a politics, or the techno-image as the representational bulwark to advancing egalitarian communities.

Despite understanding that any claim to space has organizational content, we continue to see the contradiction that space is conceptualized as neutral and empty, but nevertheless at the same time, it is called upon as an existing thing – as an abstract site that is devoid of history and which is deemed to be context free. This predilection for the void supports the ethos that space must be kept free from regulation – it must remain *as unregulated space* in order to become the *site* of critique. Of course, and just to reinforce this point: the *site of space* can never be consciously acknowledged in this argument, since if it were it would contradict the exact idea that supports this critique - that space is unregulated, uncategorized and free.

Thinking space as a locus for capital and its critique makes space a figural abstraction. This theory relies upon space as a metaphor for a concept of freedom, and is seen as standard in the world of art and theory. Space acts as a symbol of a deregulated future to come, and at the same time this concept is regulated and strategically determined as the very condition of our future, of that which determines itself towards conservative mythology.[1]

The image of space in this way is a form of the sublime, since it is located in the ideal space where traditional reason runs up against its limits. Coupled with this the image is relied upon as a form of site-less ambiguity, which props up a weak theory of democracy because it is considered to enable a diversity of interpretations, conversations and discourse. This resistance to stability founded within the essential make up of the image, is a naive idealism that interpretation is somehow key to critique and that images are always unstable. And a critique based in the fantasy of unreason terminates itself and worryingly compromises any understanding of the role of the image. It is territorialized by

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[1] Space when considered as off-planet worlds and moons is met with its conceptual bedfellow that gives this realm of space its agency in the world. This is the belief that a thought of space alone, a space that has yet to be organized empirically by capital is somehow capable of resistance to the kind of enlightened reason that would rationalize and stabilize life to the condition of site.

thought in a kind of 'picturing' that conditions space a conceptual and fictive territory that is never realized beyond this private scheme.

In light of this, a critique that is determined by the unknown, unconscious, unmapped, not yet territorialized, unaestheticized, uncategorized and yet to be valued 'thing' holds little ground. Space and the image thought this way adopts the configuration and naturalization of technological modernity towards capitalist ethics, where the operations of knowledge that territorialize and securitize space towards or away from capital produce economic value.[2]

Despite these obvious limits to this critical method, the desire to dwell within site-less image-space can be easily seen in the desire to locate peripheral and alternative sites that can contest the encroaching power of capitalism as if residing in such site-lessness can offer the only possible subterfuge.

We see similar methods at work in the notion of the liminal, or the prevalence of the "in-between" in recent arts practices, as if one can imagine placing oneself at the interstices of intersecting ideas, discourses, beliefs and vocabularies; to surf the matrix as if one can transcend the place that we come from in order become the machinic and vigilant eye of the panoptican and then to insert oneself into these spaces as conditions, basically a more mystical form of empathic consciousness. Art here and its authors are given the dubious privilege of a transcendental and caring role that follows the liberal mythology of exercising its free will, that turns out to be the overarching constraint and primary and singular definition of artistic identity. This is a niave conditioning to freedom as limited to its specific definition of individuated choice.

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[2] Foregrounded in the dialectics of critical theory, technology is understood a tool that maps and reasons space, and at the same time, because it is a tool that is distinct from the human, it is also considered neutral. This is where we see the high stakes question of the human application of technology as the definitive and dramatic moral dilemma of Modernity. *Dr Strangelove* accounts for this in the image of the scientist who invents the bomb as much as narratives of other familiar stories of pharmacists who generate drugs that are misused. This neutral space of techn-science as site is this relocated to the neutrality of science as site-less and therefore political practice. I discuss this point of technology, politics, neutrality, further along in this essay.

In art-world politics, we see the literal designation of the "alternative space" in anti-capitalist small business format utopianisms, as well as the persistent rhetoric that is claimed from the hangover of deconstructive critique wherein the space of culture is idealized as an essentially open space. Both culture as a concept and space as site convene in such cases to claim some kind of bulwark against the capitalist machine. Margaret Thatcher's injunction "There is No Alternative" ratified the all encompassing grasp of capital against these dreams, decimating them to the level of nostalgic faith. Richard Florida's work confirmed that the alternative lifestyle of artistic 'other spaces' was crucial to the economic growth of the creative and cultural sector, new business start ups and a community that would narcissistically unite around its ability to make visible its power of accumulation in new urban centers, new malls, creative hubs and arts and leisure.[3] These correlations between differentiated lifestyles, differentiated spaces, essential freedoms and neo-liberal capital fixes the position that dreams of difference are incorrectly purposed towards the impossible and fictive double character of space/site.[4] Such a critique can only configure itself a form of fiction for the gaze of capital, and rescues the mythologized subjectivity that endows capital's force.

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[3] See Richard Florida's "There Goes the Neighborhood", https://www.google.com/search?q=richard+florida+there+goes+the+nieghboruhood&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8&aq=t&rls=org.mozilla:en-US:official&client=firefox-a as well as projects like Gordon Matta Clark's early 1970's peripheral spaces art work, and real estate critique, *Fake Estates,* involved his purchasing of 15 disused sections of land in New York, which were inaccessible to developers and thus proposed as outside of the economies of capitalist accumulation. This narrative of an outside to capital as proposed through dysfunctional space underscores the high functioning symbolic value of this gesture: a gesture that circles back to the primary principles of capital's ability to dominate abstraction.

[4] This theory of lawlessness as a space unto itself and which can threaten the regulatory, administrative and systematized zones of life centers on a myth that we are very much accustomed to and one that is central to a liberal story of human value. The desert of the American Wild West was pictured in the same way in films like *For A Few Dollars More*. Life becomes an artificial stage within the vast emptiness of space. The rule of life is money, petty jealousies and carnal desire: life is thrown to upon a Hobbesian state of nature, and these films play out the tensions in the struggle between the categories of justice, law and money. The idea that these spaces were unregulated forgets the truth that they were in fact organized and regulated through the operations of capital and militaristic protection. This destroys the opposition between regulation and criminality, because the law is a form of heterogeneity that goes all the way down. Towns are made up of private corporate identities, where Wells Fargo aided by military power provided the means of capital's distribution. The myth of the west as a space that potentializes other forms of action through the collision between space and anarchy is therefore a heroic drama. The figure of the desert as 'open' is nicely destroyed in Dashiell Hammet's short story, *Corkscrew,* first published in the 1925 issue of *Black*

Modernity and communism

El Lisitisky's children's book the *About Two Squares* (1922) is a graphic story and a political allegory set within a landscape of cosmic and chaotic proportions that tells the story of a lawless nature that ultimately potentializes a communism to come.

About two Squares reaches out to the concept of a fourth dimension that will underpin the fate of revolutionary change that permeates the three dimensional world. The unknown real of another dimension promises the possibility of the types of change that we cannot imagine but will result in a form of Communism.

The notion of space as a law unto itself is central to overcoming standard capitalistic values. In order for change to happen there must be some idea of a real alterity that subjects both the red and the black square to a compelling gravitational order. This force must be understood as being beyond the laws of the given. Lissitsky imagines this force to enable the social world that he pictures, where the properties of a fourth dimension are causally connected to the success of communism as an inevitable form of social-nature. This is not so much science but science fiction, where science vis-a-vis space is delivered as the vehicle to insinuate an unquestionable fate, as though the destiny of life to communism were written in the stars. All of this is made through an appeal to natural science, and offered up in the educational graphics of a charismatic pedagogical science fiction adventure. What Lissitsky's work asks us to consider is the question of what we appeal to as our de-ontologised foundation for thought and how this is conditioned upon a theory of nature that is in cahoots with the good intentions of a politics that seeks to restore the equilibrium of a given unconstructed fate as nature reality. The spectacular dynamism of the piece is exhilarating in its ability to force its presence as contemporary to our present context. The dream of dynamic powers that would crash to earth and re-order it merge the technically efficient, organizational, clean and rigorously constructed universe with the unconstructed energies of a universal power. Whilst on the one hand

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Mask. In a one-horse town, the corruption goes all the way down to the particles of dust that background the action. This dust is everywhere, in every crevice and infiltrates each scene with its presence. It is a form of organizational authority. This story of the absolute presence of power that crosses from the human to the inorganic foregrounds the notion that space is never free.

the work promises all the force of a future as a thought of capital's destruction, its purchase for this future is set within the confines of image imaginary, not by dint of the work being a representation but because the work is incapable of overcoming its adherence to a faith in abstractions that cannot be put to use in any certain terms. Such work has provided a legacy for a political art, but it is significant enough to work through the political and artistic problem of a work that whilst being able to literalise its political position as inventive hard copy propagandist form (and thus offers the tantalizing differential to the dominance of ambiguity and equivocation that defines the normativity of liberal critical art) to act as a visible contract and promise for a future to be realized, it cannot determine itself towards this politics as a process or practice at the level of the image.

This politics keeps nature intact as the abstract and yet determined anchor for a communist future, one held in synch with the technological constructions of a new humanity through the framework of artistic media. Technology is central to the rise of a new communitarianism that is of universal proportions, but this construction lives in the temporal dialectics of nature and as such it seems incapable of superceding the binding contradiction of the predictive capacity of nature as fate and the descriptive axis of nature as a life that must realize the grounds of construction. At the level of the image, El Lissisky's piece remains a fragment of a collective idea that remains alienated in/from its promise as social practice. Social hope is maintained at level of a description of life as 'the struggle'- a means of self-identification, but it cannot comprehend its purchase on the value of equality that resides as the ubiquitous element of its representation. Whilst such a communism does not situate its revolutionary power on the capitalist enemy, and therefore avoids the idealization of human agency that would return the world to the condition of equality, this failure to refuse a conditioning of its power on its relation to other exteriorizing forms – the abstract principle of its own reality- ultimately forestalls a constructive communitarian practice.

Technology and Autonomy

These narratives are not constrained to the arts and the pages of pulp fiction. They are equally as present in critical theory. Vilem Flusser's critique of the "technical image" is central to this problem in its articulation of technology as a constructed non-human force, and in doing so Flusser's theory allows us to highlight how the connections between

capital, technology, image and space further complicate the question of fate and construction.

Flusser's critique attempts to understand the embeddedness of the technical image with the human and capital. He recognizes that the kinds of public consensual dialogue of a time and space that would pre-date the technical image with a communitarian impulse is now impossible and instead we encounter a disassociative scattering of individuals in 'their corners' within which they form the identity-free cloud that is a product of a contemporary networked culture. It is too late even for theater in which images would rescue us from this malaise and constraint, because all society is caught in the thrall of consumer culture that feeds its audience on the fix of constant media communication: the recognition of our constraint is only another condition of our desire towards capitalistic accumulation. Instead we are bound to our unfreedom within the material penetrating force of the technical image. "Film is shown in cinemas not to awaken a public consciousness in its viewers but because it relies on a technology from the 19th century, when receivers still needed to go to the sender"[5] Political consciousness, for Flusser is seen to vegetate in an "artificially preserved republic"[6] and is connected to a fiction that representational space can present political potential for critical force. A Brechtian theatrical anti-realism is no longer a means to dismantling of normative power because the technical image operates as a form of nature in an entropic closed circuit "feedback loop" of image-human relations. This negation of the space of the image as some truth telling redemptive force goes hand in hand with Flusser's correlation between capitalism and the technical image. The technical image is a "parasite" on history and, "The source from which history springs is beginning to dry up. This is human freedom".[7] The apparatus of the technical image as "feedback loop" now governs the entropy of image and people. For Flusser this loop must be interrupted and ruptured and without this rupture we are doomed to the fact that "technical images themselves are apocalyptic".[8]

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[5] Flusser, Vilem. (2011, orig 1985) 'To Interact' and 'To Scatter' in his *Into the Universe of Technical Images*, trans. Nancy Ann Roth, London & Minneapolis: University of Minneasota Press, 53
[6] Ibid
[7] Ibid, 57.
[8] Ibid, 60.

In a fashion where capital as a form of nature establishes its own crisis,[9] an "eternal boredom will spread throughout society."[10] Flusser identifies the power of the image and its condition. It is at once a power-manifest that is capable of organizing human and inhuman life at a mass scale but is simultaneously seen to be the site of chaos. This chaos is founded in a narrative of its self-destruction since this malaise, this boredom, serves to enliven revolt. This destruction is required to act as the grounds for a revolution of the image-human dynamic where new technicians arise and take control with "visionary powers."[11]

Therefore, despite itself, a kind of consciousness is necessary still, for it is required to recognize the moment of the real apocalypse of the image, and to then take the controls to produce new systems of humanitarian power. "Contemporary revolutionaries are not actively opposed to the images themselves, but rather to the integrated circuitry. They actively promote dialogical rewired images … The revolutionaries want to change not only the underlying structure but the surface of the so-called information society."[12] This new image-culture would revitalize human relations by means of new technicians who can override the 'feedback loop' of the technical image: "Instead of the traffic between people and images, it would be traffic between people by way of images that would lie at the heart of such a society. And only then would the media earn the name that unjustly designates them today".[13] A mastery over the technical image is called for so as to re-integrate society anew and without model. It is from this abstraction of a "dimensionless universe" and "from the grounds of the hallucinatory"[14] from which these technicians will come.

Flusser's revolution asserts new systems of human communication which are described in the words of *another naturalism* presented in biological space: "For only then would

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[9] This natural self destabilization smacks of the sci-fi narrative of HG Well's *War of the Worlds* (1897) where it is the common cold that infiltrates the demonic force of omnipotent alien power. Through a life with the human the technological undoes itself without any requirement for human intervention, resulting in a politics that supports a passive vigilant waiting game.
[10] Ibid; 57
[11] Ibid, 67
[12] Ibid, 67
[13] Ibid, 68
[14] Ibid, 68

[technical images] link person to person, a bit like nervous pathways and nerve cells join together." [15]

Whilst, as we have shown, Flusser recognizes the problematic correspondence between consciousness and a spatial critique, the kind that would identify a transcendental subject and an exteriorized point through and from which alternative forms and spaces of power can be asserted. His appeal to mastery produces another hierarchy that entertains its own problems, this time between the double abstraction of the human and the image. Flusser forgets that the human is a part of the technical image and is unfree to achieve the type of visionary power that Flusser's revolution requires.

Narratives that demonstrate this dissection between human and technological life conjure a transference from object to subject and back again by means of a technological aesthetic. This technology-subject dyad is seen in a litany of sci-fi movies, ranging from Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* to the *Terminator* franchise. Crucially, the desire to graft subjective, political and causal affects upon the background of technological material spells out our persistent anxiety of space. Personifying technology – closing the gap between ourselves and the technological is a spatial anxiety and pleasure because space, emptiness, and the notion of a concept-less exteriority stands as the figure of our unknown and as such the figure of potential and unknown futures. Technology is the dominant mode of representing power in twentieth century and 21st C film. Here we often see technology as equivocal medium and because of this results in the potential for radical evil. In these cases, the myth that technology has autonomy from the human as a form of pre of post human condition is eclipsed by the notion that the technological is at the same time made absolutely correlative to the humanity of techno-capital. It is precisely through this attempt to diverge these two forms - technology and capital – where technology turns out to be subjectivitsed as a form of evil transcendental human style power; and this is always played out as a figure of knowledge. In *Metropolis* this evil is the faceless machine of power that subjects workers to timeless labour. This labour is ruptured through consciousness of their machinic existence and they become the political force of the unified mob, differentiating themselves from machines in a different form of collectivity, breaking the gates of their prison to reach the ground level of society. In *Terminator* machines achieve self-awareness to become a God-like

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[15] Ibid, 68.

transcendental force that returns the human to the level of another form of subterranean life.

Whilst Flusser recognizes that capital and the image are not one and the same, there remains a demonization of the image in a general sense since the technical networked image and its circuitry are understood as absolutely correlative to capitalist expenditure is in its ability to mutate and to take the place of subjects. Therefore, Flusser's argument for a life with images demands a specific theory of communication that seeks to replace a lost humanity and to restore it at the center of politics whilst engaging with a form of anti-realism that would require our conscious engagement with images at a conceptual level, to acknowledge their essential irreality. With this suspicion and management of the tools that we require to construct

Flusser's concept of change and the concept of freedom in this case become interchangeable terms that both reside in a promise. Life beyond capital is mystified to a form and force of nature that we must wait for in readiness, and then tackle and control in a metaphysics of reason that would supplant it. As a politics of freedom this theory is unachievable and as a politics of consciousness it only guarantees knowledge of constraint that is set negatively against any task.[16]

Alternatively, when we refuse the ideal correlate between space as genre/site of the real and the negating force of revolutionary political resistance, we face the perennial complaint that life is dispossessed of meaning. This is because there is a fear that without these stable identifications or anchor points there can be no political recognition of where bad forms of power reside or from where critique might spring. And so, without these referent objects it is impossible to project a future. Here, in the objectless world, the worry is that meaning is lost at the purchase of a more mystical liaison with the de-ontologised real, and what is left is an anarchism of the image where actions, ideas and objects together are re-cast within a either a bland relativism or alternatively given unbridled power.

Techno-neutrality and conservativism

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[16] See Flusser, Vilem. (2011, orig 1985) 'To Interact' and 'To Scatter' in his *Into the Universe of Technical Images*, trans. Nancy Ann Roth, London & Minneapolis: University of Minneasota Press, pp. 51-69.

A theory of the real as site-lessness acts as the core of an egalitarian dream and its horror. Here technology co-mingles with the human in fluid and horizontal networked environments of dynamic vitalisms of a life force; where technology forces the disappearance of space within another understanding of space. The open and yet determined field of the multiplicity of appearances that standardize techno-space as the primary object. Of course we have seen the totalizing force of this comprehension of techno-capital presented back to us in culture, politics and philosophy in tales that end up in a hierarchical telos of interfaces, spanning the techno-sphere of the concept-real and life to the territory of impoverished fakery. This structure of the techo-image is central to the movie *Her*, (Spike Jonze) 2014. Technology moves through the human dimension of love, jealously, community and care to another altogether other dimension that dissolves the requirement for biological life and the values of human society altogether. Whilst there are attempts to collapse the spaces of empirical life and networked culture, they end in black comi-tragic moments, and the evolution of the relationship of user interface, to socialized partnership to infinite brain and mechanical life is ultimately made explicit.

We are familiar with these stories that dismantle the world of the human, and how they ultimately do not effect the prevalence of the ideological conservatisms that define the values of contemporary culture, that is, advanced technological processes that we engineer have no bearing upon our ability to construct a different future. Technological advance made available through the ideological substrates of capitalist desire exceeds life as we know it but this has no substantive effect in life as we live it. In the end the virtual identities developed through a user interface system form a new world, separate and totalized world. The identities by which it is constituted are disillusioned with the limits and sensations of empirical experience. It is unknown as to whether this other form of life will have any bearing upon the lives of the human characters at all, other than presenting them with the knowledge of their own deficiencies and this virtual world, whilst offering up a vast potentialised space through technology seems to replicate a parallel to the principles of neo-liberal society. Unlike the rise of the machine style narrative in standard paranoiac sci-fi stories, we are left with another version of the human remainder; passive and emaciated by its own ideological constructs and stuck in time. Consciousness of this other world means nothing and goes nowhere. This narrative pictures the world of a technologized western society of those that accept their

fate as individuals. The couple, in the end don't get it together, they just do nothing or live within the prevailing conditions of the status quo. Such different worlds, worlds that exceed ideology are not for us. The space of life is image heavy and we are weighed down by its limitations and stability. Technology, by dint of its intrinsic neutrality would seem to offer the means to invent forms of life that escape the conditions of capital but to do so these identities must are unfree to return to the territories of social practice. This notion of the technological spatial sublime offers no redemption, no site and no location for critique.

In *Her*, the fantasy of an exit from the prevalent norms of life remains as such, it is beyond the reach of empirical experience, and by doing so, it presses home the challenge of articulating difference at the level of the political, when we understand that our descriptions of the power that we seek to resist also are its point of manufacture. This point refers to the problem regarding the problem of hinging an understanding the conditions and principles that produce the massive inequalities of capitalism, and the knowledge that we are ideologically subject to these very systems, upon the production of new and different forms. In other words: Can a critique resist the predilection to conjure the figure of power *and its critique* beyond the production of a vicious circle, beyond the ethos of theoretical hope and its pleasure of contradictions?

We can now propose another comprehension of the techno-image that does not call upon the occupation of free space, whether this is a poststructuralist space of absolute difference (operating locally and without the protectionism and regulation of free space as the security of alternative economies), or as some form of tripped-out dark coalescence with the over-enhanced techno-image as an incomprehensibly directed and chaotic nature (ironic passive nihilisms). The problem endemic to such a proposal is that the relation between technology and capital prevails in society in general as a convincing myth, and as such alerts us to the question of how to condition a theory of communism with *another* Modernity. How is this achieved without relying upon or resulting in the mystifications that tell us that our fate with the technical image will be different to the condition of life we live in the present – a point of passive deferral to a theory-image, and that ultimately relegates theory and the image to the domain of false and private illusion? Rather, we can observe that images *practice* reason without the invocation of the fiction

of necessary contradictions that have blighted an understanding of the representational-theoretical work of the image so far.

Being technological

Nick Srnicek and Alex William's *#Manifesto for an Accelerationist Politics* has posed these questions in a call to certain forms of complex collective action work against the stagnation of capitalism's false modernity. They cite the finitude of capital and the infinitude of scientific and technological advancement to do so. The manifesto is careful to outline the requirement for rational systems of navigation that can "develop a cognitive map of the existing system and a speculative image of the future economic system."[17] It is interesting to note that images are set within the context of the future and maps are set within the context of historicisms that duly are pivotal to the propositional content of future action. The task of reason is highlighted as the central and defining means to drive towards another economy and this reason is already embedded within the existing paucity of the capitalism system and requires its infrastructure to act. However, just how the connection between map and image might work in this configuration perhaps leaves us with more questions than answers, since an assertion that this emancipatory (future) image can be distinct, formally, politically and methodologically, from that which has been called the folkloric or non-scientific conditions of the oppressive status quo that our map explains does not produce an articulation of the relationship between the ideological force of mapping that this project demands, and the scientific claims to rational projection that outline its mobilization. Key to this is how we might extend this theory without equating historical consciousness with scientific proof. Rather, we must understand the role of this science and representation as the conditions of a particular research project that situates political change, without identifying science as a political project in its own right.

MAP prompts the question as to the spatiality that this map-image conjures and if this dynamic is capable of making the future in a constructive sense since its telos is that of purpose, retrospection, reason. We understand here that the technologies of capitalism,

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[17] Nick Srnicek and Alex Williams, *#Manifesto for an Accelerationist Politics* (MAP), at Critical Legal Thinking, Law and the Political, May 13th 2013 (3.8). http://criticallegalthinking.com/2013/05/14/accelerate-manifesto-for-an-accelerationist-politics/

its ideological systems, are internalized, but at the same time, technology must be also be figured as a distinct entity from these operations because of an intrinsic neutrality that could potentialize different systems, networks and actions. How this understanding of technological potential stands in this case vis-à-vis the operations of reason is crucial since technology in itself is no more or less free, or pliable, as the form of visible dominance that we readily identify as oppressive. As such, the potentializing aspect of technology is not valuable because it is neutral, but because it is the inorganic material of constructed matter and a manifest part of the administration of life. [18]

In true Hegelian style, MAP sets out a heuristic cognitive mapping where self-understanding is the requirement for a new revolutionary self-rule of the present. [19] How this historical form of knowledge can gain traction to crowbar open the space of the future might engender further contradictions that turn us back to question how the role of historiography and dialectics as processes of change and progress are understood. This turns upon a question of reason and creativity, and how both are constituted here. If self-understanding is key to producing progressive action, then it would appear that education founds this work. And if the work of culture acts as the tool to knowledge, then how can culture surpass the role of explanatory device of the system as presented to us, or achieve more than an internalization of the prevalent structure as potential caricature? (This is a question of reasons as causes as much as a question of how the non-explanatory forces that we work with participate in procedures of reason, since if culture is involved in consciousness raising then what knowledge is it communicating and how is it capable of proposing new concepts?) The speculative propositional element here for the socio-political then resides in a type of reductive historical consciousness that risks leaving the role of culture as illustration and the future in suspension.[20]

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[18] This version of technology is significant in relation to Flusser's diagnosis. For Flusser, technology as the techno-image must be returned to the condition of its neutrality, as a tool that can be made distinct from the human. Only in this way can mastery take hold. For Srnicek and Williams, there is also the demand for mastery over the means of production, however their proposal does not enable the neutrality of technology as non-ideological material to act as the political ends of their project, rather technology as the social practice of reason, remains tied to the non neutral forces of human social political landscapes.

[19] Srnicek and Williams, 3.15.

[20] Srnicek and Williams do not address the role of culture in MAP but the question of how images and cultural production are factored into cognitive work is a point not to be overlooked, since this is a question of how the Gestalt of the image influences the claim

Srnicek and Williams' manifesto asks us to consider more fully how we can think and act politically without figuring the neutrality of technology upon an understanding of the space of freedom (where the space of technology itself would become the neutral means from which to underpin a politics) and to question the role of consciousness in the production of new concepts and rules. And so, let us work through the way in which we produce power without the grounds of particular phenomenological experiences from which to coordinate action but at the same time how we might understand specificity in the context of this universalism. In the throes of abstract forces we nevertheless can identify spatial dynamics since systems organize vectors of communication. This mobile spatiality requires an understanding of the local and material conditions of our action and how these claim universal concepts that are part of their construction.[21] Taking this idea of force and temporality to the image we can say that representations are incapable of

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to reason. This is especially so when representational forms have been reified as both neutral and irrational in a diversity of philosophical theory and entertain the problem of an understanding of their own rationality, that is, without the justificatory mechanism of capitalism for this.

[21] Reza Negarastani, "Where is the Concept? (localization, ramification, navigation)", a paper presented at the conference *When Site Lost the Plot*, Goldsmiths College, 2013. Negarastani discusses the navigation of the local, since the local does not offer a specific point or site that is absolute: "it is a mobile framework immersed within a generic environment. Its internal analysis is always coupled with an external synthesis." (6) Negarastani shifts the question of the object-hood of the concept to the locus and behavior of the concept, from the "what" to the "where" advocating a non-neutral perspectival interrogative reason. Following Lemma theory, an object is not a thing but is instead a point(er): action-performativity-gesture and concepts that navigate the local-global produce an inferential networked rule based space. By undermining the notion of the local as stable and fixed entity and the character of the universal as ineffable Negarastani proposes a navigational, flexible and organizational force that accommodates the necessity of heuristic approaches and inference within rational systems. The dynamic of mutability of site as complex depth coupled with the perspectival mobility of analytical inquiry avoids idealizing non-explanatory phenomena as some guarantor of or bulwark to conceptual freedom. Rather, reason is constructed with and through already existing explanations that may or may not be correct without constructing a relation to this knowledge. In this case, this theory understands the role of inference as a part of *all thinking* rather than situating space as the generic figure that can enable an exit from this bind to non-scientific knowledge. Here space acts as a methodological concept that demands a specific approach to the processes of reason, hence space itself is no site, but a point of construction. This is the alternative construction of already existing entities and ideas towards a progressive operation of reason that is "commensurate with reality"(14). The question of how the subject shifts perspectives from the what to the where leaves the question of autonomy of movement open to further discussion.

the stability that would define or protect space as some form of border and thus our representations are incapable of totalizing force. At the same time, they do not have the qualities of an essential difference that would be dispersive in action and therefore opposed to the rational capacities of science. Difference as such is incapable of protecting us from the totalizing threat of one unilateral power.[22] Instead our representations articulate a site of techno-power that destroys space as an abstraction and conceptual lacunae that could be co-opted into a political program. In this move we annihilate the possibility for critique as we have known it.

Conclusion

In this essay we have moved through the figures of nature, subjective mastery and art as identifications of autonomous non-places by which to guarantee certain freedoms and instead proposed that these assumptions of power are in different ways incapable of organization and also serve to underscore the problematic conditions of the status quo.

Now I want to return this question to art more specifically. In arts practices we have also witnessed the prevalent linkage between the manifest representational image and the evils of a ubiquitous capitalism, and therefore space as I have outlined it in terms of its affiliation with a concept of freedom, has acted as recourse to enable art to release itself from its relation to power, but unfortunately this has only been won at the level of theoretical illusion. In this case, a theory of space as abstraction for art does little in enabling art to understand or to rationalize its purpose politically and simply allow it to generate concepts of power that bolster or validate its existence as weakness.

What I have hoped to show is that: a) the righteous who seek to keep space free from 'bad' forms of power also colonize space but in a naive ideological sense, and which in the end reproduces the fictions that are central to capitalist accumulation; b) the notion

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[22] In Michel Foucault's "Of Other Spaces, Utopias and Heterotopias" (1967) he argues that the heterotopic space conjured through representationalism produces borders and territories that defend us against the immanence of total power. These include religious and liberal institutional sites such as the library archive as well as objects like the Persian rug and the temporal space of teenage life. Here the reading of the image as ethical and spatial situates the conditions for a specific form of freedom that is nevertheless a part of and product of governance. This claim to the general function of representation is supported by another representation; that of absolute dominance itself and its effect and character goes unaccounted for in this explanation.

of space that underpins such theories misunderstands the condition of capitalistic technology, by mistaking it as something that is at once an infinite totalizing force, but which nevertheless has edges, wherein the resistant object of space can confront the recalcitrant object of capital; c) the role of the techno-image is idealized and also de-realized to the condition of irrational thought experiments; and, d) in order to think the site of critique as capable of any orientation we must accommodate the conditions of abstraction within our procedures of reason and we must do so by dislodging a theory of space as object from our horizon that would serve to prohibit this comprehension of process. This means that we must refuse the error of objectifying perceived standards as neutral facts of our inquiry but at the same time to take this material seriously as the incomplete and yet accessible condition of the systems within which life is structured. Perhaps most significantly, we must proceed without taking the concept of the role of consciousness itself to be another neutral object.

To understand the artwork without these spaces of freedom at the level of construction, or destination produces the need to examine the projects of art-power and their methods. This is also a question of how such an art decides to understand its relation to knowledge and its capacity for reason, as being something that must reach beyond a form of self-description of the status of the art work at present initself. This description must be beyond the particular and extend outwards, as Althusser would say, to draw new lines for us to travel.[23]

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[23] I take this reference from Louis Althusser's text *Philosophy and the Spontaneous Philosophy of the Scientists*, 1967. Here Althusser outlines the operations as reason that navigate through space to articulate future orientation and direction, as a result of self vigilance and rational interdisciplinary projects that conjoin the operations of philosophy and science.