UNGOVERNABLE SPACES

Community Formation
& the Poetics of Resistance

KREIDER + O'LEARY

UNGOVERNABLE SPACES

UNGOVERNABLE SPACES

Community Formation and the Poetics of Resistance

Kristen Kreider and James O'Leary

Cover Image: KREIDER + O'LEARY, Solar Phone Chargers
at Skala Sikamineas Lesvos UNHCR Center, 2016.
Digital Photograph © Kreider + O'Leary, 2016

Bloomsbury Publishing Plc does not have any control over, or responsibility for, any
third-party websites referred to or in this book. All internet addresses given in this book
were correct at the time of going to press. The author and publisher regret any
inconvenience caused if addresses have changed or sites have ceased to exist,
but can accept no responsibility for any such changes.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

For product safety related questions contact productsafety@bloomsbury.com.

To find out more about our authors and books visit www.bloomsbury.com
and sign up for our newsletters.

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

On a personal note, we are endlessly grateful to our family and friends for support, encouragement and listening ears; for warmth, love and community. Lastly, to Mischka, always. We thank you all.

Introduction
Part 1

Ungovernable Spaces:

Situating Practice

What is *Ungovernable Spaces*?

Pursued through scholarly research, field work and situated practice, *Ungovernable Spaces* is a study of situations wherein communities form amidst social and political turbulence. Understanding these emergent formations in terms of 'ungovernability' and a 'poetics of resistance', the book charts a movement generally from oppression, through transformation, into imagining, and finally emergence. In particular, *Ungovernable Spaces* is a journey from the Mecca building on Chicago's South Side, displaced to make way for Mies van der Rohe's Illinois Institute of Technology campus design in the 1950s; through M. K. Gandhi's 1931 Salt March protest in Gujarat, India, and other acts of non-violent resistance intrinsic to his vision of a culturally and economically independent India; into *Ciudad Abierta* (Open City), a radical pedagogical experiment started in 1971 by a poet and an architect in Ritoque, Chile; and out of the coagulating political ecologies emergent at the interface areas of Belfast, Northern Ireland – areas on either side of the so-called 'peacelines' that developed in response to the conflict known as 'the Troubles'. The book concludes with reference to the 'hotspot' migrant camps on the Greek island of Lesvos as these have been established in response to the 2015 European 'migrant crisis' and its aftermath. Learning lessons from the questionable evolution of this camp infrastructure, we conceive, of necessity, of a new poetics of 'us' and propose how a formation of community in and through resistance on a planetary scale has the potential to make something new, something different, something unknown of the world.

Although the argument performed throughout the book's sequence of chapters is not linear, there is a narrative arc to *Ungovernable Spaces*. This starts at the point of the first chapter, 'Beneath the Grid, the Root: Politics, Aesthetics and the Overlay of Chicago's South Side'. Here the overarching problematic of colonialism and racism, which is discussed generally in the second part of this book's Introduction, is identified in the particular. It is within this problematic that the entire project is situated. From here, each of the ensuing chapters and related situations address this problem either directly or indirectly, and from various perspectives globally. Taken together, they exemplify strategies of resistance and possibilities for living and being otherwise that enable us to appreciate – and to further imagine – how aesthetic, ethical, imaginative and ecological practices can mobilize towards systemic transformation and change. This leads into the book's Conclusion, which is a call for new ways of thinking and modes of living together to confront and address myriad concerns within the contemporary condition. *Ungovernable Spaces* can thus be conceived of as a journey of sorts: one through which we search, and research, sites and situations where practices (including, but not limited to, practices of poetry, art and architecture) meet at the point of the political: a point

from which community formations begin to disrupt hegemonic order, 'ungovern' space; a point of pure potentiality.

In outlining the book's trajectory, it is important to flag that we do not consider *Ungovernable Spaces* to cover the entire territory of the 'ungovernable' and, related to this, communities of resistance globally; nor do we consider it an encompassing historical account of such communities. Indeed, as the book moves swiftly across times and between places, gesturing expansively to sites and situations in North and South America, India, Northern Ireland and the borders of 'fortress Europe', it is in no way intended to be an exhaustive study of communities of resistance globally nor an historical account of their development across time. Rather, and as we shall discuss further below when outlining our method, *Ungovernable Spaces* must be understood as a study of select formations that, taken together, serve as *examples* through which we develop a concept of what we are calling 'ungovernable spaces.'

When is *Ungovernable Spaces*?

A Beginning

In November of 2014, we – the authors of this book – went on a journey. We flew from our home in London to the city of Santiago in Chile. From there, we drove across to Valparaíso, on the Pacific coast of Chile, and then on to Ritoque. It was there we reached our destination: *Ciudad Abierta* (Open City) – a pedagogical experiment started by a poet and an architect in 1971, which continues to this day. Our visit to *Ciudad Abierta* forms the basis for the third chapter in this book and, looking back, we see it as a beginning to this entire project – a beginning, that is, of *Ungovernable Spaces*.

While this moment signals our own beginning for this project, there are numerous beginnings throughout this book. Indeed, and as will become apparent in the chapters to come, there are many and multiple beginnings to *Ungovernable Spaces,* beginnings that span across places and times. A question thus arises – *when* is *Ungovernable Spaces*?

The Failure of the Now

Returning for a moment to our own beginning for this project, it is significant that we had just completed the final draft of our book *Falling* when we flew to Santiago. In this sense, you could say that *Ungovernable Spaces* begins at the end of

that book, throughout which five figures are falling.[1] The following is the very last paragraph of the very last chapter, 'Falling Man':

> The measure of 'now' in one elongated footstep. You are falling. Your house is falling. Beneath your house, a bloodbath. Beneath the bloodbath, utopia. Beneath this, torture, death and terror in unknown quantity. A statue with blind eyeballs. Ideology as a map. A controlled collapse of structure and a sleek new symbol. Of impossible dimension. Your hyperbolic tendencies. Television, prosthetics and the visceral confusion of language. You feel love. The United States does not pick fights and, above all else, the complex iconicity of Ronald Reagan's face. Those men over there are taking pictures. You like the movies too. Sometimes you fight and other times you are instructed to remember. Perhaps all of this is absurd. The image as emblem and shrapnel. If it is no longer ethical to speak of disorientation, then imagine a leap into gravity. Contemplation and response. The frame administers itself. Have you ever tried thinking the contemporary state of global warfare *without* genre? Keep shoot'n. Keep shoot'n. Keep shoot'n. The body relies on others. As responsibility, so time converges on this 'now'
>
> in a world under the world.
> Animals. Insects. Dust. Now
>
> everything flowers.[2]

In retrospect, we understand *Falling* to embody the fall of the humanist figure along with what it represents: whiteness, patriarchy, colonialism and, with it, capitalism, industry, extraction, exploitation, the cult of the individual. *Falling* ends in a failure of the Now – a failure of the Now that is, at the same time, a beginning, a new beginning (in the ground, in situ); a beginning where 'everything flowers' – and this marks the beginning of *Ungovernable Spaces*.

For it is here – at this point where the fall of the humanist figure marks a failure of the Now; the same point that marks a beginning where 'everything flowers' – that we begin to imagine how a certain conception of the human might give way to what Sylvia Wynter calls the 'practice of being human' and move into thinking about community formation, resistance and, through this, emergence.[3] In this respect, if there is a 'when' for this project – as in, *when* is *Ungovernable Spaces*? – we can answer this, firstly, in the abstract: by situating *Ungovernable Spaces* in the time of the Now, understood as a moment of failure that is also a moment of potential; a moment, that is, of re-creation.

We shall look at this time of the Now more in detail in Part Two of our Introduction where we set out a theoretical undercurrent for this project. Understanding the

failure and potential of the Now will lead us to appreciate what it is, generally, that conditions each of the situations with which we engage throughout *Ungovernable Spaces* and the development of the project overall. As we shall suggest, it is this overarching condition that demands resistance, and it is through such resistance that newness can emerge through 'ungovernability' and a 'poetics of resistance'. But before that, in the sections that remain in this first part of the Introduction, we shall: look at the kernel of an ethical, political 'we', which lies at the heart of this project; acknowledge our position as embodied, situated researchers; and outline our method for pursuing this research. We then conclude Part One of the Introduction with a brief look at the overall form of the book and key concepts.

Who are 'We'?

Another Beginning

One is born into the world, a first act. Something new manifests; our first act is poetic. At this point, the beginning, we appear uniquely through body and voice. The baby cries and opens up space. All eyes receive them. In this respect, our natality coincides with the birth of politics, which is both spatial and aesthetic.

A question arises. *Who are you?* It sounds out and carries back. From now on, all words and all deeds – all speech and all action – will issue forth and carry back to this point.

We can now say that, if being born into the world is our first act, all subsequent acts bind us to it. A yoke. And in and through such bondage, we participate in the making of the world, becoming who we are.[4]

'I' and 'You' as the Beginning of an Ethical, Political 'We'

The question 'Who are "we"?' will recur, in various guises, throughout *Ungovernable Spaces*. As such, the understanding and formation of 'we' will morph and change throughout the book. Here, and as a means of beginning to understand who 'we' are, start with the embodied and subjective inter-relation between 'I' and 'you'. We outline this as follows:

> One appears in the world and to others through the unique shape of body and sound of voice. In making this appearance, one exists relationally in the world and with others. Subjectivity is the emergence in this unique being, understood

as an embodied relational existent, of a fundamental property of language: the capacity to posit oneself as a grammatical subject 'I' in an instance of discourse.

Positing oneself as 'I' always, of necessity, implies an address to 'you', thereby establishing a situation of discourse. Within this situation, the 'I' and 'you' are positioned and mobile – never fixed – as 'I' become 'you' to another's 'I', as 'you' becomes 'I' to mine. Moreover, the 'I' and the 'you' are multiple: each and every one can take up an 'I', becoming a 'you'; each and every one is many 'I's to many 'you's.

The situation of discourse where 'I' is positioned in relation to 'you' is itself located within the realm of appearance – a material context, the world of objects and things – that can be understood as the realm of the political. It is within this realm that the inter-relationship between 'I' and 'you' opens the potential for an ethical relation whereby 'I' relate to 'you' even through difference, and respect this difference in and through such relation. In this way, the co-mingling of the (embodied, relational, multiple) 'I' and 'you' begins to configure an ethical, political 'we'.[5]

It is important to point out that, in the above, the relation between 'I' and 'you' – so, the emergence of an ethical, political 'we' – is being situated within Hannah Arendt's conception of the political. Arendt's understanding of the political as a phenomenal, material realm in which 'we' appear uniquely through body and voice is salient for our development of thought in *Ungovernable Spaces*. Thus understood, the political is necessarily a realm of perception and, so, of aesthetics. This allows us to appreciate that any community formation arising within a situation of political turbulence necessarily emerges within this phenomenal, material realm so that the question becomes: what role does aesthetic practice play in this emergence?

While we find helpful Arendt's conception of politics as a realm of the sensible, less helpful is her apparent separation of the realm of politics from the realms of work and labour. Any such separation would seem to suggest that the political is a realm in which we enter, rather than a realm that is continually being made, un-made and re-made not only through (political) action, but also through the practices of work (i.e. making) and labour. It is in this respect, our initial understanding of the ethical, political 'we' outlined above will become nuanced throughout the whole of *Ungovernable Spaces* where we look at community formation in terms of the development of ways of living – 'forms of life' – in and through practice, including those of making and of labour, understanding this as a mode of resistance with the capacity to 'ungovern'; in so doing, to make something new, something different, something unknown of the world. Still, through all of this, the necessary

inter-relationship between the 'I' and the 'you' will remain the starting point, the beginning, of an ethical, political 'we' formation, and the kernel for how we understand a politics emergent through what we shall ultimately, and invoking the Martinican poet-philosopher Édouard Glissant, identify as a 'poetics of relation': one that is rooted in an 'ethics of opacity'. (This is developed fully in the Conclusion to this book.)

The Collaborative 'We'

We are a writer (a poet) and an architect who work collaboratively to make performance, installation and time-based media artworks. Ours is a combined practice, poetry and architecture, with its etymological roots in the words *poeisis* and *techne*. Here *poeisis* is understood as the making of something new, something different, something unknown, and *techne* as the means to achieving this end. Our collaboration since 2004 has included textual interventions into architectural sites; for example, a prison, a church, a military bunker, an academic quad. Here we extend the principles of situated practice – its concern with conditions of space, emplacement, dynamics and, indeed, ballistics – into a symbolic domain and the layered complexity of place where the qualities of site (atmospheric, architectonic, contextual) together with the materiality of the (often poetic) text informs and extends the meaning of its message. Other work seeks to extend the realities of place into an imaginative domain and, in this vein, we have enacted spatial performances in, and made installation work and moving image in relation to a derelict wing of the Cork City Gaol in Ireland; fourteen different locations throughout Japan; the Westin Bonaventure Hotel in downtown Los Angeles; three different filmic locations for Russian Director Andrei Tarkovky's *Nostalgia* in Italy. Elsewhere, we have operated at a crossover cultural geography, video documentary and fiction to interweave spatial, historical, social and political narratives in creating an immaterial overlay to site. For this, we have conducted mediated walks along the maritime edges of Lisbon, throughout Tate Britain, and along the Dover coast. Together we have published a book of drawings and poetic text relating to five different projects entitled *Field Poetics* and, as alluded to above, a work of conceptual fiction entitled *Falling*.[6]

Throughout *Ungovernable Spaces*, as throughout all of our collaborative work, there is something that draws us to a given situation, some sort of inclination that propels us to engage. In this sense, we always begin from our own subjective positions: from the 'I' that, as we discussed above, is understood always in relation to 'you'. This allows us to position ourselves in relation to a given site or situation that, for the purposes of *Ungovernable Spaces*, includes the community formations emergent therein. It is from this subjective, mobile position that we seek somehow to connect (however, tangentially, however imaginatively) with

the sites, situations and communities therein. Through this, to engage in situated practice as a means of searching and researching; of enacting knowledge and communicating this; of generating research outcomes that, in the context of academic knowledge production with its Enlightenment legacies of objectivity, rationality and transparency, might themselves be construed as forms of resistance. And it is with this in mind that we turn to take a closer look at our particular means of practicing research in *Ungovernable Spaces*.

Practising Research

Situated Practice

Situated practice asserts that all interventionist practice is uniquely situated in a particular time and place, and therefore needs to be guided and framed by the nuances of that particular situation.[7] Situated practice can therefore be seen as a method for developing a detailed attention to place, and an awareness of the dynamic, contextual sensitivities of particular situations, whatever or wherever they may be. It does this with a worldview that acknowledges the positional, relational and partial aspect of these understandings. The approach itself is marked by a prolonged engagement with sites, situations, people and materials, understanding the complex underlying social and political dynamics of a particular environment. This approach is defined by and constructed through the weaving together of differing strands of knowledge from across disciplines, including anthropology, political science, sociology, spatial analysis, urban design, architecture, art, archaeology, material culture, participation and co-design, communication and dissemination. Ultimately, within a situated research practice, space is understood as a system of relationships.

If, generally speaking, we consider ours to be a situated practice, engaging with sites of cultural interest and political significance to draw out meaning and complexity, the question then becomes, how so? That is, how do we, as a poet and an architect, engage in our particular mode of situated practice research; through this, how do we begin to make knowledge? To answer this question, we turn to a story – a myth of origin (some might call it a theory) – about the development of single-point perspective as a representational order through which to depict illusionistic space.[8]

In this story, the architect Filippo Brunelleschi uses his skills in marquetry and the technique of single-point perspective to depict the baptistry of San Giovanni on a flat panel. At the vanishing point of this composition, he drills a small hole – a viewing aperture. Brunelleschi then stands behind the panel, his eye on the viewing

aperture, and holds up a mirror to the front. There, through the aperture, in the mirror image, he is able to see the baptistry represented in perfect perspective. However, we are told, within this depiction of San Giovanni, Brunelleschi 'made no attempt to depict the sky; he merely showed it'. And in order to do so, we are told, 'he resorted to a subterfuge that introduces into the representational circuit a direct reference to external reality, and at the same time a supplementary re-duplication of the specular structure upon which the experiment was founded.'[9] But what exactly did Brunelleschi do?

We read that, in his original composition, Brunelleschi placed darkened silver foil in the place of the sky so that, when one looked through the aperture and into the mirror, one would see mirrored in it the natural sky – and there, the clouds pushed along by the wind. Now, according to the one who is telling this story, the art historian Hubert Damisch, the mirrored sky in Brunelleschi's experiment testifies to the limits of the perspectival system since one cannot depict in single-point perspective the sky without measure, the winds blowing through the clouds. The mirror thus becomes an 'epistemological emblem' that reveals perspective as a structure of exclusions, 'the coherence of which is founded upon a series of rejections, and yet which has to make room for the very things that it excludes from its order.'[10] For within that mirror (this story, Damisch's theory), the clouds take on a function that is essentially semiotic: /cloud/ becomes a sign in the triple sense of a Symbol (word), an Icon and an Index. Crucially, as Damisch notes, this triadic relation, drawn from the pragmatic philosophy of C.S. Peirce, 'conditions all discourse on art and on that account is fundamental to this present work.'[11] As a symbol, the word / cloud/ bears a learned relation to particles of moisture or other such substance suspended in air and visible as *clouds*. As an image (in the mirror, in a painting), it bears a likeness to objects or things (*clouds*) in the world. As an index, it represents what eludes objectification (wind, air), but which is nevertheless recognizable through the effect it has on real objects (the blowing *clouds* in the mirrored image of Brunelleschi's experiment). As a complex sign of index, icon, symbol, /cloud/ thus functions as that which moves and makes connections between the 'outside' world and the 'inside' illusionistic space as these relate in the mind of the viewer.

So here we are: in and of the world, discussing the making of meaning and the relation this may have to objects and things in the world. This is a relation figured through /cloud/: its shape continually shifting in time and with the wind; its figure forming and reforming somewhere between the world in which we appear along with other objects and things and those spaces we create in order to make sense of this. And with this in mind, let us change tack a bit, or at least change context, to see if there is another perspective we can take on this /cloud/, another way to

engage with and in its meaningful potential: one that has a bearing on a situated practice of making knowledge.

In this change of perspective, we are no longer standing behind Brunelleschi's panel, our eye pressed against a hole, looking into a mirror – now we are alongside Rosalind Krauss and Kasha Linville, both art historians, looking at a painting by Agnes Martin. And we are moving. First, we are moving into a *close-up* view of the gridded painting where the nuances of the canvas, the slight waver of the lines, draw our attention. Then we are moving away – *far away* – from the painting where the dense fibres and finely gridded lines become a totalizing matrix, a Euclidean field, that eventually appears as blurred texture. And we keep moving like this, *close-up* and *far away*, *close-up* and *far away,* experiencing the work. For her part, Linville notices how, in this movement back and forth, the painting seems to 'go atmospheric'.[12] Picking up on this, Krauss describes how, for her, the viewing experience is 'haptic' rather than 'optic', and she relates this to Damisch's /cloud/. This is significant for our purposes. For with this shift of context – from Brunelleschi's early experiments with a perspectival system where the eye is co-extensive with a fixed and vanishing point, to this embodied encounter with an Agnes Martin painting where things 'go atmospheric' through a movement back and forth – /cloud/ shifts from serving a semiotic function in a system of visual representation to becoming a lived experience in space and time: one that is emergent through, and embodied by, this spatial practice of moving back and forth. This is significant because this movement, this shift, between the complex signification of a representational space and the lived experience of a spatial practice is also happening in our situated practice as a poet and an architect. All of which returns us to the question of how we, as a poet and an architect, engage in our particular mode of situated practice research; through this, how we begin to make meaning.

We shall now say that this movement, this shift between *close-up* and *far away* and the meanings that arise in and through it, characterizes our particular mode of situated practice. We break this down as follows:

> Space is a system of relationships. Engaging subjectively with such a spatial situation, we call 'site' our locus of creative and/or critical intent.

> On the one hand, we engage with site *close-up*. This encompasses our movements and spatial practices 'on the ground' in a particular location, a specific time and place. Here a given location is attended to and extended into; that is, experienced phenomenologically in all of its 'thereness' and in relation with those who inhabit this place. All the while, this place and these encounters are 'read' in all of their semiotic complexity as we engage in embodied acts of perception and cognition; through this, interpretation.

On the other hand, we engage with site *far away.* This encompasses moving through the impressions and conceptions we have of it as developed from, for example, searching historical narratives, maps, and cultural outputs. And this is coupled with the impressions and conception we make of the site ourselves through, for example, video, photographs, writing, sound recordings developed while doing field work.

By means of artistic, spatial and poetic practices (e.g. performance, writing, drawing, filming) we oscillate between these engagements, shifting between *close-up* and *far away*, making meaning in and through this subjective, mobile and scaled relationship to a spatial situation. Such is the basis for our situated practice, which becomes a means of making or 'enacting' forms of knowledge that are specific to our embodied and subjective, aesthetic and imaginative engagement with site.[13]

In sum, we consider our engagement with site in terms of a performance of place that is a movement between *close up* and *far away*. Here, our perceptual engagement with a worldly reality – in all its material, spatial, temporal, cultural complexity and 'thereness' – couples with the conceptions that we bring to and make of this reality. Here, meaning extends and proliferates. Our task then becomes one of finding form to hold and to communicate this – and herein lies the potential of this method. Grasping this potential, our aim in *Ungovernable Spaces* is to cultivate an act of imagination in and through such an extension and proliferation of meaning; so doing, to generate a knowledge formation capable of contributing more broadly to the development of a transformative political imaginary.

Position and Enaction

Position is central to any method of situated practice. We thus recognize the importance of acknowledging and reflecting upon our own position, as researchers, throughout *Ungovernable Spaces*. This is particularly the case as the situations with which we engage, and to which we respond, are embedded in colonial histories. So, throughout the book, we are engaging with and responding to sites and situations often charged with political tension, affect and even trauma; exploring community formations beyond our lived experience. We must therefore continually ask ourselves: What is our position within this history; what are our privileges and our perspectives when engaging with these situations? If meaning proliferates throughout this book, through the writing and image sequences – and if an act of imagination emerges in and through this proliferation – then how and to what extent does our position inflect this development of meaning and related act of imagination? Ultimately, how are we, as embodied researchers, situated within the political imaginary that we seek, along with others, to critique, to transform, to make new?

We begin this process of acknowledgement and reflection first by clarifying how we, the authors of this book, understand our engagement with the situations and community formations throughout. To be clear, our aim is not to *identify as* or *identify with* the 'we' of these situations and communities. Nor is our aim to *know* or to *take knowledge from* these situations and communities, putting that knowledge in this book – a particular kind of knowledge production that we consider both colonial and extractive. Rather, and drawing from our discussion above, our aim is to situate ourselves, as embodied researchers each inhabiting our 'I', each relating to 'you', *in relation to* these situations and communities: formations of 'we' also understood as comprising embodied relations of 'I' and 'you'. It is through this changing, malleable – sometimes direct, often indirect – relation that we engage in practices enabling us to enact knowledge and to make knowledge aesthetically, ethically and imaginatively.

In saying this, we very much intend to resonate with Francisco Varela's concept of 'enaction' that he develops as a basis both for understanding cognition and for cultivating what he calls 'ethical know-how'. We shall discuss both 'enaction' and 'ethical know-how' more fully in the second part of this Introduction where we further develop our understanding of an ethical, political 'we' and, ultimately, envision a new poetics of 'us'. For now, however, we draw attention to the fact that our approach to research is based on an understanding that all knowledge is a practice and, related to this, that all aspects of our collaborative and situated practice contribute to how we are making knowledge. In line with this, we do not consider a given site or situation to be something that is 'out there' waiting to be discovered – an unknown entity that we search for and find, study and come to 'know' as it is in reality, bringing this ontic knowledge back with us to communicate to others in our research 'field'. Rather, we understand that it is through our engagement with a given site or situation, our performance or enactment of it through movements and related practices between *close-up* and *far away*, that the complexities inherent in a site or situation are made into knowledge formations that are, of necessity, partial, subjective and relational. Moreover, as we communicate to others, such knowledge is not so much imparted as further enacted: our communication as much as its reception becoming a reciprocal enactment of knowledge where knowledge is continually made, re-made and potentially un-made through its construction well as reception.

Writing and Image-Making

Throughout this book, we engage practices of writing and image-making. Both of these practices are intrinsic to our enactment and communication of knowledge. Echoing our words above, our combination of writing and image-making, together with the reception of this by our readers, works to enact and construct knowledge

of the sites, situations and community formations with which we engage that is, of necessity, partial, subjective and relational.

As noted previously: crucial for an understanding of the overall scope of *Ungovernable Spaces* is an appreciation that we do not intend this to be a comprehensive study of global sites of resistance, nor an historical account. Rather, we are undertaking a study of select formations that, together, serve as *examples* through which we develop a concept of what we are calling 'ungovernable spaces.' And here we are inspired by British artist, writer and thinker Yve Lomax who writes:

> In its movement of stepping outside, the example endeavours to show you the thing that it dwells beside. The example makes an exhibition of it and shows you the thing as such. You can say that it gives you an image or, indeed, an idea. But let's not forget that this idea is an exposition. The idea doesn't take the thing as given; rather, the idea — the example — shows you what it can be and, in so doing, gives opening to its knowability.[14]

Our aim, ultimately, is to piece together the elemental 'building blocks' of a community-to-come, a future community. In this respect, while each of the chapters is replete in itself – intended as a creative and critical engagement with a particular site – the book overall works cumulatively. First, (Introduction, Chapter 1) to identify the overarching problematic of colonialism and racism within which we locate each of the situations with which we engage as well as the development of the project overall, while pointing towards modes of resisting this. Then (Chapters 2, 3 and 4) to consider specific *examples* of 'ungovernable spaces' that address this problem, each in different ways; together evidencing the crucial role that aesthetics, ethics, imagination and ecology play in this process of community formation and resistance. Finally (Conclusion), and learning from these examples, to imagine a politics – a way of living and being together in this world – that is interconnected and relational; through this, to envision a new poetics of 'us'. The book, overall, thus embodies a performance of thought as well as an act of poesis in its own right.

Notably, with the exception of the writing in the Introduction and Conclusion, each of the chapters is intended to draw attention to itself as writing. In this, it embodies the 'poetic function' of language – an attenuation to the message itself as intrinsic to communicating meaning.[15] In drawing attention to itself, the writing in each of the chapters works formally to embody (however abstractly) the logic of a particular figure. These figures include: 'Grid', 'Charkha', 'Constellation', 'Cluster'. As will become apparent, these particular figures bear a formal relation to the respective situations and community formations discussed in each of the chapters,

while the general significance of 'figure' for thinking about 'ungovernability' and a 'poetics of resistance' will be discussed in the second part of this Introduction. For now, it is important to stress that, as the writing in each chapter embodies the logic of a particular figure, the thinking it performs will not necessarily follow a linear argument; that is to say, the process of thought embodied by each chapter is not strictly rational. There is, instead, a 'poetic logic' at play – through this, gaps to be inferred; connections to be imagined; scenes to be envisioned. As well, there is a storytelling impulse behind the writing and, alongside this, a 'mythic' sensibility. Indeed, as we have alluded, each of the situations with which we engage is marked by a beginning, while each chapter may contain multiple beginnings – and is it not the nature of myth to begin, and begin again?

As all of this suggests, the writing practice throughout *Ungovernable Spaces* emphasizes positionality and relation; pays close attention to the materiality of language and to the formal qualities of the writing itself in its construction; and works imaginatively, mythically and through storytelling, weaving this together with academic argumentation. In these respects, the writing practice can be understood in relation to developments in contemporary academic writing practice including: site-writing and critical spatial practice;[16] art-writing, particularly that which engages with place;[17] and creative critical writing.[18] Meanwhile, in its recognition of knowledge as a construct, as a practice, alongside an awareness of the power dynamics at play in research methods along with academia's citational apparatus, this writing is also very much informed by, inspired by and indebted to critiques of knowledge production and academic writing practice coming from decolonial perspectives and through Black Studies.[19] All of which to say that this is very much writing that seeks to engage with the meaningful potential of writing as form, as material, with all of the resistance this entails; through this, all of its emergent potential.

Drawing Together – Situated Practice, Position and Enaction, Writing and Image-Making

Drawing all of this together we return – yet again – to the question 'Who are "we"?' We can now say that we are a poet and an architect who engage with sites of cultural and architectural interest to make and communicate meaning. And throughout *Ungovernable Spaces* – that is, throughout our engagement with each given site and situation; our coming to understand the community formations therein; our imagining of a community-to-come – we engage in practice. Very specifically, we engage in practices of writing, filming, performance and drawing as we relate to a particular site or situation. Intrinsic to our enactment of knowledge, these practices allow us to understand (however partially) and/or to imagine the various practices and ways of being of the communities therein. For the purposes

of this book, we then engage in practices of writing and image-making to construct and communicate our enactment of knowledge, our (partial) understanding and our imaginative leaps, imparting this to our readers to reciprocally enact. Importantly, while all of this might describe who we are specifically, it is our appreciation, generally, of the inherent subjectivity, relationality and mobility of the 'we' – through this, the transformative potential of its emergence – that impels our engagement with each site and situation in *Ungovernable Spaces*; informs how we understand the communities to form; and, ultimately, enables us to envision the potential for a new poetics of 'us', as we do in the Conclusion to this book.

Form of the Book and Key Concepts

In anticipation of our engagement with the specific situations throughout the book, as well as the imaginative act that concludes the book, we take time here to talk through the different chapters; in doing so, to outline some of the key concepts of each. Our aim is to indicate and ground the overall 'flow' of argumentation that is embodied and performed by the writing and image-making in the chapters themselves.

Chapter 1
Beneath the Grid, the Root: Politics, Aesthetics and the Overlay of Chicago's South Side

Acknowledging its initial point of entry by way of an artwork – specifically, Victor Burgin's *Prairie* (2015) – this writing takes as its point of departure the intersection of State Street and 34th on the South Side of Chicago. This intersection, now the location of Mies van der Rohe's 'Crown Hall' building on the Illinois Institute of Technology campus, was previously the site of the Mecca apartment building. Built in 1892, the Mecca was demolished sixty years later, in 1952, after a decade of resistance by its occupants, predominantly African Americans living in this area known as the 'Black Belt' of Chicago. This same location was once the geographical site of a Midwestern prairie, home to the native *Inoka*. The writing in this chapter seeks to expose these various layers of site, each with their respective social, cultural, urban and geographic rhythm; layers that, with the development of the IIT campus and construction of Crown Hall in 1956, are seemingly occluded by the proportioned measure of Mies' masterplan, itself situated within the matrix of Chicago's urban plan. Central to this occlusion is the aesthetics of the modernist grid.

The writing itself is made up of layers that resonate, formally, with the technique of the architectural 'overlay'. Taken individually, each layer is a replete image,

observation, theorization, interpretation or affect around issues of erasure, resistance, potentiality; the relation between aesthetics and politics; the role that rhythm plays in this and the homogenizing impulse of the grid; Whiteness, Blackness, Nativeness; ornament and crime; and the importance of story and myth for our practice of being human. Read together, the layers become a means of imaginatively unearthing a community formation: one that, rich and fertile, allows us to envision the development of new forms of life.

Conceptually, this chapter identifies the overarching problems of colonialism and racism and looks at how this has informed the development of our contemporary socio-historical order. Key to understanding this is an appreciation of the relationship between politics and aesthetics. This relationship, we argue, suggests the possibility that a world – possibly a new world – can be figured, configured and reconfigured through the inter-relationship between art and life; that is, through the 'politics of aesthetics.' The aim of this opening chapter is, thus, to identify the inherent – and inherently violent – relationship between colonialism, racism, and the social order; from there, to open the question of how we might begin to imagine the world otherwise, and to consider the role of aesthetics in this. This lays the groundwork for the chapters that follow where we engage with, and learn from, examples of community formation that, ultimately, inform our imagining of a new world order in the concluding chapter.

Chapter 2
Gandhi's Salt March, Daily Practice of Spinning and Intermittent Fasts: An Ethics of Resistance in Three Acts

In 1918, M.K. Gandhi declared that it was possible to win *swaraj*, which translates as 'self-rule' or 'own rule', through the *charkha*, the spinning wheel. In October 1921, Gandhi, himself, vowed to spin daily. From that point on, he dedicated two to three hours a day to this practice of transforming raw cotton plucked from the fields into a yarn that could be used to make fabric; more specifically, a yarn that could be used to make the roughly textured, handwoven *khadi* that Gandhi would wear, that his followers would wear, and that he would entreat the whole of a nation – the entire Indian population – to wear also. Promoting the practice of spinning and encouraging the habit of wearing its product were intrinsic to Gandhi's vision for an independent India. This was a vision of political, cultural, and economic independence not only from British imperial rule, but also from Western civilization more generally. Central to this vision was the *charkha*.

The practice of spinning and a study of the *Bhagavad Gita* were part of the rhythm of daily life in the Sabarmati Ashram. (The Sabarmati Ashram was originally called the Satyagraha Ashram.) Founded in 1917 as a hub for Gandhi's 'experiments with truth', located on the banks of the Sabarmati river in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, the ashram would serve as one of the main centres of the Indian freedom struggle. Early on, the ashram was the site of Gandhi's first hunger strike in India when he 'fasted until death' for a rise in the wages of mill workers in Ahmedabad. Later, the ashram was the point of departure for one of Gandhi's most significant political actions: his infamous Salt March, which ended with Gandhi's gesture of picking up a handful of salt upon his arrival at Dandi beach. Understanding the intermittent fasts and the Salt March as political acts, we look at how these, along with the daily practice of spinning, were central Gandhi's formation of community as an act of resistance.

Drawing from Gandhi's annotation of the *Bhagavad Gita,* we also look at how Gandhi's practice of spinning and, by extension, his vision of an independent India, was informed by the philosophy of *karma* yoga, the yoga of action. We look particularly at the principles of *yajna* ('sacrifice') and *ahimsa* ('non-violence'). Notably, these principles were intrinsic both to Gandhi's foundation of the Sabarmati Ashram, and to his development of *satyagraha* ('truth force') as a particular form of non-violent resistance. These two – the ashram as a living, working community; *satyagraha* as a non-violent form of political resistance – must be understood in relation. Thus understood, it becomes clear that the ethical principles and philosophies drawn from the *Bhagavad Gita* were intrinsic to Gandhi's interrelated acts of community formation and political resistance. And this links back to a discussion of Gandhi's practice of spinning that, together with the Salt Marsh and intermittent fasts, disclose an ethics of resistance in three acts.

Chapter 3
Poetry, Architecture and the Making of *Ciudad Abierta* (Open City): Imagination and Transformation in Ritoque, Chile

Encompassing both the idea of a city and its reality – functioning as both a metaphorical space and a living, working community – *Ciudad Abierta* (Open City) began in 1971. Situated on the edge of Ritoque beach on a small tract of land just north of Valparaíso in Chile, the city was founded by the Argentinian poet, Godofredo Iommi, the Chilean architect, Alfredo Cruz, and other members of what had by then become known as the Valparaíso School of architects. Part of the Catholic University of Chile, *Ciudad Abierta* was conceived as a radical pedagogical experiment intended to embody the ethos and principles of the Valparaíso School. Here teachers and students would live and, together, work to build *Ciudad Abierta*.

With any act of making, careful attention would continually be paid to the specificity of the site including its unique light and wind conditions, relation to the sea, and ground of shifting sand. In *Ciudad Abierta*, all architecture would be interrelated with poetry; all building work would be initiated through the 'poetic act'; and the emphasis with any act of construction would always be on process over product, a process guided by intuition and realized through improvization.

Drawing from our experience of *Ciudad Abierta*, the writing in this chapter takes specific architectural details as a starting point for discussing *Ciudad Abierta*'s ethos, key principles and practices. We intersperse this with a story of *Ciudad Abierta*'s beginnings, which we piece together from background reading and research. In doing so, Chapter 3 emphasizes the importance of newness and beginning as well as the role of imagination in challenging colonial narratives and interrupting their related socio-historic orders. Moving between modalities of observing, imagining, theorizing, and storytelling, we posit *Ciudad Abierta* as a community of teaching, research, and making that is, ultimately, a form of resistance.

Chapter 4
Turbulent Politics and Emergent Ecologies: A Stratigraphy of the 'Peace Walls' of Belfast, Northern Ireland

In 1904, as part of the *Memoirs of the Geological Survey of Ireland*, geologists Lamplugh et al., wrote a paper called 'The Geology of the Country around Belfast' where they surveyed the glacial drifts and other superficial deposits around the city, organizing this cartographical information into a 'Table of Formations'. In 2017, The Belfast Interface Project published 'Interface Barriers, Peacelines and Defensive Architecture', where they systematically catalogue each 'peace wall', barrier, fence and gate used to separate and contain Nationalist and Unionist communities in Northern Ireland. Between these two documents, one can construct an historical, theoretical, and material matrix of artifacts, agents, designs, and policy related to the fields of conflict, territory and desire that comprise 'The Interface'.

Physically, The Interface comprises thirteen different wall clusters or 'peace lines' situated throughout Belfast. These clusters have existed and been developed as markers of sectarian division in Belfast for the past forty-five years. Specifically designed to respond to an evolving set of local actions, events and spaces of conflict, the wall clusters both demarcate a territorial condition and form a backdrop for the performance of violence and expressions of cultural identity. In Chapter 4, we examine the fraught territory adjacent to the so-called 'peace walls' of Belfast, Northern Ireland. This exploration is rooted in archival, historical,

architectural, and site-based research that uncovers the violence of colonial history as it manifests in the city's divisive architecture of walls and barriers that developed as a response to the conflict known as 'the Troubles'. Here we identify the significance of walls and the 'walled state' as a sign of sovereignty within the political imaginary. We then begin to imagine the walls otherwise, as alive and contributing to an emergent political ecology. How might this allow us to think beyond the politics of sectarian division to conceive community formation in terms of interconnectivity, relationality, systems and 'deep' ecology? What possibilities arise with a shift into the speculative domain where human agents as well as more-than-human actors, plants, objects and things all contribute to the making, un-making and re-making of the world? There is an anti-colonial imperative here in this imaginative shift from a humanist into a post-humanist paradigm insofar as it questions the inherited construct of the 'human' that has enabled colonial expansion, violence and extractive practices. The call is for a political ecology predicated on an ethics of non-violence and an aesthetics of cross-cultural, cross-species practices.

Conclusion
Towards a New Poetics of 'Us': Lessons from the Edge of 'Fortress Europe'

We conclude *Ungovernable Spaces* with a discussion of the reality of several refugee camps on the Greek island of Lesvos in the Aegean Sea. One need only take one look at the barbed wire and chain-link perimeter fence of the Mória Reception and Identification Centre (better known as the Mória Refugee Camp) to ask questions about the welcome provided to strangers in trouble at the very edge of 'Fortress Europe'. In September 2020, one week after authorities placed the Mória camp under complete quarantine following an outbreak of Covid, several fires broke out on the site. Over one night, these fires eventually destroyed what was then the largest refugee camp in Europe, leaving over 20,000 people without shelter. (The camp itself was built to house 2,500.) What lessons can be learned from Mória, and the evolution of camp facilities on Lesvos?

We follow this evolution of camp, drawing from our site visits to Lesvos over the course of a number of years. In doing so, we ask: What do each of these camps – the 'same', but different – teach us about our current world order, and how might resistance to them be understood as a call to form a new one? Learning lessons from Lesvos and relating these to the study of community formations throughout the previous chapters, we then conceive, of necessity, of a new poetics of 'us' and imagine how community formation on a planetary scale has the potential to make something new, something different, something unknown of the world.

Introduction
Part 2

Ungovernability and the Poetics of Resistance

A Theoretical Undercurrent, A Line of Enquiry

In this second part of our Introduction, we prepare for our journey through *Ungovernable Spaces* by outlining the theoretical undercurrent and related line of enquiry that runs throughout our engagement with the situations and communities in the chapters that follow. In developing this, we will be thinking along with writers and thinkers with whom we have engaged and from whom we have learned, often collectively and with others.[1] Here – and, indeed, throughout *Ungovernable Spaces* – we will be referring to ideas and engaging with thinking that has developed in our cultural context, which is Anglo-European, as well as referring to ideas and engaging with thinking that has developed in cultural contexts beyond this. Our aim throughout is to learn and to shape our thinking and our acting through this relation, for it is our belief that only through relation is transformation, change and newness possible.

In what follows, we first situate *Ungovernable Spaces* – including each of the situations with which we engage, as well as the development of this project overall – in the 'Time of the Now', which we understand in light of the 'condition of coloniality'. We then turn our attention to thinking about 'Ungovernability and a Poetics of Resistance.' In doing so, we follow a line of enquiry: 'What does it mean to be governed?', 'What does it mean to resist?', 'How does resistance find form?', and 'How might this make something new, something different, something unknown of the world?' This line of enquiry informs our entire project. While these questions are addressed by way of example throughout our specific engagement with the sites and situations in the following chapters, they are addressed here in this second part of our Introduction by way of abstract thought. We conclude this second part of our Introduction by at looking at the potential for 'New, Different, Unknown Formations of "We"' to arise through community formation and a poetics of resistance. Our aim – both here and in the chapters to come – is to consider the role of aesthetics, ethics, imagination and ecology in the ongoing, everlasting, inescapable movement that is the endless configuration and reconfiguration of the political.

The Time of the Now

In the first part of our Introduction, we situated *Ungovernable Spaces* in what we described as the failure and potential of the 'Now'. Here we turn to look at this in more depth. First, we consider the 'Time of the Now' specifically in terms of anti-colonial struggle. From there, we begin to think it in terms of the 'coloniality

of power' more generally. Ultimately, it is within an overarching 'condition of coloniality' that we situate *Ungovernable Spaces*. It is this condition that demands resistance, we argue, and it is such resistance that is realized in and through the community formations explored in the chapters to follow.

The Anti-Colonial Now

We arrive at an understanding of the time of the 'Now' in terms of anti-colonial struggle by way of the Indian historian and postcolonial theorist, Dipesh Chakrabarty. Writing in *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference,* Chakrabarty develops an appreciation of the anti-colonial Now by way of a critique of historicism.[2] Specifically, Chakrabarty argues that historicism – and even the whole idea of history as developed from a modern, European perspective – is an ideology of progress or 'development' that has enabled European domination since the nineteenth century. It has done so by positing Europe as the site of the first occurrence of, for example, capitalism, modernity, and enlightenment, then using historical time as a measure of the cultural distance between West and non-West. That is to say, historicist ideology 'made modernity or capital look not simply global but rather as something that became global *over time*, by originating in one place (Europe) and then spreading outside it.'[3] According to Chakrabarty, this idea that things happened 'first in Europe, then elsewhere' suggested that non-Western nationalisms would go on, later, to produce some version of the same 'European' narrative. However, he argues, when it came to non-European peoples in the nineteenth century, historicist ideology coupled with the power structures of colonial rule to effectively become 'somebody's way of saying "not yet" to somebody else.'[4]

To exemplify this 'not yet' of historicist ideology, Chakrabarty quotes John Stuart Mill's *Considerations on Representative Government*. Here, and somewhat perversely, Mill proclaims self-rule as the highest form of government whilst arguing *against* it for India and Africa – and this on historicist grounds. For Mill contends that India and Africa should, like European nations, be imbued with self-rule – just 'not yet'.[5] It is against such a patronising deferral that Chakrabarty introduces the force of the anti-colonial Now:

> Twentieth-century anticolonial democratic demands for self-rule, on the contrary, harped insistently on a 'now' as the temporal horizon of action. From about the time of the First World War to the decolonization movements of the fifties and sixties, anticolonial nationalisms were predicated on the urgency of the 'now'. Historicism has not disappeared from the world, but its 'not yet' exists today in tension with this global insistence on the 'now' that marks all popular movements towards democracy.[6]

The anti-colonial Now is thus a moment that marks the anti-colonial struggle for independence: a moment of failure (of colonial rule as this is upheld by the historicist 'not yet') and of potential (for new democracies, new nations).[7] Arguably, this is a moment of 'ungovernability' and, as such, clearly resonates with this project exploring *Ungovernable Spaces*.[8] The question becomes: How, specifically, does Chakrabarty's understanding of the anti-colonial Now relate to the Now of *Ungovernable Spaces*, and how does this, ultimately, relate to our particular understanding of 'ungovernability'?

To answer this, we turn to consider what Peruvian sociologist Aníbal Quijano, a key thinker in the field of decolonial studies, calls the 'coloniality of power'.[9] Reading Quijano in relation to Chakrabarty will lead us to an understanding of the 'condition of coloniality' as an overarching condition of the time of the Now: one that calls for resistance. As we shall argue, it is a resistance to this generalized condition that informs the emergence of communities throughout *Ungovernable Spaces* – and it is this emergence that we shall ultimately seek to understand in terms of 'ungovernability'.

The Coloniality of Power

Writing in 'Coloniality of Power and Eurocentrism in Latin America', Quijano argues that globalization, the model of power that is hegemonic today, has its roots in the constitution of America; along with it, the development of colonial/modern Euro-centred capitalism. Key to this development – and a fundamental axis of this model of power – is the concept of race. Race, Quijano argues, is a mental construction mapped onto people within a colonial matrix of power: a codification of difference used, ultimately, to control labour and its resources. In the Americas, race became a way of producing new historical and social identities; specifically, Indians, Blacks and Mestizos. Crucially, these categories designated those whose labour would be waged, indentured or enslaved. As such, the categories of race became constitutive of hierarchies and corresponding social and economic roles, serving as instruments of control within the model of colonial domination.

Developed in America, this model of power then expanded along with European colonization to the rest of the world where it has become the most effective and long-lasting instrument of social domination. In this model of power, people are situated in positions of superiority and inferiority based on their phenotypic traits; related to this, race is used as the fundamental criterion for the distribution of the world population into ranks, places and roles. Crucially, this racial axis of power – colonial in both origin and character – has proven to be more durable than the actual colonial regimes in which it was established. For Quijano, the global *world-system* as it has developed since the colonization of America – the system in which

we are currently operating – is implicated within the 'coloniality of power': a model of power characterized by Eurocentrism, racism and capitalism.

Now, where Quijano's argument dovetails with Chakrabarty's is at the point of historicism. This point appears in the course of Quijano's argument where he unpacks the particular conjunction of colonial ethnocentrism and universal racial classification whereby Europeans came to feel not only superior to all other peoples of the world, but 'naturally superior'. This 'mental operation', which he describes as fundamental importance for the entire model of global power, consisted of the following: 'the Europeans generated a new temporal perspective of history and relocated the colonized population, along with their respective histories and cultures, in the past of a historical trajectory whose culmination was Europe.'[10] Not only were these colonized populations and practices historicized, Quijano argues, they were positioned in a completely different line of continuity to the Europeans – a totally different category: 'The colonized peoples were inferior races and in that manner were the past vis-à-vis the Europeans.'[11] Such an imagined perspective has served as the basis for how subjective and cultural relations between Western Europe and the rest of the world have been codified ever since. Crucially, this codification between Western Europe and the rest of the world occurs through a play of categories that Quijano identifies as: 'East-West, primitive-civilized, magic/mythic-scientific, irrational-rational, traditional-modern – Europe and not Europe.'[12] And this codification, he argues, is the basis of Eurocentrism as the hegemonic perspective of knowledge – a perspective that, itself,

> … is based on two principle founding myths: first, the idea of the history of human civilization as a trajectory that departed from a state of nature and culminated in Europe; second, a view of the differences between Europe and non-Europe as natural (racial) differences and not consequences of a history of power.[13]

Clearly, what Quijano identifies here as the first founding myth of Eurocentrism resonates with Chakrabarty's critique of historicism, understood as an ideology of progress or 'development' that enabled European domination of the world in the nineteenth century. What Quijano adds to this, however, is an appreciation of how, by means of the second founding myth of Eurocentrism, the categories of race have become mapped onto this ideology of historicism. Through this, European domination has continued even beyond the anti-colonial struggles of the nineteenth century by way of power structures embedded systemically.

The effects of this conflation of historicism and racism is twofold: firstly, through Eurocentrism and racism, colonial power can be said to permeate the current (capitalist) world-system; secondly, the inequities developed under colonialism

and carried into this current (capitalist) world-system are deemed 'natural'. In this sense, thinking Chakrabarty's critique of historicism together with Quijano's appreciation of the coloniality of power enables us to conceive of a time – and related situation(s) – that, even if not explicitly struggling against colonialism, nevertheless carry traces of the coloniality of power. The result is that this time – and related situation(s) – can be understood as being embedded broadly within the 'condition of coloniality'. This, we posit, is the time of the Now understood in terms of the overarching condition of coloniality; a condition that demands resistance.

The Time of the Now as the Condition of Coloniality (or, The Current Disaster)

We situate each of the community formations with which we engage throughout this project in this time of the Now, understood in terms of the condition of coloniality. For although each is qualitatively unique – located in different historical times and geographical places; relating to distinct social, political and cultural contexts – they all exist within, and emerge in and through a resistance to, the condition of coloniality. This resistance is evident in practices (cultural, artistic, ethical, architectural, poetic) that manifest as, for example, rejection, refusal, reversion, reconfiguration. Through this, these community formations can be said to 'ungovern' the hegemonic order as it is figured through the coloniality of power.

As well as each of the community formations with which we engage, we situate the development of this project overall in this time of the Now, understood in terms of the condition of coloniality. Here it is important to emphasize that *Ungovernable Spaces* has developed in tandem with a period of radical transition – some call it crisis – where massive worldly shifts, from micro to macro, are resulting from war and conflict, migration, calls for social justice, developments in technology, polarization, the climate emergency, Covid. Without question, all of this has informed the development of thought behind this project, and strengthened the imperative for it – and we understand all of this explicitly in relation the condition of coloniality. How so?

Let us recall that, for Chakrabarty, historicism is understood as an ideological tool allowing colonial power to say 'not yet' to those who would seek change. We hear echoes of this deferral in the call from the Invisible Committee who, writing in *To Our Friends* in 2014, the year this project began, warn us against what they call the 'disease' of hope. We are continually informed about problems that we can do nothing about, they tell us, but that will surely have solutions *tomorrow*. The hope for tomorrow – the best way to maintain order. Here is what they say:

If we are so much inclined to flee from the now, it's because now is the time of decision. It's the locus of the 'I accept' or 'I refuse' or 'I'll go with that'. It's the locus of the logical act that immediately follows the perception. It is the present, and hence the locus of presence. It is the moment, endlessly renewed, of the taking of sides. Thinking, in distant terms, is always more comfortable. 'In the end', things will change; 'in the end', beings will be transfigured. Meanwhile, let's go on this way, let's remain what we are. A mind that thinks in terms of the future is incapable of acting in the present. It doesn't seek transformation, it avoids it. The current disaster is like a monstrous accumulation of all the deferrals of the past, to which are added those of each day and each moment, in a continuous time slide. But life is always decided now, and now, and now.[14]

We see this current disaster as a monstrous accumulation of the 'not yet' of colonial power and a direct result of the condition of coloniality. How, we then ask, might we learn from the example of the anti-colonial Now – its urgency for change – when confronting it? More specifically, how might we learn how to imagine new ways of being and to instigate/participate in processes that will lead to the systemic transformation so desperately needed *now*?

Without question, the imagining of new and different ways of being as well as the drive towards systemic change informs the development of community in each of the examples we engage with in *Ungovernable Spaces,* and is also imperative behind this project. We say this even as we fully recognize that both this project and the authors – both of whom have been 'disciplined' by and work within systems of higher education in the UK – are fully implicated within the coloniality of power. Amidst this enmeshment, we seek to understand how it may be possible to develop the means towards change and transformation; the means, that is, to 'ungovern' current hegemonic orders and to imagine/instigate new ones.

Ungovernability and the Poetics of Resistance

What do we mean by 'ungoverning'? To answer this, we first ask: 'What does it mean to be governed?' For this, we have chosen to engage with the French philosopher Michel Foucault and, specifically, his understanding of 'governmentality'. There are, of course, many thinkers of governance; however, Foucault's thinking is most relevant for our purposes because of his emphasis on power. This emphasis on power – more specifically, on 'biopower' as an overarching form of governance, and 'techniques of power' as a means of resisting this – is key to the further line of questioning we follow in this section: 'What does it mean to resist?',

'How does resistance find form?', and 'How might this make something new, something different, something unknown of the world?' Moreover, it foreshadows our discussion at the very end of *Ungovernable Spaces* where we engage with Cameroonian philosopher Achille Mbembe's concept of 'necropolitics', predicated on Foucault's 'biopolitics', when envisioning the potential for a community of resistance on a planetary scale.

What Does it Mean to be Governed?

The ancient Greek word *kybernetes* means 'helmsman' or 'steersman', later translated into the Latin word *gubernator*. It is the task of this helmsman or steersman to guide a ship that has set sail on a trajectory across open waters. But as anyone who has sailed a ship will know – and as others can imagine – this trajectory is never straight, the ship continually drawn off course by the force of the current, the wind and the waves. It is therefore the job of *kybernetes* – the *gubernator* – to feel the pull of the rudder angling from one side to the other of the ship's keel line and to 'meet' this course-altering momentum with ever more frequent, gentle corrections. Let us take this figure of *kybernetes* – the helmsman or steersman; the one whose job it is to respond to the forces and conditions that would otherwise throw the ship off course – as a figure for the art of governance.

Meanwhile, let us draw our understanding of governance as an art from the work of French philosopher Michel Foucault and, specifically, his series of lectures at the College de France between 1970-1984. Here Foucault proposes a definition of government as 'the conduct of conduct', through which he suggests government as a form of activity with the aim of shaping, guiding or affecting the conduct of a person or of people. Such activity, Foucault argues, takes on different forms including: 'the art of self-government, connected with morality; the art of properly governing a family, which belongs to economy; and finally the science of ruling the state, which concerns politics.'[15] The art of government is, for Foucault, characterized by the essential continuity between each of these forms of activity – multiple, immanent forms that effectively interweave society and the state. While, for his part, Foucault was interested in the interconnections between all these forms of governmental activity – or 'governmentality', as he called it – the main focus of his lecture series was on government in the political domain. Within this domain, Foucault's emphasis on practice – on government as a form of activity – is unique.

Colin Gordon, a professor of American public policy and economy, discusses this unique aspect of Foucault's thought in his introduction to the collection of essays *The Foucault Effect* where he acknowledges that an emphasis on practice distinguishes Foucault's ideas from other political theorists, particularly Marxist

theorists, whose thinking tends to focus primarily on an oppositional relationship between 'society' and 'the state'. For Foucault, such ideas tend to essentialize the latter, reducing it to a number of functions or properties: a monolithic enterprise seeking to constrain and control the governed. In this thinking, there are some who have power (i.e. those involved in institutions of the state) and those who do not and who must oppose this or seek to take its power away (i.e. the people). In contrast, for Foucault, an appreciation of 'governmentality' suggests that everything is power; that all relationships are relationships of power. And yet, Gordon argues, this emphasis on governmentality does not suggest that Foucault was in any way obviating the relationship between 'society' and 'state', as was the charge of many leftist critics. Rather, he understood this relationship as *mutually informative*: a relationship between the 'microphysics' and the 'macrophysics' of power.[16]

It is this understanding that of the mutually informative relationship between the microphysics and macrophysics of power that led Foucault to develop the term 'biopower', both in his lecture series and, subsequently, in essays such as 'The Subject and Power', a seminar series on 'Technologies of the Self' and in his book series *The History of Sexuality* where he uses the term to designate 'forms of power exercised over persons specifically in so far as they are thought of as living beings'.[17] Now, what is crucial for us about this term and the thinking behind it is Gordon's observation, drawn from Foucault, that '[a]s governmental practices have addressed themselves in an increasingly immediate way to "life" … individuals have begun to formulate the needs and the imperatives of that same life as the basis for political counter-demands'.[18] The implication here is that biopower, and modern biopolitics, has the potential not only to maintain the status quo, but also to create new and alternative politics. In other words, biopolitics provides the possibility for what Foucault calls 'the strategic reversibility of power relations,' understood as ways in which governmental practices can be turned into forces of resistance; that is, ways that the 'conduct of conduct' becomes woven into the fabric of 'counter-conducts'.[19] Crucially, this presupposes the capacity for everyone, not just the state, to have power or agency. Which is to say that power presupposes rather than annuls a subject's agentic capacity; the ability to act upon and through an open set of ethical and practical possibilities, including through 'techniques of the self'.[20]

Ultimately, it is an understanding of how power figures in Foucault's thinking – an understanding informed by, as much as it informed, his long-term interest in the 'techniques of power' as the range of societal and economic institutions that seek to observe, control and monitor behaviours – that holds the key to his concept of 'governmentality' and, for us, what it means to be governed. Moreover, as we shall discuss in the next section, it is also key to an understanding of what it means to resist. And it is this discussion of resistance that will inform, ultimately, our understanding of how community formations, as forms of resistance, have

the capacity to undo, unsettle or otherwise disturb hegemonic order; that is, to 'ungovern' space.

What Does it Mean to Resist?

'Where there is power, there is resistance,' writes Foucault in *History of Sexuality*.[21] If there were no resistance, there would be no relations of power – all would be obedience. '[A]nd yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power.'[22] So identified, resistance is understood by Foucault as an element in the strategic relation that is power, always reliant on the situation it combats – and this links to war. All of which leads him to conclude that: 'Power is war, the continuation of war by other means.'[23]

Writing in *On Resistance: A Philosophy of Defiance*, the British philosopher Howard Caygill draws attention to the fact that this quote from Foucault is an inversion of Prussian general and military theorist Carl von Clausewitz's classic observation that war is politics, the continuation of politics by other means.[24] 'War is not merely a political act,' argues Clausewitz in *On War*, written between 1816 and 1830 and published posthumously in 1832, 'but also a real political instrument, a continuation of political commerce, a carrying out of the same by other means.'[25] Importantly, Caygill notes, this understanding results in Clausewitz's understanding that war – by extension, politics – is composed of a trinity of elements: 'a wonderful trinity, composed of the original violence of its elements, hatred and animosity, which may be looked upon as blind instinct; of the play of probabilities and chance, which make it a free activity of the soul; and the subordinate nature of a political instrument, by which it belongs purely to the reason.'[26] All of which informs Clausewitz's theory of war as a triangulation of *passions*, *strategy* and *political logic* – a triangulation that he maps onto 'the people', 'general and his army' and 'the government'. (Incidentally, for Caygill, this triangulation further maps onto the Kantian terms of 'sensibility', 'understanding' and 'reason' so that the balance or poise between these three elements becomes a philosophical problem.)

In Clausewitz's theory, these three tendencies – three points of attraction – do not have an inherent cohesion or stability; however, they must remain poised or the situation risks escalation and mutual destruction. With this in mind, Caygill asks, 'what happens to this trinity if we try and maintain the balance between the elements and try to think of this balance in terms of resistance'?[27]

Three tendencies, three points of attraction, whose internal cohesion must remain stable or risk escalation. (At this point, the fact that Caygill had initially traced the etymology of the word resistance back to the Latin *stare* and the Greek *stasis* becomes particularly resonant.)
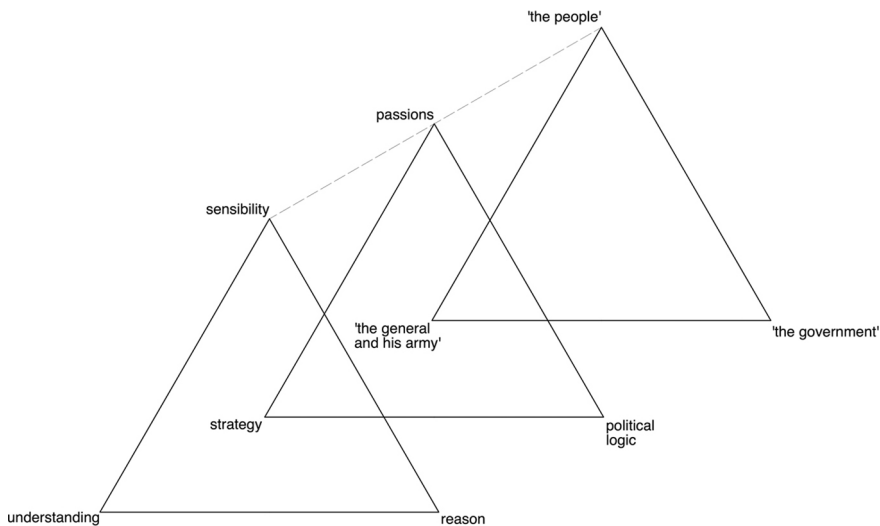
FIGURE 0.1 Kreider + O'Leary, Resistance Diagram.
© Kreider + O'Leary, Diagram, 2024.

As Caygill argues, Clausewitz's main contribution to military strategy – by extension, modern politics – pivots on this understanding of resistance. For Clausewitz's definition of war moves it from being framed in terms of a pure relation of enmity, such as a duel or a pair of wrestlers, into an appreciation of war as a situation in which the mutual application of force is intended to render the other 'incapable of further resistance.'[28] Within this dynamic, the application of force is linked to its effect and how this plays out strategically. Within this, Clausewitz identifies three types or 'states'. First, there are the 'solid bodies', axiomatic of traditional military doctrine wherein military bodies are opposed to one another. Second, there is the 'liquid mass' of the revolutionary army, its capacity to overwhelm through a wave of violence. Third, there is a newly emergent form of warfare that Clausewitz identifies as the People's War (*Volkskrug*) and describes in terms of 'episodic and pointillist attacks, momentary condensations of an intangible political vapour or cloud that is the actualisation of a new capacity to resist.'[29] Significant for our purposes, the question asked by this new form of warfare, this new capacity to resist, is not 'what are its costs?', which is the question begged by the other two forms of warfare. Rather, the question becomes 'what are the *conditions* within which it arises and how can it be *applied*?' (And here we recall our discussion of the time of the Now within which we situate the community formations throughout *Ungovernable Spaces* as well as the project overall: a time that, as we have argued, is characterized by the overarching *condition* of coloniality.)

As Caygill argues, the question underlying the application of force in Clausewitz's third 'state' – that is, 'what are the *conditions* within which resistance arises and how can it be *applied*?' – speaks very directly to the radical movements and thinkers of nineteenth and twentieth century revolutions. Most specifically, Caygill suggests, it speaks to Lenin, Mao and Che Guevara, all of whom embraced the idea that 'war is politics by other means' and understood resistance as preliminary to class war.[30] It also speaks to Gandhi who, engaging on the terrain of moral rather than physical force, developed a practice of non-violent resistance as a powerful strategy intended to preserve its own and compromise the other's capacity to resist. (We speak to this in depth in Chapter 2.) Now, what strikes Caygill the most with each of these examples – and what they add to a concept of resistance as arrived at through Clausewitz's thinking – is an appreciation that the practice of resistance 'contributes to the formation of resistant identities, exemplary resistants who inhabit and foster a broader culture of defiance.'[31] In itself, this emphasis on 'resistant identities', 'exemplary resistants' and a related 'culture of defiance' is novel and both nuances Clausewitz's resistance and informs our own understanding of how communities arise in and through resistance. However, it is Caygill's thinking of Mao and Gandhi that is particularly important for our thinking around community formation and resistance. Why so? This is because, as Caygill argues, it is possible to see with Mao and Gandhi's political thinking 'the entry of non-Western, non-"philosophical" elements (in the sense of not derived from Greek tradition) into the theory of resistance.'[32]

Replacing the emphasis on consciousness or force found in Western philosophies, this non-Western strand of political thought, alongside the anti-colonial struggles informed by it, 'brought to the study of strategy very different conceptions of the relationship between time, place and resistance.'[33] So, for example, in place of the basic intuition in Clausewitz of a theatre of opposed active and reactive forces as a premise for resistance, Mao – informed by Sun-Tzu's *The Art of War* – sees a whole *ecology* of war and resistance.[34] He thereby introduces an entirely different approach to strategic thinking: one that moves away from an understanding of the strategist as one with a *plan* (a Western conception) and towards an appreciation of the strategist as one who evaluates the *potential* of a given situation (a Chinese/Eastern conception). As shall become apparent throughout this book, it is the potential for situations to yield – to make possible – community formations and related practices with the capacity to enact systemic change and transformation that lies at the heart of *Ungovernable Spaces*.

So it is that we have moved through thinking of war and, by extension, politics in terms of power and resistance, ultimately introducing a non-Western perspective into this thinking (this theory) of resistance. This has led us from conceptualizing resistance in terms of the clashing solids of military bodies, through the forceful
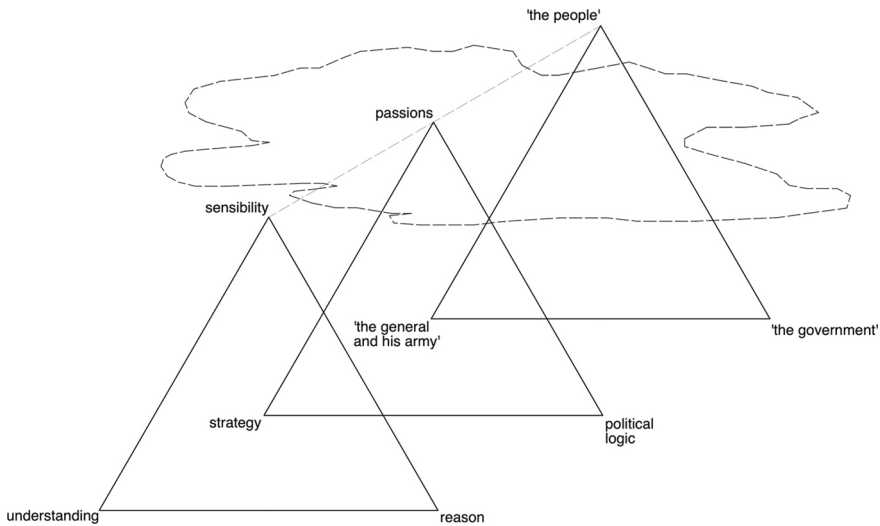
FIGURE 0.2 Kreider + O'Leary, Resistance Diagram (with cloud).
© Kreider + O'Leary, Diagram, 2024.

waves of revolutionary violence and into the momentary condensations of an intangible political vapour that is the people's capacity to resist: a concept of resistance that can be figured by a cloud moving, morphing across the landscape.

We carry with us this understanding of resistance as it is conceived of through non-Western philosophical thought and realized through anti-colonial struggle – as this is figured through a cloud moving and morphing across the landscape (a cloud that is conditioned by and responding to its environment) – as we turn, now, to think about community formation generally, and specifically as a form of resistance: one with the capacity to disrupt hegemonic order; that is, to 'ungovern' space.

How Does Resistance Find Form? (or, Community Formation as a Form of Resistance)

For the purposes of *Ungovernable Spaces*, we understand community formation, generally, as the development of practices and ways of living – 'forms of life' – in and through relation. Underlying this development is the question, 'How are we to live together?' This is an important question, a fundamentally political question. We would go so far as to say that this is the question of our time: the time of the Now, when global unrest demands that we rethink boundaries, both cultural and territorial, and change the way that we think, and we act. Notably, this is the question underlying a series of lectures delivered by Roland Barthes in Paris between 1976 and 1980 at the Collège de France.

The premise for Barthes' lecture series, aptly titled *How to Live Together*, is based on a fantasy: a fantasy of living together. Throughout the series, Barthes traces this fantasy throughout a selection of communities from Western and Eastern spiritual traditions, a number of literary works, and a network of words. The fantasy itself was unleashed, he says, when he came across the word *idiorrhythmy*: 'Where each subject lives according to his own rhythm'.[35] Indicating the etymological roots of this word, Barthes' lecture notes read: '*Rhuthmos* = the pattern of a fluid element (a letter, a *peplos*, a mood), an improvised, changeable form'.[36] Here his lecture notes allude to an essay by the French linguist Émile Benveniste where he describes how the word 'rhythm' arrives in its contemporary use through Latin from the Greek word ρυθμός (*rhuthmos*). In what follows, we shall trace this etymological root in Benveniste's writing before returning to Barthes' lecture notes. In doing so, we shall move through a discussion of *form*, *figure* and *rhythm* that enables us to unpack our understanding of community formation as a form of resistance: one with the capacity to disrupt hegemonic order, to 'ungovern' space.

Form, Figure, Rhythm

Turning to Benveniste's 'The Notion of "Rhythm" in its Linguistic Expression,' we can see that he traces the word ρυθμός (*rhuthmos*) to its first appearance in the writings of the ancient Greek philosopher Democritus, for whom the universe comprises individual particles: atoms in continual motion, forever falling, that join together in order to act as bodies.[37] For the atomist philosophers, of whom Democritus was one, these bodies become recognizable by their mutual differences in 'form', 'order' and 'position', respectively. It is in this context, Benveniste tells us, that Democritus first uses the word ρυθμός (*rhuthmos*) to designate 'form' as the disposition or configuration of atoms; for example, water and air differ from one another in the *form* or ρυθμός (*rhuthmos*) that their constituent atoms take. How, then, does ρυθμός (*rhuthmos*) come to be associated with the notion of rhythm as we now understand it?

This shift in meaning occurs, Benveniste tells us, when an atomist consideration of the formal structure of things meets a theory of measure as applied to the figures of dance: a meeting found in Plato, who uses the word ρυθμός (*rhuthmos*) to designate the measured movements of the dancing body. In this context, the word ρυθμός (*rhuthmos*) retains its original meaning as 'arrangement' or changeable 'form', but adds to this Plato's specific appreciation of ρυθμός (*rhuthmos*) as the order of movement made by the human body in combination with meter or, more specifically, the 'arrangement of figures into which this movement is resolved'.[38] Thus ρυθμός (*rhuthmos*) comes to designate corporal movement bound by the law of numbers: a *form* – more specifically, a *figure* (of the dance) – determined by measure and numerically regulated. *Rhythm,* as we now understand it, thus

emerges through the ordering of improvized, changeable form (*rhuthmos*) into controlled, measurable form (*rhythm*) as this becomes recognizable in any given moment in time (as *figure*). As will become apparent, the fact that *figure* is temporal is key. For it suggests that *rhythm* – an overarching ordering principle, based on measure; recognizable through figure – is always and ever capable of change, transformation, transfiguration. However, the significance of this for our purposes will only become apparent if we recall that, for Barthes, the word *idiorrhythmy* designates a form of life; in other words, a way of living together.

Bearing this in mind, let us reconsider the relationship between *rhythm* and *rhuthmos* (or, for Barthes, *idiorrhythmy*). If rhythm is form that is numerically regulated – that is, form that is 'ruled' by the law of numbers – then *rhythm is form that is governed by measure*. It follows that the measures that make up the *rhythm* by which we live govern our 'forms of life'. In contrast, *rhuthmos* (or, for Barthes, *idiorrhythmy*) is improvized, changeable, idiosyncratic form that, when related to ways of living together or 'forms of life', suggests 'the interstices, the *fugitivity* of the code, of the manner in which the individual inserts himself into the social (or natural) code.'[39] That is to say, *rhuthmos* (or, for Barthes, *idiorrhythmy* as a 'form of life') is *the means whereby individuals respond, react, change, alter and move (that is, improvize) in relation to others amidst the ensemble of togetherness*; how, through this act of improvization, the individual as well as the ensemble inserts themselves into the code: the governing rules or order (i.e. rhythm). More than this, however – and for our purposes – we propose to take this one step further: to understand *rhuthmos* (or, for Barthes, *idiorrhythmy* as a 'form of life') as improvized, changeable form with the active capacity to instigate a different measure, thereby enabling new forms – new *figures* – to emerge amidst the code, the rules, the metrics (i.e. rhythms) through which we are habituated and that govern our cohabitation with others, our ways of living together. In this way, we associate *rhythm* with 'governmentality' on the one hand, and *rhuthmos* (or *idiorrhythmy* as a 'form of life') with the ability to 'ungovern' (i.e. 'ungovernability') on the other – while the dance between them opens the potential for *transfiguration*.

All of this, however, is best understood by way of an example. Barthes offers us this by way of a generative model of the *idiorrhythmic* structure that was originally situated around Pisper, the desert to the south of Alexandria, and that would later develop into the more formal monastic settlement on Mount Athos in Greece.[40] Here the hermit Anthony began offering instruction to a number of ascetics who gathered around him. They all spent five days of the week alone, in wholly solitary activities. Then, on Saturdays and Sundays, they would come together in a central spot for prayer and to sell their goods, before dispersing back into their solitary existences.[41] In this example, we encounter some of the main principles of the

idiorrhythmic approach that will later characterize the monasteries of Mount Athos:

1   Each one is free to live at their own particular rhythm, with occasional communal acts.
2   There is no designated *leader* (although in this early example there is Anthony, a teacher or guru).
3   Each has some enclosed, personal space. (To note: the cell, Barthes elsewhere remarks, is the foundation of *idiorrhythmy*. It is a space that, like a house or a hut, one can interpret through one's own body, the hut being at once a body and a world; the world as a projection of the body.)
4   Different groups or individuals are spread around an uninhabited centre; the spatiality of a constellation.

This spatiality is key. For it implies that the *idiorrhythmic* community is not an enclosed community. Barthes' lecture notes read: 'No enclosure, or only partially, not vigorously enclosed. The function of *idiorrhythmy* is not to protect a "purity", that is to say an identity. It's arrangement in spatial terms: not concentration, but dispersion, space.'[42] The fact that there is no boundary or physical enclosure distinguishes the *idiorrhythmic* form from other monastic communities, which are often physically enclosed. Such enclosure, remarks Barthes, is always linked to the idea of territory and to the protection of an identity, a definition. His lecture notes read: 'The very meaning of "to define": to mark out borders, frontiers. Enclosure = defines a territory, and by extension the identity of the occupants.'[43] In the case of the enclosed monastery, the physical boundary is intended to keep out non-believers, whose entry might corrupt the identity of the monk: a prohibition, he notes, that is 'linked to a sacred, that is, to a consecrated space.'[44]

Let us now compare the enclosed, bounded space of the conventional monastery with its shared rhythm, order, identity and *idiorrhythmy*, whose spatiality is characterized by its absence of centralized leadership as much as by the porous quality of its formal boundary. Firstly, you might ask, does this porous quality, this open-ness, suggest that *idiorrhythmic* spaces are not sacred? To which we would respond, no, this is not case. Let us also recall Barthes' comment that the cell (by extension, the hut or the house) constitutes the foundation of *idiorrhythmic* communities. Arguably, the cell (hut, house) is, itself, a bounded, sacred space: one in which the inhabitant dwells in their own, singular rhythm. An *idiorrhythmic* order, comprising a number of such bounded spaces, is thus made up of this number of unique, singular rhythms that can be understood, themselves, as 'sacred' orders or spaces. However, rather than these boundaried spaces being organized in an overarching, homogenizing order, they exist as (sacred) spaces in proximity, not bound together; that is, not boundaried as a territory, and without a centralized measure or even an inhabited centre as such. That said, as Barthes

has noted, the inhabitants of these spaces do come together at certain moments. And this enables us to suggest that it is this specific time (of coming together, of co-mingling, of a relation between singular rhythms, which might be a ritual) that designates the sacred within an *idiorrhythmic* order such that the sacred is this very encounter or relation. (We will look at this in more depth in our Conclusion where we introduce the thinking of Édouard Glissant and his development of a 'poetics of relation'.)

Unsettling the 'We'

With this in mind (also bearing in mind the beginnings of the ethical, political 'we' formation from the first part of our Introduction) we propose to conceptualize these unique, singular rhythms in terms of an 'I' – situated and boundaried, yes, but always porous in relation to 'you'. At certain moments, certain times, these singularities rhythms come together – 'I' meets 'you' to form a 'we'. In these moments of coming together, the cominglings of 'I' and 'you' form and reform, figuring and refiguring a community of 'we' who morph and change, like a cloud. In this respect, *idiorrhythmic* spatiality becomes analogous for the formation of a community, of a 'we', not through territoriality and, related to this, identity and belonging, but through interrelations between singularities, 'I' and 'you', coming together otherwise.

We propose now to introduce the idea of such a formation of community, of a 'we', into a thinking of political resistance and 'ungovernability'. In doing so, we go so far as to posit that such a formation has the potential to undo, upset, unsettle a standardized rhythm (measure, order, identity). And it is here – at the point where 'I' and 'you' meet to otherwise form a 'we'; where this has the capacity to undo, upset, unsettle overarching rhythm or hegemonic measure, order, identity – that we understand community formation as a form of resistance with the capacity to upset hegemonic order; to 'ungovern' space.

How Might This Make Something New, Something Different, Something Un-known of the World?

Having looked at how community formation (i.e. the development of practices and ways of living – 'forms of life' – in and through relation) can be understood as a form of resistance with the potential to 'ungovern' hegemonic order, and understanding this in terms of a 'we' formation, the question now forming is: how might this make something new, something different, something un-known of the world? Importantly, each of the community formations that we explore in the ensuing chapters will answer this question by way of example. Here, however, we shall continue work in the abstract. In doing so, and recalling the situatedness of

Ungovernable Spaces in the time of the Now, we shall begin to answer this question by: (1) looking at what it means to be thinking in the Now and considering how this relates to action; (2) positing how the relationship between thinking and acting in the Now has the capacity to construct a reality, to make a world; and (3) arguing for how thinking and action, in formation, opens to the possibility of change and transformation. All of which enables us to consider how, through thinking and acting in concert, 'we' have the capacity to make something new, something different, something un-known of the world.

Now (the Time of Thought)

To look at what it means to be thinking in the Now and considering how this relates to action, we turn to political thinker Hannah Arendt, a German-born Jew who fled from her home country after the rise of the Nazi regime, and who lived a fugitive life between 1933 and 1941 before finally settling in the United States. Writing in *The Life of the Mind*, Arendt invokes the topology of the ancient Greek gods in order to consider the relationship between *thought* and *action*, or theory (derived from the Greek word *theos*) and practice.[45] In this topology, there are the philosopher gods, the theorists, high on Mount Olympus: separate, observing and contemplating worldly reality. Meanwhile, here we are, on the ground, caught up in the midst of living it. But Arendt is no philosopher: she is a self-proclaimed 'political thinker'. And this, her last book, unfinished at the time of her death, is an attempt to call into question any separation between thought and action. How can we think and be political? How can we think and act? Arendt dedicates her entire book to this question in an effort to think through thought as a means of avoiding the catastrophes that await us if, yet again, we fail to think. In this respect, Arendt's *Life of the Mind* must be understood in relation to her infamous essay on the Eichmann trial where she identifies the 'banality of evil'. What happens when people act without thinking? When simply 'doing one's job', without question, implicates us in large-scale horror and atrocity? There is an ethical and political imperative to thinking – thoughtlessness is our biggest threat – and this, her last book, was Arendt's attempt to address it.

The Life of the Mind is monumental, epic thought. But let us draw out one episode for our purposes: Chapter 4 of Volume 1: *On Thinking*.[46] 'Where are we when we think?' This is the question underlying this section – and one that Arendt begins to answer, firstly, by arguing that there is a necessary correlation between the act of thinking and a kind of withdrawal. Thinking, Arendt says, does not deal with particulars, the stuff of the world and of our senses that we experience as we go about our daily lives. Rather, it is the role of thinking to take this stuff and generalize something about it, taking it through a process of immaterialization whereby the perceived thing becomes a thought thing: one thought thing amongst

other thought things that, deprived of their particularity and spatiality, are related to one another in the line or train or sequence that is the order of thought, as determined by time. So, in answer to the question 'Where are we when we think?', Arendt's response is: we are in time.

Importantly, Arendt argues, we do not need to be removed from the world – in the sky, on a mountain, in a tower – to reside there, to inhabit this time of thought. In fact, we can be right there right now, where we are, lost in thought … you might be there right now. And this is key. Where we are when we are thinking, the time of thought, can be of the world, but is very much *not* the time of ordinary, everyday life: the time of clocks and calendars through which we regulate (rule, measure) our days; the time when today is present, yesterday past and the future begins tomorrow. No. The time of thought – where we are when we think – is the time of the *Now*.

At this point, Arendt offers one of Kafka's parables followed by a diagram to help explain. In the parable, 'He' has two antagonists. The first presses him from behind, his origin. The second blocks the road in front of him. 'He' gives battle to both. This parable, Arendt tells us, describes the 'time sensation' of the thinking ego: 'He' who has withdrawn from everyday experiences, who is absorbed by the absent non-visibles of thought, who then turns his attention to the actuality of thought itself. Here 'He' finds himself in a struggle between the infinite past and the infinite future – in the time of the *Now* where his presence, his battle, is the only point of distinction within the otherwise indifferent flow of everlasting change. Then, towards the end of the parable, 'He' dreams of a moment when time will have exhausted its forces, when quiet will settle down the world just long enough for him to jump out and, so, be promoted to the position of spectator outside of the game of life. And yet, while this age-old dream of an escape from the world and into a sanctum for the thinking being – a place from which to observe and spectate (let us say 'theorise') the world – may be appealing, it is, for Arendt, a dangerous dream. Remember where we started: with Eichmann and the banality of evil. We need to be thinking *and* acting; we need the two, in formation. Adjacent is Arendt's diagram:

Here, where we are when we think, is a point from which to begin. (Arendt is, after all, the thinker of beginnings). From this point, the *Now*, we move along a thought-train for as long as it lasts. This line, perfectly equidistant from the other two, the infinite past and infinite future, is nevertheless in the same plane: not 'outside', not above. This is, to use Arendt's words, 'the path paved by thinking, the small inconspicuous track of non-time beaten by the activity of thought within the time-space given to natal and mortal men'.[47] And as we move along it, we hear Arendt's voice, saying: 'This is the quiet of the Now in the time-pressed,
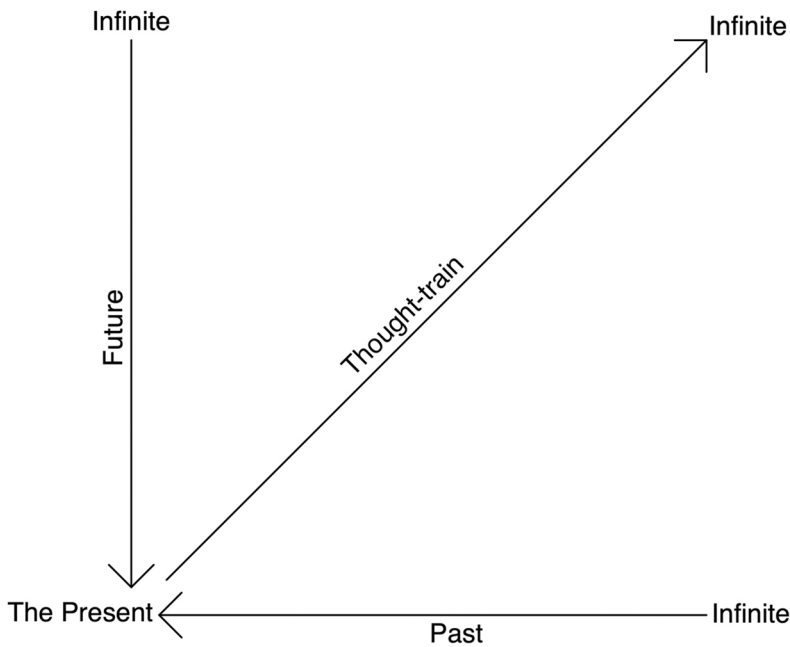
FIGURE 0.3 Hannah Arendt, Diagram.
© Kreider + O'Leary, Diagram based on original by Hannah Arendt, 2024.

time-tossed existence of man; it is, somehow, to change the metaphor, the quiet in the centre of a storm which, though totally unlike the storm, still belongs to it.'[48] The thinking mind is, then, in and of the storm, not outside of it – able to find a point from which to think, to arrive at judgements, to make decisions; so, to act.

Keeping Arendt's diagram in mind, we shall turn to C. S. Peirce, a nineteenth-century American philosopher and semiotician in whose philosophical pragmatism we can detect the roots of contemporary ecological thought. Reading Arendt in relation to Pierce suggests that it is from this point – the point where *Now* (the time of thought) meets *Now* (the time of action) – that we begin to construct a reality; to make a world.

Now (the Time of Action)

In 'How to Make Our Ideas Clear', Peirce uses music as an analogy for thought.[49] In a piece of music, he argues, there is the air and there are the separate notes that one can distinguish through it. So, too, in the act of thinking, there are elements (sensations) present at every instant so long as they last, and there are others

(thought) with a beginning, middle and end that consist in a congruence within that flow of sensation. By analogy: 'Thought is a thread of melody running through the succession of our sensations.'[50] But to what end?

For Peirce, the sole purpose of thought in action is to arrive at belief or, as he terms it, thought at rest: 'Thought in action has for its only possible motive the attainment of thought at rest; and whatever does not refer to belief is no part of the thought itself.'[51] What, then, is belief? 'It is,' Peirce writes, 'the demicadence that closes a musical phrase in the symphony of our intellectual life.'[52] Belief, Peirce argues, sets up a *rule for action*. That is to say: thought remains in action until it comes to rest, however momentarily, at a belief, at which point it sets up a rule for action. And this is key, Peirce argues, because this rule for action has the capacity to become a habit. In fact, for Peirce, '[t]he whole function of thought is to produce habits of action.'[53]

Now, what Peirce calls 'habits of action' here we understand as 'practice'. What is more, we understand that these habits, repeated – so, these practices – institute a pattern, construct a habitat, and that this, ultimately, constitutes our lived reality. Phrased differently: rules of action, repeated (i.e. practices) constitute our lived reality. All of which suggests that the moment where thought meets action in the time of the Now is a point of beginning: a beginning of how, through practice, we construct a reality, how we make a world.

Given that we are understanding community formation in terms of the development of practices and ways of living – 'forms of life' – in and through relation, this understanding of the relationship between thinking and acting (i.e. that processing of thinking come to rest at belief, setting up a *rule for action*; that this, in turn, instigates habits – practices – that create patterns, make 'worlds') is absolutely key. Moreover, a continued reading of Peirce suggests how this relationship between thinking and acting has the potential both to create and (related to this) to change or transform practices, habits, 'worlds'. As we shall see, all of this leads us to our of understanding of how community formations as forms of resistance have the potential to disrupt hegemonic order, to 'ungovern' space; so doing, to make something new, something different, something un-known of the world.

Now (a Time of Change and Transformation)

In 'What is a Sign?', Peirce describes the process of thinking in terms of a third 'state of mind' – a state that one enters via (first) feeling and (second) reacting.[54] Describing the one who moves from this first to third state of mind, Peirce

says: 'He is now in a third state of mind: he is *Thinking*. That is, he is aware of learning or of going through a process by which a phenomenon is found to be *governed by a rule*, or has a general, knowable way of behaving.'[55] We can better understand this by way of Peirce's comparison between Thinking and the second state of mind, Reaction: 'In the second there was only a sense of brute force; now there is a sense of government by a general rule. In Reaction only two things are involved; but in government there is a third thing which is a means to an end. The very word *means* signifies something which is in the middle between two others.'[56] This understanding of means is key.

To appreciate how so, we first turn to another essay, 'A Guess at the Riddle', where Peirce describes this process of learning in terms of 'synthetic consciousness' – all of which relates back to the discussion above of habit, understood as the means whereby we construct our reality, make our world. This is a long quote; however, given its significance, we will quote it in full:

> The genuine synthetic consciousness, or the sense of the process of learning, which is the preeminent ingredient and quintessence of reasoning, has its physiological basis quite evidently in the most characteristic property of the nervous system, the power of taking habits … if the same cell which was once excited, and which by some chance had happened to discharge itself along a certain path or paths, comes to get excited a second time, it is more likely to discharge itself the second time along some or all of those paths along which it previously discharged itself than it would have had it not so discharged itself before. This is the central principle of habit; and the striking contrast of its modality to that of any mechanical law is most significant. The laws of physics know nothing of tendencies or probabilities; whatever they require at all they require absolutely and without fail, and they are never disobeyed. Were the tendency to take habits replaced by an absolute requirement that the cell should discharge itself always in the same way, or according to any rigidly fixed condition whatever, all possibility of habit developing into intelligence would be cut off at the outset; the virtue of thirdness would be absent. It is essential that there should be an element of change in some sense as to how the cell shall discharge itself; and then that this chance or uncertainty shall not be entirely obliterated by the principle of habit, but only somewhat effected.[57]

As this quotation attests, thinking and, related to this, habits (governed by a rule of action, which is set up when thinking comes to rest at belief), are open to the possibility of change and transformation. That is to say, the 'rules' governing thought and action can be un-learned, un-done – a potential for 'ungoverning' through which new thoughts, new actions, new habits arise.

Drawing all of this together, what is significant here for our purposes is the understanding that thinking is a process. More precisely, it is a *means* or *technique* of linking one thing to another, thereby setting up a general rule of association (or learned belief): one that has the capacity to set up a rule for action that, in turn, instigates a habit, setting up a pattern for living and being. This moves away from an objective understanding of reality and towards an understanding that reality is constructed through patterns of thought and action; a shift from a physical, mechanical world view to a relative, ecological one. All of which enables us to appreciate that a change in one's thinking (an 'ungoverning' of thought) can lead to a change in belief and this, in turn, can set up different rules of action, habits and patterns and ways of being or, phrased differently, 'forms of life' with the potential to change, transform – related to this, create new – realities. Still, a question arises: what instigates this change or transformation – related to this, a newness – in thinking, actions, habits, worlds?

A continued reading of Peirce tells us that what instigates this change is the insertion of doubt. For if thought comes to rest at a belief, and this sets up a rule of action or habit, then the insertion of doubt sets thinking into train again. This opens the potential that thought may come to rest at a different belief: one that is linked to a different action, thereby setting up another rule, instigating a different practice, a different habit. This until such time as these are again called into question – when things break down and fail, when there is again a failure of the *Now* that brings with it another insertion of doubt. So, it continues: this process of establishing habits and disrupting them, instigating patterns and breaking them, setting up orders or rhythms and upsetting them; governing and ungoverning. And what all of this means is that even the smallest kernel of doubt has the potential to call into question what we think we know, prompting us to act otherwise; in doing so, challenging established world orders and seeding new forms of life with the potential to make something new, something different, something un-known of the world – more specifically, new, different and unknown formations of 'we', as we shall discuss in the following section. Before doing so, however, we must ask: is there anything else, aside from the insertion of doubt into a train of reasoning (all of which sounds very rational indeed) that might instigate a change or transformation – related to this, a newness – in thinking, action, habits, worlds?

With this in mind, let us shift our thinking away from the realm of philosophy, the realm of reasoning and rational thought, to consider other ways that a relationship between thinking and action can lead to the making of new, different and unknown 'worlds' – and, as we shall argue, new, different, unknown formations of 'we'. To instigate this shift, we move briefly into an art historical context where we encounter the ideas developed by Henri Focillon – an early twentieth century French art historian, who was also a poet, a printmaker and an educator.

Artistic Thought and Material Resistance

'Life is form, and form is the modality of life', argues Focillon in *The Life of Forms in Art*, drawing from one of Balzac's political tracts.[58] Such is the underlying principle of this now-classic book where Focillon investigates the 'world of forms': forms in the realm of space, of matter, of time and of the mind. For Focillon, forms in the realm of the mind are thought and, crucially, this form is necessarily understood as action. So, forms in the realm of the mind are the activity of thought – and he likens this to an artistic activity: 'The chief characteristic of the mind is to be constantly describing *itself*. The mind is a design that is in a state of ceaseless flux, of ceaseless weaving and then unweaving, and its activity, in this sense, is an artistic activity.'[59]

Elsewhere, when writing about forms in the realm of matter, Focillon refers specifically to artists' thinking, which he distinguishes from philosophical thought insofar as artists' thinking necessarily involves resistance and, more specifically, material resistance. Indeed, sound, voice, pigment, canvas, clay, plastic, metal, stone, chemical processing, computer code, bodies, affect – such are some of the material resistances that an artist might encounter. For Focillon, it is by working with and through material resistance that an artist finds form.

Now, let us not forget that, for Focillon, form is necessarily understood as action. It follows that finding form in and through material resistance is the activity of artists' thought – and key to understanding this, he argues, is *technique*. To clarify, when Focillon speaks here of technique, he does not mean technique as it is more commonly interpreted: 'as a vital force, as a theory of mechanics or as a mere convenience'.[60] No, as he writes: 'In my own case as a historian, I never regarded technique as the automatism of a "craft," nor as the curiosities, the recipes of a "cuisine"; but instead as a whole poetry of action and … as the means for the achievement of metamorphosis.'[61] This distinction is crucial. For such a consideration of technique enables us to appreciate technique – and, by extension, artists' thought – as a process of transformation: one whereby thinking and action come together in and through material resistance; through this, where form and matter (the two here being indistinguishable) change and transform – metamorphose – to introduce something new, something different, something unknown into the world. And this, we know, is the crux of poetics.

Arguably, this discussion of the particularity of artists' thought and, related to this, material resistance and poetics – all drawn from an art historical context – is speaking more to a paradigm in which art is separate from life; so, where figurative artistic practices introduce something new, something different, something unknown 'into' the world on a plane of representation. But what happens if we if we break down this distinction? That is, what happens if we consider the

boundary between art and life to be porous? Is it possible, then, to transpose an understanding of the particularity of artists' thought, material resistance and poetics to the realm of politics – and related to this, apply it to question of 'How are we to live together?' Is it further possible to understand the act of figuration in terms of a combined spatial, poetic, artistic practice such that the making of something new, something different, something unknown is not being introduced 'into' the world so much as it is being made of the world and of worlds? It is this possibility – with it, the potential of combined spatial, poetic, artistic practices – that will enable us to understand community formations as forms of resistance, 'forms of life', emergent amidst situations of social and political turbulence through what we are calling a 'poetics of resistance'.

New, Different, Unknown Formations of 'We'

With all of this in mind, we shall transpose our understanding of artist thought outlined above to situations in which 'I' and 'you' co-mingle – so, where thinking, acting and interacting create practices, habits, patterns and ways of being or 'forms of life'. In this transposition, we begin to understand material resistance in terms of the social, material and political conditions in which we act and interact – conditions that, for the purposes of *Ungovernable Spaces*, we are understanding in terms of the condition of coloniality. As we see it, it is this condition that creates the social and political turbulence through which each of these communities emerge by means of a poetics of resistance: acts of formation that are intersubjective and material; acts of formation predicated on the relationship of thinking and action as manifest through practice; acts of formation with the capacity to upset or 'ungovern' hegemonic order and, in doing so, to make something new, something different, something unknown of worlds. As we shall see, these are acts of formation in which ethics, imagination and aesthetics each play a distinct role. So, it is to the realms of ethics, imagination and aesthetics that we now turn in order to consider how a change or transformation in the interrelation of thinking and action (the 'seed of change' in a pattern, habitat, world) might lead to new, different and unknown formations of 'we' with the potential, ultimately, to generate a new poetics of 'us'.

Enaction and Transformation (or, Towards an Ethical 'We')

When speaking of the relation between thought and action and how this constructs reality, potentially transforming and making new worlds, there are some important aspects and questions to keep in mind. First, the action of thought is embodied and

situated, and the one who is thinking and acting is doing so in relation to others and the material conditions of lived reality. Second, our thinking, our actions and the beliefs uniting the two may be beyond conscious awareness – in fact, once patterns of thought and behaviour are established, they form the immediacy of a lived reality, rather than informing a process of reflection and judgement. In this respect, the action of thought carries as much as it faces resistance even as, through this, it is open to change and transformation.

In order to introduce these aspects into our thinking thus far, which will enable us to understand the potential for a change or transformation of thought to give rise to an ethical 'we', we turn to the work of Chilean biologist and philosopher, Francisco Varela and, specifically, his thinking around 'enaction'. A key tenet of Varela's thinking around enaction is that we *always* operate in some kind of immediacy of a given situation and, further, we have a 'readiness-for-action' proper to every specific lived situation. That is to say, our lived world is 'ready to hand' and we have no deliberations about how to inhabit it, we simply act and do as we 'know-how'. Moreover, we are constantly moving from one situation to another – so, from one readiness-for-action to another. More often than not, these transitions are barely perceptible. At other times, they can be unexpected or overwhelming, as when we are faced with an unexpected danger or encounter an accident, in which case they require different action, and perhaps even solicit ethical action on our part. Varela calls such readiness-for-action a *microidentity* and its corresponding lived situation a *microworld*. 'Thus, "who we are" at any moment cannot be divorced from what other things and who other people are to us,' he argues.[62] And while one could begin to identify different types of microworlds, this is less important to Varela than appreciating their *recurrence*: 'the ability to take appropriate action is, in some important sense, how we embody a stream of recurrent microworld transitions.'[63] All of which leads to his understanding of the cognitive self, as understood through this enactive approach to cognition. In a nutshell, Varela argues, the enactive approach to cognition is based on two key principles: '(1) that perception consists of perceptually guided actions; and (2) that cognitive structures emerge from the recurrent sensorimotor patterns that enable action to be perceptually guided.'[64] The result of this is an understanding that reality is not something pre-given: there is not a world that exists 'out there', as it is; a world that we perceive and, in turn, represent to ourselves. No, in an enactive approach the world is something that exists because we engage in it – moving, breathing, interacting – and, through this, 'construct' our reality, make our world.

Varela's ideas around an *enactive* approach to cognition – (thinking, we should add, that arose out of a situation of political turbulence, as we discuss in Chapter 3) – are developed fully in *The Embodied Mind: Cognitive Science and Human Experience*, published in 1991 with Evan Thompson and Eleanor Rosch. However,

one can detect roots of this thinking in Varela's understanding, developed with fellow biologist Humberto Maturana, that living systems come into being and are organized through a process of internal organization or 'autopoeisis': a concept of 'self-creation' in biological systems that Varela and Maturana further extend to address cognition and autonomy in living systems generally. Notably, this concept has been further extended into other domains including second-order cybernetics as well as studies of social and psychic systems with the effect, ultimately, of exposing how such systems actively and self-reflexively self-organize through a process of selecting what has meaning and what does not, thereby informing what actions will be taken and what will not (by extension, what habits and patterns will be developed and what will not) for the purposes of the system's continuing self-reproduction.[65] In this respect, one can see how Varela's notion of enaction (i.e. thinking and acting in the now within the particulars of a given situation) and, related to this, the concept of autopoiesis of living systems (i.e. living systems come into being and are organized through a process of internal organization) are relevant for our understanding of community formation in terms of the development of practices and ways of living – 'forms of life' – in and through relation. However, this still does not address how a reading of Varela helps us to understand how these forms of life realize their capacity to 'ungovern' and, in doing so, make something new, different and un-known of the world – how this, in turn, relates to an ethical 'we'. For this, we turn to Varela's concept 'ethical know-how' as developed in the book *Ethical Know-How*.

The basic premise of Varela's 'ethical know-how' is that ethics is situation-specific. It concerns how one reacts and responds within the texture of any given situation. Drawing from Meng-tzu, an early Confucian philosopher from around the fourth century B.C.E., Varela argues that ethics is about having the ability to experience a situation, attend to it, and extend into this what you have learned to be 'good' from another situation, adjusting your actions accordingly. In this sense, ethics must involve the capacity for empathy as well. And because it is predicated on an understanding that is developed over time and through practice, this approach to ethics is both *progressive* and *pragmatic*.

Without question, this notion of ethics coming from Meng-tzu – and, more generally, from the 'wisdom traditions' of Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism with which Varela engages – is very different to the thinking around ethics drawn from Western philosophical tradition, which can be traced back to Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. In this Western conception of ethics, the ethical subject is one who, upon entering into a situation where one is solicited to act, first rationally assesses the situation and then, having considered a range of actions from amongst a set of maxims, applies the 'right' course of action to the situation. This approach to ethics is based on reasoning, moral judgement and willed intent. However, for

Varela, such an understanding of ethics and ethical action does not address the need to act immediately in a given situation; for example, when encountering something or someone unknown – anything that interrupts one's regular habits and patterns of behaviour. As Varela rightly notes, these are the situations that most often call for ethical action; the moments that require one to know, more or less immediately, *how* to act – this rather than knowing *what* it is that one should be doing, and willing an action based on this principle. In other words, there is a difference between ethical behaviour that is based on self-conscious or intentional action and that which is based on self-less or intentionless action, and it is the latter that is often demanded in any ethical situation. This emphasis on situations demanding self-less or intentionless action is why Varela turns to Meng-tzu and other thinkers from the 'wisdom traditions' – traditions that are steeped in practice – to ground his understanding of 'ethical know-how'. For it is through practice, and particularly through contemplative practice, that one can transform self-less or intentionless actions into embodied behaviour; more specifically, into embodied behaviour that is ethical and grounded in compassion.

But what, Varela asks, is the key element that makes such intentionless learning even possible? To answer this, he references the Buddhist notion of the *sunya* of the self: the doctrine, whose truth is verifiable through direct observation when engaging in contemplative practice, that the self is *empty of self-nature*, void of graspable substantiality. There is, he argues, an enormous openness contained in this *sunya* of the self: one that extends possibilities for further self-understanding and self-transformation, particularly when one engages in contemplative practices and other 'technologies of the self' (to reference a phrase from Foucault, a reference that will become more relevant as this argument progresses). However, it is not only through Buddhism that Varela arrives at a notion of self-less and intentionless action and our capacity to train this. Varela combines this with his own understanding of the cognitive self that, as we have seen, is predicated on an enactive approach to cognition.

Indeed, the understanding of the *sunya* of the self in Buddhist philosophy and tradition – an understanding that the self is empty of all substance – is comparable, for Varela, to his understanding of the cognitive self in all its virtuality and constructedness. And, in a fascinating move, he then compares this *self-less* (or virtual) self to an insect colony such that, through analogy, the cognitive self can be understood as a 'complex system' or 'local pattern' that exhibits emergent properties through the coordinated activity of simple elements or 'local components'. Crucially, this suggests the capacity for the cognitive self to change and transform. Moreover, it suggests the possibility for this cognitive self to make something new, different and un-known of the world by giving rise to an ethical 'we'. How so?

According to Varela, the cognitive self, as per the insect colony, can be understood as an ensemble of agents; an ensemble that is situated and that comes into being in relation to its environment through continuous, improvized action. Varela likens this to a 'jam session' with the environment. Through this, and from their particular *perspective*, the situated cognitive entity makes of the environment a *world*. Due to its significance for our argument, we will quote Varela in full:

> Here we must differentiate sharply between 'environment' and 'world', for the cognitive subject is 'in' both, but not in the same way. On the one hand, a body interacts with its environment in a straightforward way. These encounters are the nature of macrophysical encounters … [but this] 'coupling' is possible only if the encounters are embraced from the perspective of the system itself. The embrace requires the elaboration of a surplus signification based on this perspective; it is the origin of the cognitive agent's world. Whatever is encounters in the environment must be valued or not and interacted with or not.[66]

If we relate this back to *Ungovernable Spaces,* a question becomes: How does this world-making capacity of the cognitive self – which we will now call the basis for the 'I', the 'you' and, through their relation, the 'we' – relate to the world 'we' make, not only on a local level, but on a planetary scale? Who has value in this world? With whom do 'we' choose to interact, or not?

We will allow these questions to resonate as we return to Varela's main proposition in *Ethical Know-How*, which is: '*Ethical know-how is the progressive, firsthand acquaintance with the virtuality of self*'.[67] If modern Western science teaches us that 'the self is virtual and empty, and that it arises continuously to cope with breakdowns in our microworlds' and Taoism, Confucianism and Buddhism teach us that 'ethical expertise is progressive in nature and grounded in the ongoing realization of this empty self in ordinary life and action', then these combine and point to the above postulate.[68] We can now appreciate fully that what Varela is calling ethical know-how comes from practice and discipline: 'praxis is what ethical learning is all about,' he argues. 'In other words, if we do not practice transformation, we will never attain the highest degree of ethical expertise'.[69] Varela, himself, was a practising Buddhist and encouraged all of his fellow researchers and students to practice this as well. 'We simply cannot overlook the need for some form of sustained, disciplined practice or *pratique de transformation de subject*, to use Foucault's apt term,' he writes.[70] The idea being that, through understanding the self as groundless, we begin to recognize our natural inclination towards compassion or, in Buddhist terminology, *karuna*. Varela's book thus becomes, in effect, a plea for the re-enchantment of wisdom understood as a skillful approach to living based on a pragmatics of transformation with the potential to lead to an ethical 'we'.

Newness and The Radical Imaginary (or, Towards an Imagined 'We')

We bear in mind this potential of an ethical 'we' as we continue in our movement towards a new poetics of 'us', turning now to the work of Greek-French philosopher, Cornelius Castoriadis. Writing in *The Imaginary Institution of Society,* Castoriadis' thinking suggests that new ways of being together are emergent in and through acts of creative imagination: acts that, drawing from the radical imaginary, manifest in both a complex of signification as well as in everyday practices of living and being together.[71] What interests us particularly is how a study of this complex of signification together with an examination of ways of living and acting reflects not only the radical imaginary, but the radical potential of a *transformative imaginary*: one with the potential to create new, different and un-known formations of 'we'.

Castoriadis' overarching claim is that new societies are not founded as products of historical necessity. Rather, social formations are self-instituted through acts of *creative imagination*. In making this claim, he is careful to distinguish that what is essential to creation is not 'discovery'; rather, it is the constituting of that which is new. '[A]rt does not discover,' he says, 'it constitutes; and the relationship between what it constitutes and the "real", an exceedingly complex relation to be sure, is not a relation of verification.'[72] This has implications for his thinking about creation on the social plane because it means that 'the emergence of new institutions and of new ways of living is not a "discovery" either but an active constitution.'[73] In other words, it is not that social formations emerge in and through a reality that pre-determines it. Rather, a social form emerges in and through what he calls *radical imaginary* (which has the capacity to make arise something which does not and has never existed) as this is 'manifested indissolubly in both historical *doing* and in the constitution, before any explicit rationality, of a universe of significations.'[74] From there, the social world is articulated as a function of this system of significations in the mode of what he calls the *actual imaginary* (which designates the products of the radical imaginary, or that which is *imagined*).

A question becomes, what prompts this creative constitution of social form? Castoriadis writes:

> Every society up to now has attempted to give an answer to a few fundamental questions: What are we as a collectivity? What are we for one another? Where and in what are we? What do we want; what do we desire; what are we lacking? Society must define its 'identity', its articulation, the world, its relations to the world and to the objects it contains, its needs and its desires. Without the 'answer' to these 'questions,' without these 'definitions', there can be no human world, no society, no culture – for everything would be an undifferentiated chaos. The

role of imaginary significations is to provide an answer to these questions, an answer that, obviously, neither 'reality', nor 'rationality' can provide …[75]

Here Castoriadis is suggesting that these 'questions' – and the search for 'answers' and 'definitions' – are what prompt the emergence of a social formation in and through the radical imaginary. And yet, he argues, all of this is metaphorical. 'These are not questions and answers that are posed explicitly,' he writes, 'and the definitions are not ones given in language.'[76] Moreover, the questions themselves 'are not even raised prior to the answers'.[77] No, he argues:

> Society constitutes itself by producing a *de facto* answer to these questions in its life, in its activity. It is in the *doing* of each collectivity that the answer to these questions appears as an embodied meaning; this social doing allows itself to be understood only as a reply to the questions that it implicitly poses itself.[78]

All of which is to say that it is in and through the life and activity of society that one finds the answers to the question of 'who are we'. And why this becomes important is because it confirms that, just as the constitution of society is not a 'discovery', is it also not simply an act of production, the making or fabrication of something pre-determined – the manufacturing of an ideal form. No, Castoriadis clarifies, this act of world-making in and through social-historical doing, this manifestation of the *radical imaginary*, is an act of *poeisis*, belonging to an art (*techne*). And what is crucial for our understanding is how all of this brings with it with the potential to create new, different and un-known formations of 'we'.[79]

A Root Expansion of Thought (or, Aesthetics and a New Poetics of 'Us')

Thus far we have explored the role of practice in realizing the transformative potential of an ethical 'we'. We have also identified the power of the radical imaginary (realized through social-historical doing manifesting acts of *poeisis* that belong to an art or *techne*) to create different, un-known formations of 'we'. We now turn to Sylvia Wynter, a Jamaican novelist, dramatist, critic, philosopher and essayist whose understanding of a 'root expansion of thought' – and, related to this, the development of new practices and ways of being human – enables us to consider the role that aesthetics plays in any (new, different, un-known) formation of 'we'. In following Wynter's thinking that, expansive and inspiring, gestures explicitly, we are called towards a new poetics of 'us'.[80]

Wynter identifies three events. The First and Second Events are the origin of the universe and the explosion of biological forms of life, respectively. The Third Event

is the co-evolution of the human brain with the emergent faculties of language and storytelling.[81] This Third Event is Wynter's adaptation of Franz Fanon's redefinition of being human in terms of 'skins' (phylogeny/ontogeny) and 'masks' (sociogeny); in other words, as a particular combination of *bios* and *mythoi*.

Elsewhere, in the essay '1492: A New World View', Wynter compares Fanon's contribution to the history of thought with that of Christopher Columbus who, presenting a challenge to Scholasticism's then-predominant theocentric model of divine creation, made his famous voyage of 1492 when he 'discovered' the Americas. For Wynter, the significance of his contribution to knowledge does not lie in the discovery of any new *facts* but, rather, in effecting *a root expansion of thought*: a movement beyond what, in Foucault's terms, would be called the 'ground' of the feudal-Christian episteme or order of knowledge. Phrased differently, Columbus' 'discovery' did not add to the 'knowledge of the world as it is' but, rather, presented a challenge to the 'knowledge of categories': that is, the understanding shared by the subjects of any given episteme that enables them to experience themselves as, in Wynter's terms, 'symbolic kin or interaltruistic conspecifics.'[82] Ultimately, Columbus' 'discovery' had, and continues to have, an effect on how 'we', as global subjects, learn to live together insofar as it has an effect on 'our' very configuration.

Wynter looks at this configuration of 'we' in Columbus' era in light of the burgeoning intellectual revolution of humanism whose generalized '*poetics of the propter nos*' set up a counterpremise to Scholasticism's theocentric view: 'This premise was that the Creation had indeed been made by God *on behalf of* and for *the sake of* humankind (*propter nos homines*).'[83] In other words, humanism effected a shift in thinking where the world was understood to have been created 'for us', and where this 'us' came to be represented by the 'Figure of Man' – a figure best exemplified in Leonardo da Vinci's famous drawing of the Vitruvian Man in *c.* 1490. Presented as universal, this figure – and the 'us' or 'we' that emerged from it – must nevertheless be understood within the specific genre of the white, mercantile, European male. It was this poetics of the *propter nos* and the humanistic premise it set forth that allowed Columbus to justify his claim that the 'new world' he had 'discovered' was intended 'for us'; that is, for the Spanish colonial 'we'. The implications of this are vast.

In a huge feat of intellectual labour, Wynter explores how this *propter nos* led, ultimately, to the displacement of the native populations of the Americas and, later, to Black Africans, all of whom were ultimately subjected to varying conditions of enslavement as predicated on their status as other than 'we': a status, as Wynter says, designated through categorical nomenclature, either '*native*' or '*n*****', respectively' (asterisks ours).[84] Perhaps to justify, effectively to propagate, this

form of subjugation, the Eurocentric, phallogocentric category of the 'we' then came to be mapped onto the very category of the 'human' understood as a purely biological species: a 'natural' organism, as set forth by Western scientific thought in the nineteenth century. As a model that pre-exists, rather than coexists with, other models of the human, this model of the human as bios suggests that all human societies have an ostensibly natural, scientific and organic basis; in turn, all religions and all cultures are merely superstructural. This, in turn, allowed human groups to be classified into those understood as *naturally selected* (i.e., eugenic) and *naturally dysselected* (i.e., dysgenic) beings, thereby mapping the same logic that had governed Columbus' day – a logic that designated some parts of the world as 'habitable' and others as 'inhabitable' – onto the 'human', some of whom were considered to be human and others simply less so.

It is at this point that Franz Fanon figures in Wynter's thinking. Not unlike Columbus, she argues, Fanon was compelled to dispute the hegemonic rationality of his day; in his case, 'liberal humanism's biocentric premise of the human as a natural organism and autonomous subject that arbitrarily regulates his own behaviours.'[85] And in a movement Wynter considers comparable to Columbus' shift into 'realms beyond reason' – a root expansion of thought – Fanon projects his own image of the human.

Making its appearance in the book *Black Skin, White Masks* (1964), this newly projected image of the human was predicated on Fanon's empirical study as a practising psychiatrist. Treating patients who were either 'native' colonial or Black Caribbeans, Fanon observes that they 'had been conditioned to experience themselves *as if* they were, in fact, genetically inferior as the hegemonic "learned discourse" of contemporary scholars ostensibly represented them.'[86] Turning against the predominant Freudian orthodoxy of his time, Fanon sought to explain this autophobia and 'aberration of affect' displayed by his patients not through recourse to their 'ostensibly individually autonomous psyches' but, rather, to the 'specific sociosystemic organizing process that had … induced the "aberration of affect" itself.'[87] In other words, where Freud had placed emphasis on the individual, Fanon emphasized the processes of socialization at play such that the 'problem of the black man and of the colonial native's self-aversive reactions was clearly *not* an individual problem. Rather, it was that of the processes of socialization.'[88] This understanding – which Wynter identifies as a veritable revolution in epistemology, turning humanism on its axis – can be summed up in Fanon's declaration that '*besides ontogeny, there is sociogeny.*'[89] Ultimately, what Fanon projects onto the Figure of Man – onto an understanding of human as *bios* – is *mythos*, language, the mask, so that being human can only be understood in terms of the whole ensemble of collective life.

'And notice!', Wynter writes elsewhere, moving with Fanon through his root expansion of thought: 'One major implication here: *humanness* is no longer a *noun. Being human is a praxis.*'[90] For Wynter, being human is a practice of, amongst other things, aesthetics. Why? Because aesthetics 'is clearly the very condition of existence of all human "forms of life"', she argues in yet another elsewhere. 'The category of the aesthetic is the determinant … of the ensemble of collective behaviour by means of which each human order effects its autopoesis as a living, self-organising (i.e. cybernetic) system.'[91]

Significantly, where the radical implications of Columbus' voyage cannot be dissociated from the turning tide from theocentrism to humanism, Wynter explains that Fanon's proposition that 'besides ontogeny, there is sociogeny' cannot be disassociated from the 'general upheaval' of the 1950s and 1960s. Here, she proclaims, is where one can begin to identify a new poetics of the *propter nos* as the rise of 'Black Power' and the 'Black is Beautiful' movement fuelling the Civil Rights campaign of the United States, which itself began to trigger a series of other such movements by non-white groups globally, including indigenous peoples of the Americas and elsewhere, leading people to begin a process of trans-ethnic co-identification as a challenge to and collective refusal of the 'extreme category of an ostensibly dysselected Otherness.'[92] And while aspects of these movements and this general upheaval can be seen to have either failed or been co-opted, it is here that Wynter turns when she argues our need, now – the 'now' of her writing, which was 1992, but we can still say the 'now' of this writing, which is 2024 – to return if we are to continue to put forward a new poetics for the *propter nos*: that is, new understandings and new alignments of a 'we' with whom to empathize, for whom to care, as whom to act; a new poetics of 'us'.

The World We Want

Let us remember where we started in this chapter: with the Time of the Now and our current disaster. We need to be thinking *and* acting – (theorizing and practicing; reflecting/speculating and instigating) – the two in formation, a temporal-spatial order. It is this that carries with it the potential to develop new and different practices and ways of living – 'forms of life' – in and through our relation to one another and to the turbulent conditions of a given situation; through this, to emerge community formations with the potential to disrupt the hegemonic order. Moreover, and having identified the time of the Now with the condition of coloniality, we understand this disruption of hegemonic order as having the capacity to undermine the ideology of progress that underpins this condition more broadly: an ideology wherein one 'world' is seen as being developed (politically, economically, culturally) with others just waiting to catch

up, and where all of these worlds are understood as aiming to emulate the 'superior' order of the first. So it is that we understand each of the particular community formations explored throughout *Ungovernable Spaces* (communities that counter the logic of the 'first' with the moment of a mythic 'beginning') as well as the development of this project as a whole to exist within this Now: a position from which to change or transform our current realities as well as to imagine alternate futures, possible worlds, and to realize these through different practices of being human and ways of living together. All of which suggests how these community formations – these 'ungovernable spaces'; these new, different and un-known formations of 'we' – might make something new, something different, something un-known of the world: a new poetics of 'us'. And here we are very much inspired by the Zapatista declaration, as this prefaces Mario Balser and Marisol de la Cadena's introduction to their edited collection *A World of Many Worlds*:

> Many worlds are walked in the world. Many worlds are made. Many worlds make us. There are words and worlds that are lies and injustices. There are words and worlds that are truthful and true. In the world of the powerful there is only room for the big and their helpers. In the world we want, everybody fits. The world we want is a world in which many worlds fit.
> – Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional 'Fourth Declaration of the Lacandón Jungle'

As there are many worlds in the world, so there are many ways to resist and, through this, to transform and make new worlds. That is to say, there are many times and ways to begin thinking and acting to make something new, something different, something unknown emerge from, exist in and resist the condition of coloniality. Such newness, such beginning, is what characterizes each of the situations in this study and, in this way, these community formations – developed in and through practices and ways of living together – both signal and function as a blossoming of refusal, as concurrent and asynchronous world orders, as 'ungovernable spaces'.
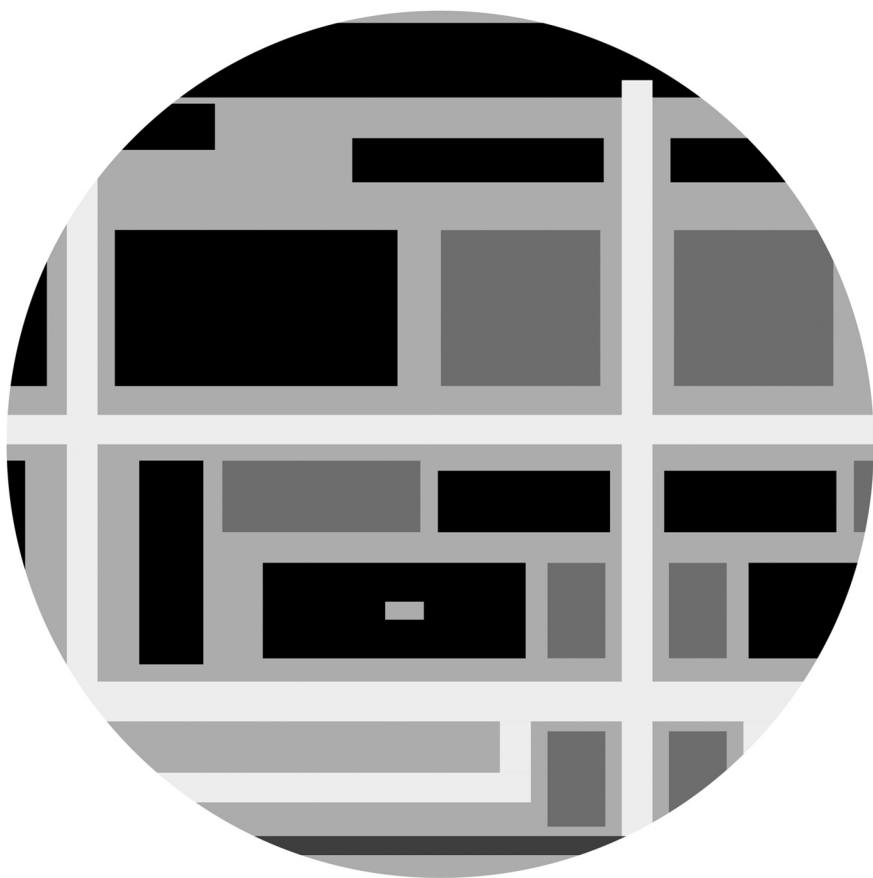
Beneath the Grid, the Root

Politics, Aesthetics and the Overlay of Chicago's South Side

A Point of Departure

Amidst the gridded matrix of Chicago's city streets, the South Side intersection of State Street and East 34th is atypical. Here, in an unusual gesture towards the pedestrian, East 34th is unpassable to vehicles so that what we encounter when we arrive are orthogonal pathways situated in a verdant landscape of lawns, trees and low benches. At the bus stop on the corner, a bench carries an advertisement for Illinois Tech: 'Discover, Create, Solve'.

This intersection is our point of departure for the writing in this chapter. We arrived at this point initially by way of our creative and critical engagement with an artwork; specifically, Victor Burgin's *Prairie* (2015).[1] As Burgin's artwork testifies, this intersection, now the location of Mies van der Rohe's lauded 'Crown Hall' building on the Illinois Institute of Technology campus, was once the site of the much larger 'Mecca' building: one of Chicago's largest apartment houses. Built in 1892 in advance of the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition, the Mecca was demolished just sixty years later, in 1952, after a decade of resistance by its occupants – predominantly African-Americans living in this area known as the 'Black Belt' of Chicago. Before that, this same location was the geographical site of a Midwestern prairie and home to the native *Inoka*.

With the development of the IIT campus and construction of Crown Hall in 1956, these layers became occluded by the aesthetics of the modernist grid as embodied by the measure of Mies' masterplan, itself inside the larger schema of Chicago's urban grid. Formally resonating with the technique of the architectural 'overlay', as does the structural logic of Burgin's original artwork, the writing in this chapter seeks to expose these various layers of site, each with their respective social, cultural, urban, and geographic rhythm. The chapter is structured accordingly into: 'Layer 1 – IIT', 'Layer 2 – Mecca', 'Layer 3 – Inoka'. Taken individually, each layer forms a replete thought comprising image, observation, theorization, interpretation, affect. Read together, the layers become a means of imaginatively unearthing a community formation: one that, rich and fertile, allows us to envision the development of new forms of life. Our aim throughout is to identify the overarching problematic of colonialism and racism that contours this site, looking at the role of aesthetics within this and recognizing its potential for resistance.

Layer I – IIT

'My formats are square, but the grids never are absolutely square; they are rectangles, a little bit off the square, making a sort of contradiction, a dissonance, though I didn't set out to do it that way. When I cover the square surface with rectangles, it lightens the weight of the square, destroys its power.'

– Agnes Martin, 'Answer to an Inquiry'[2]

The Grid

The orthogonal grid is the basis for cartographic and settlement practices in the United States, which developed incrementally and in tandem. Astronomically-determined lines of latitude and longitude were used to map vast distances across the curvature of the earth. These areas were then sub-divided, parcelled, and sold as property. Arriving by way of Galileo, Bacon, Newton and Descartes, this geometry thus unites abstract measured humanity with wild diverse nature. In doing so, it delineates division, as in the case of Pope Alexander VI's longitudinal line of 1493 that separated the Spanish and Portuguese 'New World'. This line can be seen running through the letter 'C' in the word AMERICA, first seen on a map made in 1507 by German scholar and humanist Martin Waldseemüller: the first recorded usage of the word America to name a portion of the New World in honour of Italian explorer Amerigo Vespucci.[3]

This same line would become the precursor of further lines – those that determined and shaped the New World through European geometric methods, providing a loose, open and democratic framework in theory, but in practice dividing and separating in equal measure. This evolving cartography can be traced back to maps of the original colonies on the US east coast, with its practical accommodation of the natural features of the landscape. But as this cartographic practice developed, and as settlers moved further west, the linear, the orthogonal and the abstract began to take over. Thomas Jefferson was central to this endeavour, defining the foundational principle of land allocation with the Land Ordinance Act of 1785, which stated that land should be surveyed and recorded before settlement.[4] This Act established a standardized system for settlers to buy legal title to farmland west of the Appalachian Mountains and north of the Ohio River.[5]

The survey system, whose die-straight property lines parcelled out the land, was conducted using a 'Gunther's Chain': 'a standard surveyor's chain used in England that consisted of four perches, or rods, each 16½ feet long, making a chain equal to 66 feet. This unit proved useful because ten square chains define an acre and

640 acres fit into a square mile.'[6] The use of the geographical mile as a measure was derived from the context of sea navigation, 'implying the projection of the sea's "emptiness" on a territory that was far from empty.'[7]

As the grid continued to expand westward, the advance of orthogonal lines was sometimes interrupted by the unstoppable forces of the natural features of the American landscape. The broad majestic Mississippi, which by virtue of its vast scale connected the Gulf of Mexico to the Great Lakes of the midwest, formed a corridor of movement for goods and people that would have a critical impact on the culture of the United States. This tributary connection via the Illinois river to Fort Dearborn (described on maps as 'erected at the mouth of the Chicago river for defence against the Indians'[8]) would become the great vehicle that moved formerly enslaved people after the Civil War from the cotton fields of the south to new industrial landscapes of the cities of the north, especially the burgeoning city of Chicago.

A Crime

In 1908, the Viennese architect Adolf Loos wrote the essay 'Ornament and Crime'. He did so after a visit to the Midwest of the United States where he came across, and admired, the simple architecture of barn construction encountered across the prairie states. The essay itself can be read as a response to, and rejection of, the fluid, undulating – sometimes syncopated and asymmetrical – design motifs of *art nouveau,* with it roots in the Arts and Crafts Movement's emphasis on craftsmanship and rejection of mass industrialization.

At the time, such *art nouveau* motifs could be seen particularly in urban areas, such as Chicago. However, Loos rejected this and called, instead, for a shift into a more 'progressive' style of modern art, design and architecture: one that he deemed both morally and culturally superior. Indeed, having associated 'the child', the 'Papuan [who] covers his skin with tattoos' and the 'negro tribesman' with ornamentation, Loos labels each amoral before announcing the following 'discovery', which he wishes to pass onto the world: '*the evolution of culture is synonymous with the removal of ornamentation from objects of everyday use.*'[9] For Loos, it follows that any continued use of ornamentation could only be read as a sign of 'backwardness or degeneracy'. Following this logic, he claims that 'people of culture' do not consider ornament beautiful and, instead, prefer simplicity: simple art, simple design.

What, for Loos, is the connection between ornament and crime? It is, he argues, an economic one: 'in economic respects [ornament] is a crime, in that it leads to the waste of human labor, money, and materials. That is damage time cannot repair.'[10]

A craftsman working on an ornamented object may take twice as long as one who is able to make it in a factory in a few hours, he argues, and yet the object itself will, at best, cost the same or, at worst (and particularly given the changing tastes of the time with its preference for more simple, straightforward design), it may even cost less. So, an ornamented object requires more time and more materials to produce than a simple object, and without economic return. This, argues Loos, means wasted capital: 'Ornament means wasted labour and therefore wasted health. This was always the case. Today, however, it also means wasted material, and both mean wasted capital.'[11] Ornament is thus a crime against the drive for productivity and, with it, the accumulation of wealth through capitalist means.

While it is clear that Loos considers ornamentation to be superfluous for anyone with a 'modern' sensibility, he nonetheless concedes that the case is different for those individuals and cultures who, in his terms, have not yet reached the same 'level'. And here, Loos says, he is 'preaching' as an aristocrat: one who understands that, for those 'lower' than he, the work they are doing *is* their art whereas, for Loos: '*We* have the art that has superseded ornament. After the toil and tribulations of the day, we can go to hear Beethoven or *Tristan*. My shoemaker cannot.'[12] With this in mind, we begin to wonder whether it may be possible to view ornament less as a 'crime' and more as the aesthetics for a 'form of life' very different from this '*We*' for whom art is partitioned from life. Seen in this different light, ornament becomes an aesthetics rooted in the everyday, in practices of labour and of culture, such that it carries the potential to move and to morph, to shift and to shape, to bring about change.

The Modernist Grid

I

Rosalind Krauss speaks famously of the modernist grid. Making its appearance at the early part of the twentieth century – first in France, then Russia, then Holland – the grid announces art's 'will to silence': its hostility to literature, narrative, discourse; with this, its total separation from the arts of language into a realm of pure visuality.[13] Temporally, Krauss argues, the grid is a form that is ubiquitous in the art of the twentieth century. Spatially, the flatness, geometry and order of the grid presents as 'antinatural, antimimetic, antireal.'[14] In each of these respects, the grid announces itself as inherently 'modern' and 'in the cultist space of modern art … serves not only as emblem but also as myth.'[15] With its coordinates working to crowd out the real, replacing it with the lateral spread of a single surface, the grid effectively signals the autonomy of the realm of art as the very hallmark of modernism.

II

In the development of Piet Mondrian's practice, one particular work stands out. *Composition Trees II* (1912) presents us with the image of a tree in the form of a cluster of gridded figures. Shifting away from the natural world and into the realm of abstraction, this painting marks a significant juncture in Mondrian's *oeuvre*: one from which he will continue to paint grids and, for this, become known as one of modernism's preeminent artists. Still, as Roland Barthes notes, even in his period of full-blown abstraction – a period in which he produced, for example, *Compositions in the Square* (1924) – Mondrian would continue to paint the odd flower and sell this to his friends in Holland, thus prompting Brassai's comment: "'There's a man who paints flowers to live. And why does he want to live? So he can paint straight lines.'"[16] Later, Mondrian would move to New York City and, inspired by its gridded streets, the music of its jazz cafes and nightclubs, would paint his late masterwork *Broadway Boogie Woogie* (1954): a vibrant, pulsating, syncopated extension of his earlier, more restrained orthogonal works.

III

There are reports of the young German architect, Mies van der Rohe, visiting Holland in the early 1900s and encountering works by Mondrian. This prompted later architectural historians to make a correlation between Mondrian's paintings and Mies' design work; for example, to see a clear relationship between Mondrian's 'Pier and Ocean' (1915) and Mies' ground plan for the Brick House (1927).[17] Considered a seminal work of modern architectural design, the ground plan for Brick House shows a configuration of open, right-angled planes demarcating spaces through which one could easily move in a fluid, unobstructed manner. Removing traditional architectural elements such as doors, corridor connections and fully enclosed rooms, the formal simplicity and radical openness of the Brick House plan exploded traditional understandings of space, instigating a 'new' architecture for the early twentieth century. While the house itself was never built, its plan formed a clear template for Mies' later, possibly most famous work: the German Pavilion constructed in 1929 for the International Exposition in Barcelona.

In part due to his success with the German Pavilion in Barcelona, Mies was appointed as Director of the Bauhaus in Weimar in 1930. In 1933 the school was closed by the National Socialists and, although Mies successfully argued to the Nazis to re-open the school, he later took the decision to close the school himself, in consultation with his faculty.[18] Following this, Mies joined the vast exodus of artists, designers and intellectuals fleeing the Nazi occupation of Europe and migrating to the United States, thereby changing the course of art and design

history in America. Here Mies would live and work, first in New York, then in Chicago, where he would be commissioned to design the new campus for the Illinois Institute of Technology.

IV

In his first act related to this campus design, Mies superimposed a grid over the entire site: the first time he had used the grid as a planning tool.[19] In its openness and fluidity of elements within a field condition, the urban plan for the new IIT campus, built in 1956, bears a striking relationship to that of the Barcelona Pavilion (and the Brick House) but at a much larger scale. Situated within the gridded matrix of Chicago's urban plan on the city's south side, the new IIT campus design presents itself as a completely different formal entity to that which preceded it. This is evident in a photocollage completed by Mies in 1941, where he overlays his model for the IIT's campus expansion into an aerial view of the south side of Chicago.[20] (See Figure 1.1.)

Mies had a history of using the technique of photocollage in his work to soften the contrast between the existing and proposed site conditions. In this image, four existing city blocks are completely masked off through the act of superimposition inherent in the photocollage process, replaced by an open landscape populated by sharply monochromatic and hierarchically structured array of buildings. With the clean edge of the campus clearly distinguished from the otherwise ad-hoc, eclectic mix of low-rise housing and small industrial units, the perimeter reveals a rather uncomfortable disjunction between the new formal openness of Mies' mid-century modernist urban scheme and the densely packed urban fabric that was the south side of Chicago at that time. But what, exactly, is masked off in Mies' photocollage?

In Daniel Bluestone's account of the site's development, we read that the original location of the IIT campus was at Thirty-third and Federal, in the heart of what was then known as Chicago's 'Black Belt'. Named for its high population of African-American residents, businesses, retail centres and cultural institutions – including numerous, infamous, jazz cafes and nightclubs – the area had grown in response to the massive migration of African-Americans from the rural south to Chicago's industrial jobs, spurred by World War I. As Bluestone argues, starting in 1937, and as part of their planned campus extension, the IIT board of trustees worked to slowly purchase up land around their original campus so that, ultimately, they acquired an extra thirty acres of property in addition to their original nine, all situated in the Black Belt. Continually lowering rents, filling the property with an increasingly poor population without putting in any money towards maintenance

or repair, the institute allowed for the area's deterioration with the intention first to control, then to clear out this area, modelling their plans 'on the slum-clearance precedence of the 1930's [when] [f]ederal legislation enacted in 1934 and 1937 supported massive assembly and clearance of urban tracts.'[21] From all this we understand that what is masked off in Mies' photocollage – what disappears in the visuality of Mies' overlay, but can still be heard in the city streets – is the collective cultural identity and city rhythm of the Black Belt of Chicago.

FIGURE1.1 Kreider + O'Leary, GRID Series (No. 1), Chicago, USA.[22]
© Kreider + O'Leary, Digital Image Composite, 2024.

Scenes of Statues

'I am in Barcelona.'[23] So begins Victor Burgin's 'Mies in Maurelia' that, published in his book *The Remembered Film*, offers an essayistic journey through Mies van der Rohe's modernist masterpiece, the German Pavilion in Barcelona. Originally built for the International Exposition in 1929, this building was torn down one year later – only photographs remained. The building was then later re-built in 1986: resurrected on the site of its original construction. In the interim, war and death. Burgin describes how the Nationalists, who took power in 1939, killed an estimated 50,000 to 200,000 people while, before that, some 600,000 Spanish people died during the Civil War.

One such person was a young woman about whom Burgin had read on his first trip to Barcelona. The only woman amongst a group of university students arrested for possessing anti-fascist leaflets, she was tortured and killed. Her death haunts Burgin as he moves around the German Pavilion, turning and returning through the space. 'No point of rest amongst its mirrored planes,' he writes, 'but one constant point of reference: Georg Kolbe's statue of a standing figure. Separated by

a barrier of water, the bronze, titled *Sunrise*, shows a woman with arms raised to shade her face from the light.'[24] This statue, a focal point for the building, becomes one also for the video that Burgin is there to make and, as becomes apparent, also for his essay's sequence of memories and associations, including that of the young woman.

Burgin imagines the young woman holding up her arms in defence, a woman under attack. He then sees this same gesture in Kolbe's sculpted figure with her legs bent and arms upstretched. Then another image, another involuntary association, as Burgin remembers a documentary film about Catalonia and the Civil War where the 'fleeting fragment of a shyly smiling young woman, a rifle over her shoulder, raises her arm to shade her face from the sun' mirrors the gesture of *Sunrise*.[25] So, the imagined gesture of the young woman and that of the smiling female soldier converge for Burgin at the point of Kolbe's statue. They converge and they mix with the images of others whom Burgin has seen moving around the city, hands lifted to shield their eyes from the sun; still others now drifting amidst the architectural ground of the Pavilion, its paradoxical shifting of ocular frames and specular surfaces. As real and imaginary, past and present, film and memory all converge at the point of *Sunrise*, the space between Burgin and the statue – the watery barrier between them – fills with this free play of meaning and a figure begins to emerge.

<p style="text-align:center">*</p>

We shift scenes. Now we are at the end of the fifteenth letter of Friedrich von Schiller's *Uber die asthetische Erziehung des Menshen* where he offers both a declaration and a promise, which Jacques Rancière reformulates as follows: 'there exists a specific sensible experience that holds the promise of both a new world of Art and a new life for individuals and the community, namely *the aesthetic*.'[26] Understood as the foundation of the art of the beautiful *and* of the living – intrinsic both to the construction of an autonomous realm of art that is partitioned, framed, set apart and reserved for contemplation (that is, the 'art of the beautiful') *and* to heteronomous acts of making, thinking and socially interacting (that is, the 'art of the living') – the aesthetic experience carries important implications for considering the relationship between aesthetics and politics.[27] But in order to appreciate this, we must first understand the way that autonomy and heteronomy are linked in Schiller's thinking: a link established here, in this scene at the end of the fifteenth letter: what Rancière calls the 'original scene' of aesthetics.

Here Schiller places himself and the reader in front of a specimen of 'free appearance' – a Greek statue known as the *Juno Ludovisi*.[28] Encompassing all the traits of divinity, this statue appears 'self-contained' and 'dwells in itself', seemingly distanced from any duty or care, purpose or volition: 'The statue thus comes paradoxically to figure what has not been made, what was never an object of will. In other words: it embodies the qualities of what is not a work of art.'[29] Meanwhile, the spectator standing in front of this begins to enjoy a special kind of autonomy: one that is related to a withdrawal of power. In this sense, the autonomy of art does not inhere in the work of art itself, but in the *experience* of this specific sensorium, within which both the spectator and the artwork participate in a 'free play' of meaning. There is no need to know or possess the statue, which can never be known or possessed. Rather, '[t]he goddess and the spectator, the free play and the free appearance, are caught up together in a specific sensorium, cancelling the oppositions of activity and passivity, will and resistance.'[30] And this, we are told, offers the promise of a new world.

What 'new world' is figured by this statue and one's aesthetic experience of and with it? As Rancière argues, the statue embodies the appearance of what is not aimed at as a work of art; therefore, the 'self-containment' of the statue can be read as embodying 'a collective life that does not rend itself into separate spheres of activities, of a community where art and life, art and politics, life and politics are not severed from one another' – a life such as that lived by the ancient Greeks.[31] Thus understood as the 'self-expression' of the form of life of the ancient Greeks, the statue becomes a figure for the aesthetic regime of art: a realm where 'art is art to the extent that it is something else than art. It is always "aestheticized", meaning that it is always posited as a "form of life."'[32] All of which suggests that there is a reciprocal relationship between art and life:

> Art can become life. Life can become art. And art and life can exchange their properties. These three scenarios yield three configurations of the aesthetic, emplotted in three versions of temporality. According to the logic of the *and,* each is also a variant of the politics of aesthetics, or what we should rather call its 'metapolitics' – that is, its way of producing its own politics, proposing to politics re-arrangements of its space, re-configuring art as a political issue or asserting itself as true politics.[33]

The statue, embodying the interrelationship between art and life, thus suggests the possibility of a world – possibly a new world – as figured and configured by a relationship between art and life; that is, through the 'politics of aesthetics'.

*

We shift scenes again. Now we are in a darkened lecture theatre in Toronto where Burgin is giving an artist's talk and screening his recent projection pieces including *A Place to Read* (2010), *Prairie* (2015) and *Belledonne* (2016). After screening all three works, Burgin speaks about the text and image relations in his work, with a specific eye toward how these relations inform the politics of his art practice more generally. Framing this discussion, Burgin refers to an observation made by Norwegian writer Karl Ove Knausgård who, lamenting society's over-saturation through mass entertainment, remarks: 'Wherever you turned you saw fiction.'[34] And whether it was a paperback, a TV series, a movie, the press, the news, or a documentary, the format made no difference to the fact that: 'the nucleus of all this fiction, whether true or not, was verisimilitude and the distance it held to reality was constant.'[35] It is this idea of mass cultural production maintaining a 'fixed orbit around a real that it surveys with the same standard lens' that Burgin picks up on, contrasting this with the 'spatial optic' in his own work.

On the one hand, there is what Knausgård references: the spatial optic typical of 'hegemonic forms of industrialised common sense' where representation and the real are completely distinct, the former navigating a 'fixed orbit' around the latter, which is thought to pre-exist.[36] On the other hand, there is the relation of text and image in Burgin's art: two virtualities, both phenomenal and psychic, that '"see" one another from different places in a common space' and, so doing, begin to circumscribe a 'real' – a worldly situation – that comes into existence in the mind of the viewer and through this act of circumscription.[37] In Burgin's work, this act is less a 'fixed orbit' around a stable reality than it is a continually fluctuating, moving and varied relation between multiple points of reference from images and texts, sequenced and looped, through which that reality comes into being. As such, the 'real' is not centric, but continually de-centred or re-centred – or with a multitude of centres – depending one's position (or situatedness) as much as one's point of departure; that is, the text or the image from which one begins to piece together this reality, this story that is told and re-told. In this respect, we understand that the 'real' does not pre-exist, but rather comes into existence in and through the aesthetic – and this carries implications for how we can understand the politics of aesthetics in Burgin's work and more generally.

Ultimately, it suggests that the text/image relations in Burgin's work (what one might call the 'formal' aspects of his art or its 'aesthetics') and the relationship they bear to the object of attention they circumscribe (which may be considered in terms of the 'content' of the work or the 'real' social, political, historical situations to which they refer) is not one of precedence (one does not precede the other), but of co-emergence. Here, form and content, aesthetics and politics, are figured and configured through a choreography of virtualities: one that, as Burgin has suggested, necessarily accounts for the specific subjectivity and situatedness of

both artist and recipient as conscious and unconscious layers accrue and reveal through acts of reciprocal contemplation; one that, arguably, has the potential to move beyond the subject and any given situation into new configurations of the social, communalities yet unknown.

*

We shift scenes one last time and find ourselves back at the start of Burgin's essay 'Mies in Maurelia': 'I am in Barcelona,' we hear again – and then the voice continues, 'I find the genius of the place, which for me is where my inner world and the reality of the city intersect, in Mies van der Rohe's German Pavilion for the 1929 International Exhibition.'[38] Even more precisely, the genius of the place – where Burgin's inner world and the reality of the city intersect – would seem to be at the point of *Sunrise*; that is, of Kolbe's statue: the one fixed point of reference in Mies' German Pavilion as Burgin moves through the space; the single fixed point of reference for Burgin's video work; the point onto which Burgin essayistically projects layers of association from his imagination, from a remembered film, and from the recollections of his urban foray through Barcelona alongside his experience of others moving about Mies' pavillion.

We begin to consider Kolbe's statue in relation to the politics of aesthetics in Burgin's work, and its potential more generally. As an object of attention circumscribed by image and text in Burgin's artwork and writing, the statue – seemingly fixed, seemingly pre-existent – comes into being through the ever-changing scale, tempo, direction, materiality and medium of the artist's relationship to it as he moves toward and away, projecting layers of meaning onto it, reading layers of meaning into it, relating the world to it and through it. Within this specific sensorium, this free play of meaning and appearance, there is no division between form and content, aesthetics and the 'real'. Moreover, the specificities of encounter (the subjectivities involved; the locatedness in space and time; the materiality and semiotics of the object) are all intrinsic to the meanings – the new reality – being produced. Out of this choreography, situated in time and place, the statue emerges as figure: one that, capturing a moment of stasis, nonetheless carries traces of an endlessly shifting rhythm of attention and the stories that unfold through this. It is this figure that we encounter through Burgin's artwork and writing, including yet another of Burgin's artworks, *Prairie*.

Through its careful and poetic sequencing of image and text, Victor Burgin's projection piece *Prairie* navigates the complexity of a specific urban situation. Embedded in the artwork's aesthetic layers, its point of departure is the

intersection of State Street and 34th, and the occlusion of histories buried beneath the construction of Mies van der Rohe's 'Crown Hall' building. And as replete pieces of text and image relate to one another across the linear sequence of *Prairie*, and from one looped cycle to the next, the complexity of the situation is explored and embodied by the intricate choreography of *Prairie*'s political aesthetic.

It is here, in *Prairie*, that we encounter the further figuration of Kolbe's statue in Burgin's work. This figuration reaches by way of the image of a woman, a dancer, who appears three times throughout *Prairie*, rendered in still image CGE. In one of these appearances we see her embodying the 'same' gesture as the figure of Kolbe's statue, shielding her eyes from the sun, but with one key difference: in *Prairie* she makes an appearance as a Black female figure who, in the context of the artwork, would seem to carry traces of the disappeared Mecca. So, in this further figuration of Kolbe's statue as it appears in Burgin's artwork *Prairie*, we move beyond the point of intersection between Burgin's inner reality and the city of Barcelona and toward another city, Chicago, and another communality, the residents of the Mecca, their years of resistance.

So here we are, amidst the silence of *Prairie*'s looped projected sequence, encountering the stillness of this Black female figure. And through this encounter, we begin to understand that this figure is being contoured through the aesthetic layers of a white European imaginary. Moreover, that it is through this aesthetic that the figure is stilled. And this disturbs us. We grow uncomfortable. We are complicit within this viewing experience, this imaginary, this stillness. We are filled with doubt and begin to think.

We begin to think and, in doing so, we think of the work of Christina Sharpe, an American academic, now Professor of English Literature and Black Studies in Canada, and author of *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being*. Throughout this book Sharpe speaks of *stillness*. She speaks of stillness in the lives of those who were enslaved and the lives of all Black people in slavery's wake: stillness in the hold of the Middle Passage; stillness in the daguerreotypes of Delia and Drana, two enslaved Black women; stillness in the prisons of the military industrial complex; stillness in the suspensions of Black being between life and death; stillness in the resistance to such violent suspense. For her part, Sharpe counters this stillness with 'wake work'. Turning to images, poetry and literature, she activates the variant and multiple registers of *wake* – 'keeping watch of the dead, the path of a ship, a consequence of something, in the line of flight and/or sight, awakening, and consciousness'[39] – and joins this with *work*. And she does so in order 'that we might make the wake and *wake work* our analytic, we might continue to imagine new ways to live in the wake of slavery, in slavery's afterlives, to survive (and more) the afterlife of property.' In short, Sharpe says, 'I mean wake work to be a mode of

inhabiting *and* rupturing this episteme with our known lived and un/imaginable lives. With that analytic we might imagine otherwise from what we know *now* in the wake of slavery'.[40] And as she speaks, as she writes, there is movement. Elsewhere Sharpe says: 'I arrive at blackness as, blackness is, anagrammatical … So, blackness anew, blackness as a/temporal, in and out of place and time putting pressure on meaning and that against which meaning is made'.[41] Blackness as a strategy of thought. Blackness as a strategy of thought for thinking the wake, the ship, the hold and the weather. And as Sharpe thinks, shapes begin to shift; as these shift, we begin to wonder: How might we, from our culturally embedded and embodied position – as white, American and Irish; as academics, poet and architect – begin to think, respectfully, along with Sharpe and with others doing wake work? In so doing, how might we begin to attune to another, possibly even new world: one that is figured and configured through a politics and aesthetics – a politics of aesthetics – both 'strange and oppositional'?[42]

Layer II – Mecca

Sit where the light corrupts your face.
Mies van der Rohe retires from grace.
And the fair fables fall.

– Gwendolyn Brooks, 'In the Mecca'[43]

Homeplace

'We must learn to see.' Spoken by scholar and activist bell hooks, these words sound out three different times in the essay 'An Aesthetic of Blackness – Strange and Oppositional', which is found in the collection of essays *Yearning: Race, Gender and Cultural Politics*. The essay opens with a story:

> *This is the story of a house. It has been lived in by many people. Our grandmother, Baba, made this house living space. She was certain that the way we lived was shaped by objects, the way we looked at them, the way they were placed around us. She was certain that we were shaped by space. From her I learn about aesthetics.*[44]

This story goes on to tell of rooms full of objects, crowded with things, where light 'does things' to a string of peppers hanging in front of a window. *'Look, she tells me, what the light does to the color! Do you believe that space can give life, or take it away, that space has power?'*[45] Her grandmother's questions frighten her, hooks says, but through them: 'She has taught me how to look at the world and see beauty. *She has taught me "we must learn to see."*'[46]

The story concludes, leading into another as hooks tells us how, years later, she will recall her grandmother's lesson when encountering a series of rooms arranged by a Buddhist monk Chögyam Trungpa: 'At a moment in my life when I had forgotten how to see, he reminds me to look,' she writes. 'He arranges spaces. Moved by an aesthetic shaped by old beliefs. Objects are not without spirit. As living things they touch us in unimagined ways.'[47] This is a spiritual aesthetic, hooks says, one that reminds her: 'Each space is a sanctuary. I remember. Baba has taught me "we must learn to see."'[48]

This lesson is important, fundamental even, in that it teaches hooks – and, through her, us – that aesthetics is more than just consumerism. A yearning for beauty is not the same as a yearning for things, hooks tells us, lamenting the way that advanced capitalism has affected our capacity to see. It also teaches hooks – and, through her, us – that aesthetics is 'more than a philosophy or theory of art and beauty; it is a way of inhabiting space, a particular location, a way of looking and becoming.'[49] Thus understood, aesthetics is not about material accumulation, nor is it simply an abstract ideal. Rather, aesthetics is a practice, both spatial and cultural; a way of being and of making meaning in and of the world.

Grounded in this understanding of aesthetics, hooks moves into a discussion of its relationship to politics by looking at artistic expressiveness and cultural production within racially segregated Black communities in the United States. She begins by looking at southern agrarian communities, such as her grandmother's, where artistic expressiveness and cultural production were seen as intrinsically serving a political function. How so? Firstly, by challenging racist thinking and white supremacist ideology which 'suggested that black people, being more animal than human, lacked the capacity to feel and therefore count not engage in the finer sensibilities that were the breeding ground for art.'[50] Secondly, through developing community: 'Since many African slaves brought to this country an aesthetic based on the belief that beauty, especially that created in a collective context, should be an integrated aspect of everyday life, enhancing the survival and development of community, these ideas form the basis of African-American aesthetics,' hooks observes. Thirdly, in establishing connections and maintaining links to ancestral past: 'Artistic cultural retentions survived long after other expressions had been lost or forgotten,' hooks writes. 'Though not remembered or cherished for political reasons, they would ultimately be evoked to counter assertions by white supremacists and colonized black minds that there remained not vital living bond between the culture of African-Americans and the cultures of Africa.'[51]

Having set out this relationship between an aesthetics and politics (or, more specifically, an aesthetics of Blackness and racial politics) within these southern

agrarian communities, the essay then goes on to explore how this manifests in other contexts – urban, artistic and academic – including dance, music, theatre; the Black 'talent show'; making and listening to Black music; the Harlem Renaissance; the Black Arts Movement; and progressive African-American discourses on aesthetics as part of a decolonizing agenda. All of which leads to the point in the essay where hooks positions herself as an artist and critic and, in doing so, affirms her commitment to an aesthetic that focuses on the function of beauty and artistry in everyday life and to sharing with her audience, particularly marginalized and oppressed groups, the agency and empowerment that art offers. She writes:

> I want to share the aesthetic inheritance handed down to me by my grandmother and generations of black ancestors, who's ways of thinking about the issue have been globally shaped in the African diaspora and informed by the experience of exile and domination. I want to reiterate the message that 'we must learn to see.' Seeing here is meant metaphysically as heightened awareness and understanding, the intensification of one's capacity to experience reality through the realm of the senses.[52]

And with this we find ourselves returning to the story that began hooks' essay. The story of a house and the lessons she learned from her grandmother, Baba. The understanding that we are shaped by what surrounds us, by objects and by space. We carry this lesson with us in our thoughts as we move into another essay by hooks entitled 'Homeplace (a site of resistance),' which also appears in the collection *Yearning: Race Gender and Cultural Politics*. How can reading and thinking these two essays together suggest how, by means of an aesthetics of Blackness, the act of making home becomes one of community formation and resistance?

Like the previous essay, this essay begins with a story. In this story, hooks is travelling across town to her grandmother's house, to Baba's house. The journey takes her from the 'segregated blackness of our community into a poor white neighbourhood' where she must pass through a 'terrifying whiteness' staring down at her from the porches, faces that seemed to say to her 'danger', 'you do not belong here' and 'you are not safe.'[53] She then describes her relief, the feeling of homecoming and safety when, at last, she reaches Baba's house: 'Such a contrast, that feeling of arrival, of homecoming, this sweetness and the bitterness of that journey, that constant reminder of white power and control.'[54]

This story sets the scene for the development of thought in the remainder of the essay where, and with specific reference to her grandmother's house, hooks considers the task of creating and sustaining a home environment within a

patriarchal white supremacist society – a task that, she notes, typically falls to Black women. In in doing so, hooks stresses the political dimensions of this task:

> Historically, African-American people believed that the construction of a homeplace, however fragile and tenuous (the slave hut, the wooden shack), had a radical political dimension. Despite the brutal reality of racial apartheid, of domination, one's homeplace was the one site where one could freely confront the issue of humanization, where one could resist.[55]

In this respect, for hooks, the act of making a home where people are subjects, not objects, and 'where we could restore ourselves the dignity denied us on the outside in the public world' becomes an act of resistance through which a community of resistance is formed.[56] And to support this understanding she refers to Vietnamese Buddhist monk Thích Nhất Hạnh who, writing about resistance, and particularly resistance to the Vietnam war, writes:

> … resistance, at root, must mean more than resistance against war. It is a resistance against all kinds of things that are like war … So perhaps, resistance means opposition to being invaded, occupied, assaulted and destroyed by the system. The purpose of resistance, here, is to seek the healing of yourself in order to be able to see clearly … I think that communities of resistance would be places where people can return to themselves more easily, where the conditions are such that they can heal themselves and recover their wholeness.[57]

So, we understand that the task of making homeplace, and more specifically the task of Black women making homeplace within a patriarchal white supremacist society, is not simply a matter of service, it is about constructing a safe place: a space to heal, to affirm, to nurture the spirit. A space that enables resistance, making home a community of resistance.

Moreover, hooks observes, this task is shared by Black women not only historically, but also globally: 'This task of making a homeplace, of making home a community of resistance, has been shared by black women globally, especially black women in white supremacist societies.'[58] And this, she argues, is imperative given the fact that one of the 'effective means of white subjugation of black people globally has been the perpetual construction of economic and social structures that deprive many folks of the means to make homeplace.'[59] For ultimately, she recognizes, 'when a people no longer have the space to construct homeplace, we cannot build a meaningful community of resistance.'[60]

FIGURE 1.2 Kreider + O'Leary, GRID Series (No. 2), Chicago, USA.
© Kreider + O'Leary, Digital Image Composite, 2024.

Ornament

The Mecca, designed by Edbrooke and Burnham, was built in 1891 to 1892. Its balustrade, designed by Franklin P. Burnham, resonates with the *art nouveau* movement flourishing at the time. Images of the interior of the Mecca apartment building in Chicago show its high glass roof, light flooding into the vast atrium space and shining down through the four stories of balconies all encased with an ornamental grille – a cast iron cascade of curvilinear forms in the shape of leaves and floral rosettes. We imagine the point where this organic pattern meets the floor of the building, its curving lines moving past the flat plane and extending down into the building's foundation, its layers of concrete and steel; extending deeper still into the ground, through top and other soil, whereupon the patterned lines start weaving into tighter, more intricate, complex patterns as the tendrils turn to roots and the roots make their way through the rich, dark matter that both resists and begets new life.

Black Metropolis

In the twentieth century, what became known as 'The Great Migration'[61] brought a significant influx of African-Americans to Chicago between 1916 and 1970, as the city attracted a significant share of the approximately 7 million African-Americans who left the South during these decades.[62] In Chicago, the Black population soared from 44,103 at the start of the Great Migration to more than 1 million by the end.[63] The city's existing residents were less than welcoming to this new influx of humanity, confining them to an area which became known as the 'Black Belt' on the South Side. They further greeted African-American residential expansion with

outright hostility, ranging from threats and broken windows to house bombings, effectively containing a highly concentrated settlement pattern among Black families and instigating what would become a widespread and institutionalized system of legal and financial exploitation, with heady profits made by preying on the city's most vulnerable population.

Writer and journalist Natalie Y. Moore outlies this trajectory in her book *The South Side: A Portrait of Chicago and American Segregation*.[64] In 1917, the Chicago Real Estate Board appointed a committee to deal with what it described as the 'Negro Problem.' It adopted a report that recommended each block be filled solidly with buildings, with further expansion confined to contiguous blocks to prevent Blacks from resettling in predominantly white areas.[65] This initiated the start of a series of racist urban planning policies that contained the development of neighbourhoods along racial lines and prevented African-Americans from buying or living in certain areas. In the 1920s, the real estate profession incorporated restrictions into its code of ethics and added racially restrictive covenants to property deeds, which prohibited the sale, lease or occupation of a property by African-Americans. These covenants would have a lasting effect, defining the segregation of communities for decades thereafter. In 1930, the Home Owners' Loan Corporation was formed as part of the New Deal, providing funds for refinancing urban mortgages in danger of default.[66] This government programme institutionalized 'redlining': a practice that excluded African-Americans by colour coding Black neighbourhoods based on loan risks.

In 1945, St. Clair Drake and Horace Cayton published *Black Metropolis: A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City*, a landmark sociological account of Black life in Chicago's South Side in the 1930s.[67] Ground-breaking when first published, *Black Metropolis* remains a landmark study of race and urban life in Chicago's South Side, the classic urban ghetto. Drake and Cayton's findings not only offer an analysis of Black migration, settlement, community structure and race relations in the early part of the twentieth century, but also identify five overwhelming concerns of the entirety of the community: 'staying alive, having a good time, praising God, getting ahead, and advancing the race.'[68]

South Side Stroll

Despite the structurally racist challenges to progress, the 'South Side' community excelled at 'having a good time'. The Stroll (the name given to State Street between 26th and 39th Streets) was the best-known street in African-America in the 1910s and 1920s, rivalled only by Seventh and Lenox Avenues in Harlem.[69] This section of State Street was one of the most vibrant areas in the city, the sidewalks crowded with patrons attending the local jazz and blues clubs.

Anchored within this zone of Black virtuosity was the Mecca building, with the DeLuxe club a block south, the Dreamland Cafe two blocks south, and the Elite Club three blocks north.[70] In August 1924 pianist and composer James 'Jimmy' Blyth recorded 'Mecca Flat Blues' with jazz singer Priscilla Steward, immortalizing the building in the local jazz scene, and forever laying down the 'trials, tribulations and tragedies' of its residents. In doing so they marked a change in 'their blend of New Orleans, St. Louis and other jazz expressions into a distinct Chicago idiom.'[71]

The opening of the hugely successful Savoy Ballroom at 47th Street and South Parkway in 1927 created a new centre of gravity for Black nightlife that effectively killed off the Stroll.[72] At the time of its opening, the Savoy Ballroom was the largest dancehall in South Side, with a checkroom that could accommodate 6,000 hats and coats.[73] The space featured primarily jazz artists, including Louis Armstrong, Count Basie, Duke Ellington, Earl Hines, Stan Kenton, Dizzy Gillespie, Billie Holiday, Ella Fitzgerald and Gene Krupa. Meanwhile, at the Pilgrim Baptist Church on East 33rd St. Thomas Dorsey invented what would become known as Gospel Music in the 1930s, in a building designed as a synagogue by Adler & Sullivan. Among those who have sung to the rafters at the church are Mahalia Jackson, Aretha Franklin, The Edwin Hawkins Singers and The Staples Singers.[74] Further down the block, Chess Records started by recording acts performing at their *Club Macambo* at 3905 Cottage Grove after World War II. They engineered blues and R&B hits by Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf, Little Walter, Sonny Boy Williamson and Willie Mabon.

A Photograph

A photograph shows the tenants of the Mecca apartment building in Chicago attending a meeting to protest their eviction. (See Figure 1.2). Handwritten text on the photograph reads 'Mecca Tenants Fight – 1950'. That same year an extended essay on the Mecca appeared in *Harper's Magazine*. Entitled 'The Strangest Place in Chicago', it tells of how the Mecca was once a 'splendid palace', a 'showplace.' Initially built as a hotel ahead of the 1893 World's Fair, it was described as one of the 'finest apartment building[s] in Chicago, if not America.'[75] Then came the fall and, with it, the building became a showplace 'of a very different sort … one of the most remarkable Negro slum exhibits in the world.'[76]

Architectural historian Daniel Bluestone examines this essay in the light of IIT's early 1950's efforts to demolish the Mecca in order to make way for Mies van der Rohe's Crown Hall Building. These efforts were framed, he argues, by just such a distorted historical narrative: a Mecca myth embodying the classical story of a fall from grace. 'In the view of the institute and South Side planners', Bluestone writes, 'the Mecca's fall from grace crystallized and rendered inescapable the logic

of urban renewal and the need for inaugurating a new "golden age".[77] Published in Bluestone's essay, the photograph of the Mecca tenants' fight solemnly decries this Mecca myth. Most of the tenants are seated in orderly rows; some are standing; they are all finely dressed. Their appearance is one of strength, conviction and a quiet solidarity.

What the photograph does not show is how, from 1937 onwards, the Armour Institute (the precursor of IIT) had been slowly and quietly buying up (indirectly, through its employees) dozens of parcels of land and buildings in the South Side, aiming to control the area from Thirty-first Street South to Thirty-fifth Street, from State west to the Rock Island tracks for the future expansion of their Institute. The Armour merged with the Lewis Institute to form the Illinois Institute of Technology in 1940, and they purchased the Mecca building a year later, with the aim to demolish it as quickly as possible. At this time, the tenants of the Mecca were typical of Bronzeville's large and wealthy Black middle-class. Encountering resistance from the Mecca residents, over the next decade the IIT management allowed the building to completely deteriorate, even refusing to install a fire sprinkler system mandated by the Chicago Fire Prevention Bureau, in the hope that the tenants would leave. As Thomas Dyja details in his 2013 history 'The Third Coast', the school wilfully neglecting the building. They 'let it fall apart physically and socially, dropping rents to attract low-income residents who then drove out stable, middle-class families whose flight IIT then brandished as proof that the Mecca had turned into a slum.'[78] Such is the lamentable transition from what was 'the last word in show apartments' to that of a 'slum tenement.'[79]

The residents fought against demolition in the Illinois House and Senate, and brought legal challenges through the Chicago Municipal Court, all to no avail. After a long legal battle, they were ultimately unable to save their homes. In 1952, the Speedway Wrecking Company demolished the Mecca. Nearly three years after that, the Institute's board gathered on the site to break ground for the new Crown Hall Building, which would become the Institute's architecture school, providing another built element in Mies van der Rohe's vision of modern urbanism for the area.[80]

Another Photograph

Published around this time, another photograph shows the face of Emmett Till: the young Black boy from Chicago who, in August of 1955, went to visit relatives in Money, Mississippi where he was shot in the head, his body thrown into the river, for allegedly whistling at a white woman. Till's injured body was returned to his mother, Mamie Till Bradley, who decided that he should have an open casket funeral. Hundreds of thousands of mourners came to view the body in an

unending procession and the photograph, published in the Chicago-based Black newsweekly *Jet*, was accompanied by the following caption: 'Mutilated face of victim was left unretouched by the mortician at the mother's request. She said she wanted "all the world" to witness the atrocity.'[81] However, argues Christina Sharpe, it was not 'all the world' who were called upon to bear witness. The fact that the photograph was published in *Jet* means that it was the Black community, specifically, who were being solicited to bear witness. This is Sharpe's imagining of the imperative behind Mamie Till Bradley's decision to make the image public: '*Look at what they did to my son. This is my son. Look at what they did to him.*'[82] In this respect, the image 'had nothing to do with white consciousness' – it was not, she contends, intended to create empathy or shame from white viewers.[83] In this respect, it can be understood as a call from the 'I' of Mamie Till Bradley to the 'you' of her Black community: a call to be moved by the brutal realism of this photographic image and to respond; so, a call for change.

Why do we invoke this photograph? We invoke it for the work it does to rupture the hegemony of the visual: the work it does to break the 'will to silence' of an occularcentric regime; with this, the work it does to offer another sense of the political context and racial tensions of mid-twentieth-century America and, more specifically, Chicago. We invoke it, also, that we may find a way to hear its call from a position of the 'you' (who becomes 'I') situated here and now and differently; a 'you' who is not the community of 'you' in the original address and who, recognizing and respecting this difference, seeks ways to listen. How do 'we' listen in, through and across difference, becoming 'I' to the 'you' who is beyond us?[84] In turn, how might this 'we' – configured by means of alignment in and through difference – begin to hear the call of this photograph, and respond?

We do not see this photograph, but Fred Moten does, and we listen to him. We hear him speak of the ruptured face of this young boy whose mother, by opening the casket, by publishing the image, by publicly mourning, ushered it into an aesthetic realm where perhaps there is beauty, but – like the blues, also seeming to 'alchemize' or 'figure on the literal, on the absolute fact and reality of so many deaths' – one that can never be said to be worth the dues that were paid, the pain; so, one that can never be disconnected from the political imperative, the force that it had and continues to have, not just through looking but *by way of a sound*.[85]

As he looks, Moten listens. In listening for the phonographic substance of this photograph, Moten presents a direct challenge to Roland Barthes' *Camera Lucida*. For what he is listening for is a powerful *mater*ial resistance to occularcentrism, which brings with it a political ontology premised on a sovereign sense of self. This is what Moten sees in Barthes' theory of photography.[86] And what Moten hears in the photograph is this:

Scream inside and out, out from outside, of the image. Bye, baby. Whistling. Lord, take my soul. Redoubled and reanimating passion, the passion of a seeing that is involuntary and uncontrollable, a seeing that redoubles itself as sound, a passion that is the redoubling of Emmett Till's passion, of whatever passion would redeem, crucifixion, lynching, middle passage. So that looking implies that one desires something for this photograph. So that mourning turns. So that the looker is in danger of slipping, not away, but into something less comfortable than horror – aesthetic judgment, denial, laughter, some out and unprecedented reflection, movement, murder, song. So that there is an inappropriable ecstatics that goes along with this aesthetics – one is taken out, like in screams, fainting, tongues, dreams. So perhaps she was counting on the aesthetic.[87]

Perhaps she – Till's mother – was counting on the aesthetic, Moten says, to move a people into mourning, into moaning. Into a realm where what counts is 'not the simple reemergence of the voice of presence, the visible and graphic word' – by implication, the essential 'truth' of a subject (the 'air' and, later, the 'punctum') that carries, for Barthes, a capacity to wound or to prick – but, rather, the 'rhythmic complication … the extreme and subtle harmonics of various shrieks, hums, hollers, shouts and moans' with its capacity to incite action, insurrection; with its capacity to resist.[88] 'Black mo'nin' is the phonographic content of this photograph', Moten writes.[89] All of which suggests that, in relation to this particular photograph, one is not gazing silently at the 'truth' of another, feeling a wound or prick to the ontological 'I', as does Barthes, gazing at the photographs throughout *Camera Lucida.* No. Listening to the pain of a collective 'we', Moten is one who feels a capacity to move and be moved; not to hold or to own, to be fugitive. There exists, then, an intrinsic relationship between this photograph's *mater*ial resistance and political movement – between the aural aesthetic of the resurrected dead and a force, a movement into new configurations, new alignments and forms of life. All of which suggests that rhythm, resistance and the capacity to generate change are intrinsic to the relationship between aesthetics and racial politics. As Moten says, 'New word, new world.'[90]

Layer III – Inoka

Every day is a reenactment of the creation story. We emerge from dense unspeakable material, through the shimmering power of dreaming stuff.

– Joy Harjo, 'A Postcolonial Tale' from
The Women Who Fell from the Sky[91]

Roots

Writing in 'Revolutionary "Renegades": Native Americans, African-Americans, and Black Indians,' bell hooks recalls another lesson she learned from her grandmother. She describes how, when she was a child, her grandmother encouraged her to identify with the Native Americans, 'the people of the first snow'. These were people with whom she shared a history and a lineage, her grandmother told her. Preceding the 'discovery' of the Americas, this history started with the Africans who came before Columbus and continued after the advent of slavery when members of the two ethnic groups mixed. Moreover, her grandmother imparted, this history and shared lineage created a 'bond of affinity': one that could be traced to and through their shared belief systems. Indeed, both for Africans and Native Americans, 'ancestor acknowledgement was vital to the sustaining of culture and community'; for both, 'a people without ancestors are like a tree without roots.'[92]

And yet, hooks explains, the depths of this common bond between Native Americans and Africans is something that white supremacy has sought to suppress, strategically working to separate the two groups and erase the knowledge of their shared history. For her part, hooks sought to challenge this when, as a child, she watched spectacle after spectacle of white men destroying Native Americans on TV and made a conscious decision to identify with the latter, to be part of a 'counter-perspective, a vision of cross-cultural contact where reciprocity and recognition of the primacy of community are affirmed.'[93] Arguably, through this counter-perspective, this vision of cross-cultural contact, there opens the possibility for another kind of subject to emerge through the viewing experience: not a de-individualized, totalizing 'one', nor a normative, hegemonic 'we', nor a singular, ontologizing 'I', but a subject who emerges within the realm of the sensible through a different poetics of *us*.

Ploughing

Native to Illinois is the tall prairie grass ecosystem including, for example, Big Bluestem prairie grass (*Andropogon furcatus*), Blazingstar (*Liatris spicata*), Thickspike (*Liatris pycnostachya),* Goldenrod, Stiff (*Solidago rigida),* Compass Plant (*Silphium laciniatum)* and Indian Grass *(Sorghastrum nutans*) amongst other species of tall grasses.[94] One striking feature of the native prairie grasses is their deep root system, sometimes reaching over two metres below ground. These grasses once covered all of the land of what is now the Midwestern United States, but that was before the invention of the steel plough saw all of this land cleared and agricultural developments advanced to turn this area into the 'breadbasket' of the 'new nation'. The steel plough was invented by John Deere

in 1838,[95] five years after the 1833 Treaty of Chicago saw all remaining Native American land in Illinois, the Wisconsin Territory and the Michigan Territory ceded by force to the United States government as part of the Indian Removal Act of 1830.[96]

FIGURE 1.3 Kreider + O'Leary, GRID Series (No. 3), Chicago, USA.
© Kreider + O'Leary, Digital Image Composite, 2024.

Illinois

We read that the 'Illinois' or 'Illiniwek' was a prominent Native American community in the seventeenth century. How, at their peak, they included sixteen villages – Kaskaskia, Peoria, Tamaroa, Cahokia, Michigamea, Negawichi, Moingoena, Tapouara, Coiracoentanon, Chinkoa, Chepoussa, Maroa, Michibousa, Ispeminkia, Amonokoa, and Amouahoa – and were considered a 'force'. This did not, however, continue into the eighteenth century when many factors contributed to the demise of the Illinois including disease, war and the division sewn amongst them through European influence. More specifically, we read, it was a split between the Kaskaskia and the Peoria over how to receive European ways of life, and in particular Christianity, that contributed the Illinois' fracture and led, eventually, to their loss of independence.[97]

The historian Christopher Belodeau speaks directly to the religious contact between the people of the 'Illinois Confederacy' and French missionaries. His article, '"They Honor Our Lord among Themselves in Their Own Way": Colonial Christianity and the Illinois Indians,' begins this story in 1666, when the Jesuit missionary Claude Allouez first met the Illinois at his mission Saint Esprit on Chequamegon Bay.[98] Belodeau draws attention to Allouez's amazement, upon this encounter, at finding how receptive the Illinois seemed to be of the Christian religion, pointing to a passage in Allouez's writings where he expresses enthusiasm at discovering

how the Illinois 'worship one who is preeminent above the others … because he is the maker of all things' and noting how this 'greatly facilitates their conversion' to Christianity.[99] All of this leads Allouez to think that he needed simply to replace the 'Great Spirit' of the Illinois belief system with the Christian God of his own in order to effect conversation. And, thinking that he had effectively done just this, Allouz later wrote of his encounters with the Illinois that 'this Mission is the one where I have labored least and accomplished the most.'[100]

Beladou identifies the major factor that may have motivated the people who made up the Illinois Confederation to embrace Christianity, drawing attention to how war with Iroquois, Sioux and other tribes had left the Illinois devastated, thus more open to embracing the French trade and knowledge in the hope that it could bring them protection and power. However, the overall purpose of his study is to show that what appeared to be a swift acceptance of Christianity by the Illinois was, in fact, a complex understanding of Christianity through indigenous belief. Indeed, while the French missionaries assumed that, having been introduced to Christianity, the Illinois simply replaced their Great Spirit with the Christian God, Bilodeau describes how, in fact, the Illinois embraced the Christian God only through their cosmogonic worldview. How so?

We read how the Illinois comprehended their world through their physical surroundings where all things – people, animals, plants, stones – were understood to be imbued with '*manitou*', a word meaning 'power', 'mystery', 'medicine' and, most importantly, 'spirit'. For the Illinois, there were overarching *manitous*, those who affected the whole group, and personal *manitous*, those who could be accessed via ritual and dream. As with a number of the Algonquian Indians of the Great Lakes region, the sun was a central *manitou* called *Manitoua assouv* or 'Great Spirit'. All of which leads Bilodeau, here drawing on A. Irving Hallowell's work on the Ojibwes, to suggest that, for the Illinois, being in the world means being in relation with *manitous*, who can be understood as 'other-than-human persons.'[101] Within these terms, there is no distinction between material and spiritual, the natural and supernatural, as in the European Christian worldview. There is, however, one trait that distinguishes *manitous* from humans, if not in kind, then in degree: the fact that they can change shape.

Ultimately, it is his understanding of the Illinois worldview that leads Beladou to conclude that if the Illinois did embrace the Christian God, it was less as transcendent being and more through an understanding the Christian God in terms of *manitou*. This means that if they did link their sun god, the Great Spirit *Manitoua assouv* with the Christian God, as Allouz assumed, they did so in the belief 'that the Christian "Man-God" inhabited a human's body on earth,

mirroring the existence of an Illinois *manitou*.'[102] Similarly, in revering Christian objects – the church, the cross – this was with a belief that the objects, themselves, had *manitous*. All of which introduces an aspect of resistance into the apparent ease with which the French missionaries understood the Illinois' to accept and to worship their Christian God – a resistance inherent in the belief system of the Illinois, accessible to those in the community through ritual, myth, story and dream.

The article concludes with a description of how, having been welcomed onto their lands, the French proceeded to devastate Illinois villages with disease, use Illinois warriors to fight French wars, reduce Illinois births by demanding monogamy, introduce the Illinois to 'the scourge of brandy', and force any Illinois unwilling to cooperate to leave their settlements.[103] As a result, the population of the Illinois dropped from approximately 9800 people in 1677 to 2300 in 1756.

Inoka

An article by David J. Costa, member of the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma Language Committee, looks at the etymological roots of the word 'Illinois'. Used as a place name for the state of Illinois, Costa looks at how the word is also considered the legitimate name for the area's indigenous people. Notably, Costa's article was published 'in the wake of the recent retiring of "Chief Illiniwek", the mascot and official symbol of the University of Illinois', and his argument begins with a quick internet search revealing a considerable amount of dubious scholarship claiming, for example, that the etymology of 'Illinois' and 'Illiniwek' lies in an Algonquin word meaning 'tribe of superior men' and that 'Illinois' is the French version of their own name 'Illinikwek' meaning 'men' or 'people'.[104] Costa swiftly dismisses such claims. Instead, he argues, to discover the 'true' etymology of the word Illinois it is necessary to consult the oldest records available, when the name first appeared. These oldest records are the Jesuits' Illinois language records of late-seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries along with statements from French missionaries and explorers of the period.

A close look at these records leads Costa to the following conclusions: that the name Illinois originates from a verb meaning 'speak the regular way', borrowed into the Ottawa and Algonquin from a neighbouring dialect; that this name does not mean 'men', much less 'tribe of superior men'; that 'Illinioüek' is the noun form of this word in Ottawa, and that Illiniwek is simply an anglicized rendering of this form; finally, that *none* of these terms were the Illinois's name for themselves, which was 'Inoka' – a native ethnonym almost completely absent from the literature due to it's not being contained within French historical records.[105]

Turtle Island

'Turtle Island' is the name that many Algonquian- and Iroquoian-speaking peoples use to refer to what is now called the continent of North America. Turtle Island comes into being mytho-poetically through the practice of indigenous storytelling where it is recounted as either a creation story or a re-creation story. We read a version of the creation story at the start of *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants* by Robin Wall Kimmerer, a Native American botanist and author.[106] Elsewhere, we read a narrative outline of the re-creation story in *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back: Stories of Nishnaabeg Re-creation, Resurgence and a New Emergence* by Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, who is a Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg scholar, writer and artist. Listening to both writers, we hear the story of Turtle Island.

In the creation myth, Turtle Island begins with a fall. Here a pregnant woman is falling through a hole in the celestial world, in Sky World, and down to the waters below. In her hands she is holding a clutch of branches and seeds that she grabbed to stop herself falling. And with the help of a flock of geese, the women lands safely on the back of a turtle, where she floats. Soon she is joined by others – loons, otters, swans, beavers and fish of all kinds, all of whom want to help. Elsewhere, in the re-creation myth, Turtle Island begins with a flood. Here Gzhwe Mnidoo, the Great Spirit, has seen that his teachings of living in harmony are not being followed, so he decides to flood the earth and start again. After this great flood there is only one human left, Waynabozhoo, who takes turns floating on a log with other, animals and birds, including Loon, Helldiver, Otter, Mink, all of whom want to help. Although the beginnings differ in the creation story and the re-creation story, each arrives at this point in the water, and both proceed from there. In doing so, they tell how, working together, the human and the animals make land, they make Turtle Island, through the act of putting mud on Turtle's back. But first, we hear, they must obtain the mud.

The mud is at the bottom of the deep, deep water. So, in each story, each of the animals takes a turn to dive beneath the water, but none succeed. The mud is too far down. Similarly, in each story, it is only after everyone else has tried that Muskrat offers to go. Of course, all the animals think that Muskrat is too small and will never succeed, but Muskrat dives down anyway and, after a time – a long time – the animals see something rising to the surface of the water. It is Muskrat, who had in fact reached the bottom, but who ran out of air on the way up. Still, there is a little ball of earth in his paw. (In some versions it is just a grain of sand, but it is enough.) At this point in the story either Skywoman or Waynabozhoo places this bit of mud on Turtle's back, after which everyone begins to dance and to sing

in gratitude and in thanksgiving for Muskrat, whose effort and sacrifice they both recognize and honour. And as they dance, as they sing, the earth grows and grows in all directions. So it is that a new land comes into being, resting on Turtle's back.

After telling her version of the Skywoman story, Kimmerer informs us that this story, shared by the 'original peoples throughout the Great Lakes, is a constant star in the constellation of teachings we call the Original Instructions.'[107] And while she notes that each person hearing these would necessarily understand the instructions singularly, taken together they would have been a source of identity and orientation, of ethical guidance and teaching, and of ceremony, by which she means ways of 'remembering to remember'. Kimmerer then attempts to draw out lessons from the Skywoman Falling story, offering it to those in her present context – that in which she is writing, and in which we are reading. In doing so, she draws attention to the fact that Skywoman, falling from Sky World, was an immigrant: one who arrived with nothing except for a handful of seeds; one who accepted the gifts and generosity of the animals who helped her; one who, in turn, shared the gifts that she had brought. Falling into her new world, Skywoman did not recognize a hierarchy of beings. Instead, Kimmerer says, she respected the animals and the plants with whom she would be making a home, with whom she hoped to flourish. At this point Kimmerer asks her readers: 'can we all, understand the Skywoman story not as an artifact from the past but as instructions for the future? Can a nation of immigrants once again follow her example to become native, to make a home?'[108]

If reading Kimmerer teaches us the lesson of Skywoman Falling, reading Simpson teaches us a lesson of story. More specifically, Simpson teaches us the importance of storytelling as a decolonial strategy – one that, she says, differs from western liberation and social movement theories in that it emphasizes practice:

> Our Elders and Knowledge Holders have always put great emphasis into *how* things are done. This reinforces the idea that it is our own tools, strategies, values, processes and intellect that are going to build our new house. While theoretically, we have debated whether Audre Lorde's 'the master's tools can dismantle the master's house,' I am interested in a different question. I am not so concerned with how we dismantle the master's house, that is, which sets of theories we use to critique colonialism; but I am very concerned with how we (re)build our own house, or our own houses. I have spent enough time taking down the master's house, and now I want most of my energy to go into visioning and building our new house.[109]

For this, story is key. More specifically, Creation Stories are key. This is because creation stories set the 'theoretical framework' from within which to interpret

other stories, teachings and experiences, including those thrust upon Simpson and others by what she calls 'cognitive imperialism'. What is more, she explains, everything that 'we need to know is encoded in the structure, content and context of these stories and the relationships, ethics and responsibilities required to *be* our own Creation Story.'[110] In this respect, storytelling is 'at its core decolonizing.'[111] But more than this, Simpson suggests, storytelling – and particularly in the context of oral storytelling, with a group of people in a particular context – has a *transformative* capability. Firstly, the physical act of gathering 'reinforces the web of relationships that stitch our communities together.'[112] Then, within this gathering, within this web of relation, people find their place in the story and with one another. Meanwhile, the storytelling takes cues from the context, weaving this into the story to create meaning specific to the group and to the site. Through all of this, she says, the relationship between storyteller and audience becomes dynamic, the lines between individual and collective are blurred, the situation gains transformative power and emergence becomes possible.

Although we are not part of their indigenous communities, we hear these lessons – the lessons of Skywoman, the lessons of story – as readers of Kimmerer and Simpson's texts. It is from this position that we listen. It is from this position that we learn. And it is from this position that we begin to wonder how these stories might become teachings for a community to come.
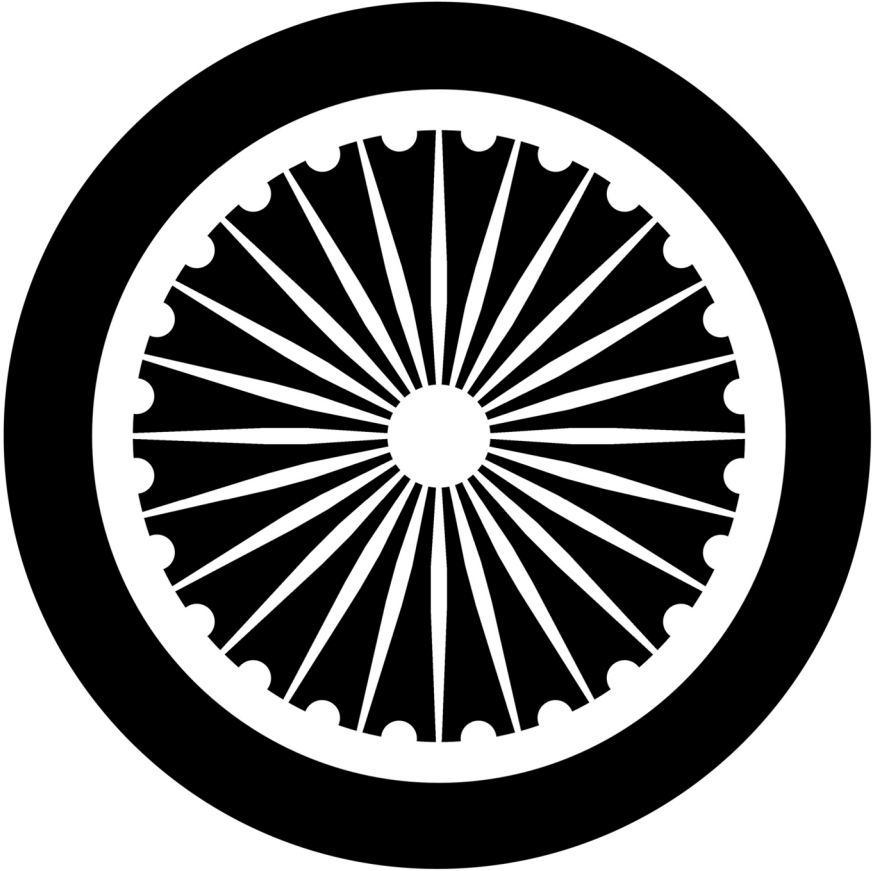
Gandhi's Salt March, Daily Practice of Spinning and Intermittent Fasts

An Ethics of Resistance in Three Acts

A Morning in Ahmedabad

We arrive in Ahmedabad in the middle of the night. Energized by the prospect of exploring a new city, we then set off on a walk just as the sun begins to rise over the rooftops. Meandering through the oldest part of the city, we encounter people making preparations for the day ahead, dogs asleep in the street, a long-horned cow slowly weaving her way through the early morning traffic. Drawn to the water, we cross the Sabarmati River over Nehru Bridge. The bridge, we find, is lined with flags of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the party of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. We move onto the newly constructed Sabarmati Riverfront. This large urban regeneration project has transformed the west bank of the river, displacing many of the city's migrant and poor population who had been living there in informal settlements. Realized during Modi's tenure as state Chief Minister of Gujarat, this project and its resulting displacement can be seen as emblematic of the 'new India' with its growing ambitions deepening divisions.

Further upriver is M. K. Gandhi's Sabarmati Ashram. Now a museum and tourist attraction, the ashram previously served as one of the main centres of the Indian freedom struggle.[1] The ashram was the point of departure for one of Gandhi's most significant political actions: his infamous Salt March, which ended with Gandhi's gesture of picking up a handful of salt upon his arrival at Dandi beach. Founded in 1917 as a hub for Gandhi's 'experiments with truth,' the ashram provided a space for the study of the *Bhagavad Gita* as well as for the daily practice of spinning cotton, both of which were intrinsic to the development of Gandhi's political thought and action. As well, the ashram was the site of Gandhi's first hunger strike in India when he 'fasted until death' for a rise in the wages of mill workers in Ahmedabad.

Understanding Gandhi's Salt March, daily practice of spinning and intermittent fasts as political acts, this chapter looks at how each of these acts were central to Gandhi's formation of community as an act of resistance. This chapter is structured accordingly into three sections: 'Act 1 – Walking', 'Act 2 – Spinning', 'Act 3 – Fasting'. In each of these sections, thoughts revolve around Gandhi's political philosophy and actions. Intrinsic to this are the principles of *yajna* ('sacrifice') and *ahimsa* ('non-violence'): principles that were intrinsic both to Gandhi's foundation of the Sabarmati Ashram and, related to this, his development of *satyagraha* ('truth force') as a particular form of non-violent resistance. Through these ideas revolving between thought and action, and drawing from Gandhi's annotation of the *Bhagavad Gita,* we look at how Gandhi's vision of an independent India was informed by the philosophy of *karma* yoga, the yoga of action. All of which links

to Gandhi's walking, spinning and fasting that, together, demonstrate an ethics of resistance in three acts.

Act 1 – Walking

Salt

Salt is the only substance of mineral origin that humans consume. No thing and no one is harmed in the making of salt. Salt is thus a sign of *ahimsa,* the ancient Indian principle and ethical practice of non-violence.[2]

FIGURE 2.1 Kreider + O'Leary, CHARKHA Series, Salt March 'Dandi Path', Gujarat, India. (HD Video Documentation).
© Kreider + O'Leary, Digital Image Composite, 2024.

The Salt March

The Salt March, also known as the Dandi March or Salt Satyagraha, was a critical event in the Indian independence movement led by Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, playing a crucial role in mobilizing the masses against the British salt monopoly and highlighting the injustice of the salt tax imposed by the British colonial government.

The primary objective of the Salt March was to challenge the British monopoly on salt production and sales, which imposed a heavy tax on the Indian people. As salt was an essential commodity, Gandhi believed that the salt tax was a symbol

of the economic exploitation and oppression faced by the people of India under British rule.

The route of the Salt March, which we followed on our visit to Gujarat in 2017, is as follows:

Sabarmati Ashram – 12 March 1930
Day 1. Ahmedabad to Anslali: 12 March 1930
Day 2. Aslali to Navagam: 13 March 1930
Day 3. Navagam to Matar: 14 March 1930
Day 4. Matar to Nadiad: 15 March 1930
Day 5. Nadiad to Anand: 16 March 1930
Day 6. Rest Day in Anand: 17 March 1930
Day 7. Anand to Borsad: 18 March 1930
Day 8. Borsad to Kareli (Crossing the Mahi River): 19 March 1930
Day 9. Rest Day in Kareli: 20 March 1930
Day 10. Kareli to Ankhi: 21 March 1930
Day 11. Ankhi to Amod: 22 March 1930
Day 12. Amod to Samni: 23 March 1930
Day 13. Rest Day in Samni: 24 March 1930
Day 14. Samni to Derol: 25 March 1930
Day 15. Derol to Ankleshwar (Crossing the Narmada River): 26 March 1930
Day 16. Ankleswar to Mangrol: 27 March 1930
Day 17. Mangrol to Umracchi: 28 March 1930
Day 18. Umracchi to Bhatgam: 29 March 1930
Day 19. Bhatgam to Delad: 30 March 1930
Day 20. Rest Day in Delad: 31 March 1930
Day 21. Delad to Surat (Crossing the Tapi River): 1 April 1930
Day 22. Surat to Vanz: 2 April 1930
Day 23. Vanz to Navsari: 3 April 1930
Day 24. Navsari to Matwad: 4 April 1930
Day 25. Metwad to Dandi: 5 April 1930
Dandi Beach – 6 April 1930[3]

During the course of the Salt March, Gandhi walked for three weeks and covered over 240 miles. As the march progressed, he was joined by an ever-increasing number of followers. Upon reaching the coastal village of Dandi on 6 April 1930, Gandhi reached down and picked up a handful of salt: a gesture of defiance that effectively signalled that he and his group of followers were producing salt from seawater, thereby technically breaking the law. This symbolic act was intended to demonstrate their collective refusal to submit to unjust laws and a commitment to achieving independence through non-violent means.

The Salt March had a profound impact on the Indian independence movement. It drew international attention to the Indian struggle for freedom and significantly increased the momentum of this movement. The campaign, which was part of Gandhi's larger campaign of *satyagraha*, demonstrated the power of non-violent resistance in the face of oppressive colonial rule.

FIGURE 2.2 Kreider + O'Leary, CHARKHA Series, Salt March 'Dandi Path', Gujarat, India. (HD Video Documentation).
© Kreider + O'Leary, Digital Image Composite, 2024.

Satyagraha

In his book *Unconditional Equality: Gandhi's Religion of Resistance*, the historian Ajay Skaria talks about the origins of the word *satyagraha*.[4] We hear that the word is a neologism: one that appeared in Gandhi's vocabulary in 1908 as a means of describing his ongoing campaign of anti-colonial actions that had, up to that point, taken place in South Africa, and that he wished to extend to an Indian context. Prior to the emergence of *satyagraha* as a term, Skaria explains, Gandhi had been using the term 'passive resistance' to describe the struggles that he was then leading against the South African colonial regime. However, dissatisfied with this term, he invited readers of the *Indian Opinion*, which he edited, to submit Gujarati equivalents. In the January 1908 issue of the periodical, a correspondent wrote to suggest the word *sadagraha*. Gandhi welcomed the term, although he replaced the prefix *sad*, meaning 'good', with *satya*. *Sat*, we are told, often translates into 'being', while the suffix *ya* carries the sense of accomplishment, whereby *satya* comes to mean a 'fidelity to being' or sense of 'truth'. Meanwhile, Skaria tells us, *agraha* translates as force, understood in terms

of a force that occurs as a seizing, a taking hold, or a firmness. *Satyagraha* thus means a firmness in the commitment to truth.

Ahimsa

From the start, *satyagraha* was linked – and would become, for Gandhi, synonymous with – another word, *ahimsa*, which links etymologically to non-violence [*a*, non; *himsa*, violence]. Such an understanding of *ahimsa* by way *satyagraha* suggests that non-violence is, in fact, an active force: one that has the possibility of establishing a new order, a new rule – not simply a 'weak' form of resisting a prevailing one.

In this respect, *satyagraha* is distinct from forms of civil disobedience, with which it is often associated. For the civil disobedient, the goal with any act of resistance is to eventually be given the same 'rights' or 'civil liberties' as others hold within a given system. The civil disobedient does not seek to change or replace hegemonic order so much as to establish their own place in it. In contrast, for the *satyagrahi*, any decision to disobey a particular law is based on the understanding that such a law upholds a rule or order that the *satyagrahi* considers unjust, refuses to be a part of, and seeks to replace with a new rule or order.

For Gandhi, this new rule, new order, is *swaraj*. Moreover, the act of establishing this new order – through mobilizing *ahimsa* in all actions, both personal and collective, thereby engaging the force of non-violence understood in terms of *satyagraha* – is understood as a means towards freedom.[5] But what do we mean here by 'freedom'? Moreover, how does this understanding of freedom alongside Gandhi's emphasis on the means (rather than the end) of its attainment distinguish Gandhi's politics? The key to understanding this lies in the meaning of *swaraj*.

Swaraj

We see the word *swaraj* in the title of Gandhi's political treatise *Hind Swaraj*. Perhaps the most concise formulation of Gandhi's political thought, *Hind Swaraj* takes the form of a dialogue between two figures, the Reader and the Editor. The Reader embodies Gandhi's political interlocutors – those who would seek to win political independence through any means necessary, and who would propose overturning the British while still maintaining their parliamentary system or rule of law. The Editor, meanwhile, embodies Gandhi's thinking: that true independence – more than that, true freedom – can only be attained through non-violent means; more specifically, *satyagraha*.

The title of *Hind Swaraj* is often translated into 'Indian Home Rule' such that *swaraj* connotes 'home rule'. It is this connotation of word *swaraj* that the Reader of *Hind Swaraj* invokes when arguing for an Indian nation-state governed by an Indian parliament, understanding this as political freedom. However, for Gandhi, whose ideas are voiced by the Editor, *swaraj* does not simply 'home rule' understood in terms of a replication of British rule by Indians. Rather, and returning to the etymological roots of the word – *swa* (meaning self, with connotations of proper and ownmost); *raj* (meaning rule) – what Gandhi means when invoking the word *swaraj* is the proper rule of the self; that is, 'self-rule, self-government'.[6] And this involves *satyagraha*.

Indeed, for Gandhi, it is only through overcoming 'body force' with 'truth force' or 'soul force' – and this through self-consciously adapting non-violent means or *ahimsa* [*a*, non; *himsa*, violence] – that one can find true freedom, with freedom here being understood both in the spiritual sense (*moksha*) and the political sense (*swaraj*), and with the two of these being, for Gandhi, necessarily interrelated.[7] In this sense, *satyagraha* was, for Gandhi, both the basis not only of his politics, but also his religion [*dharma*].

The Vow

Ultimately, for Gandhi *satyagraha* was more than just a political campaign, it was *dharma*, a way of being, a 'form of life'. It was, to use British philosopher Howard Caygill's expression, the foundation for 'constituting a resistant subjectivity.' And the key to understanding this lies in the vow.

Writing about the Gandhian vow in his book *On Resistance: A Philosophy of Defiance*, Caygill draws attention to Chapter XI of *Satyagraha in South Africa* where Gandhi describes the situation surrounding the publication of the 'Draft Asiatic Law Amendment Ordinance.'[8] In this law, Caygill writes, Gandhi saw nothing but hatred for Indians. Having seen how such hatred resulted in the brutal treatment of the Zulus resisting British colonial power in South Africa, Gandhi knew that the ordinance posed a question of life or death for the Indian community. It was this, Caygill notes, that proved the catalyst for his invention of *Satyagraha*. For up until that point, Gandhi's tactics of resistance including memorials, representations and petitions had failed; however, here he knew he could not fail: 'the community must not sit with folded hands,' he writes. 'Better die than submit to such a law. But how were we to die? What should we dare and do so that there would be nothing before us except the choice of victory or death?'[9]

So it was that on 11 September 1906 – at a meeting Gandhi would later describe in an essay on 'The Advent of Satyagraha' – that Gandhi and his fellow resisters

took an oath: to resist the ordinance or to die. Theirs was to be a pledge unto death: 'to die but not to submit to the law.'[10] And herein lies the strength of the *satyagrahi*. For, as Caygill notes, the strength of the resistant subject comes from the courage of being vowed to death. Through this vow, the *Satyagrahist* is dead to the world – freed from the world – but in this death (out of this world) still able to carry on an extended duration of struggle with those who have made it.

The Warrior's Gift

Ajay Skaria also sees the strength inherent in the *satyagrahi*'s vow, which he likens to the warrior's gift. To give oneself the gift of one's own death, to relinquish self-sovereignty, is both the ultimate act of self-sacrifice, and the key to freedom. All of which returns us to *swaraj* – and here a quote from Gandhi from 1921 is apt:

> I have been collecting descriptions of swaraj. One of these would be: swaraj is the abandonment of the fear of death. A nation which allows itself to be influenced by the fear of death cannot attain swaraj, and cannot retain it if somehow attained.[11]

Gandhi's idea of *swaraj* – of 'own rule' or 'self-government' – thus requires one to die willingly; through this, to attain freedom.

FIGURE 2.3 Kreider + O'Leary, CHARKHA Series, Salt March 'Dandi Path', Gujarat, India. (HD Video Documentation).
© Kreider + O'Leary, Digital Image Composite, 2024.

'No Politics Without Religion'

For Gandhi, then, there could be 'no politics without religion'.[12] This clearly distinguishes his political thought and activism from that developed in the context of Western liberal democracies predicated on secularism and the idea of an absolute equality based on measure.[13] More than that, the fact that Gandhi's 'religion' of *satyagraha* involves a 'self-surrender', fully relinquishing any sovereignty over the self or others, distinguishes it from all formal religions: those that are marked by the surrendering of the self to the sacred. Indeed, as Ajay Skaria argues, 'surrender without subordination' is the basic tenet of *satyagraha*. Unique to Gandhi's political thinking and action, this is key to understanding *satyagraha* as a mode of political resistance as much as to appreciating the formation of a non-violent resistant subjectivity that is the *Satyagrahi*.

A Form of Life

So, from its beginnings in 'passive resistance', *satyagraha* comes to mean 'truth force' – or, as Gandhi will also come to understand it, 'love-force' and 'soul force' – whereby it is understood both as a form of non-violent action and a form of life.[14]

*

A Ritual Order

The gods desire to leave their earthly dwelling and ascend to the sky, which was empty and free of all difficulty. So, they developed a sacrifice – a ritual order – that would allow them to go. But any kind of order, says Roberto Calasso, an Italian thinker of myth and modern consciousness, involves eliminating a part of the original material: 'That part is the residue. What is to be done with it?', Calasso asks. 'It can be treated as the principal enemy of order, as the constant threat of a relapse to the status that existed before order,' he responds. 'Or as something that, going beyond order, ensures the permanence of a contact with the continuum that preceded order itself.'[15]

Walking

To walk is to fall, just a little. The act of putting one foot in front of another is, in fact, an act of resisting the otherwise inevitable surrender of oneself to the force of gravity. In this sense, to walk is a counterforce – an act of will.

A Snail's Pace

Gandhi walked everywhere – he was a renowned walker. This can be understood as a personal preference. It can also be seen as a political act, particularly when viewed in the light of his writing in *Hind Swaraj*. 'Good travels at a snail's pace – ' argues the Editor, reflecting Gandhi's position: 'it can, therefore, have little to do with the railways. To build a house takes time, but its destruction takes none. So the railways can become a distributing agency for the evil one only.'[16] Gandhi's preference for walking can thus be understood as refusal of the railway system as associated with Western or modern civilization's emphasis on technology and speed, itself wrapped up in the triumphalist myth of progress.

And yet, argues the Reader, voicing Gandhi's political antagonists, the advantages of the railways lie in their seeding a new spirit of nationalism for India. The Editor dismisses this outright. India was already one nation before the English arrived, he argues. True, he acknowledges, there were differences, but people were able to navigate these differences as they traversed the country, slowly. People 'travelled throughout India either on foot or in bullock-cars. They learned one another's languages, and there was no aloofness between them,' says the Editor.[17] For Gandhi, to navigate a network of places, including holy places, by foot – in doing so, learning language, acquiring custom, doing pilgrimage – figures the Indian nation as 'one undivided land made so by nature.'[18]

Continuity Across Difference

In his book *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism,* Benedict Anderson proposes the following definition of the nation: 'it is an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign.'[19] He goes on to clarify: 'It is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.'[20] With this in mind, it is striking that, in Gandhi's political imaginary, the Indian nation is inseparable from the land and its navigation. That is to say, the Indian nation is imagined as a continuity across difference – a continuity that is navigated, of necessity, slowly, step-by-step, as one navigates between towns or villages when travelling by foot.

Let us compare this with the Indian nation as this is figured through the railway system. More specifically, let us compare Gandhi's recognition and embrace of a continuity across difference, and his own willingness to engage with this through the slower pace of the walk, with the overriding of difference as this is embodied

by the railway system. Through this system, differences between places, people and languages are experienced abruptly as people alight at various nodal connections, the destination prioritized over the journey. In this sense, the railway's speed of connectivity occludes difference, homogenizes place, and prioritizes ends over means. Metaphorically, the railway is thus emblematic of Western or modern civilization's emphasis on speed and telos; alongside this, liberal democracy's homogenizing impulse – its occlusion of difference through abstract measure, which manifests in many ways, chief amongst them the 'absolute equality' attributed to each individualized subject, albeit only those recognized as 'citizen'.

Rule by Measure

At the end of her talk entitled 'Earth Democracy' for the Mind and Life Institute,[21] the environmentalist, physicist and eco-feminist Vandana Shiva is asked by an audience member how she thinks bringing contemplative practice into relation with science can usher us into a new way of thinking. Shiva begins her response by emphasizing that the Cartesian paradigm, to which she had referred in her talk, both destroys relationship (because nothing is related to anything else) and quality (because of the emphasis on measure).[22] However, she says, when she relates to another with compassion – as is the ethic engendered through contemplative practice – this is a relation of *quality*: one that lends itself to an experience of true *relationship*. There is no need, therefore, for a 'third party' coming and measuring it. At which point she says:

> There was a Britisher who said 'We came and conquered India with a sword in one hand and a yardstick in the other.' So, yardsticks have always been colonial empire building. Making maps. Quantifying. And in a way we are going through the ultimate quantification right now. Everything we are saying is being quantified into tiny little bits of data and then that is being communicated.[23]

Not only is Shiva's remark here relevant to thinking about how measure operates within a colonial context, such as India before its independence, it allows us to see our contemporary global condition in the light of a colonial situation and, with it, the rule by measure; more specifically, the rule by measure of the 'Third Party'.

It is this rule that Gandhi resisted – a resistance embodied in his refusal of the railways as well as his scepticism with regard to other systems of Western order (or, following Foucault, one could say 'discipline'). 'Railways, lawyers and doctors have impoverished the country,' argues the Editor of *Hind Swaraj*, speaking the Gandhian position, 'so much so that, if we do not wake up in time, we shall be ruined.'[24]

Hands and Feet

The rule by abstract measure stands in contrast with Gandhi's political imaginary as it is figured through the act of walking, whose limit and measure is the body's own, hands and feet, and whose emphasis is on a continuity across difference. Let us call this a politics as governed by *swaraj* or 'own rule'. And let us say that it is this imagined nation that came into figuration through Gandhi's act of walking from the Sabarmati Ashram to Dandi Beach, which he finally embarked upon in the Spring of 1930 after months of deliberating what was to be the next act in his ongoing campaign of *satyagraha*.

FIGURE 2.4 Kreider + O'Leary, CHARKHA Series, Salt March 'Dandi Path', Gujarat, India. (HD Video Documentation).
© Kreider + O'Leary, Digital Image Composite, 2024.

The Example

The story of Gandhi's Salt March is told by Thomas Weber in his book *On the Salt March: The Historiography of Mahatma Gandhi's March to Dandi.* By the turn of the century, Weber tells us, the cost of salt – including the cost of its taxation – was eighty times the cost of its production, which equalled approximately two days of income per person. 'I want to deprive the government of its illegitimate monopoly of salt,'[25] says Gandhi to his audience in Ahmedabad. 'My aim is to get the salt tax abolished. That is for me is one step, the first step, towards full freedom.'[26] So he sets the stage for the next action in his *Satyagraha* campaign.

The action was intended to confront the tax on salt imposed by the British government on the people of India – a tax that, serving as a means of direct taxation, hit the poor the hardest. As Weber explains, the fact of its targeting the poor alongside the question of whether it was right for a foreign government to tax a naturally occurring substance meant that any action targeting the salt tax was laden with symbolic value.[27]

Gandhi was joined on the Salt March by seventy-nine fellow *Satyagrahis*, all of whom had been living and working – training – with Gandhi in the Sabarmati Ashram. On 12 March 1930, they set off from Ahmedabad to Dandi Beach where they arrived three weeks later. Once there, Gandhi reached down and picked up a handful of salt, raising it into the air. With this gesture, the example is set. Others followed. Henceforth, they will refuse British salt. Instead, they will make their own.

Act 2 – Spinning

A First Act

One is born into the world, a first act. Something new manifests; our first act is poetic. At this point, the beginning, we appear uniquely through body and voice. The baby cries and opens up space. All eyes receive them. In this respect, our natality coincides with the birth of politics, which is both spatial and aesthetic.

A question arises. *Who are you?* It sounds out and carries back. From now on, all words and all deeds – all speech and all action – will issue forth and carry back to this point. We can now say that, if being born into the world is our first act, all subsequent acts bind us to it. A yoke. And in and through such bondage, we participate in the making of the world, becoming who we are.[28]

The Art of Storytelling

It is the role of the storyteller to tell the story of who we are. So argues Walter Benjamin in 'The Storyteller', whereupon he makes a comparison between the storyteller and the craftsman.[29] This comparison is made by way of a precious stone and a piece of embroidered silk. More precisely, by way of the artisan's encounter with each.

In this encounter, stone and silk move beyond the respective boundaries of recognition and habitual use where they are met on different terms. These terms,

we are told, derive from 'a certain accord of the soul, the eye, and the hand of someone who was born to perceive them and evoke them in his own inner self.'[30] The soul, the eye and the hand – a connection is made; a connection that becomes an interaction, and this determines a practice. This is the practice of the artisan, the craftsman, for whom a stone becomes prophetic, and a piece of silk acquires mystical depths.

We are told that a similar coordination of soul, eye and hand characterizes the art of storytelling. 'After all,' we hear, 'storytelling, in its sensory aspect, is by no means a job for the voice alone. Rather, in genuine storytelling the hand plays a part which supports what is expressed in a hundred ways with its gestures trained by work.'[31] Through this coordination of soul, eye and hand, the storyteller meets their material, which is the raw experience of human life, and fashions it into something solid, something useful, something unique; into the story of who we are, which is also the story of the world we make.

And yet, says Benjamin, who is making this comparison between the artisan (the craftsman) and the storyteller, we are losing our familiarity with this practice. The year is 1936. Industrialization is ubiquitous and the work that was once done by hand, training its myriad gestures, is now done by machine. 'The role of the hand in production has become more modest, and the place filled in storytelling lies waste,' Benjamin writes.[32] So, it would appear, the West had lost its gestures.

How the West First Lost its Gestures

Calasso tells the story of how the West first lost its gestures. It is the story of Socrates' death. In this story, the old philosopher is sentenced to die and spends the month before his death composing hymns, adapting fables. This strange recourse from *logos* to *mythos* marks his final days.

On the very last day, an official arrives with the hemlock to drink. *May I pour a libation?* Socrates asks. *We prepared just enough for it to be drunk*, he is told. Just enough to die. Socrates, understanding, takes the drink and says a simple prayer. He will forget the libation, the sacrificial practice that requires a part of any drink to be offered to the gods before it is drunk: a gesture of giving way to, thereby connecting with the invisible; a mediality with the divine. And with this, we are told, 'the link between gesture and word, for the Greeks, had been broken. From then on, the word stands alone, self-contained, orphaned and sovereign'.[33]

FIGURE 2.5 Kreider + O'Leary, CHARKHA Series, Salt March 'Dandi Path', Gujarat, India. (HD Video Documentation).
© Kreider + O'Leary, Digital Image Composite, 2024.

Notes on Gesture (or, Another Story of How the West Lost its Gestures)

'By the end of the nineteenth century, the Western bourgeoisie had definitely lost its gestures,' we read in the essay 'Notes on Gesture' by Giorgio Agamben.[34] Written in 1992, we can hear in these notes an echo of the loss of gesture that is described in Benjamin's 1936 essay.[35] But if there we learned the cause, here we learn the effects of this loss.

We learn that the loss of gesture turned into an obsession, its recovery becoming the hallmark of the age. Poetry, the novel, dance, the compulsive collecting of Aby Warburg – all across the arts, Agamben notes, one could find Western society's attempts to recover their lost gestures. And nowhere, we are told, more so than in cinema. Indeed, if the storyteller's tale taught us that an increase in mechanical production through industrialization contributed to a loss of gesture, here we are told that mechanical reproduction became its ultimate compensation. But the question remains, as it is posed in these notes: *What is a gesture?* To which we add a further question: *What are the implications for the loss of gesture of its subsequent resurrection on-screen?*

A Declaration

In 1918 Gandhi declares that it is possible to win *swaraj*, which translates as 'self-rule' or 'own rule', through the *charkha*, the spinning wheel. In October 1921, Gandhi himself vows to spin daily. From that point on, he will dedicate two to three hours a day to this practice of transforming raw cotton plucked from the fields into a yarn that can be used to make fabric. More specifically, a yarn that can be used to make the roughly textured, handwoven *khadi* that Gandhi will wear, that his followers will wear, and that he will entreat the whole of the nation – the entire Indian population – to wear also. (The Salt March was called the 'White Flowing River' as all the people joining wore the white *khadi*.) Promoting the practice of spinning and encouraging the habit of wearing *khadi* were central to Gandhi's vision for India's complete independence – politically, culturally, economically – not just from British imperial rule, but from Western civilization more generally.

What is a Gesture?

For his part, Agamben answers the question, *What is a gesture?* with the following: 'The gesture is the exhibition of a mediality: it is the process of making a means visible as such.'[36]

The Ritual Gesture

The ritual gesture. We see this gesture in the Vedic tradition, accompanied by words, and we think of these words as a substitute. For what? For the thing itself, says Calasso. For the thing that is the world, which was sacrificed to the word. But this is a Western thought, we are reminded. Vedic thought is different. In the Vedic conception of the ritual act, the word is not a substitute for the thing itself, which is the world. No, the word is a substitute for the thing itself, which is *the world as it is made by the ritual order*. For the Vedics, everything is composition: forms, gestures, words. The world is a made thing. And this, we are told – this power – is the secret inheritance that the ritual has consigned to art. We might even say to politics.

Spinning

The practice of spinning involves, firstly, removing any seeds from the raw cotton. Gently sifting through the material, you search for seeds with your fingers, while working to straighten and open the individual fibres that make up the light, billowing form. This process is called *ginning*. Throughout this process, the individual fibres from which the seeds are removed become further straightened

as you pull them apart, gradually, in one, uniform direction. You do this repeatedly, gently straightening and pulling the fibres until, after a while, you have a small swatch of cotton. Placing this down on the floor in front of you, you take a short bamboo stick, tapered at one end, and roll the cotton onto it, shaping the swatch around the length of the stick. Eventually, you remove the bamboo stick from the role of cotton and the resulting product, called a *poony*, is what will be used to make yarn.[37]

*

Charkha

The *charkha* has three main components: a large wheel that operates the main pulley; a smaller wheel working the accelerator pulley; and a spindle. A length of yarn connects the pulley system together and drives the spindle such that one rotation of the main wheel rotates the spindle hundreds of times. Feeding the cotton fibres of the *poony* onto the spindle, the one who is spinning rotates the large wheel with one hand while gently pulling the *poony* away from the spindle with the other. Two hands work together: one turning the wheel with consistent force and a steady rhythm, the other efficiently relinquishing the *poony*, then balancing the pull and the twist of the cotton fibres. Through this, the line of the yarn is formed.

FIGURE 2.6 Kreider + O'Leary, CHARKHA Series, Salt March 'Dandi Path', Gujarat, India. (HD Video Documentation).
© Kreider + O'Leary, Digital Image Composite, 2024.

Means and Ends

An inherent disconnect between means and ends characterizes modern technology. Moreover, according to Ajay Skaria, this inherent disconnect can be understood to characterize the logic of modern or Western civilization more broadly. Modern civility is 'haunted' by such a disconnect, he argues, seeking to make up for it with the myth of limitless growth:

> While modern civility – which articulates the ideology that Heidegger describes as the 'instrumental and anthropological definition of technology' – separates out means [*sadhan*] and ends [*sadya*], and makes them external to each other, so that they can be in an instrumental or calculable relation, this separation is always haunted by the togetherness it excludes, and constantly supplemented by an immeasurable economy.[38]

In this respect, Western civility is (somewhat perversely) immeasurably and incalculably given over to the very pursuit of measurable and calculable ends.

Again, a Loss

With this we are returned to the loss alluded to by Benjamin who says, we recall: with the loss of storytelling comes the loss of the part played by the hand, '*which supports what is expressed in a hundred ways with its gestures trained by work*' (emphasis ours). We can now say that the loss of storytelling signals, more broadly, the West's loss of gesture. Moreover, the fact that these are gestures 'trained by work' suggests that this loss signals, metonymically, the loss of the role of the hand in work; with this, the inherent disconnect between means and ends accompanies a shift to industrialized or modern technology. Ultimately, then, loss of storytelling that Benjamin decries – by extension, the West's loss of gesture – signals a shift into modern technology; with this, a logic separating means from ends. Phrased differently, the loss of gesture (of ritual, mediality) signals a movement away from the measure of the hand; with this, a shift from the logic of cycles (ecology) and towards the logic of progress (teleology).[39]

A State of Awareness

We read further about Vedic society's obsession with ritual. Why this obsession? Because the Vedics wanted to think, says Calasso. Not only that, they wanted to be aware that they were thinking. Which is to say that they wanted to live in a state of awareness, understood as a means of connecting with the invisible, the un-manifest – with powers situated beyond the social order. For the Vedics, such

a state, such a connection, could be cultivated through the meticulously codified acts of the ritual order; more specifically, through the performance of its gestures. 'There is the gesture – and there is the attention concentrated on the gesture', Calasso writes. 'Attention gives the gesture its meaning'.[40]

The act of attention, an actionless act. Here we are reminded of the French mystic and political radical Simone Weil who thinks about attention, so different from a willed volition. Attention, for Weil, necessitates a kind of withdrawal: a withdrawal from the ego, from the 'I', bringing with it the utmost concentration; a suspension within thinking that has the ability to hold many truths, with nothing ever known. 'Absolutely unmixed attention is prayer', Weil writes.[41] *I am that.*

The Role of the Hand

We can now better appreciate Gandhi's emphasis throughout his political writing on the role of the hand, which is discussed in depth by Aishwary Kumar in his book *Radical Equality: Ambedkar, Gandhi and the Risk of Democracy*. Here Kumar describes how, for Gandhi, the hand became the sign of a rigorous awareness of the importance of the means (*sadhan*) in any action. The hand was a call to steadfastness and discipline; to ethics and aesthetics in any use of force. For Gandhi, Kumar notes, a moral force arose from working with the hands, touching and shaping physical materials. Equally, an emphasis on the hand imbued *satyagrahic* practice with a sense of limit and, so doing, reflected Gandhi's pragmatism: his 'attempt to envision politics in the most material, realist and yet always aesthetic terms.'[42] Finally, the hand is a sign of sovereignty or, in Gandhi's case, the relinquishing of this: 'Bodies may be lying dead, hands may be cut off,' says Gandhi during his 'Speech at Bhimrad' on 9 April 1930, 'but still you keep your promise. I will then understand that *swaraj* is approaching.'[43]

All of which enables us to appreciate what is at stake with a loss of gesture. At stake is the loss of the hand and what it signifies: finite measure; a connection between means and ends; support for and endurance of our worldly in-between; by extension, contiguity and continuity; mediality. But this leaves unanswered our previous question: *What are the implications for the loss of gesture of its subsequent resurrection on-screen?*

Making Means Visible

We watch a short film clip of Gandhi spinning. Right hand raised in front of his torso, palm facing the *charkha*, he makes slow, circular movements in a clockwise direction. Meanwhile, his left hand lightly grasps the raw cotton *poony*, feeding its fibres into the spindle with a delicate pincer of thumb and forefingers such that a

line forms between his hand and the spindle. Drawing the line towards him, palm facing up, he carefully pulls the *poony*. When his elbow nearly reaches his torso, he turns over his palm, lifts and stretches the line-up, out and around to the front, guiding the yarn onto the spindle. Then again, he turns his palm up pulling the line back and stretching it up, out, around and to the front.

Two hands, two simultaneous movements: one steady, constant and revolving around a fixed centre; the other more tactical, its path and pace determined by – because responsive to – the quality, the grain, of the raw cotton fibres. For Gandhi, these two movements, these two hands in the rhythmic act of spinning, make up the measure of India's 'own rule'.

*

A Vision

The year is 1936. M. K. Gandhi is delivering a speech at the exhibition ground in Faizpur where he reflects back on eighteen years of what he calls the 'cult of spinning'. His verdict? 'My faith in the spinning wheel is as bright today as when I first declared it in 1918,' he says. The practice of spinning is, he reaffirms, central to his vision of Indian *swaraj* and intrinsic to his plan for how to attain it.

The Baghavad Gita

The *Baghavad Gita* is one of the most important Hindu texts and a classic of India spirituality. Part of the larger epic story of the Mahabharata, the Gita comprises 700 verses that take the form of a dialogue between the prince Arjuna, a warrior who is solicited to fight, and his charioteer Krishna, who is an avatar of the lord Vishnu. The dialogue itself is a synthesis of Hindu ideas and lays the foundation for an understanding of the four yogas: the four spiritual paths leading to oneness with the divine. These include Jñāna yoga (the path of knowledge), Bhakti yoga (the path of devotion), Rāja yoga (the path of concentration) and Karma yoga (the path of action).

The Bhagavad Gita: According to Gandhi is Gandhi's translation and commentary of this key text, based talks that Gandhi delivered at the Sabarmati Ashram (also known as the Satyagraha Ashram) from 24 February to 27 November 1926. During this time, Gandhi spent his days translating the *Baghavad Gita* from Sanskrit to Gujarati. Morning prayers at the Ashram were followed by conversations about the Gita and what it meant to Gandhi.[44] Gandhi's introduction presents the *Gita*

as 'The Gospel of Selfless Action': 'This is a work which persons belonging to all faiths can read,' he writes. 'It does not favour any sectarian point of view. It teaches nothing but pure ethics.' The book itself was first published on 12 March 1930, the first day of Gandhi's Salt March.[45]

FIGURE 2.7 Kreider + O'Leary, CHARKHA Series, Salt March 'Dandi Path', Gujarat, India. (HD Video Documentation).
© Kreider + O'Leary, Digital Image Composite, 2024.

The Fire Ritual

In the Vedic fire ritual, says Swami Tyagananda, who is a monk of the Ramakrishna Order, offerings are made to the gods by way of fire – it is fire that carries these offerings to the gods.[46] And who are these gods? In the Vedic world view, he explains, the entire creation is filled with the presence of the Divine. This is a mystic vision, one in which the whole world is filled with this presence. From this perspective, the material world is not simply a material force, insentient; rather, all matter is filled with consciousness. And when these forces become personified, each of the elements (water, wind, fire, earth) make their appearance as devas, who are the gods. These are the gods of the fire ritual, of the ritualistic *yajna*, who receive offerings in the fire with the promise that they, the gods – the forces of nature – will take care of those who deliver the offering.

Yajna

In Gandhi's translation and commentary on the *Bhagavad Gita*, we find the seed of his political thinking and action in Karma yoga (the path of action) and, related

to this, renunciation – *yajna* or sacrifice. This, for Gandhi, is the only path towards *swaraj*. As he states in his commentary on the Gita:

> We should not work with attachment. Attachment to good work, is that too wrong? Yes, it is. If we are attached to our goal of winning *swaraj*, we shall not hesitate to adopt bad means. Hence, we should not be attached even to a good cause. Only then will our means remain pure and our actions too.[47]

Later, he writes: 'We should learn to be content in ourselves. *The means and the end should become one.*'[48] In this respect, Gandhi asserts both a philosophical and moral principle as much as a political strategy in highlighting an organic link between means and ends.[49]

We hear as much in Ajay Skaria's gloss on Gandhi's thinking in *Unconditional Equality,* where he emphasizes how in karma yoga, which is the yoga of action, the means and the ends must be thought in relation:

> The means [*sadhan*] is the seed and the end [*sadya*] – that which is to be got – is the tree. That is to say, as much relations as there is between the seed and the tree, that much is there between means and ends.[50]

Here, Skaria explains, means and ends are bound together: 'the seed dies, and in this *yajna* or sacrifice the tree is (perhaps) born.'[51] He further explains how this analogy between seed and tree is crucial also for Gandhi's understanding

FIGURE 2.8 Kreider + O'Leary, CHARKHA Series, Salt March 'Dandi Path', Gujarat, India. (HD Video Documentation).
© Kreider + O'Leary, Digital Image Composite, 2024.

of self-sacrifice. The following is a quote from Gandhi's essay 'The Dharma of Aapghog' (English translation being 'The Duty of Self-Sacrifice'): 'Life comes out of death. A seed must disintegrate under earth and perish before it can grow into grain.'[52] Here, says Skaria, means is the offering of the self through self-sacrifice: 'now the death of the means (which is to say, living by dying) gives life to the end.'[53] We have, of course, seen this before: in the Gandhian vow, the oath of the *satyagrahist*, which is described by Skaria as the 'warrior's gift', which is a renunciation of self-sovereignty understood in terms of 'pure gift'. In that context – of the warrior, of war – the *satyagrahists* vow to die willingly (to relinquish self-sovereignty, the ultimate act of self-sacrifice) ensures that their military campaign of resistance can be waged through non-violent means, prioritizing this above all else. In this emphasis on the purity of means, Gandhi's political thinking and action is distinct from any logic of warfare in which violent means are reconciled as being toward a 'just end'.

'Deep Ecology'

Every aspect of ritual has a deeper truth. In the case of the fire ritual, we hear again from Swami Tyagananda, that the ritualistic *yajna* is reflective of a wider, cosmic *yajna*: one within which we are all participating. Indeed, this entire universe can be understood as a cosmos, a gigantic fire ritual. Whatever we give – our actions, our offerings – goes into this; whatever we receive is our share [*prasada*]. In the *Bhagavad Gita* we read:

> Together with sacrifice did the Lord of beings create, of old, mankind, declaring
> With this may you cherish the gods and may the gods cherish you; thus cherishing
> one another may you attain the highest good. [3.10; 3.11]

Now the gods, we recall, are the forces of nature. So, what the *Baghavad Gita* is espousing here is not a transcendent idea of God – not a God who 'gives' Nature over to man to use, as does the God of the myth of Genesis. No, here is the idea that everything is imbued with the divine and that we are part of this. Moreover, we are told, this idea of the interconnectedness of the cosmos is intrinsic to Indian thought. There is sentience in all living creatures and we are part of this; that is, we are part of our environment. 'Nature' is not a resource. So, in the Vedic ritual order, which is a world order, everything is interconnected; everything is a cycle – there is, Swami Tyagananda tells us, a link here to 'deep ecology'.

A similar logic at play in Gandhi's advocacy of the act of spinning, understood in terms of karma yoga. Thus understood, spinning become an act of sacrifice, of *yajna* – an act of renouncing the fruits of one's labour such that all action is towards the greater good, and in recognition of the interconnection of all.

In this respect, in his advocation of spinning, Gandhi replaces the means-end relation of the 'anthropological-instrumental' definition of technology with *yajna*; that is, with pure means. Throughout Gandhi's translation and commentary, he then goes on to argue that the practice of spinning is this *yajna* – and, indeed, the necessary one for the time: 'If we should undertake any such *yajna* in this age and in this country, it is spinning'.[54] And later, after the following sloka:

> He who does not follow the wheel thus set in motion here below, he, living in sin, sating his senses, lives, O Partha, in vain. [3.16]

Gandhi says this: 'I have explained the wheel in this verse to means the spinning wheel. I look upon it as the supreme *yajna* in this age. He who plies it will have lived worthily; will have won the battle of his life.'[55]

Economics

If, on the one hand, the practice of spinning, as a practice of karma yoga, has spiritual aims, on the other hand this practice of spinning in Gandhi's overall vision and plan has pragmatic, economic (from '*oikos*', meaning home) aims: specifically, that of providing a steady income for the millions of inhabitants of the village communities across India. The idea here is that all village households set aside a small plot of land specifically to cultivate cotton. Equipped with the *charkha*, each household works to spin cotton into the yarn that can be used to make *khadi*. In this scenario, the cotton crop and *charkha* are at one end of the spinning process, in the village communities. At the other end are India's urban centres where the city-dwellers, incited to wear only clothes made from *khadi*, provide the financial support for the rural cotton industry. Importantly, for those in the urban centres to take up wearing *khadi* means eschewing all British-made cloth and attire, e.g. shirts and suits. Thus, a change of fashion – of cultural practice, of habit – both symbolizes an allegiance to the cause of Indian *swaraj* and also helps to realize it, practically, by providing a means to enable the economic uplift of the rural communities. In the context of Gandhi's overall vision and plan, the cotton yarn, spun by hand using the *charkha*, thus serves to connect India's rural villages with its urban centres, ultimately generating a viable economic system as an alternative to the one imposed by British rule.

The question remains: why was spinning and not another of India's cottage industries so central to Gandhi's plan? During his speech at Faizpur, Gandhi tells the story of how the rural communities in India came to be impoverished in the first instance, saying:

Let us see how India came to be utterly impoverished. History tells us the East India company ruined the cotton manufacture and by all kinds of means made her dependent upon Lancashire for her cloth, the next great necessity of man. It is still the largest item of import. It thus created a huge array of partially unemployed men and women counted in millions and gave them no other employment in return.[56]

Seen in the light of Gandhi's description of how the East India Company's destruction of India's cotton industry led to the impoverishment of its people, the fact that Gandhi advocates the practice of spinning as a means to return economic stability to the villages is clearly significant. Symbolizing a return to the root cause of India's disempowerment through Western imperialism, it acts as a starting point, a radical new beginning, a catalyst for a different form of life that redresses this injustice. The practice of spinning, instigated in the villages, connecting to the urban centres, thus sets up new patterns of work and exchange, new rhythms and measures of value. This new rhythm, measure, order is the basis of Indian *swaraj* or 'own rule'. Through this, the practice of spinning institutes a viable economic system concurrent and asynchronous with the prevailing order of Western industrialized capitalism: a new world order with the *charkha* at the centre and, in time, with the other village industries revolving around it.

A Poetic Act

Ultimately, then, the *charkha* serves as both symbol and tool in Ghandi's vision and economic plan for *swaraj*. It holds symbolic value as a sign for the root cause of India's impoverishment, and holds practical value as a technology capable of leading to the economic uplift of the people. Both communicating and instigating the transformation of India through 'own rule' – by which we understand India's 'own measure' or rhythm – the act of spinning is thus a poetic act as much as it is a praxis: one that makes something new, something different, something unknown of the world.

Act 3 – Fasting

Fasting

To fast is to slow time, perhaps even to step out of it altogether. Refusing the body nourishment interrupts the regular cycles of input and output – ingestion, digestion, expulsion. Movements slow or cease altogether. Productivity stops.

For the ascetic, fasting is a technology: a means of curbing the body's 'animal passions' through the act of self-restraint. Here, the act of fasting is understood

in terms of an overall praxis of self-discipline whose aim, ultimately, is self-transformation.[57] More specifically, the aim is the transformation of the little 'self' into a state of union with something larger, more expansive, be it called Truth, God, Universe, Divine or whatever word best approximates this state of oneness and interconnectivity.

In the realm of the political, fasting goes by a different name: the 'hunger strike'. Here we witness it throughout history, in different times and places: Joan of Arc, the Suffragettes, the Irish republican prisoners of the Maze prison in Northern Ireland. As the hunger strike, fasting becomes a tactic of refusal: one that sits within a wider arsenal of resistance, revolt and revolution.

FIGURE 2.9 Kreider + O'Leary, CHARKHA Series, Salt March 'Dandi Path', Gujarat, India. (HD Video Documentation).
© Kreider + O'Leary, Digital Image Composite, 2024.

Experiments with Fasting

Writing in his autobiography, also called *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, Gandhi describes his earliest experiments with fasting. Although he had undertaken fasts from time to time for health reasons, it was not until he joined his friend Mr Kallenback in observing the *Ekadashi* fast, a *bramacharya* vow of the Hindu tradition, that he truly began to understand and appreciate the power of fasting in teaching one self-restraint.[58]

The two of them, Gandhi and Mr Kallenback, were living at Tolstoy Farm. This was Gandhi's very first *ashram*; that is, his first attempt at communal living, which

he set up in South Africa in 1910.[59] As it happened, the time of Mr Kallenback and Gandhi's observing of the *Ekadashi* fast coincided with the Islamic month of *ramzan*.[60] So Gandhi encouraged the Muslim members of his community also to fast, in observation of their religious tradition. He then convinced others on the farm – Hindu, Parsi and Christian – to join in this act of fasting. So it was that one of Gandhi's earliest experiments with fasting was a collective act: a communal act of willed self-restraint rooted in religion and drawing together a plurality of religious traditions. To what effect?

Of the fast, Gandhi writes in his autobiography:

The famous verse from the second chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita* is worth noting in this connection:

> For a man who is fasting his senses
> Outwardly, the sense-objects disappear,
> Leaving the yearning behind; but when
> He has seen the Highest,
> Even yearning disappears

Fasting and similar discipline is, therefore, one of the means to the end of self-restraint, but it is not all, and if physical fasting is not accompanied by mental fasting, it is bound to end in hypocrisy and disaster.[61]

As we shall see, Gandhi's earliest experiment with fasting, understood as a means to the end of self-restraint, would become, over time, a powerful political act.

Fasting as a Political Act

Between the years 1913 and 1948, Gandhi undertook numerous politically-motivated fasts. While these varied in terms of duration, location and motivation, what remained constant was their two-fold nature. For Gandhi, fasting was both a spiritual practice and a political act, the two of these being, for him, inseparable. It is this inseparability between the spiritual and the political – between ethical living and socio-political transformation – that lies at the heart of Gandhi's political philosophy. It is this that characterizes the repertoire of non-violent political actions or *satyagraha* that Gandhi developed, promoted, taught and embodied as a means of realizing his vision of an independent Indian nation, free from British colonial rule.

The political theorist Banu Barga picks up on this interrelation of the spiritual and the political in Gandhi's thought and action when conceptualizing the hunger strike as a specific modality of Gandhi's politics:

What then is a hunger strike in Gandhian terms? First and foremost, it is a non-violent form of action. It is characterised by the overarching philosophy of ascetic discipline by which one becomes master of oneself. Self-starvation is, simply, an extension of self-restraint. It is an exercise in self-purification and the strengthening of one's soul. In this sense, it is at once a moral act as it is a political one … A fast is the expression of a spiritual force.[62]

For Barga, the Gandhian hunger strike (or fast, as Gandhi himself calls it) is both a political and a moral act: one that expresses and harnesses a spiritual force by suppressing and neutralizing a bodily one. In this respect, Gandhi's fasts, like all of his actions, carry meaning. Countering 'body force' with 'soul force', Gandhi's fasts speak to the struggle between a way of living that emphasizes materiality, on the one hand, and one that prioritizes spiritual life, on the other – and this speaks more broadly to the struggle for true *swaraj* or 'own rule'.

*

Purushartha

To appreciate how this struggle between a material existence and a spiritual one speaks more broadly to *swaraj*, we must turn again to Gandhi's political treatise, *Hind Swaraj* where, and throughout, he draws on Indian philosophy to develop his ideas. In this context we come to appreciate how the struggle between a material life and a spiritual life, embodied by the fast, relates to struggle for balance in the pursuit of *purushartha*, which means 'aim of life'.

As indicated in *Hind Swaraj,* there are four *purusharthas* or 'canonical aims of life'. These are: ethical integrity (*dharma*); wealth and political power (*artha*); pleasure (*kama*); and spiritual transcendence (*moksha*). According to Gandhi, the balanced pursuit of these aims should inform not only how individuals live their lives, but also how nations and civilizations develop. These pursuits are, however, more often than not out of balance, as is evidenced in the over-emphasis on *artha* and *kama* in Western civilization, and *dharma* and *moksha* in Indian civilization. Seen in the light of this updated theory of the *purusharthas* or 'canonical aims of life' in *Hind Swaraj*, Gandhi's fasts – where 'body force' confronts 'soul force', the two forces, struggling – become emblematic of a much greater struggle: a battle, even, between Western or 'modern civilization', on the one hand and Indian or what Gandhi calls 'true civilization', on the other.

FIGURE 2.10 Kreider + O'Leary, CHARKHA Series, Salt March 'Dandi Path', Gujarat, India. (HD Video Documentation).
© Kreider + O'Leary, Digital Image Composite, 2024.

'Civilization'

What is 'civilization'? Writing in his Dictionary of Indo-European Concepts and Society, the French linguist Émile Benveniste tells us that, in its European context, the word 'civilization' can be traced back to the writing of the French economist and reformer M. de Montesquieu et le marquis de Mirabeau and, more specifically, his work *L'Ami de hommes au Traité de la Population*, dated 1756 and published in 1757.[63] This, alongside the rough draft for a slightly later text, *L'Ami de femmes au Traité de la Civilisation* (a counterpart to the first) evidences that, for Mirabeau:

> 'civilisation' is the process of what had been up until his time called 'policé' in French, that is, an act tending to make man and society more 'policé', the effort to induce the individual to observe spontaneously the rules of decency and to transform the customs of society in the direction of a greater urbanity.[64]

So it was that Mirabeau and others, writing in French as well as English, began to use the term 'civilization', which carried with it this connotation of being the present state of 'man in society' following the slow and refined process of education and refinement: one that had ushered 'him' out of an original barbarity.

As Benveniste tells us, many of those writing at the time declared this understanding of civilization to be an historical, non-teleological account of the development of human society. It is, however, difficult not to detect the Christian,

teleological worldview reflected within it. Indeed, Mirabeau himself considered religion as the chief factor in the process of civilization, and it is not too far a leap to see the implications of his understanding of civilization within the European colonial project. This is particularly the case given that the justification for Europeans moving into newly 'discovered' territories – taking over, enslaving and/or otherwise over-powering the indigenous people therein – hinged upon their claim to be introducing 'civilization' and, more precisely, Christianity into what were considered to be 'barbaric' cultures and people.[65]

How does this European understanding of the term 'civilization', with its roots in eighteenth and nineteenth century French political thought, compare with Gandhi's understanding of the term 'civilization', generally? More specifically, how does it compare to his understanding of Western or 'modern' civilization, terms that he used interchangeably in his writings in the early years of the twentieth century?

In his introduction to *Hind Swaraj*, the Canadian historian Anthony J. Parel describes how, in Gandhi's view, Western or modern civilization was a particular 'mode of conduct' that emerged from the Enlightenment, and more exactly, from the Industrial Revolution. Parel quotes Gandhi writing in 1908: 'Let it be remembered that Western civilization is only a hundred years old, or to be more precise, fifty.'[66] In this respect, Parel argues, the Industrial Revolution was, for Gandhi, much more than just a change in the mode of production. 'As he interprets it, it brought into being a new mode of life, embracing a people's outlook on nature, religion, ethics, science, knowledge, technology, politics and economics.'[67] This outlook, Parel continues, was predicated on the understanding that 'nature' is somehow separate from 'culture': an autonomous realm operating according to its own laws, which is to be 'mastered and possessed at will for the satisfaction of human needs, desires and political ambitions.'[68] This, in turn, paved the way for two things: the secularization of political theory, relegating all religion to the sphere of superstition; and an understanding of labour generally as being about the 'ability to produce profit, power and capital', and of manual labour in particular as being something fit only for the 'unlettered and backward.'[69]

Crucially, it is within this framework that modern European political theory developed as a general ethical framework: one within which to integrate these changes in the fields of science, technology and economics. Parel writes:

> Two types of political theory emerged, one for the industrialised societies and the other for the rest of the world. Liberalism and liberal institutions were thought appropriate for industrialised societies; imperialism and colonialism for the non-industrialised societies such as India.[70]

In other words, the world could be partitioned into two parts: those that were industrialized and those that were not; so, those that were 'civilized' and those that were 'non-civilized', with the latter being fit only for imperial rule.

In this respect, the essay 'Foundations of the government of India' by James Fitzjames Stephen is most revealing. Offering a candid articulation of this relationship between imperialism in terms of modern civilization, Stephen poses the question: 'How then was India to be governed?'[71] To which he responds, 'by introducing the essential parts of European civilization'.[72] Writing in 1883, Stephen's argument was that India should be governed through the introduction of modern European morality, political economy and conception of security. Moreover, this would need to be achieved by force. Indeed, for Stephen, the foundations of the government of India lie on conquest, not consent. By which he meant: representative government would prevail in England, as a requirement for European civilization, while absolute government would be the requirement for Indian civilization. For only such an absolute government, ruling by force, could suppress the hostilities internal to India and teach Indians, in Stephen's words, 'how to live in peace with, and tolerate each other.'[73]

In this respect, it was Western or modern civilization *per se* that was at the heart of colonialism and, with it, colonial rule and governance. This is key to understanding Gandhi's quintessentially Indian political philosophy and the actions he developed in relation to this: walking, spinning, fasting. As we have seen, each of these acts aims to suppress, if not outright reject, the traces of Western or modern

FIGURE 2.11 Kreider + O'Leary, CHARKHA Series, Salt March 'Dandi Path', Gujarat, India. (HD Video Documentation).
© Kreider + O'Leary, Digital Image Composite, 2024.

civilization. For India to be truly free, so Gandhi reasoned, there would need to be a wholehearted rejection of Western or modern civilization, and an embrace of Indian or what Gandhi calls 'true' civilization in *Hind Swaraj*. The question becomes, what would an embrace of Indian or 'true' civilization entail, and what kind of governance might follow?

Seeds Sown by the Ancestors

Speaking in the guise of the Editor in *Hind Swaraj*, Gandhi states: 'I believe that the civilization India has evolved is not to be beaten in the world. Nothing can equal the seeds sown by our ancestors.'[74] Moreover, the fruits of the seed are still alive and growing. Indian civilization, he argues, is still solid at the foundation, whereas other ancient civilizations – including Rome, Greece, Japan and China – have either fallen or been transformed beyond recognition. It is this immutability of the core of Indian civilization that Gandhi sees as a strength, not a weakness:

> It is a charge against India that her people are so uncivilised, ignorant and stolid, that it is not possible to induce them to adopt any changes. It is a charge really against our merit. What we have tested and found true on the anvil of experience, we dare not change. Many thrust their advice upon India, and she remains steady. This is her beauty; it is the sheer-anchor of our hope.[75]

What, exactly, is this anchor of hope, this seemingly immutable kernel of Indian civilization? In his ensuing definition, Gandhi writes:

> Civilization is that mode of conduct which points out to man the path of duty. Performance of duty and observance of morality are convertible terms. To observe morality is to attain mastery over mind and our passions. So doing, we know ourselves. The Gujarati equivalent for civilization means 'good conduct'.[76]

He goes on to argue that '[i]f the definition be correct, then India … has nothing to learn from anybody else, and this is how it should be.'[77] He then goes on to describe the characteristics of this ancient Indian civilization.

The first of these characteristics is self-control, understood in terms of control of the *mind*, limiting the passions and desire for material pleasure and gain, understanding happiness to be, instead, a mental condition. The second characteristic is a system of labour not predicated on a 'system of life-corroding competition' but, rather, each person doing their work, their trade, and doing it well, with an emphasis on manual labour, and without an emphasis on the 'fruits of one's labour'. And here he writes:

It was not that we did not know how to invent machinery, but our forefathers knew that, if we set our hearts after such things, we would become slaves and lose our moral fibre. They therefore, with due deliberation, decided that we should only do what we could with our hands and our feet. They saw that our real happiness consisted in a proper use of our hands and feet.[78]

A third characteristic was the rejection of large cities in favour of small villages. And a fourth key characteristic was the recognition that 'kings and their swords were inferior to the swords of ethics.'[79] For Gandhi, these are the four characteristics of Indian civilization that must be embraced and championed for India to truly achieve *swaraj* or 'own rule' – the true rule, or measure, of Indian independence.

Now, while this declaration is sweeping and somewhat counterbalanced by other writings where Gandhi extols the work, writing and ideas of other cultures and 'civilizations', the point he is making is clear. India has its own, long-standing civilization: one that, for Gandhi, must be central to any development of an Indian nation. It is in this respect that he distinguishes himself from many of his peers – fellow Indians seeking independence from British colonial rule, but who would do so by embracing, adopting from the British, the values and ways of life inherent to modern civilization. For Gandhi, independence from Britain must entail embracing a specifically Indian way of life and tempering, if not outright rejecting, modern civilization with its emphasis on productivity and material gain; with this, its dependence on and promotion of industrialized technology.

A Struggle

Let us return, then, to Gandhi's fasts, understood both in terms of an ascetic practice and a political act. Bearing in mind his promotion of a confrontation between modern, Western civilization with 'true' Indian civilization, what do we now make of the fact that, through the act of fasting, Gandhi confronts 'body force' with 'soul force' – these two forces, struggling?

We now read Gandhi's act of fasting in light of a symbolic gesture, the meaning of which is a confrontation of 'body force' and all that it represents with 'soul force'. So, fasting becomes a metaphorical struggle between two civilizations: two 'modes of conduct' or ways of living, of being, in the world. On the one hand is 'body force' understood as modern, Western civilization and, with it, an emphasis on speed, profit, material gain: with this, an extractivist ethos and liberal democracy's demand for secularity and rights, but only for the citizens of industrialized nations (for others, absolute governance and the rule by force). On the other hand is 'soul force' understood as Indian civilization and, with it: an emphasis on slowness, on

the interrelation of means and ends, and the striving for personal transformation towards spiritual freedom or *moksha*; the aim of *swaraj* understood both in terms of self-control and in terms of Indian political dependence or 'own rule'. Crucially, for the duration of the fast, it is 'soul force' that prevails.

Now, all of this becomes particularly significant when looked at in the light of the aforementioned essay 'Foundations of the government of India' where, as we have seen, James Fitzjames Stephens poses the question of how India was to be governed, to which he responds: by introducing 'the essential parts of European civilization.'[80] We can now understand that, for the duration of the fast – during which 'soul force' subdues 'body force'; during which the time of productivity slows, perhaps even stops altogether – Gandhi is, in effect, ungovernable, and this through non-violent means.

*

Oceanic State

In the book *Syncope: The Philosophy of Rapture,* the French writer and philosopher Catherine Clément traces the concept of syncope – understood in terms of a pause, a cessation, a stop-time; as in musical syncopation (so, a means of generating rhythm) – throughout and across Eastern and Western philosophical traditions and cultural practices.[81] Along this conceptual journey she locates syncope in, for example, the state of depression, the act of fainting, the dance of the whirling dervish, falling in love – anywhere that the ego boundary dissipates and melds with something larger than the self, entering what might be describes as an 'oceanic state'. Strikingly, Clément finds syncope often celebrated, practiced, and nurtured in traditions of the East, whereas in the West she finds that it is often denigrated, with practices (medicine, psychology) being developed to fix or remedy it. (Although this is not surprising given the fact the primacy of the 'individual' within Western philosophical and cultural systems.)

In the last chapter of Clément's book, a chapter called 'Syncope's Strategies: The Creative Act and the Un-Governing of the World', we encounter a discussion of Gandhi. What intrigues us is the fact that Clément first articulates a necessary relation between syncope and the creative act before she turns to her discussion of Gandhi and, in particular, his act of fasting. Following Clément, how might we begin to appreciate Gandhi's act of fasting as well as those of walking and spinning (all acts of resistance) as creative acts? How does this, in turn, relate to ungovernability?

FIGURE 2.12 Kreider + O'Leary, CHARKHA Series, Salt March 'Dandi Path', Gujarat, India. (HD Video Documentation).
© Kreider + O'Leary, Digital Image Composite, 2024.

The Creative Act

According to Clément, no creation is possible without a syncope of the subject, for '*there can be no creative act without an expansion of the field of consciousness*'.[82] So, she argues, the 'artist' is, along with all of the other 'syncope-people' she has been looking at throughout the book, in fact a 'renouncer':

> Those who practice inspiration as a profession, be they artists, mystics, prophets, philosophers, or dancers on a crowded dance floor, go back and forth between the world of the banal and that of the extraordinary. By entering the blessed syncope of supreme moments, by temporarily losing the secured identity that constitutes them as a single member of the social body, they escape its confines: they are free, with an unreal and extraordinary sense of emancipation.[83]

For Clément, Gandhi – like the 'artist', like the 'mystic' – is a 'syncope-person'. And yet, it is crucial to say, Gandhi was *not* an artist, nor was he a mystic, and he resisted any attempts to define him as such. Gandhi was a political reformer. So it is in this context, the context of the political, that we must begin to appreciate his employment of what Clément identifies as 'syncope strategies'.

The first and foremost of these strategies, Clément argues, was the fast or, in Gandhi's terms', the 'fast until death':

To suspend the life cycle, to suppress the biological, to disengage oneself from the process, and to use it as a weapon to blame the other. Also, a weapon against oneself, in order to escape. Gandhi's fasting was his main syncope.[84]

And he used it again and again, very effectively, to bring about change.[85] *Gandhi has decided to fast until death.* An announcement would be made in the media and all would stop, both his followers and his oppressors alike, to consider the situation: to reflect, to think and, from there, to decide on the best course of action. Fasting was thus a tool – a non-violent technique – to stop time; to insert doubt; to break habitual processes of thought and action. Through this, to get people to think and to act differently – all of this to bring about transformation and change. In this respect, Gandhi's fasts, understood as syncope, are 'creative acts'. Indeed, as Clément notes: 'the premises of the creative act are contrary to habit, even that of thought.'[86]

As well as the fasts, there are other acts, other syncope strategies, in Gandhi's repertoire of non-violent political action. For her part, Clément sees syncope in the hartals (which are much like a strike, but understood as part of the broader resistance in the form of non-cooperation) as well as in the marches, including the Salt March. We see it, too, in Gandhi's act of spinning. In each of these acts, there is a cessation – a stop-time – that intentionally breaks with a habitualized way of being (a pattern, a rhythm, an order) to bring about change or transformation. It is in this respect that we understand syncope, deployed within the realm of the political, as an inherently creative act – all of which we appreciate as an act of 'un-governing' the world.

An Un-Governing of the World

Reflecting on the exercise of power, and with specific reference to Gandhi, George Bataille writes the following in his notes:

> A paradox.
> If one wants to govern the world, one must renounce governing: the un-governing of the world.[87]

And this:

> Sovereignty is revolt. It is not an exercise of power. True sovereignty refuses.[88]

In refusing to be governed 'like that, by them'[89] – in renouncing aspects of Western or modern civilization, including a desire for the accumulation of material wealth; industrialized technology; political power's use of force – Gandhi was, in effect,

becoming ungovernable. Through example, he then led others to become the same. All of which leads Clément to say: 'What Gandhi accomplished is nothing other than an *un-governing of the world*: to undo, untie, liberate.'[90]

The Last Fast to the Death

Gandhi's very last 'fast to the death' was performed after India secured independence in 1947. This last fast was intended as a means of putting a stop to the sectarian violence being perpetuated during the process of partition, which Gandhi himself vehemently opposed. He began the fast on 13 January 1948, with the following declaration: 'Death for me would be a glorious deliverance rather that I should be a helpless witness to the destruction of India, Hinduism, Sikhism and Islam.'[91] For his dream, Gandhi explained, was that all Hindus, Sikhs, Parsis, Christians and Muslims would live together in harmony. On 30 January at 5pm, Gandhi was killed by Nathuram Godse, a Hindu nationalist, who shot him three times in the stomach and chest.
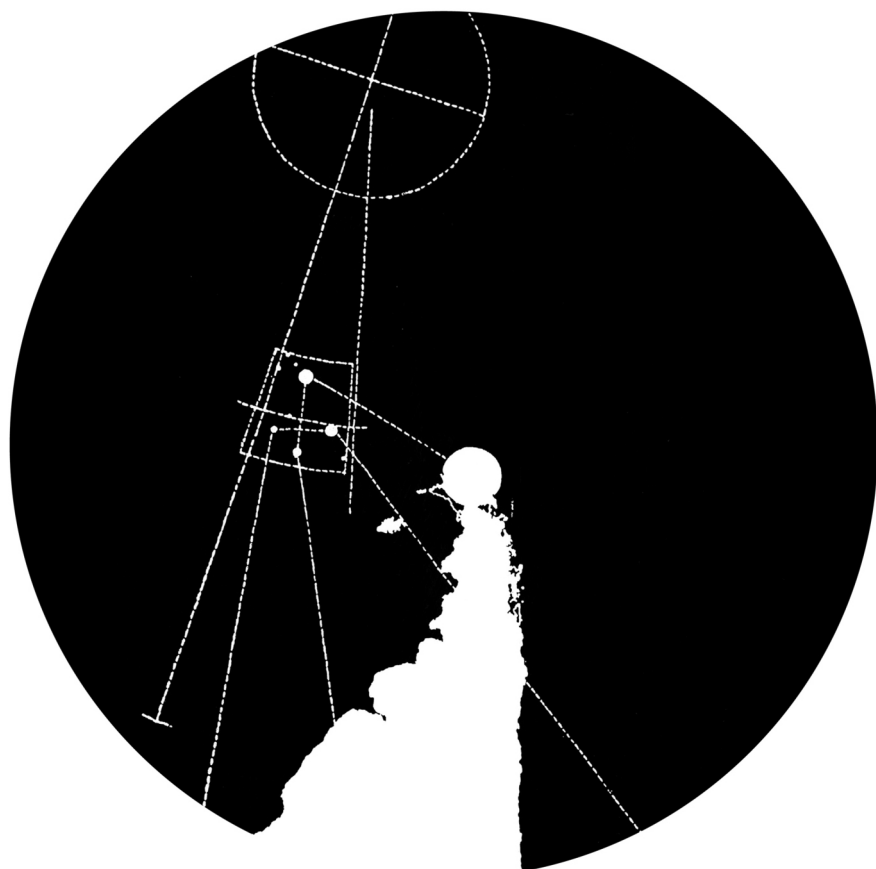
Poetry, Architecture and the Making of *Ciudad Abierta*

Imagination and Transformation in Ritoque, Chile

A Foundation in Sand

As we leave the vertiginous city of Valparaíso on the Pacific coast of Chile and head northwards through the seaside resort of Viña del Mar, the landscape starts to flatten and soften, slowly yielding to become the pillow-like sand dune landscape of Ritoque. This is, to say the least, a most unexpected place to encounter a city. And yet, encompassing both the idea of a city and its reality – functioning as both a metaphorical space and a living, working community – *Ciudad Abierta* (Open City) was founded here, in 1970, on this very tract of land.

The city was founded by the Argentinian poet, Godofrodo Iommi, the Chilean architect, Alfredo Cruz, and other members of what had become known as the Valparaíso School of architects.[1] Part of the Catholic University of Chile, *Ciudad Abierta* was conceived as a radical pedagogical experiment intended to embody the ethos and principles of the Valparaíso School. Here teachers and students would live and, together, work to build *Ciudad Abierta*. All architecture would be interrelated with poetry, and all building work would be initiated through the 'poetic act'.[2] The emphasis with any act of construction would always be on process over product: a process guided by intuition and realized through improvization. All the while, careful attention would continually be paid to the specificity of the site: its unique light and wind conditions, its relation to the sea, its ground of shifting sand. Through this, *Ciudad Abierta* has developed to encompass numerous architectural elements including an agora, a chapel, a palace, a garden, a cemetery, a music room and a number of *hospederías*.

Throughout its history and development, *Ciudad Abierta* has occupied an eccentric position: institutionally, as an adjunct to the main Catholic University of Chile; culturally, in relation to the perceived capitals of globalized modernism; politically, in relation to the political upheaval in Chile. In terms of the latter, and as will become apparent, the story of *Ciudad Abierta*'s beginnings and development runs throughout a history of political turbulence in Chile: its burgeoning socialist agenda and, with it, the election of the first-ever democratically elected socialist president, Salvador Allende, in 1970; Allende's efforts to shape a government reflective his wide-ranging, progressive vision of radical democracy; his subsequent brutal overthrow by a *coup d'etat* led by Augusto Pinochet and backed by the United States government; and Pinochet's subsequent dictatorship from 1973 to 1990. Arguably, it is *Ciudad Abierta*'s unique ethos and practices alongside its peripheral positioning that has contributed to its sustainability in educational, architectural and political terms, as much as to its 'magical' quality as a place. As a poet and an architect who collaborate to make work in relation to site, both researchers and educators in our fields, we felt a call to go. Pursuing this, we ventured to Ritoque with the aim of studying *Ciudad Abierta* in detail.
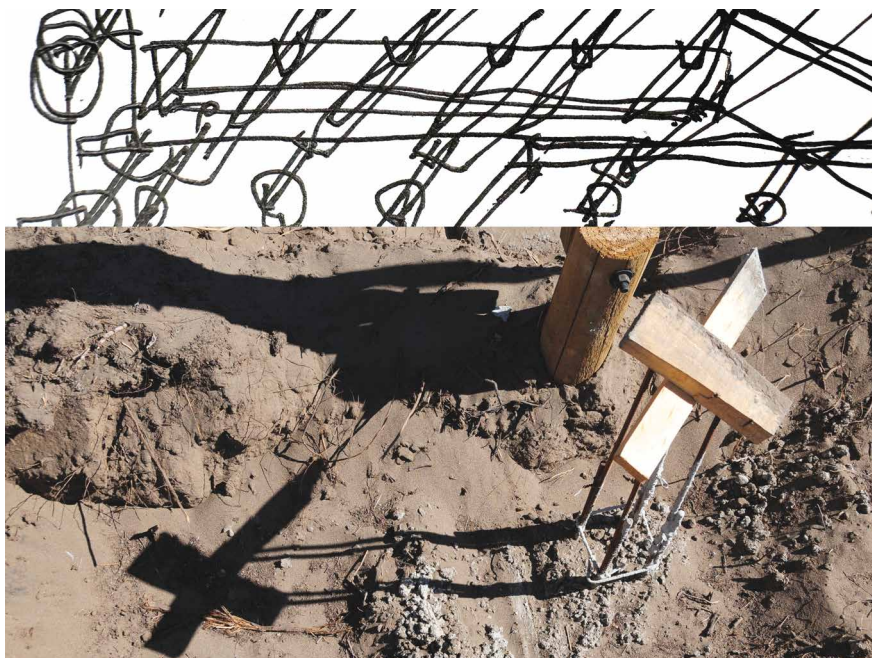
FIGURE 3.1 Kreider + O'Leary, CONSTELLATION Series, Ciudad Abierta, Chile.
© Kreider + O'Leary, Digital Image Composite, 2024.

*

Here we are in mid-sphere – the Earth, to be exact, and we have just reached the middle. We have just slipped our way across the equatorial band dividing northern from southern hemisphere when we lose sight of Polaris, our single point of reference, and begin to drift … We look up to see the constellation of the Southern Cross. We look further to see its two accompanying pointer stars. We imagine a line connecting these two stars; at its midway, another line extending at a right angle. We extend this line even further in our minds to meet a line we envision as being drawn along the axis of the cross itself. The meeting place of these two points is, we know, the approximate location of the South Celestial Pole. So, we way-find in relation to a figure.

*

We spent a number of days moving through the site, contemplating building works, inhabiting public spaces, observing activities; all the while drawing, photographing, writing and filming. We spoke with some members of the community, both students and staff; however, we were left primarily on our own to meander through and imagine into each piece of *Ciudad Abierta*'s urban semiotic. We concluded our visit with an ephemeral architectural intervention: a method of study that seemed appropriate and in keeping with the ethos of *Ciudad Abierta*, which is open to and opened through newness, discovery and imagination as well as the material, spatial and ephemeral conditions of site.

What follows draws from our site study of *Ciudad Abierta*. Here we take eight specific architectural details as a starting point for discussing *Ciudad Abierta*'s ethos, key principles and practices. Together, they form a constellation of thought. We intersperse this with a story of *Ciudad Abierta*'s beginnings pieced together from our background reading and research and contextualized in relation to Chile's political situation. Moving between modalities of observing, imagining, theorizing and storytelling, we posit *Ciudad Abierta* as a community of teaching, research, making and, ultimately, as a form of resistance.

Detail 1 – Foundation

Early in our wanderings we came across the beginnings of a building project and stopped to look at it more closely. This image shows the progress of that building's developing foundations.

But what are we looking at? What is this image? We detect that the four steel reinforcement bars penetrate the ground and sink into a concrete foundation, possibly a raft foundation: a square grid buried beneath the sand. We imagine that, at some point later, these four steel reinforcement bars will engage another, vertical structure; however, at present, the bars here are covered with a timber cross that we take to be a health and safety measure.

Next to this form is a wooden post, most likely the base for what will be a timber structure, another foundation. So, we imagine, there will be two foundations: one concrete, one timber. Most likely the timber base overground will connect with the concrete foundation underground and the two foundations, together, will work to anchor the building in place. We imagine, otherwise, the sand dunes shifting and changing in a high wind scenario: the building becoming like a Chinese lantern, lifting up and blowing away.

*

The year is 1965. Alberto Cruz, Godofredo Iommi and members of the Valparaíso School, together with the poets, painters and philosophers they attract, set off on a journey. To begin, they first displace the constellation of the Southern Cross from its position in the night sky to the ground, plotting it against the cartography of South America in line with Joaquín Torres-García's proposition that South equals North.[3] They then use this figure to plan out their crossing or 'travesía' of the vast 'interior sea': the continental expanse with all of its cultural, geographical and meteorological rhythms.

*

Imagination (Shifting Sand)

The fact that so much of the building work at *Ciudad Abierta* literally takes place on a ground of shifting sand carries practical, poetic and philosophical implications, all intertwined.[4] To unpick these, we turn to the writings of Ernesto Grassi: an
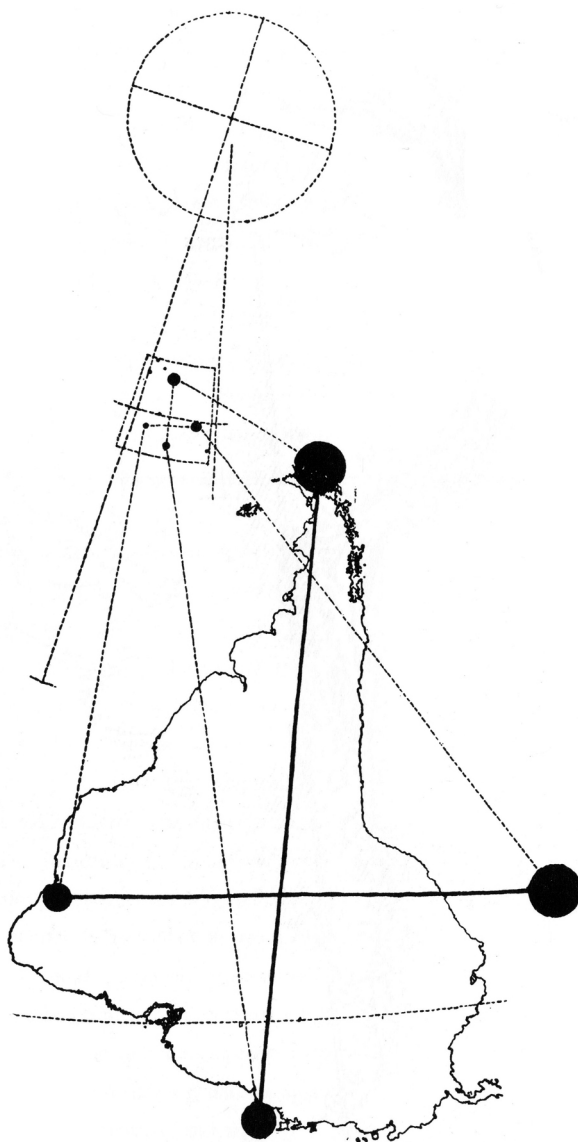
FIGURE 3.3 Corporación Cultural Amereida – Mapa de la Cruz del Sur / Southern Cross Map, 1970 to 2017.
© Corporación Cultural Amereida, 2017.

Italian-born philosopher who later worked in a German context. Grassi's thinking is relevant to a discussion of *Ciudad Abierta* given his presence at the University of Santiago in 1952 to 1953, where he proved an early influence on Iommi and Cruz.[5]

Grassi's major contribution to philosophical thought lies in his return to the Italian humanist tradition and, mobilizing this along with key aspects of Greek and Latin

thought, developing a concept of rhetoric as the foundation for philosophy. Through this, Grassi both presents a challenge and offers an invitation. The challenge he presents is to the primacy of rationalist, post-Enlightenment thought: thinking that, predicated on philosophical 'first principles', is reliant upon deductive forms of reasoning and argumentation to ascertain 'Truth'. And the invitation he offers is for his readers to consider how philosophical 'first principles' – the firm ground or foundation of rationalist thought – came to be in the first place.

While it may be possible to arrive at philosophical 'first principles' through deduction, Grassi argues, it is not possible to formulate these assertions *in the first instance* through rational speech. Rather, he contends, such primary assertions are thoroughly *indicative*: 'Such speech is immediately a "showing" and for this reason, "figurative" or "imaginative" and thus in the original sense "theoretical" [*theorein* – i.e. to see].'[6] Grassi is keen to show here that 'rhetoric' – by which he means poetic, imaginative and figurative language (and metaphor, in particular) – is not simply an art or technique of persuasion: not just the fleshy excess of rational discourse used to embody an idea in order to get across a point. Rhetoric *is* philosophy, he argues, insofar as all primary or 'archaic' speech (archaic here meaning dominant, *arche, archontes*) must have rhetorical character:

> [Archaic speech] is metaphorical, i.e. it shows something which has a sense, and this means that to the figure, to that which is shown, the speech transfers {*metapherein*} a signification: in this way the speech which realizes the showing 'leads before the eyes' {*phainesthai*} has a significance. This speech is and must be in its structure an imaginative language.[7]

With rhetoric thus understood as the very foundation of rational thought, Grassi argues, 'the ground of human historicity and human society is not the rational process of thinking but the imaginative act.'[8]

This understanding of rhetoric as poetic, imaginative, figurative language that is the very foundation for philosophy is key for appreciating how Grassi's thinking relates to *Ciudad Abierta*. For central to his thinking (and more generally to the humanist tradition from which is draws) is a concern with the origins of society, with philosophical reflections in and from history, and with the role that fantasy plays in all of these matters. Crucially, all of these concerns lend themselves to valuing *practice* as the means whereby 'things acquire their meanings in their concrete relationship' to one's 'efforts to cope with them.'[9] In this worldview, reality is construed not as an object to be contemplated or theorized, but something with which to engage creatively – imaginatively, ingeniously (from the Latin *ingenium,* its connotations of intelligence, cleverness, skillfullness) – in order to make meaning. All of which suggests the crucial role of the poet in the making of that reality.

The poet, argues Grassi, 'has a unique and original capacity' to create 'community and human history'.[10] Through poetic image, the poet cultivates new relationships and new meaning, establishes new beginnings, visualizes change – the poet as 'revealer'. Moreover, as orator and initiator of poetic action, the poet creates the measure (sets the rhythm) that develops and orders the passions, regulating relationships 'between men and the order of the state'.[11] In this respect, rather than dealing in abstraction, Grassi's poet engages in a specific time, place and context to make and to re-make reality, including political reality. All of which resonates with *Ciudad Abierta* where it is a poet, Iommi, who works with an architect, Cruz, to lay the imaginative foundations for this community formation and then – by means of creative practice and collaboration; through living, working and making – turn this into a political reality.

Detail 2 – The Observatory

The Observatory at *Ciudad Abierta* is one of the most peripheral buildings on the campus, an outlier. It is also one of the few structures with an outward-facing orientation as (curiously, for a place near the sea) many of buildings at *Ciudad Abierta* look inward.

FIGURE 3.4 Kreider + O'Leary, CONSTELLATION Series, Ciudad Abierta, Chile.
© Kreider + O'Leary, Digital Image Composite, 2024.

We approach the structure during the day, crossing a field of wild flowers, moving towards the sea. On the horizon we can see the skyline of Valparaíso and, in this respect, the Observatory signals a relation to *Ciudad Abierta*'s origins in the Valparaíso School. The building itself is a simple cube enclosed on all sides except for one, which is the side where the viewer enters. We enter. Sitting down at the viewing bench, we are then able to up look up through the '*Ventana del asombro*' (Window of Wonder) that is oriented towards the sky.

FIGURE 3.5 Kreider + O'Leary, CONSTELLATION Series, Ciudad Abierta, Chile.
© Kreider + O'Leary, Digital Image Composite, 2024.

Inside, the walls of the Observatory are lined with black boards where chalk figures appear: the traces of lessons past. One of these figures presents the angle of inclination of the Observatory itself; another compares two orientations, one geographic and the other celestial; a third shows three astral constellations that we imagine are visible through the viewing window at night. Amongst these is the *Cruz del Sur,* the Southern Cross: a central figure in the story of *Ciudad Abierta*'s beginnings.

*

So the sky has fallen. South is now north. Sea is now land and Alberto Cruz, Godofredo Iommi and members of the Valparaíso School, together with the poets, painters and philosophers they attract, begin their voyage. Guided by the constellation of the Southern Cross, which they have displaced from the sky to the ground, they will make a journey from the southern-most tip of Chile to the place where the two axes meet: the city of Santa Cruz de la Sierra in Bolivia, a location they deemed the 'poetic capital' of Latin America. So it is that this crossing, this first travesía, *is a journey into origin: a journey of new beginnings, a journey of symbol and ritual – a foundational, poetic act. (Although, their journey will be cut short when, fifty kilometres from Santa Cruz, the road becomes blocked by Ché Guevara's revolution.)*

*

Constellation (Figure, Cifra)

Displacing the Southern Cross from the night sky to the ground transforms this astral constellation, this figure, into *cifra*. We read that the word *cifra* comes from Middle French, and is itself from the Arabic word *sifr* meaning 'empty, cipher or zero'. The word translates directly into English as 'cipher' to mean 'a method of transforming a text in order to conceal its meaning' also 'a message in code'. 'Cipher' can also denote Arabic numerals: numbers in figures or the figure of the number – the actual mark that makes it. And the verb form 'to cipher' means 'to use figures in a mathematical process' or to 'encipher', the complement of this being 'to decipher'.[12]

Acknowledging that the word is difficult to translate into English with all of its connotations intact, the architect and educator Ann Pendleton-Jullian, author of *Road that is Not a Road and the Open City, Ritoque, Chile*, is careful to point out that the tension inherent in the word *cifra* is 'specifically between the way the word can oscillate between the mysterious and the rational, and in that oscillation,' she suggests, 'is the implication that *cifra* is analogous to poetry.'[13] In this sense, the fact that the members of the Valparaíso School instigate their journey across the Latin American continent through *cifra* signals that they instigated this act in and through poetry. To what effect?

> *quién sino ella* [cifra] *dice de un origen   pues solo poética-
> mente se aparece?*
>
> *– Amereida*[14]

In his book *The Sacred and the Profane,* the Romanian historian of religion, Mircea Eliade, contends that creation involves transforming 'chaos' (i.e. the disorder of an unknown territory) into 'cosmos' (i.e. a reality ordered in accord with given systems and beliefs). Such transformation happens symbolically through the ritualized repetition of a paradigmatic cosmogony. Eliade offers an example. The Spanish and Portuguese conquistadors who 'discovered' and conquered territories across Latin America took possession of these lands in the name of Jesus Christ. In each place razed they raised a cross. A consecration. A re-birth. 'For through Christ "old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new"' (II Corinthians, 5, 17).[15] What becomes 'our world' must first be created. Whether this be cultivating uncultivated land or conquering land already inhabited, 'a territory can be made ours only by creating it anew, that is, by consecrating it'.[16] The newly discovered territories of the Southern hemisphere were thus 'renewed' and 'recreated' by the sign of the Cross, Eliade contends. In turn, and much later, the members of the Valparaíso School would effectively reclaim 'Latin America' from its colonial territorialization by using this very same sign – taking the Southern Cross from the heavens, plotting it cartographically on the continental expanse – to guide their first *travesía*.

Detail 3 – Ruins of Latinity

Walking through the sand dunes we come across a pile of words: fragments of text in concrete formwork. This heap of materials appears not so much to be discarded as to be stored in a haphazard way. From the colouring it would appear that some of the sand from the dunes was being used in the formwork to give the concrete a texture, and the words embedded in it a hue, that would allow these word-forms to blend within the chromatic range of the landscape.

The fragments themselves appear to be iterations of a process intended to make letters legible for the life-span of a landscape; a way of making words that would remain for a long, long time. *'A sa spere',* an Italian phrase that translates as 'let's hope'. *'Arrobadoras'*, a Spanish word meaning 'raptures'. As well as material, these words take on meaning. We begin to understand them as ruins of Latinity nestled in the shifting sands of Ritoque Beach.

FIGURE 3.6 Kreider + O'Leary, CONSTELLATION Series, Ciudad Abierta, Chile. © Kreider + O'Leary, Digital Image Composite, 2024.

*

In the course of their first travesía*, in tandem with their actions and movement across the continent, Alberto Cruz, Godofredo Iommi and members of the Valparaíso School, together with the poets, painters and philosophers they attract, compose a poem. In this way,* travesía *– translated as 'crossing' – comes to connote not only the crossing of physical space, but also the crossing between physical and mental space; as well, the movement of meaning (crossing or transfer) that, riding the rhythm of line and sentence, is intrinsic to the poetics of metaphor. The poem they make is called 'Amereida' such that this first* travesía *of the Valparaíso group became known as the 'Travesía de Amereida'.*

*

Crossing (Travesía de Amereida)

Serving as a foundational myth for the group itself – this community of teachers, researchers and makers making their way across the Latin American continent – the

poem *Amereida* also provokes a conception of, and establishes the foundation for, what will become the *Ciudad Abierta* of Ritoque. Emphasizing the group's interest in origins, in language and in the relation between the two, the word *Amereida* is an amalgam of two words, 'America' and 'Aeneid'. America relates to the continent through which they travelled on the *travesía*: the 'New World' as it was known upon being 'discovered' by the Spanish and Portuguese explorers; a territory named after Amerigo Vespucci, who deemed it a continent in itself and not simply the eastern extension of Asia, as previously presumed. The other part of the poem's title refers to the *Aeneid,* an epic poem composed by the poet Virgil between 29 and 19 BCE.

The poem, which follows the wanderings of Aeneas and a small band of Trojans after the fall of Troy as they searched for a new homeland, is considered to be the great mythological foundation of Rome. In this sense, it relates to the origins of 'latinity' – and herein lies its significance for the Valparaíso group. Latinity signals belonging to the world that was opened up by Rome. Tied neither to a particular nation-state nor boundaried, geographical location, latinity it is a condition that, as Pendleton-Jullian argues, is created in and through cultural participation, and in which Latin-based languages prove the 'binding force'.[17] Such has been the condition of the American continent since its European colonization: a condition that has worked to overshadow the cultural specificity of the indigenous population and, through the coloniality of power, has also led to the devaluation of the gifts that Latin American culture has to offer. And yet, as title of the poem suggests, *Amereida* offers a symbolic acceptance and even embrace of latinity; through this, Latin America's cultural origins in Europe. How, then, are we to understand the relationship between *Ameirida* – by extension, *Ciudad Abierta* – and this European cultural heritage?

For her part, Pendleton-Jullian argues that, although *Amereida* can be seen to enact and embody a symbolic acceptance of 'latinity' and 'Latin America,' it does so in order to offer 'a critical understanding of that culture' and to suggest the potential for a 'metamorphosis of a sensibility with regard to that culture'.[18] Crucially, this suggests a critical imperative and transformative potential underlying the *Amereida* poem and its process of development – by extension, the mythical foundations of the *Ciudad Abierta* of Ritoque. But what, we ask, is the crux of this critique of latinity, and in what ways is this cultural sensibility transformed? With this in mind, we turn to *The Idea of Latin America* by Argentinian semiotician and decolonial theorist Walter Mignolo to consider whether the poem and process of the *Travesía de Amereida,* with its enactment and embodiment of 'latinity' and 'Latin America,' can be understood in terms of a decolonial agenda.[19]

Mignolo's overarching claim is that 'Latin America' is a construct. It is, in effect, a 'political project' developed by and for Europe that effectively constructs the reality it portends simply to name. Mignolo unpacks this by arguing, firstly, that America itself was never 'discovered' by Columbus. America, he argues, has no

ontic status. Rather, it is a colonial invention embedded within what Mignolo calls the 'colonial matrix of power'. Through this, America exists in and through the European epistemological frameworks used to 'know' it; for example, cartography, historiography, anthropology and other forms of socio-scientific representation and categorization. From here, Mignolo argues that the geopolitical identity of Latin America was then a subsequent invention: an equally Eurocentric 'idea' whose process of development includes the early Spanish imperial project of incorporating all of the colonies situated in South/Latin America into the Euro-Christian cosmology; the later use of this imperial construct of 'latinidad' by the French in their attempt to distinguish Latin America from the more Anglo-Saxon America of the North; and the subsequent embrace of 'latinidad' by mestizo aristocrats wishing for connection to European modernism. In sum, the sub-continent of 'Latin America' and the cultural identity of 'latinidad' are both colonial concepts.

Thinking along with Mignolo, we begin to recognize that the constructs of 'Latin America' and 'latinidad' have the effect of homogenizing all of the geographic specificity and cultural differences inherent in this colonized region into these universalizing concepts. On the one hand, these concepts thus work to exclude the cultural and philosophical traditions of colonized persons, particularly the Afro-Caribbean and Amerindian populations. On the other hand, and bearing in mind Mignolo's further discussion of how both of these concepts undergo a process of racialization, they work to enmesh all of the places and persons in this region within the colonial matrix of power, whereby they are controlled. All of this, ultimately, has the effect of turning the land and the people of this colonized region into resource and labour for European capitalist gain. It is a call to address this injustice that drives Mignolo's theoretical project.

For his part, Mignolo seeks to combat the exclusion, homogenization and commodification that results from the concept and constructs of 'Latin America' and 'latinidad' by rejecting them altogether. Indeed, this rejection is key to his decolonizing agenda. However, as we have seen, the members of the Valparaíso School, far from rejecting these concepts, consciously work to embrace them. This is evidenced in *Amereida* by their allusion to the Aeneid, and is signalled more generally by their continual engagement with and dependence on European philosophies and artistic traditions, particularly those stemming from French and Italian intellectual and cultural traditions. It would appear, then, that there is a fundamental disconnect between the *Travesía de Amereida* – by extension, *Ciudad Abierta* – and Mignolo's decolonial agenda.

Having said this, a closer look at the *Travesía de Amerida* reveals that there are, in fact, commonalities between the two projects. We gain this perspective by way of an article entitled 'On Facing Latin/South American Coloniality: The *Travesía de Amerida* and the Geo-Poetic Turn at the Valparaíso School' by Álvaro Mercado

and Daniela Salgado Cofré, both professors in the Faculty of Architecture and Design at the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso. In their excellent historical and critical account of the *Travesía de Amerida*, Mercado and Cofré contextualize the publication of the poem *Amereida* in relation to the inquiries into Latin American identity that had re-emerged during the mid-sixties: questions regarding the epistemic and intellectual dependence of Latin America that had arisen as a direct result of the process of University Reform in Chile between 1967 and 1973. The *Amereida* poem, they argue, contributes artistically to this inquiry by working to expose the paradoxical interplay between the 'discovery' and the 'veiling' of America that was established by different historical acts of colonization, beginning with the voyages of Columbus (1492 to 1504) and continuing through the geopolitical invention of Latin America in the nineteenth century. In this respect, we can see how the poem very much resonates with, and even seems to poetically pre-empt, the theoretical argument laid out by Mignolo in his much-later treatise: specifically, his claim that this process of constructing the idea Latin America (a process that Mercado and Cofré liken to 'veiling' when discussing how it is rendered in *Amereida*) results in homogeneity and exclusion. That said, very much unlike Mignolo, the members of the Valparaíso School did not work to resist this homogenization and exclusion by combatting and, ultimately, rejecting the concepts of 'Latin America' and 'latinidad,' as Mignolo advocates. Rather, their decolonial strategy of resistance lies in how they work first to embrace and then to *poetically transform* the concepts of 'Latin America' and 'latinidad'.

In this respect, Mercado and Cofré's reading resonates with Pendleton-Jullian's who, we recall, suggested that *Amereida* draws from 'latinity' in order to offer 'a critical understanding of that culture' and to suggest the potential for a 'metamorphosis of a sensibility with regard to that culture'.[20] Returning to our query above, we can appreciate that the crux of this critique of latinity is colonization and its attendant sensibility as developed through a European universe of cultural signification. But the question still remains, in what ways is this cultural sensibility transformed by *Travesía de Amereida* and, by extension, *Ciudad Abierta*?

The key to this transformation lies in the method used to develop the poem. Let us recall that the poem was composed along the course of the *travesía,* crossing the vast 'interior sea' of Latin America by moving from the periphery of the continental expanse to its centre. This movement was slow and deliberate, enabling those on the journey to experience the phenomenal plenitude of place. This movement was punctuated with acts: writing, performance, recitation; interventions and architectural projects; making and craftwork, such that their performance of place was aesthetic, imaginative and led by practice. This movement was collective as much as it was interactive, involving conversations with groups, schools and people they met along the way, thereby opening up their peripatetic community of practice to multiple perspectives and diverse voices, which were included in

the poem. Suggestively, Mercado and Cofré lay stress on this inclusion of multiple voices alongside the 'errant' mode embraced by the Valparaíso group. In doing so, and with reference to Martinican poet and philosopher Édouard Glissant (with whom we engage in the conclusion of *Ungovernable Spaces*) they consider both the journey of the members of the Valparaíso School and their use of the epic form as attempts to move beyond the burden of totalitarian colonial and geopolitical categories and into a space where multiple identities are understood in relation, and where the basis of a community's existence becomes 'a modern form of the sacred, which would be, all in all, a Poetic of Relation.'[21] All of which suggests that, through their situated method – an aesthetic, imaginative and relational practice of place – the Valparaíso group developed *Amereida* and, through this, created a myth of origin capable of transforming the ideas of 'Latin America' and 'latinity' from being totalizing, universalizing, Eurocentric categories into concepts specific to the geographical particularity and cultural heterogeneity that is South/Latin America, knowable only partially and poetically.

Detail 4 – Berm

We pass through an open landscape edged by a linear berm. Holding back a section of land, this berm sets up a kind of boundary condition: one that turns what was a continuous gradient of land into a series of steps.
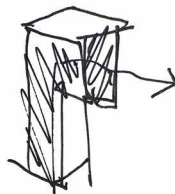
FIGURE 3.7 Kreider + O'Leary, CONSTELLATION Series, Ciudad Abierta, Chile. © Kreider + O'Leary, Digital Image Composite, 2024.

Architectural elements such as this are typically quite prosaic, with a focus more on engineering than aesthetics. This one, however, foregoes any registration of its structural role and, instead, becomes a poetic element in the landscape. Here the berm's concrete strata act both as a kind of plinth for the multiform concrete figures choreographed on top and as a material substrate for a poetic text inscribed on it. This text is by Godofredo Iommi and reads:[22]

> *La poesía es Fiesta*
>
> *Me digo: es necesario obedecer al acto poético con y a pesar del mundo para desencadenar la Fiesta. Y la Fiesta es el juego, supremo rigor de mi libertad. Tal es la misión del poeta porque el mundo debe ser siempre reapasionado.*

Through these words, embedded in concrete, we hear the poet speak: 'I say: it is necessary to obey the poetic act with and despite the world – to unleash the Celebration. For the Celebration is the game, and the supreme rigour of my freedom. Such is my mission because the world must always be experienced anew.'

What is celebration, we wonder? It is a stop-time. It is a time when people move outside of their habituated activity: when productivity ceases and the rhythm of life is interrupted. It is a time when the rules change – a time of transformation, often accompanying a change in the seasons or a moment in the cycle of life where a transition takes place. Reading these words, embedded in concrete on this berm in *Ciudad Abierta*, we begin to think that the key to unlocking their meaning (so, the key to understanding what it is that unleashes the Celebration) is a deeper understanding of what the poet means here when he speaks of the 'poetic act'.

*

Along the journey of their first travesía, *moving inland to the axis – to the 'poetic capital' of Latin America – Alberto Cruz, Godofredo Iommi and members of the Valparaíso School, together with the poets, painters and philosophers they attract, stage a series of acts: gestural, sculptural, architectural. And each act performed leaves behind a trace, be it a mark or structure on the site. These acts are all improvised, taking into account the spatial, material, geographical, psychological and emotional conditions of their situation and setting a tempo for the journey along the way. Engaging space and place through improvised action, these enactments along the* travesía *could thus be understood in relation to the earlier* phalènes *or 'poetic acts' of the Valparaíso School – even as an extension of them.*[23]

*

Transformation (Phalène)

Phalène is a French word meaning butterfly – more aptly, moth – and was used by the Valparaíso School as a name for their 'poetic acts'. The name is rife with symbolism, carrying with it the connotations of a process of radical change. This is because both the butterfly and the moth develop through the process of metamorphosis, which is a Greek word meaning 'transformation' or 'change in shape'. This moment of transformation takes place in the pupa stage of the insect's life cycle.[24] Here the butterfly or moth hangs upside down and either spins itself a cocoon or molts into a chrysalis. Once inside this protective shell, the caterpillar then begins to digest itself. Enzymes are released, tissues dissolve – essentially, the caterpillar turns into an amorphous soup. There are, however, a group of highly organized cells that withstand this process of dissolution. Known as the 'imaginal discs', these cells begin to feed on the protein-rich dissolution of a previous form of life in order to catalyse the process of cell division that ultimately results in the wings, antennae, legs, eyes and other features of a new one: the adult moth or butterfly who, in this stage, is called the *'imago'*.[25]

The *phalène* or 'poetic acts' of the Valparaíso School initially involved students and staff reciting poetry in public places around the city. Happening mainly in groups, the intent behind these recitations was to bring poetry into the streets; to intervene, directly and poetically, into everyday urban life. From these group recitations, the *phalènes* then developed into ways of actually making poetry: improvized performances, writing poetry in groups, card games and tournaments. Writing about the *phalènes*, Pendleton-Jullian describes how the Valparaíso School's development of them emphasized their commitment to a complete interrelation between poetry and architecture, further extending this into the realm of everyday life. She then likens these activities to Surrealist acts, which is not surprising given that the idea of the *phalène* was first developed from a series of seminars that Iommi gave on French modern poetry and art. We begin to wonder: how might an exploration of the *phalène* in this context of French modern poetry and art shed light on the *phalènes* of the Valparaíso School and, later, *Ciudad Abierta*?

Notably, the word *phalène* appears in a French translation of a poem by Edgar Allen Poe, one of the only English-speaking poets embraced by the modern French poets. The word appears specifically in the poem 'Fairy-land'. Here butterflies/moths ('*phalènes*') are attracted by starlight – that which transforms everyday reality into the beauty of a nocturnal fairy land – and, so, they 'seek the skies.'[26] But the stars are beyond reach, so butterflies must eventually return. They do so, however, with 'a specimen/upon their quivering wings' in the last two lines of the poem.[27] Poe's butterflies thus image a journey skyward towards the transformative

potential of art (i.e. 'starlight'), followed by a return journey to earth, bringing back with them a specimen: something specific, something special – a trace of this potential. The butterfly, the *phalène,* thus symbolizes the introduction of art, with all of its potential for transformation, into the reality of everyday life.

We relate our interpretation of the *phalène* in Poe's poem to the ethos of the modern French poets: the *poètes maudits* and Surrealists, including Baudelaire, Mallarmé, Rimbaud, Verlaine, Lautremont and Breton. These poets prioritized poetic activity over marketable product, emphasizing poetry's ritualistic aspects. Seeking to involve the participation of both poet and reader in the making of meaning, and making no distinction between art and the everyday, these poets saw in poetry, specifically, and in art, generally, the potential to transform the political sphere of human interaction. (And here it should be noted that the lines quoted above from Iommi's *La poesía es Fiesta*, which alludes to need for the 'poetic act', concludes with a footnote: a reference to Breton's *Arcane 17* that, itself, emphasizes the importance of introducing poetry into the everyday through celebration.)

Taken together, our interpretation of the *phalène* in Poe's poem alongside the relation it bears to the ethos of modern French poets offers insight into the *phalènes* or 'poetic acts' of the Valparaíso School – this insofar as it emphasizes their status as a medium for intuitive interpretation and poetical transformation. Having said this, what is unique to the Valparaíso School is the fact that, with the *phalènes,* any act of interpretation and transformation is intrinsically linked to the place where these acts unfold. This distinction is noted by Pendleton-Jullian's who argues that, ultimately, through involving groups of people who occupy space in certain configurations in the active participation of making poetry, the *phalènes,* or 'poetic acts' of the Valparaíso School introduce the possibility of '*linking poetry to place and to space*: to the place in which it occurs and to the space which it configures.'[28] Opening up both meaning and measure, the *phalènes* ultimately became central to the teaching and working methods of the Valparaíso School and, eventually, *Ciudad Abierta*, where they achieved their status as initiators of the architectural process; through this, become central to catalysing *Ciudad Abierta's* community formation.[29]

Detail 5 – Cemetery

A cemetery is a form of burial architecture that, pragmatically, houses the bodies of the dead and, symbolically, provides a space both to remember and to honour this death. The cemetery at *Ciudad Abierta* began with the death of Godo and Ximena, two of the founders' children. One died by fire, the other by water.[30]

These are the first two tombs we encounter when, having followed along a densely wooded path, we enter into the cemetery.

FIGURE 3.8 Kreider + O'Leary, CONSTELLATION Series, Ciudad Abierta, Chile. © Kreider + O'Leary, Digital Image Composite, 2024.

Continuing on, we experience the cemetery as a necklace of spaces that contract and expand with our movement, like breath. Our inclination is to move along one path that, while staying level, becomes increasingly enclosed by walls on either side. The walls continue to rise higher and higher until eventually, at the very end, we find that we are looking at the sky through a far away frame. We realize that, in fact, we are inside of the ground, the ground having opened into space.

*

Now the year is 1970 and a group of people are performing a poetic act that will lay the foundation for Ciudad Abierta. These people are moving across the sand dunes of the Ritoque coastline in a line, single file. As they move, each footstep leaves behind a trace to become a mark of their collective journey. But on their return, the participants discover that the marks have vanished: the trace of their venture lost

to the inevitable shift of sand. From this arises the concept of volver a no saber, *'the return to not knowing': a concept emergent through the movement of the shifting sand that is the foundation – the ground – for this community of education, architecture and poetry. It is this concept that will continually inform the development of this experimental city nestled here between the line of sand dunes along its Pacific edge and the stretch of higher ground to the east.*[31]

<center>*</center>

Community (Formation)

The cemetery as a generic architectural form, as much as our specific experience of the cemetery at *Ciudad Abierta*, prompts reflection on the formation of community. For this, we turn to *The Inoperative Community* by the French philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy.[32] Here Nancy describes how singular beings, finite and exposed, appear to one another not as individuated, but as the very relation between them – what Nancy terms 'compearance' (*com-paraître*). This exposure of finitude, argues Nancy, constitutes the basis of community. Importantly, in explicitly revealing such finitude, the death of another opens up space. Or, in the words of Maurice Blanchot, conversing with Nancy in the book *The Unavowable Community*, the death of another 'puts me beside myself' becoming a 'separation that can open me, in its very impossibility, to the Openness of a community.'[33] We thus appreciate how, amidst our co-existence as a plurality of singular beings, the death of another reveals our finitude while its attendant ecstasy opening up space: space for sharing, space for communication – space as the necessary 'ground' for singularities being-in-common. It is just such a ground, ground as an opening of space, that we have experienced in this cemetery of *Ciudad Abierta*.

Nancy's argument carries a further, important qualification: that singularity does not *proceed* from anything. It does not arise *from out of* or as an *effect of* anything. Rather, the 'ground' in his concept of community is a 'groundless "ground" … made up only of the network, the interweaving and the sharing of singularities.'[34] Nancy's concept of community is therefore not predicated on something like *work*.[35] Rather, community takes place in what Blanchot calls, for his part, the 'un-working' of the work: 'that which, before or beyond the work, withdraws from the work, and which, no longer having to do either with production or completion, encounters interruption, fragmentation, suspension.'[36] Seen in this light, community as such is 'made up of the interruption of singularities, or the suspension that singular beings *are*.'[37] And here we are reminded of a story.

In this story, a group of students and teachers from *Ciudad Abierta* are travelling across Chile on one of the *travesías*. At one point they all get into a boat to cross a body of water. There they are, sitting in a boat upon the water, when one of their teachers invites them to undertake an action. All of the students and their teachers are invited to throw their identification papers and cards overboard. Thus stripped of their name, their occupation – their identity – all of the students and their teachers remain there for a time, suspended in the boat, exposed.[38]

This conceptualization of singularities in suspense distinguishes the idea of community from the social cell as a collective of 'individuals' working toward a common goal. In fact, for Nancy, the individual as an abstraction, perfectly closed and detached – atomized – means that the question of community does not even enter into it: 'one cannot make a world with simple atoms,' he writes. 'There has to be an inclination or an inclining from one toward the other, of one by the other, or from one to the other.'[39] Singularity is thus behind any theme of the atomized individual. The singular being as an embodied reality: *a* voice, *a* face, *a* death, *a* writing – always in relation, ever inclined toward that that which is outside.[40] 'Community is at least the *clinamen* of the individual,' Nancy writes.[41] So singularity is linked to ecstasy and the passion of the singular being, while community *is* this relation and the sharing of passion.[42] All of which carries implications for how we understand *Ciudad Abierta* to operate, or perhaps not to operate, as a community.

We suggest that, rather than a collective of individuals who work to produce objects, the inhabitants of *Ciudad Abierta* can be understood as a community of singular beings, finite and exposed, who engage in poetic activity to open up a space for inclination, passion and the un-working of work. Notably, this concept of community becomes operative in *Ciudad Abierta*'s practice of *trabajo en rondo,* or 'working in a circle'. This practice is described by Chilean architect and academic Fernando Oyarzún as consisting of 'project cooperation which could manifest itself at several levels: from the possibility of contributing ideas and observations, in dialogue form, to working collectively on a project starting from relatively independent fragments developed by different architects.'[43] Through *trabajo en rondo,* building work becomes a process of continual interruption forwarded through cooperation: one that undermines any sense of individual authorship on a project. And here we are reminded of yet another of *Ciudad Abierta*'s large-scale building works, The Palace of Light and Air. Intended as a roofed structure, this building was completed roof-less when, midway through its construction, Iommi and the group agreed that the project was finished. The result is a building – a process – held in suspense: one that, resisting closure as an architectural object, proliferates imaginative possibilities to open up a space for community to take place.[44]

Detail 6 – Jardin de Bo

Resisting the seduction of seascape, most of the buildings at *Ciudad Abierta* face inland. Such introversion allows the mind to focus; the ears to attune – and such attunement cultivates the *Jardin de Bo*.

FIGURE 3.9 Kreider + O'Leary, CONSTELLATION Series, Ciudad Abierta, Chile. © Kreider + O'Leary, Digital Image Composite, 2024.

The *Jardin de Bo* is a sun garden marking out the meter and cadence of a poem by Ephraim Bo. Walking through the garden, our experience is one of a spatialized pattern in a moment of time: an experience, that is, of rhythm. The rhythm of the garden here is atypical, structured neither radially nor in linear vectors reading from left-to-right. Rather, our movement navigates a series of interconnected inclined planes: vectors progressing towards points of concentration that construct a set of contractions and expansions of space across the undulating ground of the site. Meanwhile, the dunes, the clouds, the wind; the sound of faraway waves; the branches of the evergreens and their vibrating needles; the sun as it moves across the sky, day in, day out.

*

1970, the year of Ciudad Abierta's founding, also saw the election of Salvador Allende to the presidency of Chile. The first socialist to be elected to the presidency in South America through the democratic process, Allende vowed to bring about revolutionary change by working within the country's constitutional democratic tradition – a platform that became known as the 'Chilean road to socialism.' In keeping, Allende began working quickly and decisively to nationalise healthcare, continue reforms to the educational system, establish a program of free milk for children and, most radically, to bring a major part of Chile's economy under state control including large-scale industries such as copper, thereby securing material benefits for working-class groups.[45]

*

Rhythm (World)

The French linguist Émile Benveniste examines the etymology of the word rhythm, tracing it back to the Greek word ρυθμός (*rhuthmos*). This word is not, Benveniste argues, an abstraction of the verb ρεω, meaning 'to flow'. Such a commonly held misunderstanding has led many to think that the word and concept of rhythm is derived from the movement of the waves of the sea. Instead, and as we discussed in the Introduction, Part 2, the word ρυθμός first appears in the philosophy of Leucippus and Democritus, two of the creators of atomism. Benveniste describes how, for these materialist philosophers, the universe is comprised of individual particles: atoms in continual motion that together act as bodies; bodies that become recognizable by their mutual differences in 'form', 'order' and 'position', respectively. In this context, Democritus first uses the word ρυθμός to designate 'form' as the disposition or configuration of atoms; for example, water and air differ from one another in the *form*, ρυθμός, that their constituent atoms take. We thus understand ρυθμός as a pattern of movement or improvised, changeable form.

How, then, does ρυθμός come to be associated with the notion of rhythm as we now understand it? It is, as we noted in the Introduction, Part 2 when the aforementioned consideration of the formal structure of things meets a theory of measure as applied to the figures of dance. Benveniste points to how this meeting occurs in Plato's discussion of musical intervals. In this context, the word ρυθμός retains its original meaning as a form of movement; however, what Plato adds is his specific appreciation of ρυθμός as the form of movement made by the human body in dance. ρυθμός thus comes to designate corporal movement bound by the law of numbers: a form – or, more specifically, a figure – determined by measure and numerically regulated. From this, Benveniste claims, we receive our current understanding of rhythm.

As a measure of movement, rhythm is intrinsic to human activity. Through rhythm, we distinguish types of human behaviour, both individual and collective. We also project this sense of rhythm into things and events beyond the human sphere. In this sense, argues Benveniste, the very condition of the word *rhythm* suggests the 'vast unification of man and nature under time,' but less because man gleans his appreciation of rhythm from the ebb and flow of the sea, and more because man imposes his own sense of regulated and measured time onto the movements of the world – and, we would argue, other men.[46] For to control the durations and repetitions of human activity is to control human behaviour. We might phrase this as follows: if rhythm is intrinsic to human activity, then its regulation is intrinsic to government.[47] It is this regulation that is upset by the improvized, changeable form of *Ciudad Abierta* – a community of practice whose rhythm is intrinsically linked to place.

With this in mind, we turn to another discussion of rhythm. In his book *Rhythmanalysis*, Henri Lefebvre distinguishes between two distinct measures, by which he means two different patterns of repetition in time and space: the cyclical and the linear. The former, he writes, typically originates in 'the cosmic, in nature: days, nights, seasons, the waves and tides of the sea, monthly cycles, etc' and the latter is more evident in social practice, in human activity: 'the monotony of actions and of movements, imposed structures.'[48] These two systems of measure, which he associates with time and space, respectively, exert a reciprocal action: 'they measure themselves against one another: each one makes itself and is made a measuring-measure; everything is cyclical repetition through linear repetitions' and this, he argues, constitutes the measure of time.[49] This measure of time – that is to say, rhythm – is both quantitative *and* qualitative: the former marking time and distinguishing moments in it, the latter linking these together. All of which, Lefebvre argues, is superimposed on the 'multiple **natural** rhythms of the body … though not without changing them.'[50] Rhythm thus appears as 'regulated time, governed by rational laws, but in contact with what is least rational in human being: the lived, the carnal, the body.'[51] The resulting 'bundle' of natural rhythms, wrapped with social or mental functions, contours our habits and routines. We now suggest that the habits and routines of *Ciudad Abierta* – intrinsically linked to poetry and to place – have the capacity to un-govern the rhythm of regulated time, opening up the potential for singularities engaging in practice to relate to one another and to the specificity of place; through this, for a community to emerge.

This returns us to the *Jardin de Bo* where we find a relationship between rhythm and the natural world evident in the garden's formal order. Clearly there is measure as we move along the patterned path: a measure drawn from poetry and realized through a composition of inclination, contraction and expansion; a composition that accounts for the phenomenological conditions of site. All of which carries an

important implication. As it is poetry that instigates any building work at *Ciudad Abierta*, and as this building work is not undertaken for the purpose of commerce or trade, we appreciate that the measure of human action at *Ciudad Abierta* is concerned less with the regulation of human labour for the purposes of productivity than it is with an inclination for – and continued cultivation of – 'poetic activity' in and in relation to the world: an activity that results in an architectural rhythm integrating worldly phenomenon into its formal order; this as opposed to using such form to order the natural world. This complexity of rhythm, embodied here by the *Jardin de Bo*, underlies a particular understanding of community: one that allows us to posit *Ciudad Abierta* itself as, ultimately, a form of political resistance.

Detail 7 – Roof

In the language of architecture, 'roof' is a basic unit. It's function? To shelter. To keep the elements out. Typically a roof is constructed as simply as possible. Whether flat or inclined, the more basic the better – there's less to go wrong. In the case of the roof of this *hospedería* in *Ciudad Abierta,* there is much that could go wrong.

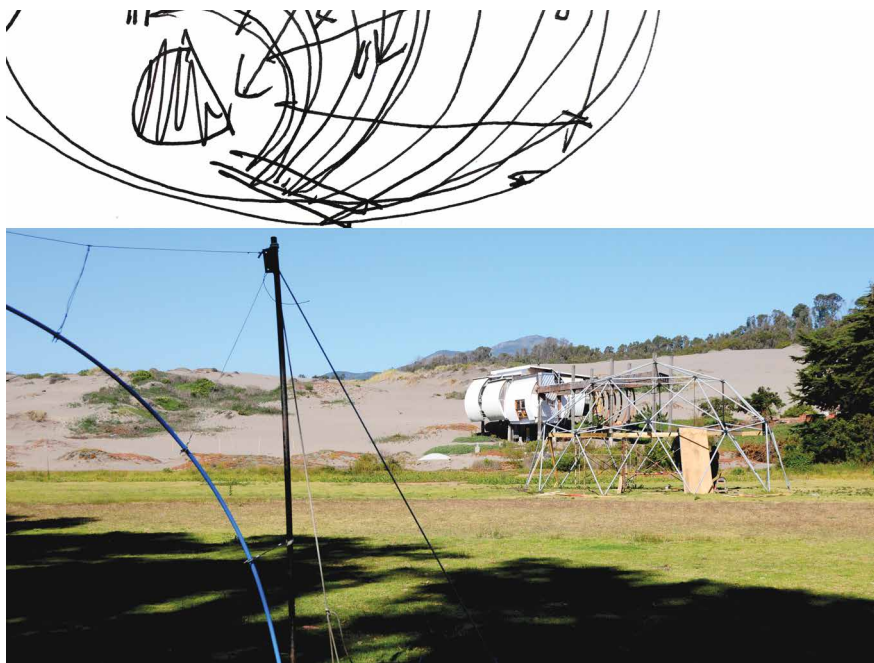**FIGURE 3.10** Kreider + O'Leary, CONSTELLATION Series, Ciudad Abierta, Chile.
© Kreider + O'Leary, Digital Image Composite, 2024.

The roof undulates, mimicking the rhythm of the sand, the waves and the angles of light. Diverse sets of junctions meet to form a veritable constellation of centres – a quixotic combination of angles, curves and surprises. The roof materials are mixed: painted render, tongue-and-groove timber, lead sheet, plywood panel, metal framed glazing, timber framed glazing, folded metal sheet and concrete over chicken wire mesh. But note the double membrane: the roof over the roof; a much more rationalized, geometric structure made from timber beams and corrugated plastic sheets. It appears that so much went wrong with the first iteration that they had to build a second roof, a meta-roof – an ideal of roof – transcending the adhocist construction beneath.

*

Related to Allende's programme of social reform, he invited the British cybernetician Stafford Beer to come to Chile in July 1971. Beer's task was to develop a technological system that would enable 'worker participation' in the overall management of the now state-run industries. As it was envisioned, the project would ultimately allow the newly elected government to regulate Chile's economic transition in line with Allende's socialist principles. So 'Project Cybersyn' came into being, making its appearance as a cybernetic form of socialist governance: one that entered into the world of politics just at the height of the Cold War.[52]

*

Failure and Feedback

Adhocism, as defined by architectural historian and theorist Charles Jencks and architect Nathan Silver in their 1972 manifesto *Adhocism*, is purposeful, directed behaviour with an immediate end in view.[53] The adhocist is one who engages actively and directly in shaping the local environment, using whatever is to hand. Predicated on purposeful action, Jencks and Silver describe how adhocist practices obviate the ideologies of determinism and the delays caused by specialization and bureaucracy. They suggest, instead, a more general, loose and immediate approach to problem-solving. As a design method, adhocism is thus inherently anti-deterministic, pluralistic and subversive. This is equally true of adhocism as a research method that, making use of pre-existing concepts and fusing them into new wholes, celebrates

the fact that knowledge is fragmentary and contradictory; that our understanding of the world is in a perpetual state of discovery, change and development. Which goes to confirm what we so often forget: that knowledge, itself, is a practice.

That the building works at *Ciudad Abierta* embody these qualities of adhocism is evident. They are each made 'for this' or that purpose; for example, a music room, a chapel, the living quarters of the *hospederías.* However, the adhocist strategies of design and research at *Ciudad Abierta* are unique in that their goal is not oriented by the single aim of solving a problem through the realization of an object or building. Rather, the fact that all work begins with poetry and is pursued as a mode of study and research suggests combined architectural, poetic *and* educational aims. This further suggests that any resulting object or building embodies these multiple dimensions. Moreover, with the emphasis always on the process itself – the means rather than the end – value is placed on the act of production over the product or the quantification of productivity. We can see all of this with a closer look at the roof of this *hospedería,* where it is clear from the combination of materials, geometries and techniques that the aim was to make a roof, and that the construction work was improvized using whatever was to hand, but where it is also possible to see all of this in the light of poetry and the process of making and learning.

On the floor of this *hospedería* we see a quote from the poem 'Fragment' by the American poet John Ashbery.[54] Published in 1970 as a closing piece to the book *The Double Dream of Spring,* the poem is written in the style of a French *dizain*: a short poetic form of ten lines or, in the case of Ashbery's poem, a ten-line stanza within a longer sequence. Written partly in his home town of Sodus, New York, where Ashbery had returned to bury his father, and partly in Paris, where he was then living in self-imposed exile, Ashbery wrote the poem systematically: two *dizains* per day, one *dizain* per page, over the course of twenty-five days.[55] This constraint makes sense of the two lines that open *dizain* three, which are inscribed here on the *hospedería* floor: 'This page is the end of nothing / To the top of that other.'[56] The page, the physical edge, is not an end in itself, but the beginning of another – another page, another *dizain* or formal compositional unit. In like manner, the different planes and angles that make up the roof of the *hospedería* comprise replete units that, nevertheless, continue into other planes and angles: new beginnings, new fragments that, altogether, comprise this pluriverse of roof.

Back in the poem, the paradox of the page/unit edge in 'Fragment' is further complicated by Ashbery's poetics. Notably, Ashbery's line breaks rarely conform to the conventions of grammar and syntax and through which thought, chaotic and in flux, becomes ordered. In Ashbery's postmodernist verse, meaning spills over from one line into the next line: a disjunctive rhetorical strategy at the local level that nonetheless yields meaningful cohesion – a suspended overall sense or

conceptual synthesis – throughout the course of reading. We compare this to the poetics of the roof construction here at the *hospedería*. In doing so, we imagine rivulets of rain flowing from one angle or plane to another, regardless of any physical or architectonic division. We imagine further how, even amidst this chaos and flux, the roof remains a 'roof', suspended overhead.

At this point one detail becomes particularly significant. We see how, at one of the many junctures of steel and glass, it is obvious that that the construction of the edge has caused rain water to pool and collect, enter the building and, over time, erode the fabric of the construction. In response to this obvious error, two small chevrons have been cut from the edges of the steel frame allowing any pooled water to pour out. We consider this as we turn to the essay 'Mistake Mystique' from the collection *Education Automation: Comprehensive Learning for Emergent Humanity.* Here Buckminster Fuller, an American architect and systems theorist, discusses the importance of error and mistake in any learning process. Rather than viewing mistakes as something to be avoided, Fuller sees them as something to be made – and continually so – since, in his words, 'thinking accrues only after mistake-making which is the cosmic wisdom's most cogent way of teaching each of us how to carry on'.[57] And this understanding, Fuller contends, is the very basis of *cybernetics*: the term used by Norbert Weiner to identify the process whereby humans gain and employ information; that is, the learning process. Etymologically, this process has roots in *kybernḗtes,* the Greek term for helmsman or steersman (metaphorically, the 'guide' or 'governor'; the Latin *gubernator*). As Fuller explains, when the rudder of a ship is angled to one side or another of a ship's keel line, the ship's hull begins to rotate around the pivot point. The resulting momentum tends to rotate the ship beyond the intention of the helmsman, who then must 'meet' that course-altering momentum. 'It is impossible to eliminate altogether the ship's course realterations,' Fuller writes. 'It is possible only to reduce the degree of successive angular errors by ever more sensitive, frequent and gentle corrections. That's what good helmsmen … do'.[58] Weiner invented the term *feedback* to identify this process of detecting error and correcting throughout any course of any action – which returns us to our roof with its leaky edge.

We imagine the streams of water criss-crossing the roof's planes and angles and becoming channelled into the two twinned rivulets that fall perpendicular to the roof's horizontal logic. These little falls are meaningful, now less in terms of Ashbery's fluid poetics and more as the sign of a mistake and the maker's response to it: a perfect example of feedback; how one learns through observing, interacting with, and responding to an object of study. The same holds true for the meta-roof that, as we noted, sits above the adhoc roof construction of the *hospedería*. Clearly addressing the problems suggested by the original roof (quite simply, that it was unable to keep out the elements), this roof above the roof gestures towards

the original roof's multiplicity of planes and angles, but through a more refined geometry and selection of materials: what one might describe as a conceptual and material synthesis of the original adhocist process. In this way, the second roof continues to embody the poetics of the first, while successfully fulfilling its pragmatic aim. Importantly, the fact that the second roof remains suspended over the original roof means that, rather than totally replacing it, the second roof preserves its archaeology of mistakes. All of which turns the entire structure into a learning tool: an object to be studied, thereby fulfilling the educational aim of *Ciudad Abierta*'s approach to making.

Detail 8 – An Object

Moving through *Ciudad Abierta* we come across an object: a carefully constructed object situated in a field. This object, we surmise, is a one-to-one scale study of the tensions and resistance needed to generate a curved line in space, perhaps to make an arch or a curved section.

FIGURE 3.11 Kreider + O'Leary, CONSTELLATION Series, Ciudad Abierta, Chile. © Kreider + O'Leary, Digital Image Composite, 2024

As a figure, this is nothing more than two points on a grid with a curved line between them. But in three dimensions – in the world, in this landscape of *Ciudad Abierta* – it needs a structural apparatus to keep the figure in tension. It needs this delicate assemblage made of metal poles and taut rope turning pure inclination into lived reality. So we imagine the act of making this object: carefully placing each metal pole on the ground; bending the rod so that it greets each compression point; tensioning the lengths of wire to maintain the curve. All of this would cultivate an embodied understanding of the physics behind the figure. And this prompts us to think that it is less the object and more the act of making that is at stake here; that the act of making is, itself, the study; by extension, that the one engaging in this act is a student of *Ciudad Abierta*.

Now we imagine the interaction between student and teacher while making the object. Confirming the need and supporting the intention to make; questioning, verifying and correcting the actions of making; evaluating and reflecting on the thing made. There would be conversation back and forth – a dialogue of speech and action – as the object emerges between them. Through this, would take place through conversation and practice in a non-hierarchical relation between student and teacher.

*

Salvador Allende held office as president of Chile for three years, from 1970 to 1973, at which point his democratically elected government was overthrown in one of the most violent episodes in Chile's history. The coup d'état of 11 September, 1973, led by General Augusto Pinochet, saw the death of Allende by apparent suicide and the subsequent rise to power of Pinochet. The declassification of previously secret government documents relating to U.S. relations with Chile from the 1960s and throughout the Pinochet era attest to the role that Richard Nixon, Henry Kissinger and the CIA played in this turbulent situation. Through cultivating a 'coup climate' in Chile, thereby setting up the conditions for Pinochet's overthrow of Allende, U.S. interests helped to ensure that Allende's model of governance, perceived as a threat by the U.S. government, would fail. Pinochet's military dictatorship lasted for sixteen years, during which time he shut down parliament, banned trade unions and set up numerous concentration camps throughout the country. The Pinochet government was ultimately responsible for the torture, exile and 'disappearance' of over 30,000 Chilean people.[59]

*

An Object in Common

Our envisioning of this educational exchange taking place around an object situated in a field of *Ciudad Abierta* is informed, in part, by Austrian theologian, philosopher and social critic Ivan Illich's critique of the role that 'schooling' plays in post-industrial society. Published in 1970, the year of *Ciudad Abierta*'s founding, *Deschooling Society* is based on conversations that Illich participated in regularly when attending meetings of the Center for Intercultural Documentation in Cuervanaca, Mexico. Addressing his particular concerns for the social realities of Latin America and Africa, Illich's argument boils down to this: society has become increasingly institutionalized and 'schooling' is both the means and the place where this happens. Separating education off from our everyday living and working lives, 'schooling' suggests that learning happens only in a particular time and place; that one can learn only from a specialist with a specific training; and that we can never have enough (better, higher, more 'professional') education and degrees.

Broadly speaking, the implications of this 'schooling' of society are that education becomes a commodity: one that we lack and, so, one we desire; one that, for the working classes and poorer nations, will never be 'good enough' – they will always be 'behind'. Why? Because the institutionalization of 'schooling' supports misleading assumptions of 'progress', thereby maintaining a false inequality. In response to this, Illich resolutely calls for a 'deschooling' of society. He calls for learning that can happen everywhere and anywhere. Anyone can be a teacher and anyone a student. There are no specialists and no 'higher' degrees. Those who are curious ask and those who have skills teach. In this way, education is not some separate sphere reserved for children of a certain age and those in 'higher' education; rather, the world with all of its objects, texts, machines and other people, becomes an open educational environment for all.[60] All of which resonates with *Ciudad Abierta*'s pedagogy as this is practiced through a living, working, making community.

Without question, Illich's work must be seen in the light of the important work being done at the intersection of pedagogy and politics in the 1960s and 1970s in South America, generally, and Chile, specifically – particularly amongst the South American Catholic Left. One crucial text to consider is *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* by Brazilian educator Paulo Freire. Notably, Freire was living in Chile from 1964 to 1969, in exile from the Brazilian military dictatorship in his own country that was established through a *coup de-état* in 1964, and it was during this time that he developed and published his highly influential book.

Pedagogy of the Oppressed is an inherently humanist project: one that develops a pedagogical practice intended to affirm one's human identity, thereby counteracting the process of dehumanization suffered by oppressed groups as a result of exploitation

and social injustice – a process that is reaffirmed in authoritarian educational models. Freire's is also an inherently utopian project: one that lays emphasis on the possibility for education leading to personal and collective freedom – a freedom that, Freire argues, people come to fear as a result of oppression. Moreover, his is an eminently practical project, as evidenced by the final chapter where, having lain his theoretical foundation, Freire introduces the practice of participatory action research. Stressing the importance of dialogue, this practice invites members of a community to investigate particular research 'themes' as these relate to what one could conceive of as the problem of a particular community. From there, members of the community work together to arrive at the knowledge needed to transform their environmental conditions. In this way, education catalyses transformative action towards political and structural change. So, for Freire, education is the means for oppressed persons to achieve critical consciousness; through this, to know and to act in the face of their oppression. And through his development of an inherently critical and emancipatory pedagogy – one that emphasizes dialogic learning and creative communities – education is, ultimately, understood as a political and collective act.

Understanding *Ciudad Abierta* in relation to this context of educational reform in South/Latin America generally, and Freire's argument in particular, would seem to suggest that, as a pedagogical project, *Ciudad Abierta* is inherently political. However, an essay entitled 'Prisoners of Ritoque: The Open City and the Ritoque Concentration Camp' by the architect, teacher and historian Ana María León, sheds a different light. In this essay León looks at how, in 1974 and 1975, just a few miles along the beach from *Ciudad Abierta*, one of Pinochet's concentration camps was set up in a former holiday camp that was built originally for working families under the Allende government as part of Allende's widespread social agenda. Having identified the ironic proximity between the two, León sets about comparing and contrasting the practices of *Ciudad Abierta* with those initiated in the camps, exploring the motivations behind each. Strikingly, she notes a number of similarities. For example, both *Ciudad Abierta* and the inmates of the camp placed emphasis on teaching and education. We have seen how this manifests in *Ciudad Abierta*. In the camp, this included inmates producing a series of lectures and festivals and even opening up a small school. Inmates taught their field of specialization, with physicists teaching mathematics, farmers explaining land cultivation, mechanics demonstrating how to dismantle an engine, and so on. As León notes, '[t]hese study sessions established a common ground that brought different income levels and social classes together'[61] – an egalitarian educational process that, much like the pedagogical practices of *Ciudad Abierta*, aimed at emancipation. Also in the camps, as in *Ciudad Abierta*, the inmates engaged in performance. In this respect, the incarceration of Óscar Castro, director of the Aleph Theatre, was key. León describes how Castro, who had been interned in the camp after staging an allegory of the military coup in 1973, started staging plays

in the camps with collaboration from fellow prisoners, professionals and amateurs alike, which soon became weekly events. Crossing fact with fiction, these plays were intended to comment on the situation of their incarceration. Performed in front of the prison guards, they therefore became a direct form of critique and resistance – and it is this directness, argues León, that serves to distinguish the pedagogy and the performance practices of the camps from those of *Ciudad Abierta*.

Ultimately, León traces the camp's pedagogical principles back to Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* as have we. However, for her part, she explicitly contrasts Friere's pedagogy with the 'deliberately apolitical architectural pedagogy' of *Ciudad Abierta* and, in particular, Iommi's advocation of an 'a-critical consciousness: a liberty of thought … nurtured from within a community and deliberately disengaged from external political forces.'[62] She goes on to link the work of Friere to that of playwright Augusto Boal, another Brazilian exiled in Chile, and argues that Boal's development of a 'poetics of the oppressed', based on Freire's pedagogy, influenced the work of Castro, so further influenced the performances staged in the Ritoque concentration camps. León explicitly contrasts this with the poetic acts of *Ciudad Abierta*: acts that 'encouraged participation but sidestepped its political meaning.'[63] At this point, she goes on to align the practices of *Ciudad Abierta* with what Foucault calls 'practices of freedom' and those of the inmates at the Ritoque concentration camp with 'processes of liberation', ultimately claiming that '[s]uspended in utopian isolation, the school gained the freedom to act at the cost of its own relevance.'[64] She later qualifies this by noting that, '[f]or the architects of the *Ciudad Abierta*, the only avenue for action existed outside the larger political context. The body of work the school produced under the dictatorship stands as the strongest argument for their project.'[65] Whilst acknowledging that the very fact of their continued existence under Pinochet stands testament to their political importance within that context, León is clear in her preference for the more direct political action of the camp: 'The school chose to disengage, while the camp chose to resist.'[66] And yet, we wonder, is it not possible to appreciate this choice of disengagement – this decision to exist as a community of makers and thinkers in the dunes of the Ritoque Beach, far from the political fray; this practice of refusal – as, itself, a form of resistance?

Coda – Casa de los Nombres

On our very last day in *Ciudad Abierta* we engaged in an eight-hour performance leading to an installation – an intervention, really, nestled in the midst of the shifting sands of the Ritoque dunes. Here we sought to emulate the practices of *Ciudad Abierta*. So, we instigated this act through poetry and, specifically, a line of poetry randomly selected from *Amereida*:

a causa del gran circulo.[67]

We then engaged in a process of making characterized by collaboration, improvization and an emphasis on process over the product or thing made.
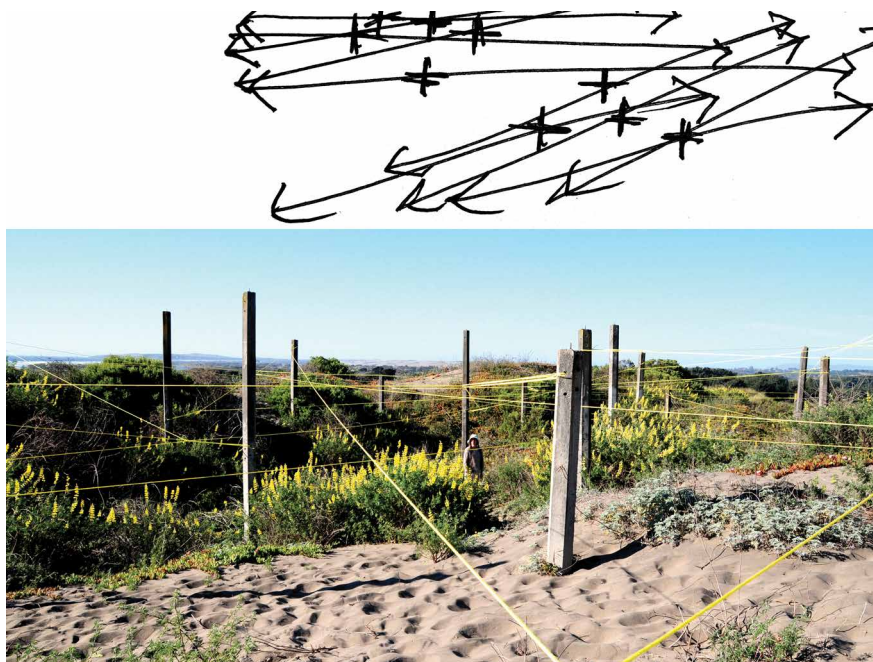
FIGURE 3.12 Kreider + O'Leary, CONSTELLATION Series, Ciudad Abierta, Chile. © Kreider + O'Leary, Digital Image Composite, 2024.

The intervention was situated in the remains of what was the *Casa de los Nombres.* Designed and built over the course of two years, the original *Casa de los Nombres* was an exhibition space and place of congregation for 400 people that was erected in celebration of the fortieth anniversary of *Ciudad Abierta.* However, following the event of the anniversary, the building was abandoned when, in an ultimate act of un-working, the movement of the dunes ran counter to the anticipated sand movement vectors such that the building was covered over, erased by its very foundation. This left behind the grid of twenty-nine concrete pillars that, originally twenty metres high, were now barely surfacing in the sand. This grid served as the infrastructure for our performative intervention: a constellation formed by connecting up the pillars through delineations of rope; a memory space relating to the building that was.

*

Two years after the violent overthrow of the Socialist president Allende through the military coup led by Pinochet, a group of economists introduced a radical policy reform in Chile. These economists were acting on the advice of the 'Chicago Boys', who were a group of Chilean economists educated at the University of Chicago. In Chicago, they worked under the economist Milton Friedman, who was best known for his advocation of small government and free-market capitalism as a way of maximizing human liberty. In line with Friedman's ideas, the Chicago Boys instigated reforms in Chile that worked to reverse the prevailing trend, both in the country itself and Latin America more generally, of expanding state institutions as a means of promoting industrialization, regulating social conflicts and reshaping social structures. The Chicago Boys sought, instead, to free the market from any external constraints in order to allow its self-regulatory dynamic to flourish. So it was that, under the dictatorship of Pinochet, the state was shrunk to its minimum, public services were privatized, markets were deregulated and the economic policy later named 'neoliberalism' was born into the world.[68]

*

El Gran Circulo

Our intervention in the sand dunes of Ritoque took around eight hours to complete, approximately three of which were spent untangling a knot in the rope that we were using to construct the figure.[69] When we had finished, we took the whole thing down. All of which left us asking ourselves: *What did we know of* Ciudad Abierta *that we did not know before?* Followed by: *Is this really the question we need to be asking?* Indeed, the very foundations of *Ciudad Abierta* – foundations in *cifra*, *travesía*, *phalénes*, *Amereida* – all suggest that there is no stable ground for knowing it. There is no 'real' *Ciudad Abierta* that we can observe, describe, measure, know. So, as we stand in the dunes with our memory of what we had just made and un-made fresh in our minds, the question becomes not *what* do we know now of *Ciudad Abierta* (the question of what it *is*, an ontological question), but rather *how* are we coming to know *Ciudad Abierta* (an epistemological question) – and why is this important?

We begin to ponder this and, as we do, we start to understand that we are coming to know *Ciudad Abierta* through a situated and poetic practice of place. In this way of knowing, there is only the ground on which we are standing. This ground is made of sand, so shifting in relation to its environmental conditions; and these

conditions include the 'we' who are coming to know it. It then strikes us that there is a resonance here between this way of knowing and the enactive approach to cognition that was developed by Chilean biologist and philosopher Francisco Varela.

As we discussed in the Introduction, Part 2 Varela's enactive approach to knowledge is based on an understanding that reality is not something pre-given: there is no world that *is* and that we, in turn, perceive and represent to ourselves. Rather, in an enactive approach, the world is something that exists because we are engaging in it (moving, breathing, eating) and, through this, 'constructing' our reality, our world. When we discussed this in the Introduction, Part 2 we looked at how Varela's understanding of enactment (related to this, his appreciation that the cognitive self is embodied, situated, relational and capable of transformation) is central to his conception of 'ethical know-how' as a basis for acting and interacting and, through this, constructing a reality, a world. Bearing this discussion in mind, we turn now to look at how, very significantly for us in this discussion, the roots of Varela's thinking lie in his lived experience of the political turbulence of Chile's military *coup*.

We hear about these conceptual roots in a talk entitled 'Reflections on the Chilean War' that Varela delivered in June 1978 at Lindisfarne, which was 'an association of scientists, artists, scholars, and contemplatives devoted to the study and realisation of a new planetary culture' founded by the social historian William Irwin Thompson in 1972, and where Varela was the second Fellow-in-Residence.[70] It was during his residency that Varela delivered his talk. He begins by stating that he is not accustomed to speaking personally, but feels compelled to do so in this context – this gathering of friends – so that they may fully appreciate the imperative behind his thinking generally, and specifically in relation to epistemology. 'I take epistemology quite seriously,' he says. 'I think it does matter. It is not a game or a fine pastime.'[71]

He then goes on to speak about his experience in Chile in the period leading up to and including Pinochet's *coup*. Specifically, Varela describes what it felt like when Allende came to power: the first socialist president – the first Marxist – to be democratically elected. He describes the feelings of happiness and jubilation. There was celebration! People pouring onto the streets. 'For about two hours you could see 500,000 people jumping up and down like kids,' he recalls.[72] But he is quick to clarify that this celebratory moment should not be understood in isolation. It was, he says, the result of a forty, perhaps forty-five-year long period of slow-moving growth of a broadly based worker movement: a movement of which Varela – along with his left-leaning, progressive colleagues at the University – played a part, and continued to play a part after Allende's succession to the presidency. But soon, he

says, 'from this sense of opening and exploration, what began to happen was the development of polarity.'[73]

This polarity revolved around siding either for or against Allende's party and it began, quite literally, to split the country in two. No one could agree, he says. It was as though people were living in two completely different realities: 'The polarity created a continual exaggeration of the sense of boundary and territoriality: "This is ours; get out of here,"' he remembers.[74] And as the polarity continued, Varela describes how he began to have doubts: 'I couldn't believe that the other guys, on the other side of the fence, were so bad, stupid, wrong, immoral, ugly and so on and so forth as I was supposed to believe.'[75] Eventually he started to lose his conviction and found himself in the utmost confusion: 'I don't know how to say it vividly enough; it was absolutely and completely chaotic. In the literal sense of the word chaotic. There was not possibility of distinguishing any order or any rule anymore.'[76]

From here his story shifts abruptly to Tuesday, 11 September, 1973: the day of the *coup*. He describes waking up, getting ready, taking his daughter to nursery. On the radio he hears that it is raining, but it was not raining. 'These guys are crazy,' he thinks.[77] But then his neighbour approaches him. *Doesn't he know? Know what?* That radio stations are being taken over by the army. And he remembers: 'It is raining' is a code for the *coup*. The *coup* has begun.

The story continues. Varela's recollections become more violent and foggy. He drops his daughter at a neighbour's house. He goes into work, getting ready to play a part in what he anticipates will be a civil war, but he receives no order. Instead, he hears that Allende is dead. He then sees a young boy, nineteen years old, riddle another man with bullets; a tank rolls over a factory and people are killed. He waits for death. 'For me, at the time,' he says, 'the ground had been pulled from under me. Nothing else was left to hold on to.'[78] It was then, in the midst of all this chaos, that he had the following realization:

> Polarity wasn't anymore this and that side, but something we had collectively constructed. Literally a collective action that we had all done. As this became more clear to me, it dawned on me that whatever my stances had been, my opinions had been, or whatever somebody else's opinions had been (and the workers' opinions and what not), were fragments that constituted this whole, this complete mandala of sorts. That all of the sudden it revealed the craziness. Total craziness … And you see the craziness, the way in which there was a collective pattern in which I was responsible, everybody was, and in which my views couldn't any more signify anything except that piece of a larger puzzle for which I really didn't have any answer.[79]

Here, in the midst of chaos – the fog of war – Varela recognizes that he, that everyone, had played a part in creating the violent situation of which they were all now a part. This situation was no longer about 'me here and they there,' everyone was in it together and, what is more, the whole thing seemed to have a logic to it. With this, he sat down to write 'The Logic of Paradise': the beginnings of what would develop into his concept of enactment; so, the seed of 'ethical know-how'.[80]

Varela concludes his story thus: it was, he says, from his experience 'of being rooted in the complete chaos and mass killing' that emerged his understanding of an inherent connection between the world view, political action and personal transformation. For it revealed to him that he could not separate *how* his mind and his actions operate and generate political action from *what* his understanding of the world is. All of which returns him to his passion for epistemology: 'Because epistemology does matter,' he says. 'As far as I'm concerned, that civil war was caused by wrong epistemology. It cost my friends their lives, their torture, and the same for 80,000 or so people unknown to me.'[81] All of which brings him to the crux of enaction:

> So, it is not an abstract proposition for me when I say that we must incorporate in the enactment, in the projecting out of our world views, at the same time the sense in which that projection is only one perspective, that it is a relative frame, *that it must contain a way to undo itself.* And unless we find a way of creating expressions of that nature, we are going to be constantly going around the same circle.[82]

All of which brings us back to our intervention on the dunes of the Ritoque beach where we sought to emulate the practices of *Ciudad Abierta* and, in doing so, instigated a process of making with a line of poetry from *Amereida*:

a causa del gran circulo

A 'great circle' is a term that is used in geometry to describe the largest circle that can be drawn on any given sphere. One practical application of this is the distinction of the celestial equator dividing the northern from the southern hemisphere; another is the use of great circles to approximate geodesics on the Earth's surfaces for air and sea navigation. It was 'because of the great circle' that we engaged in this performative act of making a figure and then un-making it, which we have likened to a process of enactment: one that is situated, embodied and relational; one that understands itself as only one of many ways to know *Ciudad Abierta*; so, one that contains a way to undo itself. And this, for us, strikes a chord, both with Varela's call for an epistemology that is capable of undoing itself and with *Ciudad Abierta*'s ethos of *volver a no saber*. Indeed, upon reflection,

we begin to hear quite clearly the resonance between all three. As we do so we consider conclusion of Varela's talk:

> I don't believe anymore in the notion of a cultural revolution in the sense that one form of politics and knowledge and religion is superseded by a new one. If I am interested in doing anything at this point, it is in creating a form of culture, knowledge, religion, or politics that does not view itself as replacing another, in any sense, but one that can contain in itself a way of undoing itself.[83]

Through his 'Reflections on Chile', Varela thus comes to reject dialectics and calls, instead, for the creation of a form that does not supersede, but works to undo hegemonic order. For our part, and recalling our argument in the Introduction, we call this ungovernability. So it is through our poetic act in the sand dunes of Ritoque, combined with Varela's critical 'Reflections on Chile' and, with this, the origins of his thinking around enactment and 'ethical know how', that we have come to know *Ciudad Abierta* as an ungovernable space.

Turbulent Politics and Emergent Ecologies

A Stratigraphy of the 'Peace Walls' of Belfast, Northern Ireland

A Memory of Walls

Our first encounter with the 'peace walls' situated in and around the city of Belfast, Northern Ireland, was from the back of a black cab. We were visiting Belfast in that hopeful time directly following the signing of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement in 1998. Although we would not return until years later, there was something about the psychological impact and menacing material quality of the divisive architecture, fortified R.U.C. stations, and British Army 'observation posts' scattered throughout the city that stayed with us. A memory of walls.

We returned to Belfast in 2014 with the specific intention of researching these walls dividing the city. In doing so, we selected thirteen points: one for each of the wall 'clusters' situated in and around the city. These have acted as the starting points for thought, expanded through our exploration of the physical, psychological, emotional and imaginative effects of the walls on the inhabitants of the city. Taken together, these conceptual explorations became a means of charting the material transformation of the city. Drawing from this, the writing in this chapter can be read as: a stratigraphy of the city's geological, cultural and historical layers; a depiction of its metamorphosis over the thirty years of the conflict known as 'the Troubles'; an anticipation of the city-to-come as we imagine the walls otherwise – alive and contributing to an emergent political ecology. How might this act of imagination allow us to think beyond the politics of sectarian division to conceive of community formation in terms of interconnectivity, relationality, systems and 'deep ecology'? Bearing this question in mind, what follows are thirteen points, expanded.

Point 1 – Formation, Repetition

Carson

A droplet falls and swerves, marking the birth of a political event.[1] A confusing turbulence follows, becoming civil war. Elements, now polarized, congeal and crystallize into bodies seen marching or fleeing from a street on fire. Families are displaced. Decay and decline. A burnt-out bus between the Falls and the Shankill Road severs connection through vernacular divide.

All of this, or something similar, will happen again. The vortical logic will hold.[2] The pattern will repeat, each time with a slight variation, each time leaving behind a wall.

Meanwhile, on the hill overlooking the city, a figure stands with feet spread and arm raised. An oratory gesture in apparent stasis that solicits illusive unity. A bird flies overhead. Emissions rise from his fingertips like the wisps of a fog.

FIGURE 4.1 Kreider + O'Leary, CLUSTER Series, Belfast, Northern Ireland.[3]
© Kreider + O'Leary, Digital Image Composite, 2024.

*

/ The Interface /

In 1904, as part of the Memoirs of the Geological Survey of Ireland, geologists Lamplugh et al. wrote a paper called 'The Geology of the Country around Belfast' where they surveyed the glacial drifts and other superficial deposits around the city, organizing this cartographical information into a 'Table of Formations'.[4] In 2017, The Belfast Interface Project published 'Interface Barriers, Peacelines and Defensive Architecture', where they systematically catalogued each peace wall, barrier, fence and gate used to separate and contain Nationalist and Unionist communities in Northern Ireland.[5] In the conceptual space between these two documents, one can construct a matrix of artefacts, agents, designs and policy related to the multiple fields of conflict and desire operating across this territory. We have constructed such a matrix, with a view to gaining an understanding of the mutating condition we call 'The Interface'.[6]

/ Subject of the Interface /

The Interface is a form of relation. This is to say that 'what is most essential to a description of the interface lies not in the qualities of an entity or in lineages of devices or technologies, but rather in the qualities of relation between entities.'[7] So, The Interface is a form of relation that exists between two or more distinct entities, conditions or states, such that it only comes into being as these distinct entities enter into active relation with one another. Through this, it actively maintains, polices and draws on the separation. Both the actions performed upon The Interface and the agency of their performance are, to a critical extent, already anticipated, giving them the flavour of an endless rehearsal, or catalogue of errors.[8]

/ Clusters /

Physically, The Interface comprises thirteen different wall clusters or 'peace lines' situated throughout Belfast, Northern Ireland. The non-physical, yet related, elements of The Interface are less easy to identify.

/ Stratigraphy /

Stratigraphy is the branch of geology concerned with the order and the relative position of strata and their relationship to the geological timescale. In 1904, Lamplugh et al. list the formations occurring in the Belfast maps as follows: Recent / Glacial Drift / Tertiary Volcanic Series / Upper Cretaceous / Lower Jurassic / Triassic / Permian / Silurian / Tertiary and Pre-Carboniferous. What follows is a survey of the turbulent politics and emergent ecologies at The Interface in Northern Ireland made manifest through a stratigraphy of the 'Peace Walls' of Belfast.

Point 2 – Foundation, Ballistics

Forensics

The streets pulse with a history of combat. Paint bomb traces, redacted graffiti and walled-off back gardens assemble. Here is a problem with many origins; actions enmeshed in a web of interconnectivity,[9] suffused with heterogenous affect; politics infused with the psychic realities of the present past become public.[10] A new form of community asserts itself in a warlike manner.

Feet take us out the front door. Bodies, mobile, move between the plenum of Ardoyne and the porosity of Glenbryn, activating the relation between them, its legacy of violence. One witness experienced it thus:

> *The weight that one body may have in history. The hardness inside compressing to an unreasonable atomic weight outside of scale. Act outside of scale. With little hope. To an audience of one. His skeleton, basic impulse of protest, against corporate exoskeletons crowded to a shell. The notion that there was something inside that can change through will alone, dropping hard to match a weapon.*[11]

This articulation of fact stands testament to a blanket force: a strange kind of power that fights and resists. An unknowable outside, right inside the body that makes visible a singular disruption.

FIGURE 4.2 Kreider + O'Leary, CLUSTER Series, Belfast, Northern Ireland.
© Kreider + O'Leary, Digital Image Composite, 2024.

*

/ The Ground /

Everything starts and ends in the ground. The ground is not to be confused with 'the situation on the ground', which determines how things go. Directors of government agencies talk of 'taking a temperature check' of the situation on the ground. This does not relate to heat *per se* but has more to do with the dynamics of the space. When it does relate to heat, things escalate.

The ground is deep thickness, embedded with fragments, plastics, shards, paint splatters and congealed material, sometimes bonded in the heat of fire. Strange, blackened coagulations defy description because they have passed from one material state into another – a form of trans-substantiation. Fire is idolized here by communities on both sides of the divide, whether the purifying fire from which the phoenix of the 1916 Easter Rising in Dublin arises, or the iconic bonfires lighting the way for the ships of 'King Billy' to enter Belfast Lough prior to the Battle of the Boyne in 1690.

/ Schism /

The root cause of division in Northern Ireland has a long, complicated and contested history. However, a radical and unprecedented moment of schism that can be agreed upon by most historians is the Plantation of Ulster in the early 1600s. The result of an elaborate two-year long exercise in English government planning, the Plantation of Ulster was the organized colonization (plantation) of six northern counties of Ireland by people from England and the lowlands of Scotland during the reign of King James I. As part of this process, an estimated half a million acres (2,000 km^2) in the north of Ireland were confiscated or 'escheated'[12] from Gaelic chieftains, most of whom had fled Ireland for mainland Europe in the 1607 'Flight of the Earls'.[13]

The conditions for the Scots and English settlers undertaking the plantation were, principally, that each undertaker should, within about a three-year period, erect a stronghold on his estate, and import settlers at the rate of twenty-four men per thousand acres. The conditions were explicit in the nature of the defensive architecture required to be constructed by each undertaker:

> Every of the said Undertakers of a great Proportion, shall within 3 yeeres (sic) to be accompted from Easter next, build thereupon a stone house, with a strong court or bawne about it; And every Undertaker of a middle Proportion, shall within the same time build a stone or brick house thereupon, with a strong court or bawne about it; And every Undertaker of a small Proportion, shall within the same time make thereupon a Strong Court or bawne at least.[14]

This led to a proliferation of tower houses and castles surrounded by bawn enclosures across Ulster, ensuring a settlement pattern of villages protected by undertakers' strongholds.

By 1619, the surveyor Francis Pynnar travelled around Ulster documenting the extent of the Plantation, noting that it involved the construction of nearly 2,000 houses, 107 castles with bawns, 19 castles without bawns, and 43 bawns containing

only modest houses.[15] Colonizing Ulster with settlers loyal to the Crown was seen as a way to prevent further rebellion, as it had been the region most resistant to English control during the preceding century.[16] By 1704, just 5% of land in Ulster was owned by native Irish.[17]

/ Sleech /

After the close of the Glacial period, the mouth of the Lagan valley was converted into an estuary and choked with a muddy and silty deposit containing marine shells – the 'Estuarine Clays' or *sleech* on which the lower part of Belfast stands. This *sleech* provides the ideal raw material from which to make the venerable Belfast brick. The majority of the city's buildings, from the lowly single-storey terraced house to the elevated civic architecture of the city, are constructed with Belfast brick.

/ Bricks /

Poet Ciaran Carson tells us that "Belfast is built on *sleech* – alluvial or tidal muck – and is built *of* sleech metamorphosed into brick," with the city consuming its very foundations as the brickfields developed across the city. Sleech (he says): "this indeterminate slabbery semi-fluid – this gunge allied to *slick* and *sludge, slag, sleek* and *slush*, to those in Belfast or the Scots, *sleekit* means sneaky, underhand, not-to-be-relied-on, becoming in the earnest brick, something definite, of proverbial solidity – *built like a brick shit-house*, we say, or in dated slang, *you're a brick*."[18]

/ Rejected Boulders /

In the pits at the brickworks the great heaps of rejected boulders afford a fine field for the study of the transported stones of the drift. Basalt and chalk largely predominate, and among the far-travelled blocks the following were recognized by McHenry from his knowledge of the rocks of North Antrim: Quartzite, Gneiss, Garnet-schist from North Antrim; Red Porphyry of Cushenden; Red Sandstone of Cushendall; Dolerite like that of Fair Head; Sandstone like that of Ballycastle; Carboniferous Limestone, dark and flaggy; Silurian Grits; stained and unstained; a few fragments of Riebeckite rock like that of Ailsa Craig.[19]

/ Belfast Confetti /

We have become intimate with the qualities of the Belfast brick, with its distinctive skin, tone and patina. Looking through images of 'The Troubles' for this research,

we encounter images of scattered bricks, half bricks captured flying through the air, mounds of bricks forming barricades. In anger, Carson reminds us, you might "*come down like a ton of bricks* on someone; the victim might *shit a brick*. The subversive half-brick, conveniently hand-sized, is an essential ingredient of the ammunition known as 'Belfast Confetti', and has been tried and trusted by generations of rioters," recreational and otherwise.[20]

/ Milk /

Bottles of milk, flying through the air, in the middle of a riot. Later, forming dynamic white figures on the ground.[21]

Point 3 – Separation, Semiotics

Fantasy Figures

What does it mean to say: 'This wall is alive'? It means that this wall is not dead. It means that this wall has a life. It means that this wall is *a* life, understood as pure event.[22] It means that this wall is alive as a philosophical concept containing only virtuals, made up of virtualities.[23]

Off the Springfield Road there is a wall painted with a number of fantasy figures: Superman, Wonder Woman, Batman, Catwoman, Flash Gordon, two or three others. Each figure is an active force, shattering bricks with a necessary violence, exploding a way through the wall. And behind each figure, through the wall, skies are bursting with orange and yellow rays. Buildings scrape the skyline in pink-purple silhouette.

If it is true that some love the wall while it is standing, it is also true that others will love it only after it is gone.[24]

FIGURE 4.3 Kreider + O'Leary, CLUSTER Series, Belfast, Northern Ireland.
© Kreider + O'Leary, Digital Image Composite, 2024.

*

/ Quis separabit? /

Quis separabit? (Latin: Who will separate [us]?) A motto derived from the Vulgate translation of Romans 8:35 – '*Quis ergō nōs sēparābit ā cāritāte Christī …*' This can be translated as: 'Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?'

The motto is associated with Ulster unionism, Ulster loyalism and the British Army in Ireland; for example, it is used in the British Army by the Royal Dragoon Guards, the Royal Ulster Rifles, the London Irish Rifles, the Irish Guards, the Ulster Defence Regiment and the 5th Royal Irish Lancers.[25] Such was the motto of the former Government of Northern Ireland which appeared on the province's now defunct coat of arms. It is also the motto of the Ulster Defence Association, a loyalist paramilitary group in Northern Ireland.

These words can be seen repeatedly on the murals that adorn the gable ends of brick terraces across Protestant, Unionist and Loyalist parts of Belfast. This paired word formation is one of many icons, signs and symbols that make up the complex and frequently competing semiotic fields of The Interface.

/ Single-Identity Communities /

Anyone visiting contemporary Belfast with a curiosity to move outside of the city centre will be familiar with its initially bewildering patchwork of 'single-identity' communities, the territorial marks of which are expressed through a vast semiotic field of flags, graffiti, murals and painted kerbstones. Although some visitors may read this as a product of 'The Troubles', it is clear that residential segregation between Catholics and Protestants is present from the city's founding in the early seventeenth century, when Belfast was established as a town in 1613 by Sir Arthur Chichester.[26] A leading figure in the Plantation of Ulster, Chichester re-built Belfast Castle on the edge of the river Lagan, on the site of an earlier Norman fortification.

/ Retreat /

Geographer F. W. Boal has researched the history of segregation in Belfast since the seventeenth century. In doing so, he notes that segregation has increased over time, producing current levels that are higher than in any earlier period. Boal suggests that this process was initiated with the migration of Catholics into the city in search of employment and housing. As Protestants had been the dominant community in these areas, the resulting competition for housing, jobs and resources was the initial point of tension between the two communities.

With rising tensions, Boal notes, there was a natural tendency to retreat into 'single-identity' communities, leading to increasingly segregated areas of the city. In 1911 only 41% of Catholics and 62% of Protestants in Belfast lived in segregated areas, but by 1967 the territorial division of working-class Belfast between Catholic and Protestant groups was almost total.[27] In its recent phases, the development of the city is one that can be described as a 'frontier zone': a zone founded on the interfacing of the 'British' and the 'Irish' realms.

/ Theory of Signs /

Belfast is a landscape of inscription. It is continually being overwritten with new signs, symbols and texts to correspond to the ever-changing political situation. These scripts form a collective social response to the broader questions of governance played out in these territories. Through these signs and symbols, communities of interest parade their ideologies publicly, presenting a collective (not necessarily democratic) response at street level – direct in communication and always place-specific: Flags, Emblems, Icons, Bunting, Demarcations, Heraldry, Memorials, Murals, Graffiti, Bonfires, Parades, Protests, Riots. Here, zero-sum behavioural patterns are repeated with a wearying regularity.

/ Murals /

The mural painting tradition in Northern Ireland is a long one, initially associated with public displays to coincide with loyalist commemorations of the Twelfth of July: the anniversary of Protestant King William's defeat of Catholic King James II in the Battle of the Boyne in 1690. The first mural in Belfast depicting this battle was painted around 1908.

Belfast mural historian Bill Rolston claims that this tradition came into a period of crisis when the state came under siege, following the civil rights campaign of the late 1960s and the British takeover of the 1970s and 1980s that left Northern Ireland without a parliament.[28] Without control of the state, Loyalists sought to broaden their iconographic language to refer to inanimate symbols, flags, and 'red hand of Ulster' motifs.

By the mid-1980s, in response to the Anglo-Irish Agreement in 1985, murals started to contain highly militaristic images of hooded and balaclava-wearing figures, firing weapons. These new murals were intentionally sinister and threatening and were meant to be read as such. Catholic Nationalist mural painters co-opted this tradition for their own ends, regularly communicating the 'word on the street' in paint on the gable ends of houses to reflect the changing political landscape. More recently, murals have been softened in tone, with mythological and superhero figures replacing the paramilitary.

Point 4 – Secret, Order

CONCLUSIONS OF A MEETING OF THE OF THE JOINT SECURITY COMMITTEE HELD ON MONDAY, 28 SEPTEMBER 1970, IN STORMONT CASTLE AT 11.30AM

In response to the persistence of violence, communities strengthened their borders with ad-hoc assemblages of timber pallets, old furniture, burnt-out vehicles and other rubble. When these exclamatory interjections into the social order began to impact the mobility of state force, bureaucracy intervened. A document dated 9 September 1969 outlines a set of conditions to be announced by the Prime Minister on TV.[29]

> *(ii) A peace line was to be established to separate physically the Falls and the Shankill communities. Initially this would take the form of a temporary barbed wire fence which would be manned by the Army and the Police. The actual line*

of fence would be decided in consultation with the Belfast Corporation. It was agreed that there should be no question of the peace line becoming permanent although it was acknowledged that the barriers might have to be strengthened in some locations.

Years later, after the anti-globalization demonstrations at the G8 Summit, a high-ranking Italian police officer will say this to the newspaper *La Republica*: 'Look, I'm now going to tell you something that's not easy for me and that I have never told anyone … The police aren't there to put things in order, but to govern disorder.'[30]
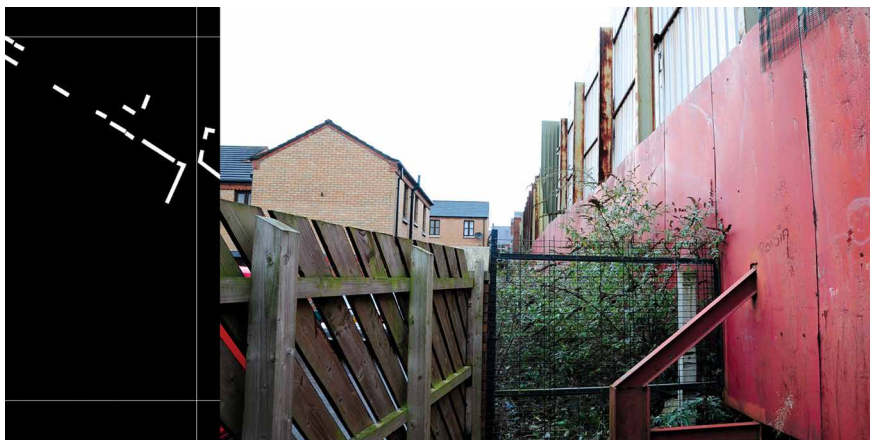
FIGURE 4.4 Kreider + O'Leary, CLUSTER Series, Belfast, Northern Ireland. © Kreider + O'Leary, Digital Image Composite, 2024.

*

/ Sealing off Access /

The word SECRET is stamped on the top middle and bottom middle of a page in red ink. The word appears again, and in the same location, on each subsequent page of this series of four discoloured A4 pages. The typed script of this document is overwritten with the letters GSU and the numbers 47 in two different scripts, in both black and blue coloured inks. On the bottom left-hand corner appear the letters © PRONI HA/32/2/55, indicating that the document is a copyrighted asset of the Public Records Office of Northern Ireland relating to 'Home Affairs: Speeches, Statements and Debates on Security' of the United Kingdom.[31]

In this document, a series of eighteen numbered paragraphs lay out the unfolding of events in Northern Ireland. The final paragraph of the document relates specifically to a meeting of the Cabinet Security Committee held on 16 August 1969. And the final part of the last sentence of this paragraph reads: 'At a meeting of the Cabinet Security Committee it was agreed that "the possibility of sealing off access to the Falls from the Shankill to prevent infiltration was also to be investigated."' This is the first minuted record in any governmental meeting relating to what would become the system of 'Interface Barriers' separating Catholic / Nationalist / Republican (CNR) and Protestant / Unionist / Loyalist (PUL) communities in Belfast.[32]

While this passing mention may feel less than significant, it will have an incalculable impact on the urban fabric and social relations of Northern Ireland for decades to come. From such 'possibility' will grow directives instructing the construction of numerous walls, barriers and fences in Belfast and other towns and cities throughout Northern Ireland, most notably the Falls–Shankill peace line on Cupar Way, which still divides these areas more than fifty years later. Built primarily of concrete and steel, this structure is approximately 1.6 kilometres long and up to fourteen metres high in places. It is one of many major security barriers or peace walls in Belfast currently in existence. While the exact number of these walls, barriers and interfaces, like so much in Belfast, is an item of dispute, in 2012, the Belfast Interface Project published a catalogue of security barriers across the city listing ninety-nine separate structures grouped into thirteen separate clusters.[33] In a 2017 update to this mapping exercise, ninety-seven barriers were catalogued. The metrics chart the glacial pace of wall removal over a five-year period.

Point 5 – Walls, Archive

54 .600928, -5.987470

Wall is a single point, expanded. There is more than one wall in this place. Around every wall is an environment and, at certain times – say, in periods of unrest – we who inhabit this place expand. That is, our sense of self or ego expands to fill the entire environment.[34] We individuals, our sense of self, expands beyond the boundary of our skin and, in this way, the environment becomes thick with emotion. Thick like fog or like smoke billowing up from each individually lit fire.

After the fires on Cliftonpark Avenue they erected a dense stratification of concrete foundation, concrete block, profiled metal sheeting, mild steel angles, scaffold bar, razor wire, metal palisade fencing and roller spikes. Over time these materials have changed and, more recently, the heavy, opaque constructions have been replaced by a lighter, more candid fencing. Perhaps one day these will all be retractable, like

the one on St Matthews Court with its potential to be not a wall. Perhaps even later, some time in the future, all of walls will degenerate into mere geometry, a simple line. But whatever its material, the idea of wall will always remain. For generations now there has been nothing in the world more important.[35]

FIGURE 4.5 Kreider + O'Leary, CLUSTER Series, Belfast, Northern Ireland. © Kreider + O'Leary, Digital Image Composite, 2024.

*

/ Barrier Up /

'They put a barrier up, and there's a door (household) on this side of it, and there's a door (household) on the other side of it. God help people that live there because they don't live there long. They live there a few weeks and can't stick any longer with the bricks, the sniping, and the petrol bombs. You'd get 20 houses deserted just because a barrier was put up.'[36]

/ www.peacewall-archive.net /

At the Belfast Interface Project, Strategic Director Joe O'Donnell hands over a photocopy of a recently uncovered 38-page report written by John D. Taylor, then Minister of State in the Government of Northern Ireland, on 'FUTURE POLICY ON AREAS OF CONFRONTATION' dated April 1971. The document has the familiar off-

centre quality of canted text and markings of a document that has been photocopied numerous times, revealing a residue of dots, disappeared staples and paper folds.

In the report, Taylor and his team propose that future planning in Belfast should provide 'the maximum natural separation between the opposing areas through some sort of cordon sanitaire.' It specifically states that the number of access roads between the Falls and Shankill should be 'substantially reduced,' and proposes the construction of infrastructure, factories and warehouses between conflicting areas, with high walls to 'form natural barriers.'

The following day we hit the streets to look at the outcomes of this policy defined in 1971. Decades on from the publication of the Taylor Report, the temporary Falls/Shankill peace line mentioned in the document has grown into an extensive urban barrier of concrete, steel, sheet metal and mesh. We attempt to photograph the extent of this barrier from one end at the Westlink motorway that encircles Belfast city centre to its termination on the lower slope of Divis mountain on the western side of the city. These photographs form the starting point of the *Peacewall Archive*, an ongoing project which aims to provide the definitive online documentation of the Belfast peace walls.[37]

Point 6 – Security, Unrest

One of a Number of Surveillance Cameras

In *Elephant*, a short film directed by Alan Clarke for the BBC in 1989, we watch the backs of eighteen men walk through public parks, leisure centres, industrial buildings and neighbourhood streets.[38] We watch as they find their target and dispassionately shoot their weapon. We watch as they walk away and as the camera lingers over each fresh corpse, opening space.

Limestone Road is lined with five security cameras – a reminder that the interface is not just a wall, but a dispersed and heterogenous set of conditions; an accumulation of techniques and affect.[39] One that cannot be fully described and, instead, must pieced together from disparate and contradictory fragments.[40] An impossible anatomy. An autopsy with unruly cause.
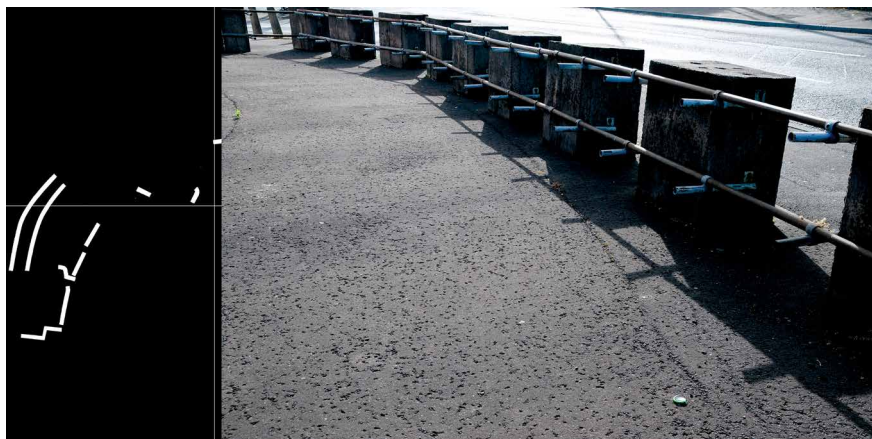
FIGURE 4.6 Kreider + O'Leary, CLUSTER Series, Belfast, Northern Ireland.
© Kreider + O'Leary, Digital Image Composite, 2024.

*

/ Brutal Simplicity /

Peace walls are brutal, and they offer a brutal simplicity. Walls reduce potential complexity. Walls simplify; and by their nature they tend to construct opposing sides: 'them' and 'us.' Walls offer up a clarity of perimeter, demarcating a 'place of control' or a 'place of sanctuary', depending on your point of view. They provide electoral legibility: separation is clarity. As a system, walls and gates control movement. Increasingly, this forms a backdrop for performances, both positive and negative. Although mute, walls communicate simply through their scale and material condition.

The peace walls are a state-sanctioned system of division and control that demarcates and reinforces the territorial segregation of ethnic groups into various 'pockets' across the city. They offer a sense of boundary for these communities and contribute to a sense of security for those living within these sometimes-fraught communities. Peace walls are a cheap solution to a difficult problem. Unarguably, they prevent damage to property, and probably saved lives during conflict. They provide a sense of security and, increasingly, a benefit through tourism.[41] However, they are visual and material proof of the failure of the reconciliation phase of the 'Peace Process', acting as magnets for clashes and riots in times of unrest and completely denying any visual connection to adjacent 'other' communities, furthering and reinforcing division. In this respect, they have a detrimental impact

on the health and social well-being of 'Interface Areas', with areas described as 'frozen in time', hampering redevelopment.

/ Cost /

Although initially relatively cheap to construct, maintenance costs are expensive. The cost of division in Northern Ireland has been estimated at £1.5 billion a year, but what is the cost of a potentially 'shared future'?[42]

/ Heightened Vigilance /

Physical partitions are often presented by authorities as temporary solutions to immediate problems of security or unrest, but as architect Eyal Weizman states in relation to Jerusalem: because their presence provokes resistance, their *raison d'etre* as a response to a security threat merely 'perpetuates the condition that justifies their further deployment.'[43] Echoing this sentiment in relation to Belfast, researchers Hastings Donnan and Neil Jarman claim that 'resistance and heightened vigilance become mutually entangled in a potentially escalating cycle' and instead of minimizing unrest, barriers 'institutionalise distinctions and divisions, create or reinforce a sense of territorialism, and often exacerbate the very tensions they were intended to alleviate or prevent.'[44] So, why do systems with a history of replicating the very thing they seek to resolve continue to be built globally? The answer lies in the expediency of immediate intervention trumping the often-prolonged difficulty of dealing with these issues by other means – through dialogue, negotiation and formal political processes.

Point 7 – Segregation, Violence

Friday, 15 August, 1969

The wall in Alexandra Park is comprised of segments that, tack-welded together, form a single, unified plane that cuts across whole of the park, drawing distinction. In 2011 a gate was inserted into the wall, onto which was painted a photorealistic depiction of the parkland beyond. On 16 September the gate was opened and, for the first time in seventeen years, members of the local community crossed the park without digging holes underneath the wall or using ladders to climb over the top. Today the gate is open from 9.00am until 4.00pm and, when walking through, it is difficult to say if one is inside or outside.

But let us return to the violence that is just under the skin and the pathology of atmosphere from which symptoms arise.[45] Stomach ulcers. Nephritic colic. Menstruation trouble in women. Sleeplessness. Hair turning white. Accelerated cardiac rhythm and intense sweating. Generalized contraction with muscular stiffness. Skin disorders.

From all of this we know that, by its very nature, power is separatist and regionalist, that its aim is to divide what it seeks to control and that, consciously or not, our aim is to resist.

FIGURE 4.7 Kreider + O'Leary, CLUSTER Series, Belfast, Northern Ireland.
© Kreider + O'Leary, Digital Image Composite, 2024.

*

/ Ratcheting Up /

Over the years, Belfast has become a city of increasingly segregated pockets of competing communities, with local tensions over time leading to a 'ratcheting up' of voluntary segregation. The solidification of these ethnic enclaves led to increasing tensions at the perimeters of these areas where political tensions were played out. Local communities fortified their edges by constructing makeshift barricades to control access. In turn, these perimeter zones would become sites for peace wall construction. Because they are contoured to these 'pockets' of territory, the Belfast peace walls are unique in strategies of post-war city division. Rather

than construct a continuous line of demarcation between two opposing forces, such as in Berlin, Beirut and Nicosia, for example, the Belfast peace walls are an accumulation of multiple, local divisions and barriers that rarely coalesce to form a continuous linear barrier. As such, they are scattered, multifarious, inconsistent, porous and frequently intangible.

/ Borderlands /

Still, the motivating idea behind these barriers – that is, the imposition of control over movement through the construction of divisive architectural structures – is not a new one. With the decline of the sovereignty of the nation state due to a new mobility of capital flows and contending economic and security imperatives,[46] a globalizing capital is prompting a rising tide of fractious racial, ethnic, religious and gender conflict.[47] The separation walls of Belfast thus share many characteristics with numerous counterparts all over the world, where walls and barriers are built between countries as well as within cities with the aim of controlling immigration, reducing crime, minimizing violence, increasing a sense of security, restricting movement and excluding the unwanted.[48] The same retrenchment at the borderlands has led to the construction of 'border fences' between the United States and Mexico, India and Bangladesh, South Africa and Zimbabwe, Saudi Arabia and Yemen, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, and Israel and the Palestinian territories and can be seen happening at recursive scales down to neighbourhood level in ethnically or politically divided cities such as Belfast, Baghdad, Beirut, Jerusalem, Mostar and Nicosia.

In their research for their work on *Divided Cities*, urbanists Jon Calame and Esther Charlesworth concluded that divided cities are 'not aberrations. Instead, they are the unlucky vanguard of a large and growing class of cities' where inter-communal rivalry has led to physical segregation.[49]

/ Militarization /

During 1982 to 1989, the 'post Hunger-Strike' ratchet phase, civil enmity increased to unprecedented levels, and the city transformed from one dealing with multiple 'security-threats' to one of near-complete militarization. The completion of the Westlink motorway effectively 'moated' the centre of the city and reduced the entry and exit positions in and out of the centre to a handful that could be easily controlled by checkpoints. British Army Bases & Sangers increased in number and visibility and became increasingly defensive in nature and appearance. The construction systems of army Sangers and peace walls form a material continuity. During this period peace walls were extended and heightened.

/ Black Friday, Belfast 1972 /

Bomb 1. Albert Bridge – Discovered at approx. 1.00pm, defused / Bomb 2. Limestone Road – Exploded 2.40pm / Bomb 3. Botanic Avenue – Exploded 2.45pm / Bomb 4. Star Taxis, Crumlin Road – Exploded 2.45pm / Bomb 5. Brookvale Avenue – Exploded 2.50pm / Bomb 6. Queen Elizabeth Bridge – Exploded 2.55pm / Bomb 7. Ormeau Avenue – Exploded 2.57pm / Bomb 8. Garmoyle Street – Exploded 2.59pm / Bomb 9. Liverpool Ferry Terminal – Exploded 3.02pm / Bomb 10. M2 flyover – Discovered 3.02pm, failed to detonate / Bomb 11. Oxford Street Bus Station – Exploded 3.02pm / Bomb 12. Creighton's Garage, Upper Lisburn Road – Exploded 3.05pm / Bomb 13. Stewartstown Road – Exploded 3.05pm / Bomb 14. Finaghy Road North Railway Bridge – Exploded 3.05pm / Bomb 15. Electricity Substation, Salisbury Avenue – Exploded 3.05pm / Bomb 16. Tate's Avenue Railway Bridge – Exploded 3.09pm / Bomb 17. York Street Station – Exploded 3.10pm / Bomb 18. Smithfield Bus Station – Exploded 3.10pm / Bomb 19. Eastwood's Motors, Donegall Street – Exploded 3.12pm / Bomb 20. Cavehill Road shop – Exploded 3.15pm / Bomb 21. Dee Street flyover – Discovered 3.30pm, defused / Bomb 22. Great Victoria Street Station – Exploded 4.00pm / Bomb 23. NI Carriers, Grosvenor Road – Failed to detonate.

Point 8 – Persistence, Accretion

Oscillating Rhythm of Yellow Semicircles and Blue Perforated Circles

Situated on the outskirts of the city, the basalt outcrop of Cave Hill resembles the profile of a man lying down. Its craggy silhouette is rumoured to have inspired Jonathan Swift's eighteenth-century satire *Gulliver's Travels.*[50] The tale begins with Gulliver washed up on the island of Lilliput where he lies, tied and prone, imprisoned by this nation of tiny people. At the end of the tale, Gulliver encounters a race of talking horses. Intelligent and civilized, they rule over the filthy, brutish Yahoos, who are humans in their most base form.

Through his depiction of the Yahoos, Swift promotes the ideal of 'civil society', understood as a politically well-regulated community devoid of violence. Such an ideal echoes those advanced earlier in Italian courts and Parisian salons where it was suggested that the threat of incivility, understood as the threat of violence, could be overcome through artificial conventions: refined speech, polite manners and effeminate styles of dress, for example.[51] Making manners mild and civil, bringing them under 'good government' or 'good law', such artifice was thought to distance human beings from their otherwise base and brutish habits.

Over time, as the walls have become a more permanent feature of the urban infrastructure, they have evolved to incorporate aspects of ornament and decoration: inlaid patterns of brickwork; the rhythmic oscillation of yellow and blue semicircles. These aspiring signs of civility belie a monopolization of violence by the state and, with it, scores to be settled either tomorrow or the day after.

FIGURE 4.8 Kreider + O'Leary, CLUSTER Series, Belfast, Northern Ireland.
© Kreider + O'Leary, Digital Image Composite, 2024.

*

/ Security-Threat-Community /

At the height of 'The Troubles' in 1976, social-housing in Belfast was in crisis as communities consolidated along ethnic boundaries, often with violent consequences, with some communities becoming drastically overcrowded and others falling into abject dereliction. David Coyles' research examines how these events legitimized an emergent confluence of housing and security policy, which brought into being what he calls 'the security-threat-community'; a socio-material construct where 'every person is a potential insurgent and every dwelling a potential security-threat.'[52] Crucially, the research problematizes the complex entanglement of political, military, paramilitary, economic and ideological forces that shaped its formation.

/ Minority Report /

From the time of the initial receipt of the secretly photocopied Taylor Report, entitled: FUTURE POLICY ON AREAS OF CONFRONTATION, it takes a further twenty-two months of correspondence with the Records Management, Cataloguing and Access Department of the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland before the original 1972 Taylor Report, recently catalogued as PRONI – FIN/30/T/4 is released for public access on 25 November 2016, after forty-five years under lock and key.

Turning to the section of the report entitled 'Minority Report by A. Hewins Esq.', there is evidence of a dissenting voice in response to the proposals contained therein, which outline the development of what is described as a 'cordon sanitaire' between the opposing communities. Mr Hewins states that: 'I find myself in disagreement on the proposals that the divisions in the community should be accepted as a feature of life which must inevitably persist for a hundred years or more. This seems a council of despair. A despair which it is proposed should be expressed in bricks and mortar.'[53]

Point 9 – Removal, Resistance

Next to the Pink Pavilion

It is impossible to distinguish between form and colour. We cannot conceive of a colourless line or colourless space or any formless relation of colour.[54] In this way, colour territorializes, even if its divisions are, like those of language, in the first instance arbitrary. How so?

Take the colour spectrum, along which colour appears in a continuum – no separation. In order to make a distinction, we draw lines and name the spaces between them. Red. Orange. Green. Blue. In this way we order our world through a rhythmic scale of difference, to which we ascribe the significance of that street edge over there, those fence posts, these countless flags and murals and the perennial lines of people marching down domestic streets.

Elsewhere, next to the pink pavilion, a young Romanian couple operate a car wash in an otherwise empty parking zone. One blue and one red bucket, benign participants in this alternative economy at the interstice of sectarian geography.

FIGURE 4.9 Kreider + O'Leary, CLUSTER Series, Belfast, Northern Ireland.
© Kreider + O'Leary, Digital Image Composite, 2024.

*

/ Reduce and Remove /

On the 23 May, 2013, the office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister of the Northern Ireland Assembly announced its 'Together: Building a United Community Strategy', (T:BUC) in which it outlines its goal to 'Create a 10 year programme to reduce, and remove by 2023, all interface barriers' in Northern Ireland.[55] This announcement by First Minister Peter Robinson and deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness, a landmark decision in the ongoing peace process,[56] was met with some surprise and cynicism by elements of the media and local communities, who were sceptical about the reality of bringing down the walls in this timeframe. From their point of view, it was difficult to see how an agreement could be reached concerning when and how the various walls and barriers could be removed, bearing in mind the ongoing security issues experienced in the adjacent communities and the longevity of conflict and associated violence in the city.[57] The T:BUC Strategy states: 'Taking down interface barriers is not something that can be achieved without engagement, consent and support with the people who live there.'[58] However, subsequent reports appeared to evidence that, amongst local residents, support for the barriers being removed is actually weakening, and that the climate of community relations (and, ultimately, the sense of safety) has deteriorated among residents over the previous three years alone.[59]

/ A Mesh Curtain /

In November 2013, a retractable steel mesh curtain is constructed in the grounds of St Matthews in Short Strand. Designed to be retractable when not needed, The Department of Justice (DoJ) requisitioned church land on the Newtownards Road for the fence. The aim was to stop missiles being thrown between the mainly Unionist Newtownards Road and two streets in the predominantly Nationalist Short Strand. Justice Minister David Ford stated at the time that reducing the number of interfaces 'remains a priority.' This fence had been agreed with residents in the Short Strand and was a 'proportionate and innovative measure. The default position will be that it will remain open and indeed I envisage that this will be the case for the majority of the year. When closed, it will act as a barrier to projectiles thrown from either side of the interface.'

Ulster Unionist Michael Copeland said that both sides of the community wanted the fence. 'It's a practical solution to a practical problem,' he said.

> The truth is, it's regrettable that so far into the peace process and so long after the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement, we're still finding it necessary to build walls or fences to protect one side of our community from the other. The people who are important in this are the people who live in the shadow of these walls, who look to these walls for their protection, no matter what section of the community they come from. High ground moralising and political posturing on the (Stormont) hill should not take precedence over their fears, their needs and their hopes and aspirations.

The Department of Justice, which is responsible for peace walls and interface fences, said that it would work with the police and residents over when the fence would be deployed, in order 'to minimise the impact on the community.' I have passed this Fence/Wall many times since, and it is always, always in the non-retracted position. Apparently, there was disagreement about who would be in control of the controls.

Point 10 – Removal, Mutation

Documentary Film Still (The Dawn of the Troubles)

A series of film clips present Belfast in September 1969, after a night of heavy rioting.[60] One bit of footage shows an early, ad-hoc interface through which a number of children and a few women are moving by ducking underneath the wheels of a large vehicle. Perhaps it is this porosity that has sustained the interface

for so long: the fact that it is a system of interdictions *and* allowances – walls, but also gates, kettles, industrial buffer zones, open derelict land areas and motorways. A system capable of shutting down at any sign of unrest, and open just enough not to need to resist.

The interface here, in Suffolk-Lenadoon, is one of the city's 'success stories.' The two communities, working together, have taken down the wall and, in its place, built a row of commercial units including a coffee house and a pharmacy as well as offices for a Community Forum, a Regeneration Project and a Counselling Project. Perhaps it is the fact that the interface has become an institution – one that attracts both tourism and funding – that has sustained it for so long.

FIGURE 4.10 Kreider + O'Leary, CLUSTER Series, Belfast, Northern Ireland.
© Kreider + O'Leary, Digital Image Composite, 2024.

*

/ Slow Aftermath /

'Are ya ready? … Are ya ready? … Just watch it coz all of that could come down in one go.' And so, it starts; the performance of the wall 'take-down' commences. Multiple cameras are rolling. The mechanical digger engages. The operator in the cab using twin metal joystick controls exhibits the skills of a ballerina, deftly positioning the fingers of the bucket to ease coils of razor wire from the top of the wall. First the coils of wire, then the concrete capping pieces, then the first courses

of brickwork. Afterwards, while reviewing the footage, it is clear that he is playing out the removal of these various layers for the cameras, stretching out the event for dramatic effect.

These contractors are not locals, but they understand the significance of this wall coming down. They are from Omagh, so are not unfamiliar with atrocity and its slow aftermath.[61]

/ Cliftonpark Avenue /

As the work of removing the wall is progressing, two women, in slight agitation, walk swiftly toward the site foreman. They are an interface worker and a representative from a local community group on the Protestant, Unionist side. 'We were not informed about this … it's coming down too early.' They are concerned about encroachment and potential raids from across this newly opened ground, particularly from the Catholic Nationalist New Lodge, the towers of which are suddenly all the more visible through the hole just made in the wall. The proximity of the New Lodge has not changed, just the perception of it.

The Interface, through its porosity and its capacity to mutate and accommodate change while retaining its divisive function, is a masterpiece of material resilience. Though without a central brain, it has its own class of agency. Jane Bennett calls this vital materialism 'Thing-Power': the curious ability of inanimate things to animate, to act, to produce effects both dramatic and subtle.[62]

Tense negotiations are carried out on the spot. After some time, it is agreed that current work will stop completely until a barrier of 'palisade fencing' around three metres high is constructed. They agree the position of this new fence, which is to run parallel to the current wall about twelve metres away at the edge of the roadside. In effect, they have asked for two walls to be in place – a temporary double wall to prevent any transgressions, at least while the inner one is in the process of being removed.

At this precise moment, The Interface is mutating again. It is changing form – from brick and metal sheet to metal mesh palisade fence. It is changing position – a twelve metre offset in parallel to its current position. But, effectively, it remains in place, doing its job, as it has done for the past fifty years or so.

Point 11 – Configuration, Burnout

Fluff

We are told that the word *force* is not a synonym for *violence*, with which it is often conflated. Instead, it should be reserved, in terminological language, to refer to 'the forces of nature' or 'the force of circumstances'; that is, to indicate the energy released by physical or social movements.[63] Force is thus distinguished from the more instrumental character of violence, which must always seek to justify itself through either means or ends.[64] Freed from this moral constraint – and, with it, history's ceaseless search for a cause – force becomes creative, capable of infinite, interconnected relations and motley assemblages. Like a thousand plastic bags shredded and wrapped around razor wire or the spontaneous coming together of a people outside of state control.

FIGURE 4.11 Kreider + O'Leary, CLUSTER Series, Belfast, Northern Ireland.
© Kreider + O'Leary, Digital Image Composite, 2024.

*

/ Interagency Group /

In December 2015, the Interface Community Partners & Interagency Group Annual Conference is held at the Ulster Hall in Belfast. This forum was set up to facilitate communication between governmental agencies responsible for future peace wall policy and local interface resident groups and interested stakeholders.

At this congenial gathering, laid out in configuration much like a wedding dinner, academics from the Institute for Research in Social Sciences at the University of Ulster set out the challenges of removing peace walls. Through a series of Policy Brief Documents, they outline a number of problems that policymakers face in this context, including 'articulating a clearer rationale for why the walls need to come down,' 'a lack of clarity in the phrase "removal of all peace walls," and the absence of an agreed definition of peace walls.'[65] Although the relevant strategy document emphasises that no walls can be removed 'without engagement, consent and support with the people who live there.' the most recent study, in 2015, confirmed that support for barrier removal among local residents is weakening. This trend increases in the following years, as political tensions re-surface during UK-EU Brexit negotiations. As someone at the table said: 'Why place all the risk with those that have the most to lose?'

/ Structures of Governance /

We are sitting in a circle, in a room, in a hall, adjacent to a church, next to an interface, overlooking the Belfast Urban Motorway. The gathering has been organized by Vicky Cosstick, author of *Belfast – Toward a city without walls*, as a way to try to energize public awareness of the level of change happening at interfaces.[66] People talk for hours. Little changes. But this 'little' is important, a change in perception perhaps, or a change in outlook because of an interchange might be important. Such is the glacial pace of change at The Interface.

/ Group Configurations /

The 'Interface Community Partners' & 'Interface Working Group' groups have morphed into the single 'Tension Monitoring Ministerial Subgroup'. Apparently, the feedback from the Community Partners had become too vocal and too difficult to manage.

/ Community Sector Burnout /

It is reported that interface communities are sick to death of 'so-called' consultation.[67]

Point 12 – Slowness, Change

A Parliament of Things

Circular forts made out of limestone blocks were common in Ireland throughout the Dark Ages. Castles were introduced after the Norman invasion of Ireland

in the late 1160s.[68] Hundreds of these castles – varying in shape, size and the exact configuration of fortification – can be found throughout Ulster, their figures in plan revealing a long history of defensive architecture.

Consider this: that the history of thought since the Enlightenment has been a confrontation with the loss of a cosmological centre. That, since the start of the Modern Age, the human world has had to learn to accept and to integrate new truths about an outside that bears no relation to the human. That, according to one philosopher, these are 'shelless times'[69] for which we compensate by creating a dimension where humans can be contained, like the concept of 'globalization' or the image of a ball-shaped Earth surrounded by an orbit of space junk.

At the interface, things stripped of human cause gather. Formations with the potential to become political. One segment of a broken gate. A plastic bottle. A glass bottle. A litter of tree branches. Bits of algae and plants. The edges of a concrete wall. A leather ball, still floating.

FIGURE 4.12 Kreider + O'Leary, CLUSTER Series, Belfast, Northern Ireland.
© Kreider + O'Leary, Digital Image Composite, 2024.

*

/ Interface Programme /

On Friday 29 September 2017, a full four years into the ten-year removal target announced in 2013, the Department of Justice in Northern Ireland finally announces details of its 'Interface Programme' stating that it intends to deliver the commitment made by the Northern Ireland Executive to remove all Interface structures by 2023.[70] However, the announcement confirms that the Interface programme will focus only 'on the structures which the DoJ are responsible for, currently numbering 50, and in addition structures put up by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive at 15 locations in Belfast, Derry/ Londonderry, Portadown and Lurgan,' leading some to speculate that 'one in five of the structures will remain in place even if the strategy is delivered.'[71] In the same week, a three-metre-high wall cutting off Springfield Road from Springhill Avenue is removed in West Belfast after almost thirty years in place.[72]

On 12 August 2019, the Northern Ireland DoJ published its *Interfaces Programme – A Framework Document*. The tone of this document is one of pragmatism. For example, where the T:BUC Goal of 2013 was to 'Create a 10-year programme to reduce, and remove by 2023 *all* Interface barriers' (emphasis ours), the Framework Document Goal of 2019 is rephrased as 'reduction or removal of interfaces by 2023'.[73] In considering options for change at Interface 'peace lines', the document states that four main alterations are usually possible, which are: (1) Remove – complete removal of interface structure and reinstatement of the affected site; (2) Reduce – partial removal or reduction (in the scale, height or nature of the interface); (3) Re-classification – the formal re-designation of an interface fence for an alternative purpose, such as use as a perimeter fence by a local landowner; (4) Re-image – interim changes to the interface structure. The whole document can be summed up in the first sentence of the conclusion to the document: 'Interface removal work is a journey, not an event.'[74]

Point 13 – Postmemory, Futurecasting

Underground Wall in Belfast City Cemetery, Constructed 1866

A popular legend speaks to the origin of the Red Hand of Ulster. The kingdom of Ulster has no heir, so rival chieftains hold a boat race to decide who will rule: whoever's hand touches the Irish shore first will be made king.[75] And when it becomes apparent to one of the chieftains that he is losing the race, he cuts off his hand and throws it to shore where it lands, first – a bloody sign of sovereignty.

Another origin. The Belfast City Cemetery was built in 1869 between the Falls Road and the Springfield Road. Serving as a burial ground for the city's growing population, the plots are divided into Catholic and Protestant areas. These areas are separated by a wall sunk into the ground, nine feet deep. And every day and every year and every decade since, the soil around the wall has been moving and shifting, its particles tilled and sifted by countless little mouths.[76]
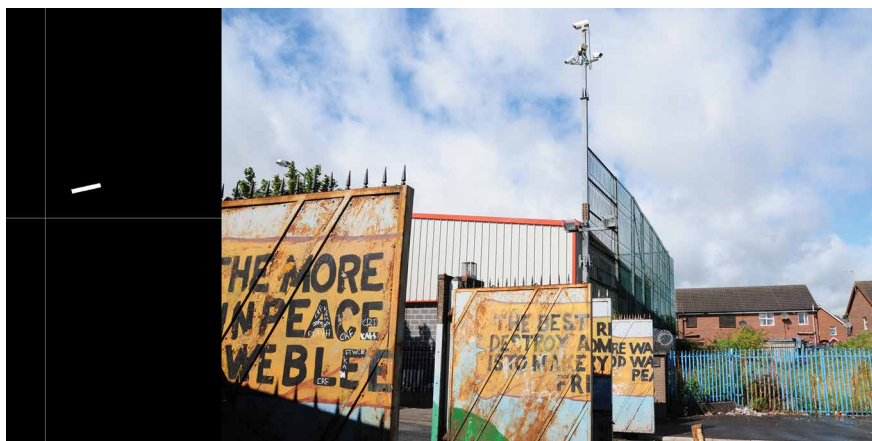
FIGURE 4.13 Kreider + O'Leary, CLUSTER Series, Belfast, Northern Ireland. © Kreider + O'Leary, Digital Image Composite, 2024.

*

/ Berlin Wall Memorial /

In late July 2019, we visit the Berlin Wall Memorial on Bernauer Strasse in Berlin, which commemorates the events that transpired along this 1.4 kilometre strip of land. Here the Berlin Wall was constructed in 1961 and more than 2,000 people were forced to leave their homes on Bernauer Strasse due to the proximity of the housing to the newly imposed Wall line. Subsequently, many lives were lost by people trying to get from East to West Berlin. Multiple tunnels were dug under the so-called 'death-strip' with only limited success. On the Western side, visitors from all over the world climbed on top of elevated timber viewing platforms to get a cinematic glimpse of daily life unfolding in real time across the Wall in East Berlin. It was also here, on Odenburger Strasse, that the first opening was made in the Wall on the night of 10 November 1989 following the 'Peaceful Revolution'. The official demolition of the Wall began here on 13 June 1990.

/ Postmemory /

In 1992, Marianne Hirsch introduced the term 'postmemory' into theoretical discourse.[77] The term was originally used primarily to refer to the relationship between the children of Holocaust survivors and the memories of their parents and has since been expanded to relate to multiple post-conflict or post-traumatic situations. Postmemory questions how the stories, narratives, images and behaviours of one generation allow the following generations to experience the personal, collective and cultural trauma of their more elderly relatives and friends.

We encounter two young friends on Brucevale Park as a construction team are in the process of removing the 'Girdwood' perimeter wall – a perimeter of a former British Army base that presented and acted as a peace wall. One of the boys is waving a republican tricolour tacked to a short piece of timber. They strike combative poses and start chanting shouts of support for the IRA. They are around six or seven years old. Without question, they are post-ceasefire children.

Everyone is born into a particular culture and raised within certain traditions that recognize historical relationships to kith and kin. It is natural and human to pass on these traditions, these lineages, these connections. However, when these connections are forged in a conflict situation, the intensity of the circumstances tends toward narratives that might, through their repetition, change in form.

Songs and stories.

Narratives can over-simplify, flatten or exaggerate, becoming moulded and remoulded into received and ever-more dominant narrative tropes. Memory is that slippery thing that can never be verified and yet, in its reproduction, is responsible for so many actions and their consequences. The reliance on narratives as the primary medium of transgenerational trauma transmission needs to be questioned.

/ Futurecasting from Berlin /

Some day in Belfast, tourists will be guided along a path by bronze linear panels embedded in the pavement, as a method of marking where the peace line used to be. Some day in Belfast, bystanders will look at graphics on a gable wall, charting in black-and-white and latterly colour photography, the slow growth and inevitable take-down of the peace walls. Some day in Belfast, parts of the wall will be gathered together to form a kind of ruinous island, slowly becoming a forest.

Some day in Belfast, relics of the former wall will become incredibly meaningful, a hook to hang a story on. Some day in Belfast, elements of the wall will be strategically retained to become the centrepiece of a landscape of sedimentary memory. Some day in Belfast, tourists will climb a stair at an interpretive centre as a way to understand the scale and power of the former peace wall. Some day in Belfast, small parts of the former wall will truncate and dovetail with its newer, more porous representation.

Conclusion

Towards a New Poetics of 'Us'

Lessons from Lesvos at the Edge of 'Fortress Europe'

At the Edge of 'Fortress Europe'

The 'Migrant Crisis'

There is a long history of migration via the Mediterranean. Human mobility in all directions across the Mediterranean has occurred for thousands of years. More recently, and since at least the mid-1990s, thousands of people each year have crossed the Mediterranean by boat to migrate to Europe or, if they do not have the documentation required by the countries of destination, to seek asylum.[1] This trickle reached a tipping point in 2015 when the Eastern Mediterranean migration route via a sea crossing from Turkey to Greece became the main maritime route used for irregular entry to Europe. In that single year, nearly one million migrants attempted to cross the Mediterranean via this route – persons primarily from Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq hoping to seek asylum in Europe due to conflict and unrest in their home countries.[2] That same year, more than 3,500 tragically lost their lives making the treacherous journey.

Due to its geographical position at the eastern edge of the Greek Aegean islands, the island of Lesvos became the focus of this movement of people, experiencing a significant influx of migrants and refugees in the summer of 2015. As it happened, this was the first year we arrived on the island, very much in holiday mode. We hired a car from the airport and set off on our plan to circumnavigate the island via the coastal roads. After about fifteen minutes of driving around the coast we were met on the road by a group of about thirty people – men, women and children. Only later did we realize that this was our first encounter with what would become known as the 'Migrant Crisis' on the edges of Europe.

'Hotspots'

Despite the difficulty, the people on Lesvos initially responded with warm hospitality to the migrant situation, setting up informal welcome areas with locals collaborating to improvize the provision of food and shelter.[3] Meanwhile, the EU responded to the migratory pressure at its external borders by designing the *European Agenda on Migration*.[4] The Agenda introduced the 'hotspot approach':[5] a flexible and ad hoc governance mechanism[6] which aimed to "better coordinate EU agencies" and national authorities' efforts at the external borders of the EU, on initial reception, identification, registration and fingerprinting of asylum seekers and migrants."[7]

In introducing its 'hotspot approach', the EC aimed to alleviate 'migratory pressure' by facilitating the operation of key EU agencies on the ground, including the

European Asylum Support Office (EASO), the EU Border Agency (Frontex), the EU Police Cooperation Agency (Europol) and the EU Judicial Cooperation Agency (Eurojust).[8]

In 2015 to 2016, ten such hotspots were nominated in Italy and Greece. This allowed for the provision of 'First Reception Centres' (FRCs) to deal with the influx of migrants. In the case of Lesvos, several emergency FRCs were established to help process and identify migrants and refugees and to provide them with basic services.

FIGURE 5.1 Kreider + O'Leary, FORTRESS EUROPE Series, Skala Sikamineas Reception Centre, Lesvos, Greece.
© Kreider + O'Leary, HD Digital Photograph, 2015-2023.

We came across one of these FRCs when we returned to Lesvos a year later, in July 2016. The encounter happened as we were walking up the winding hillside road out of Skala Sikamineas: a fishing village on the northern coast of Lesvos where the Turkish coast is a clear mass on the horizon, when viewed from the rocky outcrop of the church of Panagia Gorgona. One of shortest sea routes from Türkiye to Greece, this area had been the site of numerous, perilous crossings at the peak of the crisis one year earlier. In the meantime, in March 2016, the EU and Türkiye signed the 'EU–Türkiye Deal'. The deal agreed that anyone who arrived on the Greek islands from Türkiye would be returned there, and for every Syrian returned from the islands, one of the EU Member States would accept one Syrian refugee

who had waited inside Türkiye. This agreement stemmed the flow of migrants to such an extent that when we arrived at the Skala Sikamineas FRC, the site was completely empty.
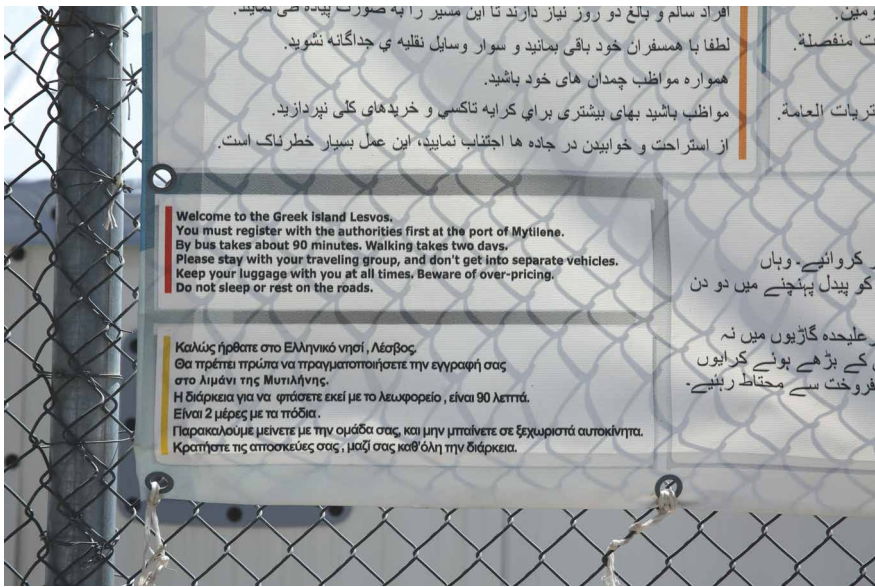
FIGURE 5.2 Kreider + O'Leary, FORTRESS EUROPE Series, Skala Sikamineas Reception Centre - Welcome Text, Lesvos, Greece.
© Kreider + O'Leary, HD Digital Photograph, 2015-2023.

What we encountered instead was a small fenced-off village of plastic-sided UNHCR dispensary tents. The tents were clustered around a large central tent with rugs, ad hoc tables made from unexpected pieces of timber, and cast-iron garden chairs lining the edges of the space. One of the single tents was dedicated to an array of aluminium boxes providing snaking power connectors for different mobile phone types. Another tent was piled high to the ceiling with black refuse sacks full of clothes and blankets. We saw more tables fashioned out of timber offcuts and OSB sheets covered in clear plastic; long seats made from timber covered in UNHCR-branded tarpaulin; a pink plastic mirror cable-tied to the chain-link fence about two feet off the ground.

At the edges of this tent cluster there were sanitary, washing and shower units, and outside the fence a more scattered world of pallets, mounds of stuff piled under covers, and some open cage-like storage units with anoraks, clothes and shoes of various sizes. There were also some support spaces – medical areas with stretchers and areas curtained off for privacy. And attached to several walls we saw

myriad A4 plastic multi-lingual signs with multiple large versions of the same map showing the two viable routes to the Lesvos capital of Mytilene and a place called Móría. In four languages the following information is repeated:

- Welcome to the Greek island Lesvos.

- You must register with the authorities first at the port of Mytilene.

- By bus takes about 90 minutes. Walking takes two days.

- Please stay with your travelling group, and don't get into separate vehicles.

- Keep your luggage with you at all times. Beware of over-pricing.

- Do not sleep or rest on the roads.

FIGURE 5.3 Kreider + O'Leary, FORTRESS EUROPE Series, Skala Sikamineas Reception Centre – Array of mini-solar panels for mobile phone charging, Lesvos, Greece. © Kreider + O'Leary, HD Digital Photograph, 2015–2023.

Moria

The very first FRC on Lesvos was identified in October 2015 in Móría: a village close to, yet removed from Mytilene, the main port town and capital of Lesvos. A former military base, the site was modified as early as 2012 to operate as an FRC capable of accommodating a maximum of 3,000 people. Intended as a transit facility, the FRC in Móría hosted migrants staying only for a few days

before continuing on their journey to mainland Europe.[9] However, having been identified as an EU-defined hotspot, what had been an open reception facility soon became more strictly regulated and governed by several EU agencies designated to assist the Greek authorities in identifying and registering anyone who had crossed the border into the EU.[10] Soon, the slower processing of asylum seekers and the stricter, more complex return decisions prescribed in the 2016 EU–Türkiye deal converted the Mória FRC from a temporary stop into a final destination: one that prolonged the stay of the applicants from days to months, with many newly arrived migrants, including vulnerable persons such as the elderly, pregnant women and small children trapped in a state of detention. Unaccompanied minors were detained in the absence of proper guardianship systems and specialized shelters.

The reception conditions quickly became problematic as overcrowding created tensions within various groups.[11] Reports of inadequate facilities, lack of sanitation, and limited access to healthcare raised concerns from humanitarian organizations. As a result, various international organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and volunteers provided aid and support to the migrants and refugees, often filling gaps in services provided by the authorities. Pre-existing accommodation facilities soon became insufficient to serve the accumulating number of people, which led to the formation of an informal camp settlement in the 'olive groves' to the east of the main camp in the winter of 2016 to 2017.

We returned to Lesvos in 2017 and went to visit Mória where the informal camp had taken on a life of its own, growing in scale to become a kind of parallel camp. This informal camp had a distinctly different and more open atmosphere to the more enclosed and fenced-off main Mória camp, which was taking on a more prison-like appearance. Although not allowed past the main gates of the camp, we talked through the fence to detainees who had been in the place for months, with little prospect of moving on, and little by way of communication or badly needed legal or mental health support.

In the ensuing two years, the quickly escalating numbers of migrants arriving caused the Mória camp and 'olive groves' to become hugely overcrowded. This led to dire humanitarian conditions: 'lack of decent shelter provision; long queues for food; very limited access to clean water, proper sanitation facilities or health care; frequent incidences of violence and fire with poorly organized waste management, scarce electricity and washing facilities.'[12] Jean Ziegler, vice-chairman of the committee of experts advising the UN Human Rights Council, described Mória as a 'concentration camp on European soil' when he visited in 2019. Asked what he had seen at Mória, Ziegler replied:

FIGURE 5.4 Kreider + O'Leary, FORTRESS EUROPE Series, Mória Camp - after Fire, Lesvos, Greece.
© Kreider + O'Leary, HD Digital Photograph, 2015-2023.

Barbed wire, rotten food, absolutely terrible hygienic conditions. In Mória, the toilets are unsanitary and do not close. There is one for more than 100 people. The showers have cold water. The camp is divided into two. Inside the official camp, several families share a single container, which leaves them only 6 m² to live in. Outside, what officials poetically call "the olive grove" is a shantytown like those of Manila or Dhaka. Children play in the rubbish among snakes and rats, and when it snows, the tents collapse. These refugee camps called "hot spots" are real concentration camps. Suicides are increasing there, children are self-harming.

Elsewhere, Apostolos Veizis, (director of medical operational support in Greece for Médecins Sans Frontières), told *The New Humanitarian* in 2019 that there was just 'one shower for every 506 people at Mória'.[13] At the end of 2019, the population of the Mória camp had reached 14,000 people;[14] in March 2020, with the arrival of Covid-19 throughout Europe, this number had peaked at 19,333 – over six times its official capacity of 2,840.[15]

Tragically, in the late hours of the 8th of September 2020, a devastating fire broke out in the Mória refugee camp. Between the 9th and 11th of September 2020,

FIGURE 5.5 Kreider + O'Leary, FORTRESS EUROPE Series, Mória Camp - after Fire, Lesvos, Greece.
© Kreider + O'Leary, HD Digital Photograph, 2015-2023.

multiple fires took hold, which eventually destroyed much of the camp, leaving thousands of migrants and refugees without shelter. An investigation by Forensic Architecture revealed that this was at least the 247th outbreak of fire to have occurred at the overcrowded camp since 2013. Video evidence shows that migrants fleeing from the fire were showered with teargas by the Greek authorities, and that access to Mytilene via the road was blocked by an official roadblock comprised of army vehicles blocking the road.[16]

Kara Tepe-Mavrovouni

In the aftermath of the fire at Mória, efforts were made to relocate the displaced inhabitants to temporary facilities in other parts of Greece. To house the again-displaced population locally, the Greek government constructed a new camp located in the Mavrovouni area: a so-called 'Mória 2.0' situated close to the smaller 'Kara Tepe' camp on a coastal site about 3km north of Mytilene.[17] Meanwhile, and despite the challenges and the destruction of the Mória camp, migrants and refugees continued to arrive on Lesvos, thus putting further strain on the island's resources and infrastructure. Efforts were made to expedite asylum processing
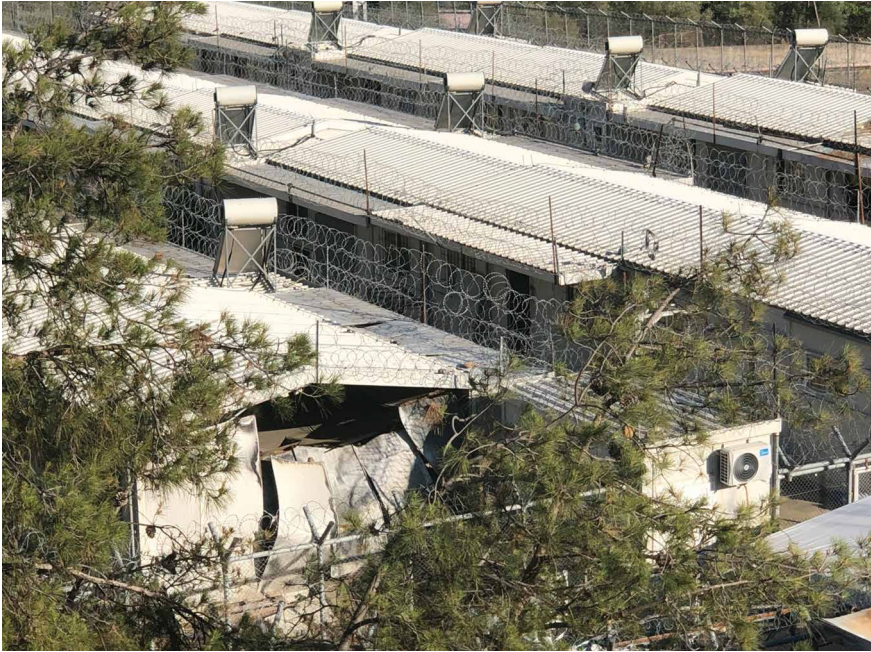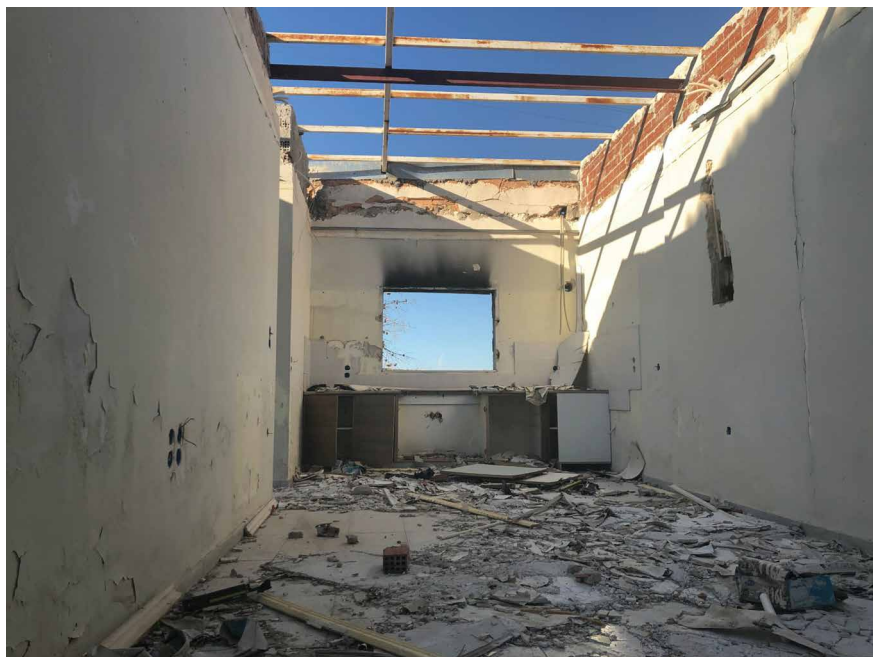
FIGURE 5.6 Kreider + O'Leary, FORTRESS EUROPE Series, Mória Camp - after Fire, Lesvos, Greece.
© Kreider + O'Leary, HD Digital Photograph, 2015-2023.

and improve living conditions for migrants and refugees on the island, with international organizations and NGOs continuing to provide support; however, challenges persisted in finding suitable housing and processing asylum claims.

The Mavrovouni site, which began its operation as a temporary accommodation structure for asylum seekers after the destruction of Mória, soon functioned as the Reception and Identification Centre of Mytilene (RIC Lesvos). In November 2022, the structure was then transformed from a Reception and Identification Centre (RIC) to a Closed Controlled Access Centre (CCAC). Situated on a former shooting range very close to the sea, this location works well during the summertime; however, as winter approaches, the exposure of the site to the north wind makes living there difficult. According to testimonies from cases legally handled by Refugee Support Aegean, there are reported shortages in hot water, children's milk and bed linen, and complaints about the poor quality of food and mattresses. In addition to general problems, residents and people working on site speak of frequent power cuts.[18]

Despite the relative improvement of housing conditions in relation to the improvized structures in Mória, the situation within the CCAC of Lesvos is
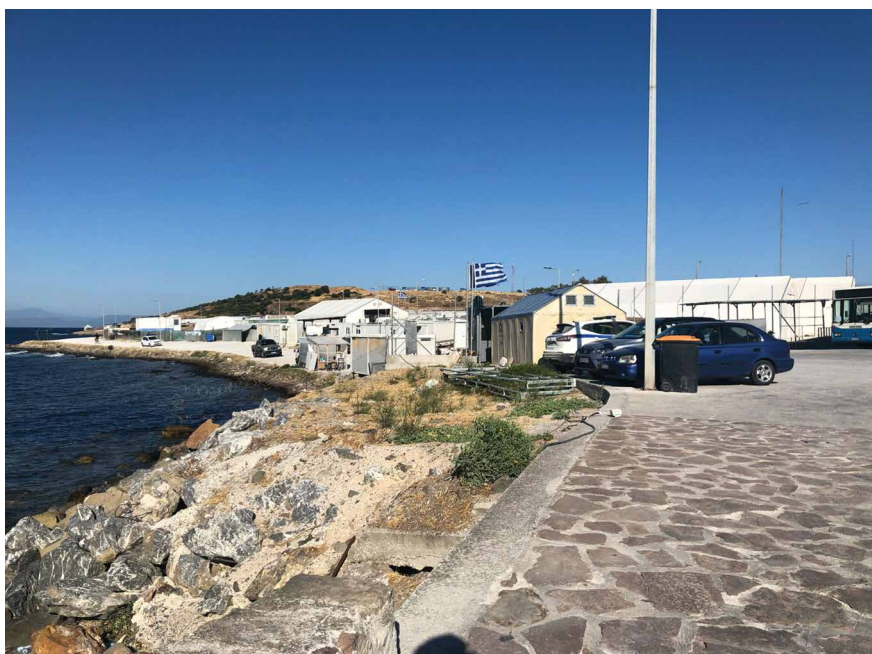
FIGURE 5.7 Kreider + O'Leary, FORTRESS EUROPE Series, Kara Tepe / Mavrovouni Camp Entrance, Lesvos, Greece.
© Kreider + O'Leary, HD Digital Photograph, 2015-2023.

particularly worrying, primarily due to the lack of medical staff, psychologists and interpreters. At the end of March 2023, there were only two National Public Health Organisation doctors inside the CCAC. The effects of the security and surveillance regime within the CCAC (discussed below) on the physical and mental health of residents has also been noted. Apostolos Veizis, doctor and general director of INTERSOS HELLAS, reported to Refugee Support Aegean:

> Uncertainty, lack of health services, general lack of support services for these people, have serious consequences. We have seen in people who have had traumas, those traumas growing, and we have seen people who were healthy, then ailing, physically and mentally, under those circumstances. After the sessions in our centre these people have to go back to the CCAC, to the same place where the pain is 'produced'.[19]

We visited the Kara Tepe-Mavrovouni Camp in 2022 in an effort to understand the change in provision for migrants following the Mória fire. However, we quickly became aware that, unlike Mória where we were able to converse with people who lived in the camp, this would not be possible at Mavrovouni. We made it

FIGURE 5.8 Kreider + O'Leary, FORTRESS EUROPE Series, Kara Tepe / Mavrovouni Camp Perimeter, Lesvos, Greece.
© Kreider + O'Leary, HD Digital Photograph, 2015-2023.

as far as the entrance gate, where we were taking photographs of the prison-like external perimeter wall, when we were hailed by security staff and told to stop photographing. We were then taken into the security reception area of the camp where our names and addresses were logged and where we were briefly detained and questioned by security about our interest in this place. They accessed our phones and deleted all image files related to the site, then escorted us back to the entrance. As we have now come to realize, this new attitude of closed security is something that has become part of the architecture of the next generation of camps on the Aegean islands.

Closed Control Access Centres

Despite calls for 'No more Mórias' from politicians, activists, and residents after the devastating fire at Mória in September 2020, the EU has continued to develop policy to contain the migrant flows through the camp system. In 2020 and 2021, Greece received 276 million Euros from the European Commission to build five new 'closed' camps on the islands of Leros, Samos, Kos, Chios, and Lesvos. In

September 2020, the first so-called 'Closed Controlled Structure' reception centre on Samos was opened. It was followed by camps on Kos and Leros.[20] The goal was to build new accommodation for people seeking protection that meets 'EU standards' in an effort to avoid the emergence of a new Mória. However, as is becoming apparent, the architecture of this next generation of camps is deeply worrying.

The new camp structures detain migrants invisibly, in rural areas, isolated from local infrastructure and surrounded by three-metre-high chain-link fences topped with barbed wire. There are watchtowers, with uniformed security personnel patrolling inside and outside the camp twenty-four hours a day. All of this is despite the EU Human Rights Agency recommendations that:

> A center intended for the first identification and registration of new arrivals should not look like a prison. To avoid as much as possible the risk of re-traumatizing effects for people who have experienced violence and persecution, barbed wire and prison-like fencing should not be used and ununiformed personnel deployed, where possible.[21]

Surveillance technologies such as X-ray scanners, cameras at entrances and exits, drones, turnstiles with smart cards, and cameras with motion analysis are used. This is the technological apparatus of the prison, laid bare. Cameras transmit live to the command centre of the camps, but also to a monitoring room set up in the Greek Ministry of Migration in Athens specifically for the purposes of surveilling. The monitoring system, which is called 'Centaur' is described as a 'security management system' for the 'protection of human life and property' as well as for 'reception structures for third-country nationals,' cost around 37 million Euros.[22] Research conducted by Fallon, Perrigueur, Grillmeier and Deleja-Hotko is revealing in the level of control exerted by this surveillance apparatus:

> From the command center you can see into people's beds. The cameras are partly equipped with artificial intelligence that analyzes movements and sounds an alarm when people gather in a group, for example. Faces are also scanned. There are thermal imaging cameras and drones are also used.[23]

This next generation of refugee camps contains all the traits of extraterritoriality, referring to a strong form of exclusion rooted both in the detaining conditions of a physically defined, and optically scanned, space where different laws and regulations apply in comparison to the host state.[24]

Lesvos CCAC Vastria

In April 2023, a fourth camp of this kind was scheduled to open on the island of Lesvos. The Greek government aimed to inaugurate the new CCAC in the Vastria region and to close the structure in Mavrovouni before Easter 2023. The new structure is located in an area of about 240 acres in a remote district in north-eastern Lesvos next to the largest waste disposal site on the island. It is adjacent to a protected NATURA area and is 100% funded by the European Union through the Emergency Support Mechanism, with a budget of EUR 76 million. Satellite image sequences confirm that construction at the site has been conducted at an intensive pace, despite questions about the necessary Environmental Impact Assessment and the approval of the fire protection study.

The structure is designed to have a nominal capacity of 3,000 people, with the prospect of its infrastructure being increased to a capacity of 5,000 or more people. Meanwhile, within the same area, a Pre-Removal Detention Centre (PROKEKA) is also planned that will have an initial nominal capacity of 2,000 people, again capable of reaching 5,000. All of this means that the total nominal capacity of the two structures combined can reach or even exceed 10,000 people.[25] However, Refugee Support Aegean has serious concerns that, due to the remote location of the camp, there will be no information about or control over what will happen there, and there will be no potential for social pre-inclusion of refugees. A report by *Mare Liberum*, a human rights organization that documents human rights violations and border violence against people on the move in the Aegean Sea, states that:

> This structure of the 'closed' camps has an impact on the monitoring and documentation of violence and human rights violations. The lack of access to the camps for external and independent observers limits the possibilities to investigate and report on possible incidents. This leads to a breeding ground for human rights violations in the camps that are neither prosecuted nor documented.[26]

There are also serious concerns regarding safety and forest fires, particularly after the significant wildfires in the Vatera region on the southern part of the island in 2022. Michalis Bakas, environmentalist and coordinator of the Ecologist Greens in Lesvos, has said:

> We are opposed to this construction in the heart of the biggest pine forest of the Aegean, since the risk of fire in these structures is very high, as we all know, and if, in the summer, a fire starts from there, it will burn thousands of acres of virgin forest and risk people's lives, as escape routes for so many thousands of people are problematic.[27]

In early February 2023, the Mytilene City Council issued a unanimous negative opinion on the delayed Environmental Impact Assessment for Vastria and recommended the region to reject it on grounds of public interest, despite the Minister of Migration and Asylum Notis Mitarakis stating that the project had reached 50% of its technical completion and was in the phase of full completion by 2023. The Council of State, in its interim decision (199/19.12.2022), upheld the application on the part examined, specifically relating to the route of access to the Vastria structure, prohibiting its construction until the final judgement of the court on the application for annulment. The court upheld that the construction of the road would lead to irreversible destruction of the forest wealth and rare avifauna of the protected area.[28] Since that time, in November 2024, a joint letter was sent from the Collective Aid and other signatories from humanitarian organisations to Greek and EU authorities claiming that 'despite the court-ordered revocation of a construction permit for its proposed access road,' construction has continued. In response, the signatories have called for 'the immediate halt to the construction of the Vastria Closed Controlled Access Centre (CCAC) on Lesvos, and the termination of all related plans for its opening, due to the high likelihood of human rights violations should the CCAC become operational.'[29] The fate of the camp remains unclear at the time of writing.

We attempted to visit the site of the Vastria camp on Lesvos in 2023. As we drove the 40 km north of Mytilene, up a winding wooded road leading to the coordinates that we had been given for the new site, we were stopped by a soldier in a pillbox by the roadside, who told us we could not go any further. When we said we were looking for the camp, he gave us directions to the Kara Tepe/Mavrovouni site, 20 km back on the same road to Mytilene.

Hotspot Transitions

Since their introduction, there has always been some creative ambiguity about the role and nature of hotspots on the EU periphery. They have been rightly defined as a 'highly flexible informal mechanism for governing diverse migrant population.'[30] As Wendy Brown states: migration 'cannot be stopped, only routed.' Lesvos has become part of the 'intricate ad hoc network of spatial and governing technologies for diverting, channelling, policing and governing migrant flows.'[31] Over the past ten years, 'hotspots' have changed from sites for regulating migrant arrivals by sea (the Skala Sikamineas model) to places for migrants' redistribution on land (the Mória model).[32] The Greek islands hotspots have evolved from being 'places of transit and registration to places of effective containment and the management and consolidation of crisis'[33] (the Vastria model) by redistributing migrants already present on the national territory and removing their contested presence from highly visible sites. The change in migrant visibility is now very evident,

with migrants placed away from social centres to remote areas that are completely removed from everyday visibility on the Greek islands.

Over time there has been an inescapable hardening of attitudes. One could already sense the change in emphasis following the EU-Türkiye Statement, where the European Commission recognized that 'the hotspots on the islands in Greece will need to be adapted – with the current focus on registration and screening before swift transfer to the mainland replaced by the objective of implementing returns to Turkey [*sic*]'.[34] There is a clear change of emphasis here from providing a safe and legal passage into the EU, embodied in Angela Merkel's empathic and simple statement of '*Wir schaffen das*' ('we can manage this') during the 2015 European 'Migrant Crisis', to the much more heavy-handed approach of Aegean push-backs[35] and contemporary hotspots acting as 'flexible chokepoints of mobility disruption.'[36] In short, Lesvos has transformed from a space of transit to a space of containment. In their current guise, the hotspots are spaces made of a combination of functions designed with the purpose of 'controlling or interrupting people's mobility, collecting their personal and biometric data for the management of "crisis" and in the hope of rendering them knowable and pliable to the sovereignty of European member states and EU border and asylum practices.'[37]

FIGURE 5.9 Kreider + O'Leary, FORTRESS EUROPE Series, Mória Camp - after Fire, Lesvos, Greece.
© Kreider + O'Leary, HD Digital Photograph, 2015-2023.

Refugee camps, by their nature are transient spaces where displaced people become stranded, enmeshed in prolonged and indefinite blocks in transit, experiencing an endless multiplication of temporal, legal and financial borders to be crossed. In the camps, displaced persons cannot benefit from the same rights or the same political protection as citizens.[38] Stuck in physical and bureaucratic loops, such persons are left vulnerable and exposed. Diken[39] refers to refugee camps as 'non-places', echoing Marc Auge's definition of non-places as places that 'do not integrate other places, meanings, traditions and sacrificial, ritual moments but remain, due to a lack of characterization, nonsymbolized and abstract spaces.'[40] In their extreme isolation from any possible social, cultural or economic interactions with their host communities, the contemporary Aegean CCACs force migrants and refugees into a hyper-unnatural state of suspension, in what *Mare Liberum* described as a 'breeding ground for human rights violations.'[41] Why has it come to this and how might we begin imagine things otherwise?

Lessons from Lesvos

Crisis and Cut

Reflecting on the situation in Lesvos – the 'Migrant Crisis,' as it is known – we read about the history of the word 'crisis.'[42] We learn that, for the Greeks, the term had clearly demarcated meanings in the spheres of law, medicine and theology. The Greek word 'crisis' (κρίσις) has its roots in the Greek word κρίνω (*krinō*) meaning to 'separate' (part, divorce), to 'choose,' to 'judge,' to 'decide'; also as a means of 'measuring oneself,' to 'quarrel,' or to 'fight'. The concept imposes choices, or decisions, between stark alternatives of, for example, right or wrong; salvation or damnation; life or death. The word was used up until the early modern period primarily within the sphere of medicine where it denoted the turning point of a disease. From the seventeenth century onward, the term has been used metaphorically, extended into the arena of politics, economics, history and psychology. Due to its metaphorical flexibility, the term 'crisis' has entered into everyday parlance such that now there is 'virtually no area of life that has not been examined and interpreted through this concept with its inherent demand for decisions and choices.'[43]

We now understand that, in labelling the situation on Lesvos and elsewhere a 'crisis', there is an implicit demand for a decision (literally from the Latin *de* 'off' + *caedere* 'to cut'). All of which suggests that the 'Migrant Crisis' as we first encountered it on Lesvos in 2015 was set up, conceptually, as a demand that something – some possibility, one of many possible futures – be cut off. This demand has been met through the very real development of the refugee camps on Lesvos that, as

evidenced through the evolution of what were initially First Reception Centres (FRCs) into what are now Closed Control Access Centres (CCACs), have one core, stable function: to divide those inside the camps from the general population, thereby cutting off the possibility of integration.

'Bare Life' and Biopower

We consider this as we sift through the many scholarly accounts considering the migrant camps in terms of Giorgio Agamben's notion of 'bare life,' as developed in his book *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*.[44] Here Agamben relates 'the camp' to the figure of *homo sacer*, understood as a person who is stripped of their rights as a citizen; so, outside of any political existence. This figure exists, instead, within what Agamben describes as a 'state of exception': a state wherein the rule of law has been suspended, thus enabling sovereign power to better exact control.

To better understand Agamben's concept of bare life and its implications for the camps on Lesvos, it is necessary to unpack the notion of 'sovereign power'. Historically, sovereign power has meant holding the power to dictate who lives and who dies. However, with Michel Foucault's development of biopolitics (which Agamben draws upon), there is, instead, an emphasis on sovereign power's hold over life or 'biopower'.[45] Related to this, and as we discussed in the Introduction, Part 2, 'biopower' and 'biopolitics' refer to the development of institutions and technologies aimed at controlling forms of life. In that previous discussion, we looked at this in terms of the 'art of governance' through which a hegemonic order or rhythm is established and imposed, with the further understanding that this art of governance may be a technology of the state but is not in any way limited to this. Relating this here to Agamben's argument: the figure of *homo sacer*, is understood as one who exists within a state of exception, thereby exposed as bare life to sovereign power; that is, to biopower. In keeping, such a person is stripped not only of their rights as citizens, but also denied the means of (echoing Sylvia Wynter) practicing being human. Instead, these persons are reduced to bare life: to *bios*, to *zoē*; that is, life in its most exposed, raw state of physical existence. To the extent that this life is preserved and sustained only through the 'mercy' of sovereign (bio)power, bare life can be understood as being exposed to sovereign violence. It is in this sense that many scholars have looked at the migrant camps across Europe in terms of Agamben's concept of bare life.

One such scholar is the architect Irit Katz. Writing in 'Between Bare Life and Everyday Life: Spatialising Europe's Migrant Camps', Katz looks at how, for Agamben, the camp, where bare life is produced, is formed 'whenever the nexus of the modern nation-state – land, state, and nation – enters a crisis, or whenever there is a discrepancy between the "territorial container" of the state and the

"nation" inhabiting it.'[46] Relating this to our discussion of 'crisis' above, we can now begin to understand the camps and the order of bare life that they produce in terms of that which is cut off in order to ensure the sanctity (territoriality, division, order) of the nation-state, which we understand to imply not only Greece, but all of the nation-states of the European Union for which this Greek island – and, indeed, all of the European coastal areas along the Mediterranean Sea – serve as an opening. We will return to a discussion of Katz below and, for now, take a brief look at the relationship between bare life, the nation-state and the camps in order to better understand the complexity of the cut or division that the camps enact and the relationship that this has to our contemporary condition (i.e. the 'current disaster') that we outlined in the Introduction, Part 2.

Bare Life, Nationalism and the Order of 'Purity'

A conversation between eminent philosophers Judith Butler and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, published in the book *Who Sings the Nation State?*, picks up on a discussion of Agamben's bare life with specific reference to its relationship to the nation-state.[47] Here, and during the course of their discussion, Butler takes issue with the entire concept of bare life. For her part, Butler understands that instances of bare life – where persons are stripped of citizenship and, with this, the rights afforded to citizens under the logic of liberal democracy – are far from being outside of any political existence, as Agamben argues. Rather, Butler argues that bare life, in serving as the constituent outside of the logic of the nation-state, is in fact *highly* politicized, saturated with the exclusionary logic of state power.

To appreciate the complexity of how state power operates on bare life we must understand the basis of the exclusionary logic upon which it is based. For Butler, the key to this lies in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* by Hannah Arendt.[48] In this book, Arendt develops an understanding of the nation-state as a form; specifically, a state formation that is 'bound up, as if structurally, with the recurrent expulsion of national minorities.'[49] That is to say, for Arendt, any formation of a nation-state is bound up with a sense of national identity that is predicated on exclusion: 'national belonging' exists only insofar as there are those who do not belong, who are 'illegitimate' inhabitants. In this sense, the nation-state is a singular and homogenous entity whose logic requires it to purify itself of its heterogeneity – except, Butler acknowledges, in cases where 'a certain pluralism allows for the reproduction of homogeneity on another basis.'[50]

Written in 1951, after World War II, Arendt's text clearly reflects her lived experience as an exile from Nazi Germany who spent years living a fugitive life before becoming a naturalized citizen of the United States. Equally, it sheds light on Arendt's early objections to a Jewish nation state in Palestine. For her purposes,

Butler invokes Arendt's critique of nationalism in this conversation with Spivak because it allows her to draw out the complexity of the relationship between bare life and state power, which she sees as inherently bound up with nationalism. More specifically, by linking Agamben's bare life to Arendt's understanding of the formation of the nation-state, Butler is able to argue that instances where people have been stripped of or denied their rights as citizens – such as the expulsion of Jews from Nazi Germany; the situation of Palestinians living under occupation in Gaza; the refugee camps across Europe – are not 'undifferentiated instances of "bare life" existing beyond political existence, but highly juridified states of dispossession' for the explicit purposes of shoring up national boundaries, national identities and, in turn, state power.[51] And why this is important, Butler argues, is because '[w]e need more complex ways of understanding the multivalence and tactics of power to understand forms of resistance, agency, and counter-mobilisation that elude or stall state power.'[52] All of which lays the foundation for the key question that Butler is asking in this conversation, which is: 'What makes for a non-nationalist or counter-nationalist mode of belonging?'

This discussion between Butler and Spivak returns us to the migrant camps on Lesvos and to the lessons we can learn from their evolution. For if we now understand these to be, in Butler's terms, 'highly juridified states of dispossession' intended to shore up nationalism, national identity and, through this, state power, then the question becomes whether, with such complexity in mind, we might begin to identify instances of resistance to these camp formations. Related to this is a question of whether, learning from Lesvos, we might begin (echoing Butler) to imagine what a 'non-nationalist or counter-nationalist mode of belonging' might be? And with this we turn again to the migrant camps on Lesvos in order to seek instances of – or the potential for – resistance to them from varying perspectives and across different scales, all with the aim of beginning to imagine, from this, new ways of being and living together.

A Practice of Resistance through Everyday Life

Let us begin with a look inside the camps where the reduction of inhabitants to bare life – that is, where the mere fact of biological life is prioritized over the way a life is lived – appears to shut down what architect Irit Katz identifies as 'the prospects of life, with all of its potential, possibilities and forms.'[53] Indeed, if the camps are understood, on the one hand, to preserve the sanctity (territoriality, division, order – we would say 'rhythm') of the nation-state by keeping migrants out of these territories, the flip side of this is that they work to instil another order (territoriality, division, order – we would say 'rhythm') on camp life itself. We have seen this in the evolution of the camps on Lesvos, where the later incarnation of Kara Tepe-Mavrovouni Camp – its high defensive walls and standardized living

containers – carry all the signs of 'bare life': that is, a life stripped to the minimum. Here the sole purpose of the camp is to keep residents alive such that the 'form of life' in the camp is an embodiment of (the order, the rhythm of) biopower. We compare this with an earlier incarnation of the camp at Skala Sikameneas where we found material witnesses, signs of life and community, of what Katz would call 'everyday life'. It is here that we locate one instance of, or potential for, resistance.[54]

To appreciate this, we must understand that, while many scholars have turned to Agamben's understanding of *bare life* to conceptualize the camps, Katz aims to study the ways that refugee camps across Europe are created or altered by the occupants themselves in relation to their *everyday life*. In doing so, she looks at how everyday spatial practices in the camps register the social and political agency of those living in the camps as well as the attendant and multiple forms of life that emerge from this. It is crucial here to note that in no sense is Katz glorifying camp experience, nor are we. However, we draw from Katz' argument an appreciation of the potential for community formations within the camps to alter, interrupt or otherwise upset the overarching order of camp life (what we would identify as the 'rhythm' of biopower as a hegemonic order for camp life); in doing so, to 'ungovern' the space of the camps, which are understood as spaces of division: a division that is realized practically on the local level and imagined metaphorically on a planetary scale.

Lesvos Solidarity

Now we move from inside of the camps to the relationship between the camps and their immediate surroundings. The fact that the camps on Lesvos enact a division between inhabitants of the camps and members of the local community and the island more broadly means that there is no possibility for relation. But it did not have to be this way. To understand this, we turn to the Lesvos Solidarity's 'Pikpa Camp', which exemplifies a path to accommodate migrants with dignity and social inclusion on the island.[55]

Established in 2012, the Pikpa Camp was unique as the first open refugee camp in Greece, calling for the inclusion and integration of refugees in local society. The Pikpa Camp was intended as a clear political statement against the detention of refugees and migrants in Greece, which was then becoming the norm. Although small with a capacity of 100–120 people, it has hosted hundreds more during times of emergency. Lesvos Solidarity, the NGO whose mission is to provide community-based solidarity spaces, estimates that, since 2012, over 30,000 individuals have stayed in Pikpa Camp, and the photographs showing their activities attest to the welcome given to all who passed through their doors.[56] Sadly, on 30 October 2020, during a year of what were described as 'unprecedented attacks to solidarity

from the Greek government,' the Pikpa Camp was closed down after eight years of operation. The residents of the camp were moved by police forces to the municipal camp of Kara Tepe.[57]

We understand the Pikpa Camp as an instance of, and an example of the potential for, resistance to the hegemonic camp order: a formation based not on division, but on relation. Pikpa Camp might have become a model for a number of multiple, smaller welcome centres integrated into the local community and landscape. However, the mutating situation for migrants and refugees on Lesvos and other Greek islands highlights the evolving nature of ongoing debates within the European Union about sharing the responsibility of hosting and assisting migrants and refugees attempting to enter the EU. Since the 'crisis' of 2015, we can see a bifurcation of approaches between with the bottom-up creation of genuinely safe spaces through social practices of solidarity in Greece, and the top-down geopolitical construction of safe space, which has materialized in the evolving nature of the hotspots in the EU periphery.

Planetary Entanglement and the Ethics of the Passerby

Changing scales and perspectives, we move now to look at the camp through the lens of Cameroonian historian and political theorist Achille Mbembe's *Necropolitics*.[58] Written in 2016, Mbembe's understanding of necropolitics picks up on Agamben's understanding of bare life and Foucault's notion of biopower. In doing so, however, Mbembe lays stress not on sovereign power's ability to dictate who lives, but on its ability to determine who dies – and how. Arguing that biopower is 'insufficient to account for contemporary forms of subjugation of life to the power of death,' Mbembe puts forward the notion of 'necropolitics' and 'necropower' to:

> account for the various ways in which, in our contemporary world, weapons are deployed in the interest of maximally destroying persons and creating *death-worlds,* that is, new and unique forms of social existence in which vast populations are subjectivised to living conditions that confer upon them the status of the *living dead*.[59]

Crucially, for Mbembe, necropolitics is indissociable from racism. This is true insofar as biopower, itself, is indissociable from racism, which is understood, in Foucault's terms, as above all a technology aimed at permitting the exercise of biopower, 'that old sovereign right to kill.'[60] To see the migrant camps in the light of necropower therefore suggests their enmeshment within what we have

identified in the Introduction, Part 2 as the 'colonial condition' – and, without question, they are. However, a continued reading of Mbembe allows us to view the camps from yet another perspective: that of Mbembe's own understanding of the current condition, which he terms *planetary entanglement.*

For Mbembe, planetary entanglement characterizes 'constituent features of these times of ours, this peculiar movement our world is going through' and is encapsulated in the following description: 'Worldwide, the combination of "fast capitalism", soft-power warfare, and the saturation of the everyday by digital and computational technologies has led to the acceleration of speed and the intensification of connections.'[61] For Mbembe, planetary entanglement is the condition of the now: a condition that, crucially, impels movement. People on the move, 'fugitives', who are forced to leave their places of birth because one day this place became uninhabitable due to war, climate or economic conditions. Mbembe continues:

> But entanglement is not all that characterises the now. Instead, wherever we look, the drive is decisively toward contraction, containment, and enclosure. By enclosure, contraction, and containment, I do not simply mean the erection of all kinds of walls and fortifications, gates and enclaves, or various practices of partitioning space, of offshoring and fencing off wealth. I am also referring to a *matrix of rules* mostly designed for those human bodies deemed either in excess, unwanted, illegal, dispensable, or superfluous.[62]

In this respect, the now, for Mbembe, is characterized by planetary entanglement on the one hand, and a drive towards enclosure, contraction and containment on the other. And all of this is not surprising given that, within this generalized condition, he locates the inevitable shift in power between the human and the technological. In this, Mbembe sees indications of what he takes to be the key clash emergent in our time: one that will not, he argues, be between religions or 'so-called civilizations', but between liberal democracy and global capitalism. In this respect, we can understand the drive towards containment in terms of an imperative to preserve and shore up the nation-state – the bedrock of liberal democracy – as it prepares to meet the coming wave of accelerated capitalism, technological saturation and digital warfare.[63]

It is at this nexus of planetary entanglement and containment – one that is located at the cusp of the coming wave of accelerated capitalism, technological saturation and digital warfare – that Mbembe situates the camps. In doing so, he lays stress less on the problem of containment and bare life and more on the problem of borders. 'Borders. Everything begins with them, and all paths lead back to them,' he writes – and continues:

In fact, everything leads back to borders – these dead spaces of non-connection which deny the very idea of a shared humanity, of a planet, the only one we have, that we share together, and to which we are linked by the ephemerality of our common condition. But perhaps, to be exact, we should speak not of borders but instead of 'borderization'. What, then, is this 'borderization', if not the process by which powers permanently transform certain spaces into impassable places for certain classes of people?[64]

In this sense, for Mbembe, the camps come to represent less 'who is allowed in' and more 'who is allowed to roam'. Who in our world is entitled to move freely, to cross borders, to enact relation? At present, he says, the answer would seem to be the Europeans. Mbembe's response?

Under such conditions, how else might we resist the claim by one province of the world to a universal right to predation, if not by daring to imagine the impossible – the abolition of borders, that is to say, giving all inhabitants of the Earth – human and nonhuman alike – the inalienable right to freedom of movement on this planet?[65]

Fittingly, he concludes his book with a call for movement, for transition, across boundaries – of country, of relation – as a means to bridge, to connect and, through this, to transfigure. This is a call for the rhythm, the cadence, of displacement – along with it, the capacity to weave one place with another with a 'twofold relation of solidarity and detachment. This experience of presence and distance, of solidarity and detachment, but never indifference – let us call it the ethics of the passerby.'[66] For Mbembe, the possibility of traversing a multiplicity of places 'as responsibly as possible, given the entitled parties that we all are' is a journey that will entail translation as much as conflict. All of which brings with it the potential for a planetary community: 'What will then emerge in relative clarity are the demands, if not of a possible universality, then at least of an idea of the Earth as that which is common to us, as our communal condition.'[67]

For us, this movement, this rhythm of displacement – along with the transfiguration it implies – suggests the potential for a community of resistance on a planetary scale: a community resisting division and the polarity that comes with it; a community that is formed in and through relation. So it is that through Mbembe's vision, oscillating somewhere between dystopian nightmare and utopian dream, we begin to imagine a community to come.

Towards a New Poetics of 'Us'

In his call for movement and, through this, relation – the call with which he ends *Necropolitics;* a call that he sounds into the 'extreme fragility of all' at the opening of the twenty-first century – Mbembe draws inspiration from Martiniquan poet-philosopher Édouard Glissant, whom, he says, has shown himself to be the poet of the idea of the 'All-World'.[68] Notably, we have caught glimpses of Glissant's thinking throughout this journey from oppression, through imagination, into transformation and finally emergence. We saw it, fleetingly, in the ethics of opacity underlying the fundamental and necessary relationship between 'I' and 'you' that, for us, constitutes the (politico-aesthetic, imaginary, ethical, ecological) 'we' that has been in formation throughout this book. We then saw it, in passing, in the concept of errancy that was invoked to appreciate how the *Travesia Amereida* of the Valparaíso School – their poetic journey across the 'inland sea' of South/Latin America's 'inland sea' – enacted a relation to the land and to the people encountered therein. It seems fitting, then, that we would arrive, via Mbembe's call for movement and for passage (with this, the combination of solidarity and detachment that characterizes the ethics of the passerby) at a sense of Glissant's 'All-World' here at the end of *Ungovernable Spaces* – in this place, the island of Lesvos in the Mediterranean Sea. How might Glissant's thinking of Relation help us think beyond the 'crisis' at the heart of the Mediterranean – a crisis that, as we have seen, has led to a demand for cutting off, for division, for the sake of preserving (national) identity?

With this question, we turn to *The Poetics of Relation* where we find Glissant moving away from thinking about identity in terms of the 'root' and towards an identity of 'relation'. This thinking runs parallel to what he identifies as a paradigmatic shift from positivist science towards relativism, with Glissant identifying how this paradigmatic shift manifests imaginatively, aesthetically and poetically through the turbulence, the 'whirl', that is the expansion/extension of forms of the '*chaos-monde* (the immeasurable intermixing of cultures).'[69] Here there is disorder and 'immense friction' as cultural specificity rubs up against the exclusivity of a generalized order and, in doing so, creates 'callouses of resistance' at every node of Relation. It is within this turbulence – that itself must be understood in relation to the increasing speed of communication and movement (so, relation) that characterizes our contemporary condition – that we find the two logics of root identity and relation identity operating. With reference to Glissant's summary, we will look at these in turn.

Of 'root identity', Glissant writes:

Root identity

- is founded in the distant past in a vision, a myth of the creation of the world;
- is sanctified by the hidden violence of a filiation that strictly follows from this founding episode;
- is ratified by a claim to legitimacy that allows a community to proclaim its entitlement to the possession of a land, which thus becomes a territory; is preserved by being projected onto other territories, making their conquest legitimate – and through the project of a discursive knowledge.

Root identity therefore rooted in the thought of self and of territory and set in motion the thought of the other and of voyage.[70]

Within root identity there is inwardness and self-preservation. There may be thought of the Other – so, there may be 'inclusion' – but this does not alter or change thinking; so, it does not alter acting (politics). The world remains the same. That is, world and politics remain ordered within the sanctity – the territory – of root identity, its universalizing rhythm and exclusionary logic. Within root identity, we can see the operations of colonialism, racism, nationalism, occupation, the camps. And if there is a figure for this identity, it is the Mediterranean Sea: 'an inner sea surrounded by lands, a sea that concentrates (in Greek, Hebrew, and Latin antiquity and later in the emergence of Islam, imposing the thought of the One)'.[71]

Then of 'relation identity', Glissant writes:

Relation identity

- is linked not to a creation of the world but to the conscious and contradictory experience of contacts among cultures;
- is produced in the chaotic network of Relation and not in the hidden violence of filiation;
- does not devise any legitimacy as its guarantee of entitlement, but circulates, newly extended;
- does not think of a land as a territory from which to project toward other territories but as a place where one give-on-and-with rather than grasps.

Relation identity exults the thought of errantry and of totality.[72]

With relation identity there is movement, distance, diffraction. This is catalysed by a desire for contact among cultures and a willingness to dwell in the contradictory nature, the difficulty and dissonance, of this experience – but never to fully need to 'know'. Rather than thought of the Other, relation identity introduces the other of Thought and, in doing so, alters how we think, how we act, and the worlds that we make:

> The other of Thought is precisely this altering. Then I have to act. That is the moment I change my thought, without renouncing its contribution. I change, and I exchange. This is an aesthetics of turbulence whose corresponding ethics is not provided in advance.[73]

If there is a figure for this identity, it is the Caribbean Sea, the sea of Glissant's homeland: 'a sea that explodes the scattered lands into an arc. A sea that diffracts.'[74] A sea that serves for him as a 'natural illustration of the thought of Relation.'[75]

So, with relation identity, we move away from the exclusionary logic that is the basis for the formation of the camps as these have been developed in response to the 'Migrant Crisis', and as these can be seen to embody an implicit response to the question of 'How are we to live together?' And in this movement (this 'errancy') we surmise the potential for the emergence of a new poetics of 'us': one realized in and through extension; one that, with respect to the fundamental un-knowability of another ('opacity'), enables relation across difference. Through this poetics, through this act of extension, we detect the potential for a new politics: one that carries 'the germ of criticism of territorial thought (of its sacredness and exclusiveness), so that ecology will then act as politics.'[76] For Glissant: 'The politics of ecology has implications for populations that are decimated or threatened with the disappearance as a people. For, far from consenting to sacred intolerance, it is a driving force for the relational interdependence of all lands, of the whole Earth.'[77] This is, then, a politics that takes us beyond territory, beyond nationalism, beyond exclusivity and towards a recognition of the sacredness inherent in relation itself.

With this in mind, we conclude *Ungovernable Spaces* with an act of imagining: one that draws from and together the specific examples of community formation throughout this book; our reading and thinking in relation to these; the lessons we are learning from Lesvos migrant camps. In doing so, we end with a beginning to imagine the formation of community on a planetary scale: a community formation resistant to a universalizing, generalized order (its homogeneous rhythm, its exclusionary logic) through which emerges a new poetics of 'us'.

This 'us' is made up of singularities, 'I' and 'you', as these are configured, transfigured, through movement. There is boundary, yes, there is limit, but there is also crossing, traversal. There is encounter, so, there is sensing – which is to say, there is aesthetics. Through this, there is understanding without knowing, thinking as transformation, relation as reciprocity. There is imagination beyond reasoning and then more movement. A cloud morphs across the landscape, particles of air shifting and changing with its environmental conditions. Layers of sound and soil push up against the grid – beneath this, a turtle turns to land. The seed becomes a tree. From dissolution comes flight. Meanwhile, the worms are tilling the soil in an act of pure will. Through all of this, there is extension: a movement beyond territory and boundary. So, ecology acts as politics. And in this realm of extraterritoriality, there will be relation. There will be 'us' as a community to come: a community based not on any sense of belonging, but on the awareness that this is a reality – a reality that we make from our thinking and our acting – for which each of us will have been necessary.

NOTES

Introduction – Part 1

1   The chapters of Falling are: Man on Moon; Man on Wire; The Slapstick Body; A Man Who Is Falling; Falling Man.

2   Kristen Kreider and James O'Leary. *Falling* (Isle of Wight: Copy Press, 2015).

3   Discussions around Wynter's ideas were first explored by the authors in a reading group convened by Prof. Kristen Kreider and Prof. Michael Archer on the Art Research MPhil/PhD programme in the Art Department at Goldsmiths, University of London, in 2017. Thanks to Katherine McKittrick for providing a copy of the manuscript *Black Metamorphosis* by Sylvia Wynter, and to Wynter for her permission to use her unpublished manuscripts for the reading material for this group. Thanks to all participants of the group for sharing their thoughts and ideas.

4   This text is a poetic precis of Hannah Arendt's discussion of natality as the 'first act', which appears in the section on 'Action' in her book *The Human Condition*. For Arendt, all action is relational and inherently tied to politics and to the realm of the political. Each act marks a beginning, setting off effects that cannot be predicted. In this sense, action is linked to pure potentiality. (This poetic precis will also make an appearance in Chapter 2.) Arendt, Hannah. *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013).

5   For a more extensive discussion of the ethical relation between, 'I' and 'you', see the Introduction to Kristen Kreider, *Poetics and Place: The Architecture of Sign, Subject and Site* (London: IB Tauris, 2013).

6   Kristen Kreider and James O'Leary. *Field Poetics* (London: Ma Bibliothèque, 2018).

7   The principles of Situated Practice might be described as: Contextual awareness, cultural sensitivity, social engagement, environmental consideration and historical understanding. Situated Practice is by necessity collaborative and acknowledges the positional, relational and partial aspect of these understandings. These principles are continually explored by staff and students on the 'Situated Practice' MA programme at the Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL, (devised by Jane Rendell and James O'Leary) where James O'Leary was Programme Director from 2017–2024. Many thanks are due to all staff members and students of the programme who, through their work, continually evolve these principles.

8 For an elaboration of this myth, or perhaps, historical event, see Hubert Damisch, *A Theory of /cloud /: Toward a History of Painting* (Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002).

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid.

12 Paraphrasing Linville, Krauss describes how, when shifting between a close-up and far away view of Martin's paintings, 'the ambiguities of illusion take over from the earlier materiality of a surface redoubled by the weave of Martin's grids or bands; and at this place the paintings go atmospheric.' See: Rosalind Kraus, 'Agnes Martin: The / Cloud/', in *Bachelors* (Cambridge, MA, MIT Press, 1999), 333.

13 For more on this subject, see: Kreider, Kristen, and James O'Leary. 'Particles of Moisture or other Substance Suspended in Air and Visible as Clouds.' In *Drawing Ambiguity: Beside the Lines of Contemporary Art*, Eds: Phil Sawdon and Russell Marshall (London: IB Tauris, 2015).

14 This quotation is from a short essay entitled 'Roll and the Example.' Yve Lomax, 'Roll and the Example,' https://www.finetuned.org/yve-lomax.html. Accessed 1 May 2024. Another work by Lomax, which was a source of inspiration both for our mode of writing and for our thinking around the 'ungovernable', is *Pure Means: Writing, Photographs and an Insurrection of Being* (Isle of Wight: Copy Press, 2013).

15 This approach parallels a methodology developed for a previous book. See Kristen Kreider, *Poetics and Place: The Architecture of Sign, Subject and Site* (London: IB Tauris, 2013).

16 For site-writing and critical spatial practice, please see the work of Jane Rendell, particularly *Art and Architecture: A Place Between* (London: IB Tauris, 2006), and *Site-writing: The Architecture of Art Criticism* (London: IB Tauris, 2011). For an extensive and dialogic account of practice relating to site-writing see https://site-writing.co.uk/references and for critical spatial practice see https://criticalspatialpractice.co.uk/references.

17 There are numerous artists whose work could be considered 'art-writing' and, in this mode, engage with place. See in particular the work of Caroline Bergvall, in particular *Drift* (Nightboat Books, 2014) and *Alisoun Sings* (Nightboat Books, 2019); Maria Fusco, in particular *Master Rock* (London: Book Works, 2015); *Legend of the Necessary Dreamer* (Vanguard Editions, 2017); *History of Present* (2023); Sharon Kivland, in particular *Freud on Holiday, Volumes I, II, III* (2006); *Memoirs* (2007); An *Agent of the Estate* (Information as Material, 2008); Katrina Palmer, in particular *The Dark Object* (London: Book Works, 2010); *End Matter* (London: Book Works, 2018).

18 See in particular Katja Hilevaara and Emily Orley, *The Creative Critic: Writing as/ about Practice* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018). Tim Matthews, *There and Not Here: Chronicles of Art and Loss* (London: MA Bibliothèque, 2022); Mussgnug, Florian, Mathelinda Nabugodi, and Thea Petrou, eds. *Thinking Through Relation: Encounters in Creative Critical Writing* (Lausanne, Switzerland: Peter Lang Limited, International Academic Publishers, 2021).

19 See in particular Katherine McKittrick, *Dear Science and Other Stories* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2020); Saidiya Hartman, *Wayward Lives, Beautiful*

Experiments: Intimate Histories of Riotous Black Girls, Troublesome Women, and Queer Radicals (London: Serpent's Tail, 2019) and Gumbs, Alexis Pauline. *DUB: Finding Ceremony* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2020) and *M. Archive* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018); Sharpe, Christina. *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being.* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016); Moten, Fred. *In the Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003); Moten, Fred. *Black and Blur*. Vol. 1 (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017); *Stolen Life*. Vol. 2. (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018); *The Universal Machine*. Vol. 3. (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018).

Introduction – Part 2

1   Some of the ideas in this section were formed in various reading groups, discussion fora and seminars at the Art Research MPhil/PhD programme in the Art Department at Goldsmiths, University of London, The Ruskin School of Art at the University of Oxford, the Art Research MPhil/PhD programme at the Slade School of Fine Art, UCL and the Situated Practice MA programme at Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL. We thank the staff and students of these programmes.

2   Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe. Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

3   Ibid, 8.

4   Ibid, 8.

5   John Stuart Mill, *Considerations on Representative Government* (London: Parker, Son & Bourn, 1861).

6   Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe.*, 8.

7   Here, we recall that the root of the word 'nation' is natality, which signifies newness and beginning.

8   However, with the exception of our engagement with Gandhi's political action in Chapter 2, the situations with which we are engaging throughout *Ungovernable Spaces* are not explicitly linked to anti-colonial struggle, per se. Equally, and while it is certainly possible to conceive of 'ungovernability' in terms of revolutionary efforts to overturn governmental regimes and instigate new nations, that is not how we are conceiving the term for the purposes of this book.

9   Aníbal Quijano, 'Coloniality of Power and Eurocentrism in Latin America.' In Nepantia: *Views from the South*, Vol 1.3, Eds. Walter Mignolo, Alberto Moreiras, Gabriela Nouzeilles, (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2000), 533-80.

10   Ibid, 541.

11   Ibid, 541.

12   Ibid, 542.

13   Ibid, 542.

14   The Invisible Committee (Translated by Robert Hurley), *To Our Friends*, (Cambridge, MA: Semiotext(e), 2015).

15 Michel Foucault, *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 91.

16 For Foucault's understanding of the relationship between the microphysics and the macrophysics of power, See: Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction, Volume I*. Trans. Robert Hurley, (New York: Vintage, 1990), 1–160.

17 Foucault, Michel. *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 5.

18 Ibid, 5.

19 Ibid, 5.

20 Ibid, 5. See also: 'The Subject and Power' in Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982) and 'Technologies of the Self' a record of the faculty seminar conducted by Michel Foucault at the University of Vermont, in 1982, later published in Luther H. Martin, Huck Gutman and Patrick H. Hutton, eds. *Technologies of the self: A seminar with Michel Foucault*. (London: Tavistock, 1988).

21 Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 7.

22 Ibid, 7.

23 Ibid, 7.

24 Howard Caygill, *On Resistance: A Philosophy of Defiance*. (London: Bloomsbury, 2013).

25 Carl Clausewitz, *On War*. Anatol Rapaport, ed., (Harmondsworth: Penguin UK, 1982), 119.

26 Ibid, 121.

27 Howard Caygill, *On Resistance*, 61.

28 Ibid, 11.

29 Ibid, 25.

30 In this respect, Lenin, for example, understood flashes of resistance to be a prelude to conscious, affirmative struggle of the coming revolution. See Caygill, *On Resistance*, 45. So, for Lenin, resistance is the condition for the 'possibility of its own overcoming in the revolutionary consciousness of the proletariat' (p. 46). Significantly, Caygill then compares Lenin's thinking here to Rosa Luxembourg who, in *The Mass Strike, the Political Party and The Trade Unions*, counters Lenin's ideas that acts of insurrection and resistance fit into the continual logical and temporal narrative of a class struggle that hinges upon the raising of 'class consciousness' as an element outside of organized struggle, and dictating it. In contrast, Caygill writes, 'her immanent materialism refused to accept the distinction between the episodic spontaneity of resistance and the constant self-correcting presence of revolutionary consciousness' (p. 46). Rather, there was no pre-determined plan or organized action. For Luxemborg, consciousness follows the movement and metamorphosis of resistance, it does not direct it. For her, the passage from resistance to revolution is not a clash of solids (as with Lenin), but movements of fluid forces made of diverse current at different velocities: 'for her resistant interruptions of the course of the world constitute their own rhythmic flow' (p. 48). Ultimately, for Luxemborg, organization is thus 'an autopoetic process of correction and challenge expressed a dynamic response to the environment; a continual process expressed in the figure of the wave of resistance' (p. 48).

31 Caygill, *On resistance*, 12.

32 Ibid, 64.

33 Ibid, 64.

34 Tzu Sun, *The Art of War*. (London: Hachette UK, 1994).

35 Roland Barthes, *How to Live Together: Novelistic Simulations of Some Everyday Spaces*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 6.

36 Ibid, 7.

37 Émile Benveniste, 'The notion of "rhythm" in its linguistic expression.' *Problems in General Linguistics* (1971): 281-288.

38 Ibid, 287.

39 Barthes, *How to Live Together*, 8.

40 Ibid, 30.

41 Ibid, 31.

42 Ibid, 58.

43 Ibid, 58.

44 Ibid, 58.

45 Discussions around Arendt's ideas were first explored by the authors in a reading group convened by Prof. Kristen Kreider on the Art Research MPhil/PhD programme in the Art Department at Goldsmiths, University of London, in 2016. Thanks to all participants of the group for sharing their thoughts and ideas.

46 Hannah Arendt, *The Life of the Mind: The Groundbreaking Investigation on how we Think*. (San Diego CA: Harcourt, 1978).

47 Ibid, 209.

48 Ibid, 209.

49 Discussions around Peirce's ideas were first explored by the authors in a reading group convened by Prof. Kristen Kreider on the Art Research MPhil/PhD programme in the Art Department at Goldsmiths, University of London, in 2018. Thanks to all participants of the group for sharing their thoughts and ideas.

50 Charles S. Peirce. 'How to make our ideas clear' *Popular Science Monthly 12* (January 1878), 292.

51 Ibid, 292.

52 Ibid, 292.

53 Ibid, 294.

54 Charles S. Peirce, 'What is a Sign,' in Charles Sanders Peirce, *The Essential Peirce, Volume 2: Selected Philosophical Writings (1893-1913)*. Vol. 2. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992).

55 Ibid, 5.

56 Ibid, 5.

57 Charles S. Peirce, 'A Guess at the Riddle,' in Charles Sanders Peirce, *The Essential Writings*, Ed. Edward C Moore, (Amherst NY: Prometheus Books, 1998), 264-5.

58 Henri Focillon, *The Life of Forms in Art*. Charles Beecher Hogan & S. Lane Faison Eds. (New York: Zone Books, 1942), 33.

59 Ibid, 118.

60 Ibid, 102.

61 Ibid, 102–3.

62 Francisco Varela, Evan Thompson, and Eleanor Rosch. *The Embodied Mind*, *Revised Edition*: *Cognitive Science and Human Experience*. (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 2017), 9.

63 Ibid, 10.

64 Ibid, 12.

65 See: Humberto R. Maturana and Francisco J. Varela. *Autopoiesis and Cognition: The Realization of the Living*. Vol. 42. (Springer Science & Business Media, 1991).

66 Varela, Thompson, and Rosch. *The Embodied Mind*, 55–6.

67 Francisco J. Varela, *Ethical Know-how: Action, Wisdom, and Cognition*. (Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999), 63.

68 Ibid, 63.

69 Ibid, 63.

70 Ibid, 75.

71 With gratitude to Tom Clark, then a PhD researcher at Goldsmiths, for stimulating thoughts around Castoriadis and related conversations around 'figure'.

72 Cornelius Castoriadis, *The Imaginary Institution of Society*. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1987), 133.

73 Ibid, 133.

74 Ibid, 146.

75 Ibid, 147.

76 Ibid, 147.

77 Ibid, 147.

78 Ibid, 147.

79 Ibid, 197.

80 Discussions around Wynter's ideas were first explored by the authors in a reading group convened by Prof. Kristen Kreider on the Art Research MPhil/PhD programme in the Art Department at Goldsmiths, University of London, in 2018. Thanks to all participants of the group for sharing their thoughts and ideas and to Sylvia Wynter and Katherine McKittrick for making available the unpublished manuscript *Black Metamorphosis*.

81 Katherine McKittrick and Sylvia Wynter, 'Unparalleled Catastrophe for our Species?' in *Sylvia Wynter: On Being Human as Praxis*. Eds. Katherine McKittrick and Sylvia Wynter, (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2015), 9–89, 23.

82 Sylvia Wynter, '1492: A New World View,' in *Race, Discourse and the Origin of the Americas – A New World View*, Vera Lawrence Hyatt and Rex Nettleford, eds. (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995), 21.

83 Ibid, 27.

84 Ibid, 37, (asterisks ours).

85 Ibid, 44.

86   Ibid, 45.

87   Ibid, 45.

88   Ibid, 45.

89   Ibid, 45.

90   Ibid, 45.

91   Sylvia Wynter. 'Rethinking Aesthetics: Notes to a Deciphering Practice', *Ex-Iles: Essays on Caribbean*, 237–79: 244.

92   Sylvia Wynter, '1492: A New World View,' in *Race, Discourse and the Origin of the Americas – A New World View*, Hyatt and Nettleford, eds., 41.

Chapter 1

1   We acknowledge the importance of Victor Burgin's Digital projection work *Prairie* (2015) to this chapter's inception and development of thought. See Victor Burgin, *Prairie*, 2015, Digital projection work, 8:03 minutes © Victor Burgin. Seehttps://www.cristintierney.com/artists/40-victor-burgin/works/4226-victor-burgin-prairie-2015. Accessed 6 August 2024. An earlier version of this text was published as *Prairie (Argo)* in *Seeing degree zero: Barthes/Burgin and political aesthetics*. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019), edited by Ryan Bishop and Sunil Manghani.

2   Martin, Agnes. *Writings/Schriften*, ed. Dieter Schwarz, (Berlin: Hatje Cantz, 2005), 29.

3   Virga, Vincent & US Library of Congress. 'Cartographia: mapping civilizations'. (New York: Little Brown & Co 2007), 176.

4   Corner, James and Alex S. MacLean. *Taking Measures Across the American Landscape*. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996), 31.

5   Aureli, Pier Vittorio. 'Appropriation, subdivision, abstraction: a political history of the urban grid.' *Log* 44 (2018): 139–67.

6   Corner and MacLean. *Taking Measures Across the American Landscape*, 31.

7   Aureli, Pier Vittorio. 'Appropriation, subdivision, abstraction: a political history of the urban grid.' *Log* 44 (2018): 139–67.

8   See The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs: Print Collection, The New York Public Library. 'Old Fort Dearborn, erected at the mouth of Chicago River for defence against the Indians.' New York Public Library Digital Collections. https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47d9-7d36-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99. Accessed 14 November 2023.

9   Loos, Adolf. *Ornament and Crime*. (London: Penguin UK, 2019).

10   Ibid.

11   Ibid.

12   Ibid.

13   Krauss, Rosalind, 1979. 'Grids', *October*, Vol. 9 (Summer), 51–64.

14   Ibid, 50.

15   Ibid, 54.

16 Barthes, Roland. *Camera Lucida* (trans. Richard Howard) (London: Vintage, 2000), 88.

17 Al-Saati, Abdulaziz, 1990. 'Mondrian: Neo-Plasticism And Its Influence In Architecture', *Journal of the Faculty of Architecture*, Middle East Technical University, Vol. 10. No. 1–2, 63–74, 68.

18 Mertins, Detlef, *Mies*, (London: Phaidon, 2014), 10.

19 Ibid, 245.

20 Ibid, 254.

21 Bluestone, Daniel. 'Chicago's Mecca Flat Blues.' *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 57, no. 4 (1998), 382–403, 393.

22 These image composites include drawing information composed by Nicole Salnikov. (https://nicolesalnikov.com. Accessed 6 August 2024).

23 Burgin, Victor. *The Remembered Film*. (London: Reaktion Books, 2004), 75.

24 Ibid, 75.

25 Ibid, 83.

26 Rancière, Jacques. 'The Paradoxes of Political Art', in *Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics*, trans. Steven Concoran, (London: Bloomsbury, 2010), 123–42, 123.

27 Ibid, 124.

28 Ibid, 125.

29 Ibid, 125.

30 Ibid, 125.

31 Ibid, 126.

32 Ibid, 126.

33 Ibid, 127.

34 *Knausgård*, quoted in: Burgin, Victor, 'About A Place to Read', transcript of talk given at Prefix ICA, Toronto (Thursday, March 10, 2016), Unpublished, transcript courtesy of the artist.

35 Ibid.

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid.

38 Burgin, Victor. 'Mies in Maurelia', in *The Remembered Film*, (London: Reaktion Books, 2004) 74–88, 75.

39 Sharpe, Christina. *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being*. (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016), 18.

40 Ibid, 18.

41 Ibid, 76.

42 hooks, bell. 'An aesthetic of blackness: strange and oppositional.' *Lenox Avenue: A Journal of Interarts Inquiry* 1 (1995): 65–72.

43 Sixteen years after the Mecca's destruction, in 1968, Gwendolyn Brooks would write 'In the Mecca,' a long narrative poem reflecting on the Black experience in the building's later years.

44 hooks, bell. 'An aesthetic of blackness: strange and oppositional', *Lenox Avenue: A Journal of Interarts Inquiry* 1 (1995), 65–72, 65.

45 Ibid. 65.

46 Ibid, 65.

47 Ibid, 65.

48 And still later, when emphasizing her commitment to this early lesson throughout her work as an artist and critic, hooks will say the words again, this time clarifying: 'Seeing here is meant metaphysically as heightened awareness and understanding, the intensification of one's capacity to experience reality through the realm of the senses.' See hooks, bell. 'An aesthetic of blackness: strange and oppositional.' *Lenox Avenue: A Journal of Interarts Inquiry* 1 (1995), 65–72, 65.

49 hooks, bell. 'An aesthetic of blackness: strange and oppositional.' *Lenox Avenue: A Journal of Interarts Inquiry* 1 (1995), 65–72, 65.

50 Ibid, 66.

51 Ibid, 66.

52 Ibid, 66.

53 Hooks, Bell. 'Homeplace: A site of resistance.' In *Yearning: Race, Gender and Cultural Politics*, (Boston: South End Press, 1990), 383.

54 Ibid, 383.

55 Ibid, 384.

56 Ibid, 384.

57 Ibid, 384.

58 Ibid, 384.

59 Ibid, 397.

60 Ibid, 388.

61 Before this migration, African-Americans constituted two percent of Chicago's population; by 1970, they were thirty-three percent. See Grossman, James R. *Land of Hope: Chicago, Black Southerners, and the Great Migration*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011).

62 Ibid.

63 Wilkerson, Isabel. *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration*. (London: Penguin UK, 2020).

64 Moore, Natalie Y. *The South Side: A Portrait of Chicago and American Segregation*. (New York: Macmillan, 2016).

65 Ibid.

66 Massey, Douglas, and Nancy Denton, *American Apartheid*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993).

67 Cayton, Horace R. and St. Clair Drake, *Black Metropolis: A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City*. Vol. 1. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970).

68 Strong, Samuel M. 'Review of Black Metropolis', *American Sociological Review*, 11(2) (1946), 240–1.

69 White, Shane, and Graham White. *Stylin' African-American Expressive Culture, From Its Beginnings to the Zoot Suit*. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2018).

70 Bluestone, Daniel. 'Chicago's Mecca Flat Blues.' *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 57, no. 4 (1998), 382–403, 392.

71 Ibid, 392.

72 Encyclopedia of Chicago. 'The Stroll.' http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/1212.html. Accessed 25 October 2023.

73 Brothers, Thomas. *Louis Armstrong, Master of Modernism*. (New York: WW Norton & Company, 2014).

74 WikipediaWikipedia. 'Pilgrim Baptist Church,' https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pilgrim_Baptist_Church. Accessed 25 October 2023.

75 Bluestone, Daniel. 'Chicago's Mecca Flat Blues.' *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 57, no. 4 (1998), 382–403.

76 Ibid.

77 Ibid, 399.

78 Dyja, Thomas L. *The Third Coast: When Chicago Built the American Dream*. (London: Penguin, 2013).

79 For a more detailed analysis of this sequence, please see: Bluestone, Daniel. 'Chicago's Mecca Flat Blues.' *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 57, no. 4 (1998): 382–403.

80 Bluestone, Daniel. 'Chicago's Mecca Flat Blues.' *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 57, no. 4 (1998), 382–403, 399.

81 Moten, Fred, *In the Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 102.

82 Sharpe, Christina, *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being*, (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2016).

83 Ibid.

84 This idea was drawn from the student-led forum Decolonise at the Slade School of Fine Art and, in particular, through the reading group hosted Onosiokhue Yakubu where a response from Kexin Jiang opened up the possibility for thinking about identities 'beyond' rather than 'other' to one's own.

85 Moten, Fred, *In the Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 197.

86 Ibid, 198.

87 Ibid, 201.

88 Ibid, 201.

89 Ibid, 202.

90 Ibid, 211.

91 Harjo, Joy. *The Woman who Fell From the Sky*. (New York: Norton, 1996), 18–19.

92 bell hooks, 'Revolutionary renegades: Native Americans, African-Americans and Black Indians.' Black looks: Race and representation (London: Turnaround Press, 1992), 181.

93 Ibid, 181.

94 The 'scientific' names of these plants are placed here in parentheses. These names can be understood as another kind of 'overlay' to the site insofar as scientific names have worked, effectively, to over-write local and indigenous plant names. With thanks to Slade doctoral researcher Lucille Junkere for drawing attention to the relationship between plant names and scientific racism.

95 Leffingwell, Randy. 'John Deere: A History of the Tractor,' (St Paul, MN: Motor books/MBI Publishing Company, 2004), 10.

96 Gerwing, Anselm J. (Summer 1964). 'The Chicago Indian Treaty of 1833'. *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*. 57 (2): 117–42.

97 Rogers, Gerald A., 'The changing Illinois Indians under European influence: The split between the Kaskaskia and Peoria,' Graduate Theses, Dissertations, and Problem Reports. 4522. (Morgantown: West Virginia University, 2009) https://researchrepository.wvu.edu/etd/4522: 2-3.

98 Bilodeau, Christopher, 'They Honor Our Lord Among Themselves in Their Own Way': Colonial Christianity and the Illinois Indians Author(s), *American Indian Quarterly*, Summer, 2001, Vol. 25, No. 3, (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 352-77.

99 Ibid, 352.

100 Ibid, 352.

101 Quoting work of A. Irving Hallowell on Ojibwes. See Hallowell, A. Irving. 'Ojibwa ontology, behavior, and world view.' In *Primitive Views of the World*, 49-82. (NYC: Columbia University Press, 1964).

102 Bilodeau, Christopher, 'They Honor Our Lord among Themselves in Their Own Way', 358.

103 Ibid, 368.

104 Costa, David J., 'On the Origins of the Name "Illinois"', *Le Journal*, 24.4 (Fall 2008), 6-10.

105 Ibid, 8.

106 Kimmerer adapted the story from oral tradition and from the book: *Skywoman: Legends of the Iroquois* by Shenandoah and George. See Shenandoah, Joanne, and Douglas M. George-Kanentiio. *Skywoman: Legends of the Iroquois*. (San Diego, CA: Clear Light Publishers, 1998).

107 Simpson, Leanne. *Dancing on our Turtle's Back: Stories of Nishnaabeg Re-creation, Resurgence and a new Emergence*. (Winnipeg, MB, Canada: Arbeiter Ring Pub., 2011), 7.

108 Ibid, 9.

109 Ibid, 32.

110 Ibid, 33.

111 Ibid, 33.

112 Ibid, 34.

Chapter 2

1   'Gandhi Ashram: History,' Gandhi Ashram at Sabarmati. https://www. gandhiashramsabarmati.org/en/about-gandhi-ashram-menu/history-menu.html. Accessed 3 May 2024.

2   Weber, Thomas. *On the Salt March: The Historiography of Gandhi's March to Dandi.* (India: Harper Collins, 1997), 91.

3   Salt March Itinerary, based on 'Map Retracing Gandhi's Salt March' produced by Greg Polk, Himanshu Dube and Linda Logan-Condon. 'To the extent possible we wanted to find the exact path that Gandhi and his fellow Satyagrahi took and not just follow the present-day road system. Many hours were spent interviewing people along the way, poring over maps and getting lost.' See https://www.facebook.com/ groups/1661897610747403. Accessed 15 September 2024.

4   Skaria, Ajay. *Unconditional Equality: Gandhi's Religion of Resistance.* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016).

5   Judith Butler, 'The Force of Nonviolence: An Ethico Political Bind.' (London: Verso, 2020).

6   Skaria, Ajay. *Unconditional Equality: Gandhi's Religion of Resistance.* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016), 3.; Howard Caygill, *On Resistance: A Philosophy of Defiance.* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 110.

7   Indeed, it is this understanding that leads Gandhi to conceive of *satyagraha* not only as his religion [*dharma*], but as constitutive of all religion – in Skaria's words, as 'the unrepresentable and inexpressible kernel that constitutes the possibility for any religion as well as for any conception of the ethical.' All of which, Skaria notes, is what leads Gandhi to call for the spiritualization of politics and to argue also that there can be 'no politics without religion'.

8   Caygill, Howard. *On Resistance: A Philosophy of Defiance.* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013)

9   Ibid, 112, referencing: Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, *Satyagraha in South Africa.* [1928] (New Delhi: Balaji Publications, 2023), 84.

10 Caygill, Howard. *On Resistance: A Philosophy of Defiance.* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 113; referencing: Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, *Satyagraha in South Africa.* [1928] (New Delhi: Balaji Publications, 2023), 93.

11 Skaria, Ajay. *Unconditional Equality: Gandhi's Religion of Resistance.* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016), 92; original source, M.K. Gandhi, 'The Fear of Death [*Maranbhay*]', Aug 14, 1921, Akschardeha, 20, 471; Gandhi, *Collected Works,* 24: 85.

12 Gandhi, Mohandas K., 'May God Help', *Young India*, 24 November 1924; in *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* (CWMG), 2nd edn, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India (Ahmedabad: Navjivan Press, 1958), vol. 29, 373.

13 Skaria, Ajay. '"No Politics Without Religion"': Of Secularism and Ghandi: The Religious Imagination in Public Spheres'. In *Political Hinduism: The Religious Imagination in Public Spheres*, ed Vinay Lal. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

14 Skaria, Ajay. *Unconditional Equality: Gandhi's Religion of Resistance.* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016), 2.

15 Calasso, Robert. *Ka.* (London: Vintage, 1999).

16 Gandhi, Mahatma. *Hind Swaraj' and Other Writings.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 46‑47.

17 Ibid, 47.

18 Ibid, 47.

19 Anderson, Benedict. 'Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism.' In *The New Social Theory Reader*, 282‑8. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2020), 6.

20 Ibid, 6.

21 The Mind & Life Institute was founded in 1991, by Chilean neuroscientist Francisco Varela, American entrepreneur R. Adam Engle and the spiritual leader of the 'Yellow Hat' school of Tibetan Buddhism, The Dalai Lama.

22 Vandana Shiva, 'Earth Democracy: Connecting the Rights of Mother Earth and the Well Being of All,' Recorded Video presentation, 9 June 2021, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KjD1NIkNWF4. Accessed 1 May 2024.

23 Ibid.

24 Gandhi, Mahatma. *Hind Swaraj' and Other Writings.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

25 Weber, Thomas. *On the Salt March: The Historiography of Gandhi's March to Dandi.* (India: Harper Collins, 1997), 94.

26 Ibid, 94.

27 Ibid, 91.

28 A précis of Arendt, Hannah. *The Human Condition.* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013).

29 Benjamin, Walter. 'The Storyteller: Reflections on the Works of Nikolai Leskov'(1936), tr. Harry Zohn (1970), in *The Novel: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory 1900–2000*, ed. Dorothy J. Hale (Malden MA: Blackwell, 2009), 361–78.

30 Ibid.

31 Ibid.

32 Ibid.

33 Calasso, Roberto. *Ardor.* (London: Macmillan, 2014).

34 Agamben, Giorgio. 'Notes on gesture.' In *Philosophers on Film From Bergson to Badiou: A Critical Reader*, 208‑17. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2019).

35 Indeed, and as others have also pointed out, the citational apparatus in Agamben is often difficult to discern See Butler, Judith, and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. 'Who sings the nation-state.' *Language, Politics, Belonging* (London: Seagull Books, 2007), 58‑61.

36 Agamben, Giorgio. 'Notes on gesture.' In *Philosophers on Film From Bergson to Badiou: A Critical Reader*, pp. 208‑17. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2019).

37 Recounted from a demonstration of the spinning process the authors witnessed at the Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad and through first-hand attempts at the

practice of spinning. With thanks to Catherine Grant for prompting this first-hand engagement.

38 Skaria, Ajay. *Unconditional Equality: Gandhi's Religion of Resistance.* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016), 114.

39 Incidentally, the word ecology is linked, etymologically, with the Greek work *oikos*, meaning household. It is the root of the word economy. And *oikos*, the household, is predicated on a logic of cyclical labour – incidentally, the realm of human action that, within Arendt's schema of 'the Human Condition', was relegated to the private sphere, outside of political. This is striking in light of Gandhi's introduction of the cyclical labour of spinning into the realm of the political, which suggests a politics predicated not only on ethics but also ecology.

40 Calasso, Roberto. *Ardor.* (London: Macmillan, 2014).

41 Weil, Simone. *Gravity and Grace.* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 117.

42 Kumar, Aishwary. *Radical Equality: Ambedkar, Gandhi, and the Risk of Democracy.* (Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press, 2015), 99.

43 Ibid, 99.

44 Gandhi, Mohandas Karamchand. *The Bhagavad Gita According to Gandhi.* (New Dehli: Orient Publishing, 2011). See publisher's introduction.

45 On the same day, his book on the Gita is published. See Skaria, Ajay. *Unconditional Equality: Gandhi's Religion of Resistance.* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016), 249.

46 Swami Tyagananda. *Insights from the Gita: Chapters 1–6.* Vedantasociety.net.

47 Gandhi, Mohandas Karamchand. *The Bhagavad Gita According to Gandhi.* (New Dehli: Orient Publishing, 2011), 49.

48 Ibid, 53.

49 See also Jean-Marie Muller. *The Principle of Non-Violence: A Philosophical Path.* (Honolulu: Center for Global Non-Killing, 2014).

50 Skaria, Ajay. *Unconditional Equality: Gandhi's Religion of Resistance.* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016), 114.

51 Ibid, 200.

52 Ibid, 200; *Gandhi Collected Works*, June 20, 1920, 20, 404

53 Ibid, 201.

54 Gandhi, Mohandas Karamchand. *The Bhagavad Gita According to Gandhi.* (New Delhi: Orient Publishing, 2011), 83.

55 Ibid, 88.

56 Gandhi, Mohandas Karamchand. *The Essential Writings.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 47.

57 See also Peter Sloterdijk. *You Must Change Your Life*, trans Wieland Hoban (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013).

58 Gandhi, Mohandas Karamchand. *An Autobiography: The Story of My Experiments With Truth*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993).

59 Bhana, Surendra. 'The Tolstoy Farm: Gandhi's experiment in "Co-operative Commonwealth". *South African Historical Journal* 7, no. 1 (1975), 88–100.

60 Note: The Urdu word for Ramadan is *Ramzan*.

61 Gandhi, Mohandas Karamchand. *An Autobiography: The Story of My Experiments With Truth*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993), 304

62 See Bargu, Banu. *Starve and Immolate: The Politics of Human Weapons*. (NY: Columbia University Press, 2014) and Bargu, Banu. 'The silent exception: Hunger striking and lip-sewing.' *Law, Culture and the Humanities*, 18, no. 2 (2022), 290-317.

63 Mirabeau, Victor Riqueti. *L'ami des hommes, ou Traité de la population*. (Chez Chrétien Hérold, 1757).

64 Ibid.

65 Benveniste, Emile. 'Problems in General Linguistics,' trans. Mary Elizabeth Meek. (Coral Gables FL: University of Miami Press, 1971).

66 Parel, Anthony J. Editor's Introduction to *Mahatma Gandhi, Hind Swaraj' and Other Writings*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), xxx.

67 Ibid, xxx.

68 Ibid, xxxi.

69 Ibid.

70 Ibid.

71 Stephen, James Fitzjames. 'Foundations of the Government of India.' *The Nineteenth Century and After: A Monthly Review* 14, no. 80 (1883), 541-68.

72 Ibid, 541-68.

73 Ibid, 541-68.

74 Mahatma Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj' and Other Writings*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 64.

75 Ibid, 64.

76 Ibid, 65.

77 Ibid, 65.

78 Ibid, 65.

79 Ibid, 65.

80 Parel, Anthony J. Editor's Introduction to *Mahatma Gandhi, 'Hind Swaraj' and Other Writings*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), xxxii.

81 Clément, Catherine. *Syncope: The Philosophy of Rapture*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994).

82 Ibid, 236.

83 Ibid, 240.

84 Ibid, 244.

85 Harinarayanan, A. Timeline and Number of Fasts, Gandhi's Fasts: An Analysis (Summary) Proceedings of the Indian History Congress, 1986, Vol. 47, Volume I, 696-98. (Indian History Congress, 1986).

86 Clément, Catherine. *Syncope: The Philosophy of Rapture*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 238.

87 Ibid, 246.

88 Ibid, 246.

89 Michel Foucault, 'What is Critique' in *The Politics of Truth*. Ed. Sylvère Lotringer, trans. Lysa Hochroth and Catherine Porter. (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2007).

90 Clément, Catherine. *Syncope: The Philosophy of Rapture*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 247.

91 Ganguli, H. C. 'Hindu-Muslim Problem in the Gandhian Programme.' *India Quarterly* 26, no. 4 (1970), 390–409.

Chapter 3

1 An earlier version of this chapter was published as: Kreider, Kristen, and James O'Leary. 'Volver a no saber: Poetry, architecture and the beginnings of Open City.' in *The Routledge Companion on Architecture, Literature and The City*, 246–69. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018).

2 We shall discuss the 'poetic act' in further detail later.

3 Facts about this first *travesía* are taken from Rodrigo Pérez de Arce, 'So far yet so near: the Ciudad Abierta and the Travesías,' in in *Valparaíso School: Ciudad Abierta Group*, ed. Raúl Rispa (Berlin: Birkhäuser Publishers, 2003), 14. This includes the allusion to *América Invertida* (*Inverted Map of South America,* 1943) by Uruguayan artist Joaquín Torres García (1874 to 1949), who claimed that 'because our north is the south … that is why we turn the map around.'

4 This is particularly the case when we take into account Nancy's argument that the history of Western thought is grounded on two fundamental ideals: 'foundation' and 'institution'. *Ciudad Abierta* shakes them both. See the interview with Jean-Luc Nancy in *The Ister,* written and directed by David Barison and Daniel Ross (2004).

5 León, Ana María, 'Prisoners of Ritoque', *Journal of Architectural Education* 66.1, (84–97, 2012), 90.

6 Grassi, Ernesto. *Rhetoric as Philosophy: The Humanist Tradition* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1980), 65.

7 Ibid, 65.

8 Ibid, 65. See also our Introduction: Part 2 and our discussion of Cornelius Castoriadis' discussion in *The Imaginary Institution of Society,* which resonates with Grassi's claims regarding the importance of imagination in the founding of a social order.

9 Grassi, Ernesto Grassi. *Rhetoric as Philosophy: The Humanist Tradition* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1980), 65. (We repeat, without condoning, the dated use of 'man' as a universal.)

10 Ibid, 73.

11 Ibid, 73.

12 *New College Merriam-Webster English Dictionary*, s.v. 'cipher.'

13 Pendleton-Jullian, Ann M. *The Road that Is Not a Road and the Open City, Ritoque, Chile*, (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1996), 74.

14 'Who but she (cifra) speaks of origin / for only poetically does it appear?' (our translation) taken from Godofredo Iommi, *Amereida: volumen primero* [1967] (Valparaíso: Escuela de Arquitectura y Diseño, 2011), 13.

15 Iommi, Godofredo. *Amereida: volumen primero* [1967] (Valparaíso: Escuela de Arquitectura y Diseño, 2011), 32.

16 Eliade, Mircea. *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion* [1957], (New York: Harcourt Publishing, 1987), 32.

17 Pendleton-Jullian, Ann M. *The Road that Is Not a Road and the Open City, Ritoque, Chile*, (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1996), 80-1.

18 Ibid, 83. Further, Pendleton-Jullian argues, it 'creates the foundation for an authentic and original form of historical and cultural research that absolutely relies on action in addition to speculation' and 'creates the foundation for a way of researching and acting within the natural context of the South American continent.'

19 Mignolo, Walter D. *The Idea of Latin America*. (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 2009).

20 Pendleton-Jullian, Ann M. *The Road that Is Not a Road and the Open City, Ritoque, Chile*, (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1996), 83.

21 Mercado, Álvaro, and Daniela Salgado Cofré. 'On Facing Latin/South American Coloniality: The Travesía de Amereida and the Geo-Poetic Turn at the Valparaíso School.' *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies* 31, no. 1 (2022), 23-50, 39.

22 Iommi, Godofredo. *Carta del Errante* [1976] (Valparaíso: Archivo Histórico José Vial Armstrong at Escuela de Arquitectura y Diseño UCV, 2010). https://www.ead.pucv.cl/app/uploads/1976/06/POE-1963-Carta_Errante.pdf. Accessed 9 January 2024.

23 For further discussion and record of the experience of *travesía* seehttps://www.ead.pucv.cl/experiencia/travesias. Accessed 9 September 2023. Documentation of *travesías* and specific information about them can be found on Archivo Historico Jose Vial Armstrong. https://www.ead.pucv.cl/espacios/archivo-ahjva. Accessed 9 January 2024 For a list of 'Travesia' pages in the Archive seehttps://wiki.ead.pucv.cl/Categor%C3%ADa:Traves%C3%ADa. Accessed 9 January 2024.

24 Ferris Jabr, 'How Does a Caterpillar Turn into a Butterfly?' *Scientific American*, 10 August 2012. https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/caterpillar-butterfly-metamorphosis-explainer. Accessed 9 January 2023.

25 Ibid.

26 Edgar Allen Poe, *The Complete Stories and Poems* (New York: Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, 2001), 741 (l. 42).

27 Ibid, 741 (ll. 45-6).

28 In the words of Alberto Cruz, as spoken by Godofredo Iommi, the *phalènes* 'culminate' architecture: 'It could be said that the event culminates as meaning, as a latitude where things take place, have room. For this reason, perhaps, the *phalène* can be seen as the culmination of place and, specifically, of extension. Extension would then be a meaning' (Pendleton-Jullian, 1996, 71).

29 For this specific discussion of the *phalènes* by Godofredo Iommi, see http://wiki.ead.pucv.cl/index.php/Segunda_Carta_Sobre_la_Phal%C3%A8ne. Accessed 16 September 2024. Documentation of the *phalènes* can be found on Archivo

Historico Jose Vial Armstrong. see http://wiki.ead.pucv.cl/index.php/III._CIUDAD_ABIERTA._AHJVA. Accessed 9 January 2024.

30 In his exploration of the material imagination, (Gaston Bachelard, *The Psychoanalysis of Fire*, (London: Routledge, 1964)) Bachelard associates fire with the *Prometheus complex* and our compulsion *to know*. Elsewhere, Bachelard, (Gaston Bachelard, *Water and Dreams*, (Cambridge: The Pegasus Foundation, 1983)) associates water with the *Charon complex* and the necessary forgetting – the return to not-knowing – that awaits us in death.

31 Through this positioning between the Pacific and higher ground, the site of Ciudad Abierta seems almost to mimic – in miniature – the much wider expanse of Chile, itself bounded by the vast expanse of the Pacific Ocean to the west and the rugged terrain of the Andes Mountains inland to the east.

32 Nancy, Jean-Luc. *The Inoperative Community* tr. Peter Connor, Lisa Garbus, Michael Holland, and Simona Sawhney. (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1991).

33 Blanchot, Maurice. *The Unavowable Community* tr. Pierre Joris, (Barrytown, New York: Station Hill Press, 1988), 9.

34 Nancy, Jean-Luc. *The Inoperative Community* ed. Peter Connor, tr. Peter Connor, Lisa Garbus, Michael Holland and Simona Sawhney, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 27.

35 'One does not produce [community], one experiences it,' he writes, 'or one is constituted by it as the experience of finitude' (Nancy, 1991, 31). In fact, the understanding of community *as a work* or *through its works* 'would presuppose that the common being, as such, be objectifiable and producible (in sites, persons, buildings, discourses, symbols: in short, in subjects)'. (Nancy, 1991, 31).

36 Blanchot, Maurice. *The Unavowable Community* tr. Pierre Joris, (Barrytown, New York: Station Hill Press, 1988), 31.

37 Ibid, 31.

38 This story is outlined in Ann M. Pendleton-Jullian, *The Road that Is Not a Road and the Open City, Ritoque, Chile*, (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1996).

39 Nancy, Jean-Luc. *The Inoperative Community* ed. Peter Connor, tr. Peter Connor, Lisa Garbus, Michael Holland and Simona Sawhney, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 4.

40 Ibid, 9.

41 Ibid, 7.

42 This returns us to our thinking about rhythm as the basis – the 'ground' – for community. Previously, we looked at how the word rhythm derives from atomist philosophy: the word $\rho\upsilon\theta\mu\acute{o}\varsigma$ having been used to designate 'form' understood as the disposition or configuration of atoms. When then looked at how, through the figure of the dance, this word began to suggest the imposition of a regulated, measured formal order onto human activity. We suggested further that the regulation and measure of human activity as labour is intrinsic to government, contrasting it with the poetic measure that instigates human activity in Ciudad Abierta. Bearing in mind Nancy's understanding of community, we can now appreciate how, in its functioning as a community, Ciudad Abierta acts as a form of resistance: an ungovernable space.

43 Fernando Pérez Oyarzun, 'The Valparaíso School', *Valparaíso School: Ciudad Abierta Group* ed. Raúl Rispa, (Berlin: Birkhäuser Publishers, 2003), 11.

44 With gratitude to Kate Pickering, who was then a PhD researcher at Goldsmiths, and co-supervisor Bridget Crone for stimulating discussions relating to community.

45 Fleet, Michael H. 'Chile's Democratic Road to Socialism.' *The Western Political Quarterly* 26, no. 4 (1973), 766–86. https://doi.org/10.2307/447149.

46 Benveniste, Emile. 'The Notion of "Rhythm" in its Linguistic Expression', *Problems in General Linguistics* [1956], tr. Mary Elizabeth Meek, Coral Gables, (Florida: University of Miami Press, 1971), 65.

47 This discussion of Benveniste's notion of rhythm and its implication in governmentality is taken from our book: Kreider + O'Leary, *Falling* (Isle of Wight: Copy Press, 2015), 45-8.

48 Lefebvre, Henri. *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life.* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2013), 8.

49 Ibid, 8.

50 Ibid, 9.

51 Ibid, 9.

52 Medina, Eden. Project Cybersyn: Chile's Radical Experiment in Cybernetic Socialism, *The MIT Press Reader*. https://thereader.mitpress.mit.edu/project-cybersyn-chiles-radical-experiment-in-cybernetic-socialism. Accessed 9 January 2024.

53 Jencks, Charles and Nathan Silver. *Adhocism: The Case for Improvisation*, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1972).

54 The poem is formally modelled after *Délie, objet de plus haute vertu*, a sequence of 449 *dizains* published in 1544 by Maurice Scève in Lyons.

55 Watkin, William. 'Ashes to Ash: Elegiac Language in the Poetry of John Ash and John Ashbery', August 13, 2007. http://williamwatkin.blogspot.com/2007/08/ashes-to-ash-elegiac-language-in-poetry.html. Accessed 9 January 2024.

56 Ashbery, John. 'A Fragment', *The Double Day of Spring* (New York, Ecco Press, 78–94, 1976). 78 (ll. 30-1).

57 Fuller, Buckminster. *Education Automation: Comprehensive Learning for Emergent Humanity* (Baden: Lars Müller Publishers, 2010), 163.

58 Ibid, 164-5.

59 Both the National Commission on Political Imprisonment and Torture (Valech Report) and the Commission of Truth and Reconciliation (Rettig Report) approximate that there were around 30,000 victims of human rights abuses in Chile, with 40,018 tortured and 2,279 executed. See: 'Report of the Chilean National Commission on Truth and Reconciliation,' (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1993. https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/resources/collections/truth_commissions/Chile90-Report/Chile90-Report.pdf). Accessed 9 January 2024.

60 It is important also to note the important work being done at the intersection of pedagogy and politics in the 1960s and 1970s in South America, generally, and Chile, specifically – particularly amongst the South American Catholic Left. For example, Paulo Freire, a highly influential Marxist pedagogue and author of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970)*,* was living in exile in Chile from 1964 to 1969. We look further at

Freire below where we compare his overtly politicized pedagogy to Ciudad Abierta's much more introverted and solitary project of teaching and community-building.

61   León, Ana María. 'Prisoners of Ritoque', *Journal of Architectural Education* 66.1, 84-97, (2012), 90.

62   Ibid, 93.

63   Ibid.

64   Ibid.

65   Ibid, 95.

66   Ibid.

67   English translation: 'Because of the great circle.'

68   See Marcus Taylor, 'Introduction: Neoliberalism and Social Transformation.' In *From Pinochet to the 'Third Way': Neoliberalism and Social Transformation in Chile*, 1–10. (London: Pluto Press, 2006). https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt18dztpr.5 Accessed 16 September 2024. Also Valerie Brender, 'Economic Transformations in Chile: The Formation of The Chicago Boys.' in *The American Economist* 55, no. 1 (2010), 111–22. http://www.jstor.org/stable/40657832. Accessed 16 September 2024.

69   We published documentation of this performance in: Kreider, Kristen, and James O'Leary. Artists pages in: *Performance Research: On Poetics & Performance*, 2015 (Volume 20:1), 70-6.

70   See William Irwin Thompson, 'The Cultural Phenomenology of Literature.' https://www.yorku.ca/livlit/part4.pdf. Accessed 9 January 2024.

71   Varela, Francisco, 'Reflections on the Chilean War', Lindisfarne Letter 8, Winter 1979, 14-19. Talk delivered in June 1978 at Lindisfarne. https://podcast.mindandlife.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/FV-Civil-War.pdf. Accessed 16 September 2024.

72   Ibid, 16.

73   Ibid, 16.

74   Ibid, 16.

75   Ibid, 16.

76   Ibid, 17.

77   Ibid, 17.

78   Ibid, 18.

79   Ibid, 18.

80   Ibid, 19.

81   Ibid, 19.

82   Ibid, 19. (emphasis ours).

83   Ibid, 19.

Chapter 4

1   Foucault, Michel. 'Theatricum Philosophicum' in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard, tr. Donald F. Bouchard & Sherry Simon. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977), 165–96.

2   Serres, Michel. *The Birth of Physics*, tr. Jack Hawkes. (Manchester: Clinamen Press, 2001).

3   These images use cartographic information from '*Security Barriers and Defensive Use of Space',* which was an invaluable publication to map the various manifestations of 'peace walls' and defensive architecture around Belfast. See Belfast Interface Project, Security Barriers and Defensive Use of Space, (Belfast: Belfast Interface Project, 2012).

4   Lamplugh, G. W. & Kilroe, J. R. *et al.*, *The Geology of the Country Around Belfast: (Explanation of the Belfast Colour-printed Drift Map)*. (Dublin: HM Stationery Office, 1904).

5   Belfast Interface Project, *Interface Barriers, Peacelines and Defensive Architecture*, (Belfast: Belfast Interface Project, 2017).

6   A previous version of this chapter was published as: Kreider + O'Leary (Kristen Kreider + James O'Leary). 'Milk, Confetti, Erratics – A stratigraphy of the landscape of the Belfast "peace walls"'. in *Fieldwork for Futures Ecologies: Radical practice for art and art-based research*. Bridget Crone, Sam Nightingale and Polly Stanton (Eds), (Eindoven: Onomatopee, 2022). https://www.onomatopee.net/exhibition/fieldwork-for-future-ecologies. Accessed 16 September 2024.

7   Hookway, Branden. *Interface*. (Boston: MIT Press, 2014).

8   We are grateful for Branden Hookway's excellent opening chapter 'The subject of the Interface', from which these thoughts are distilled. See Hookway, Branden, *Interface*. (Boston: MIT Press, 2014).

9   Rancière, Jacques. *Disagreement: Politics and Philosophy*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004).

10 Dawson, Graham. *Making Peace with the Past?: Memories, Trauma and the Irish Troubles*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007).

11 Testimony of writer Maria Fusco, email to the Authors. 1 July, 2014.

12 'Escheat' is the right of a government to take ownership of estate assets or unclaimed property in the event there are no heirs or beneficiaries.

13 Bardon, Jonathan. *The Plantation of Ulster: The British Colonisation of the North of Ireland in the Seventeenth Century*. (London: Gill & Macmillan, 2011)

14 'Conditions to be observed by the Brittish (sic) Undertakers of the Escheated Lands of Ulster', Part of the 'revised articles' of the plantation, produced in the spring of 1610. Source: British Library, Lansdowne MS 159, ff 217v and 219–21.

15 Salter, Mike. *The Castles of Ulster* (Malvern: Folly Publications, 2004), 8.

16 Stewart, Anthony Terence Quincey. *The Narrow Ground: The Roots of Conflict in Ulster*. (London: Faber and Faber Ltd. New Edition, 1989), 38.

17 Ó hAdhmaill, Féilim. 'Community Development, Conflict and Power in the North of Ireland,' in *Community Development*, ed. Ashling Jackson & Colm O'Doherty, (Dublin: Gill & MacMillan, 2012).

18 Ciaran Carson, 'Belfast', Ciaran Carson Papers, MSS 746, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University, Box 27, Folder 5.

19 Lamplugh, George William and James Robinson Kilroe *et al. The Geology of the Country Around Belfast: (Explanation of the Belfast Colour-printed Drift Map)*. Vol. 36. (London: HM Stationery Office, 1904).

20 Ciaran Carson, *Belfast Confetti* (The Gallery Press, 1989).

21 Refers to image 'political 1 sheet 19 3, People in Trouble', 2011 by Broomberg & Chanarin, which featured as a key image in the installation: *People in Trouble Laughing Pushed to the Ground (Dots)* in 'Conflict, Time, Photography', at Tate Modern, London, 2015, curated by Simon Baker, with Shoair Mavlian and David Mellor.

22 Bennett, Jane. *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*. (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009).

23 Deleuze, Gilles. *Pure Immanence*. (New York: Zone, 2001).

24 Lars Laumann's film, 'Berlinmuren,' 2008. See: Lars Laumann, Berlinmuren. https://kadist.org/work/berlinmuren. Accessed 1 December 2023.

25 *Wikipedia* https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quis_separabit%3F. Accessed 26 October 2020.

26 Boal, Frederick W. 'Belfast: walls within.' *Political Geography*, 21(5), (2002), 687–94.

27 Murtagh, Brendan. 'Image making versus reality: Ethnic division and the planning challenge of Belfast's Peacelines.' In *Reimaging the Pariah City: Urban Development in Belfast & Detroit*, edited by W. J. V. Neill, D. S. Fitzsimons and B. Murtagh. (Brookfield, VT: Ashgate, 1995), 209–30.

28 Rolston, Bill. *Politics and Painting: Murals and Conflict in Northern Ireland*. (Vancouver: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1991).

29 Public Record Office of Northern Ireland – © PRONI HA/32/2/55_1969.

30 Source: Tiqqun & Alexander R. Galloway. *Introduction to Civil War*. (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), MIT Press, 2010).

31 This document is described by the Public Records Office of Northern Ireland as 'Formal government decisions (i.e. those taken by the Cabinet or Cabinet Committees) in relation to the use and deployment of (a) the R.U.C., (B) the U.S.C. and (c) the Army, including (where available) the information and evidence placed before Ministers', © PRONI HA/32/2/55 – Public Records Office of Northern Ireland.

32 For a visual case study of the Belfast Interfaces, see James O'Leary, 'The Interface: Peace Walls, Belfast, Northern Ireland,' *Footprint*, Issue # 19 (Autumn / Winter, 2016), 137–44. http://dx.doi.org/10.7480/footprint.10.2.1436. Accessed 16 September 2024.

33 Belfast Interface Project, *Security Barriers and Defensive Use of Space*, (Belfast: Belfast Interface Project, 2012).

34 Evernden, Neil. 'Beyond ecology: Self, place, & the Pathetic fallacy.' *The North American Review* 263.4 (1978), 16–20.

35 LeGuin, Ursula K. *The Dispossessed.* (London: Hachette, 2015).

36 Excerpt of first-hand accounts from Allen Feldman, *Formations of Violence: The Narrative of the Body and Political Terror in Northern Ireland.* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

37 O'Leary, James. 'Peacewall Archive'. http://www.peacewall-archive.net. Accessed 16 September 2024.

38 Clarke, Alan. *Elephant.* BBC, 1989, Elephant by Alan Clarke, *Daily Motion*. https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x9670o. Accessed 16 September 2024.

39 Hookway, Branden. *Interface.* (Boston: MIT Press, 2014).

40 Agamben, Giorgio. '*What is an Apparatus?' and Other Essays*. (Redwood City, CA, Stanford University Press, 2009).

41 There are 350,000 visits to Cupar Way each year. As noted in: Jonny Byrne, The *Belfast Peacewalls: Problems, Politics and Policies of the Troubles Architecture.* Unpublished PhD, (Belfast: University of Ulster, 2011), 123.

42 For an outline of the 'shared future' narrative and policy in Northern Ireland, see: Brian Graham and Catherine Nash. 'A shared future: territoriality, pluralism and public policy in Northern Ireland.' *Political Geography*, 25(3), (2006), 253–78.

43 Weizman, Eyal. *Hollow Land: Israel's Architecture of Occupation.* (London: Verso, 2012), 172–3.

44 Donnan, Hastings & Neil Jarman, 'Ordinary everyday walls: Normalising exception in segregated Belfast.' In *The Walls Between Conflict and Peace*, ed. Alberto Gasparini (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2017), 238–60.

45 Fanon, Frantz & Constance Farrington. *The Wretched of the Earth*, tr. Constance Farrington. (London: Penguin Books, 1969).

46 Brown, Wendy. *Walled States, Waning Sovereignty*, (Boston: MIT Press, 2017).

47 Bennett, W. Lance. 'The uncivic culture: Communication, identity, and the rise of lifestyle politics.' *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 31, no. 4 (1998), 741–61.

48 Marcuse, Peter. 'Walls as metaphor and reality.' *Managing Divided Cities*, (Vol. 17), ed. Seamus Dunn, (Ryburn Publishing: Keele University Press, 1994), 41–52.

49 Calame, Jon & Esther Charlesworth, *Divided Cities: Belfast, Beirut, Jerusalem, Mostar, and Nicosia.* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011).

50 Swift, Jonathan. *Gulliver's Travels* (Hertfordshire, UK: Wordsworth Editions, 1992).

51 Keane, John. *Reflections on Violence.* (London: Verso, 1996).

52 Coyles, David. 'The security-threat-community.' *City*, 21, no. 6, (2017), 699–723.

53 Taylor, John. 'FUTURE POLICY ON AREAS OF CONFRONTATION,' Second (and final) Report of the Joint Working Party on Processions, etc.,' CAB/1634/3, (Belfast: PRONI, 1971).

54 Bell, Clive. 'The Aesthetic Hypothesis,' (1914) *Modern Art and Modernism: A Critical Anthology.* eds. Francis Frascina, Charles Harrison and Deirdre Paul, (Thousand Oaks CA: Sage, 1982), 66–74.

55 Office of the First Minister & Deputy First Minister, 'Together: Building a United Community Strategy', 23 May 2013. https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/publications/together-building-united-community-strategy. Accessed 10 February 2016.

56   Nolan, Paul. *Northern Ireland Peace Monitoring Report*. (Belfast: Community Relations Council, 2014).

57   Cosstick, Victoria. *Belfast: Toward a City Without Walls*. (Belfast: Colourpoint, 2015).

58   Paragraph 3.7: *Taking down interface barriers is not something that can be achieved without engagement with, consent and support of the people who live there. We must be sensitive to the views and perceptions of residents and balance this against the responsibility on us to create the conditions within which division and segregation can become resigned to the past.* From Northern Ireland Executive Office, 'Together: Building a United Community Strategy,' Date published: 23 May 2013. https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/publications/together-building-united-community-strategy. Accessed 20 November 2023.

59   Byrne, Jonny, Cathy Gormley-Heenan, Duncan Morrow and Brendan Sturgeon, 'Public Attitudes to Peace Walls Survey Report,' (NI Department of Justice & Ulster University, 2015). https://www.ulster.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0015/224052/pws.pdf. Accessed 30 October 2017.

60   *Belfast 1969: The Dawn of the Troubles*. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MS9jI12JwFY. Accessed 15 April 2016.

61   This observation relates to the Omagh Bombing, which was the largest loss of life in a single incident in Northern Ireland. See CAIN / Martin Melaugh, 'Main Events surrounding the bomb in Omagh – Saturday 15 August 1998'. https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/events/omagh/events.htm. Accessed 20 October 2023.

62   Bennett, Jane. *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*. (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2010).

63   Arendt, Hannah. *On Violence*. (Boston MA: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1970).

64   Benjamin, Walter. 'The Critique of Violence' (1955) *Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings*, ed. Peter Demetz. (New York: Schocken Books, 1978), 277–300.

65   The Policy Brief Documents are as follows: 'Removing Peace Walls and Public Policy (1): The Challenge of Definition and Design' Gormley-Heenan C, Morrow D. and Byrne J, (Belfast: Ulster University, Institute for Research in Social Sciences, October 2015). 'Removing Peace Walls and Public Policy (2): The Challenge of Delivery' Morrow D, Byrne J & Gormley-Heenan C, (Belfast: Ulster University, Institute for Research in Social Sciences, October 2015). 'Removing Peace Walls and Public Policy (3): The Challenge of Engaging Communities' Byrne J, Gormley-Heenan C & Morrow D, (Belfast: Ulster University, Institute for Research in Social Sciences, October 2015).

66   Cosstick, Victoria. *Belfast: Toward a City Without Walls*. (Belfast: Colourpoint, 2015).

67   Notes from a meeting at the Belfast Interface Project Offices, Royal Avenue, Belfast.

68   Salter, Mike. *The Castles of Ulster* (Malvern: Folly Publications, 2004).

69   'Living in the Modern Age means paying the price for shellesssness.' Peter Sloterdijk, *Bubbles: Spheres. Vol. 1. Microspherology*, (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2011), 24.

70   Northern Ireland Department of Justice, 'Department of Justice Interface Programme,' (Belfast: NI Dept of Justice, 2017). https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/articles/department-justice-interface-programme. Accessed 16 September 2024.

71 Excerpt from a Tweet by Cormac Campbell (@CC_TheDetail), who authored the article 'Flaws exposed in plan to remove Northern Ireland's peace walls', 22 May 2017.https://www.thedetail.tv/articles/government-revise-down-interface-removal-target. Accessed 16 September 2024.

72 McDonald, Henry. 'Belfast "peace wall" between communities felled after 30 years', *The Guardian*, Wednesday 20 September 2017. https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/sep/20/belfast-peace-wall-between-communities-felled-after-30-years. Accessed 16 September 2024.

73 Northern Ireland Department of Justice. Interfaces Programme – A Framework Document, Published, 12 August 2019, (Belfast: NI Dept of Justice, 2019).https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/interfaces-programme-framework-document. Accessed 16 September 2024.

74 Ibid.

75 Maume, Patrick. 'The Red Hand of Ulster.' *History Ireland* 2:18 (March/April 2010).

76 Darwin, Charles. *The Formation of Vegetable Mould, through the Action of Worms, with Observations on Their Habits.* (London: John Murray, 1881). (Relevant discussion in Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*.)

77 Marianne Hirsch, 'The generation of postmemory.' *Poetics Today*, 29 no. 1, (2008) 103–28.

Conclusion

1 The International Organization for Migration (IOM)'s Missing Migrants Project records incidents in which migrants, including refugees and asylum seekers, have died at state borders or in the process of migrating to an international destination. Since 2014, the Missing Migrants Project has recorded more than 56,928 deaths and disappearances worldwide of people who die in the process of migration towards an international destination, regardless of their legal status. As of late 2023, a total of 27,668 of these recorded deaths have been in the Mediterranean – a number which is almost certainly an undercount due to the limitations of data collection. For an overview of migration via the Mediterranean, see the Missing Migrants Project: https://missingmigrants.iom.int/region/mediterranean/. Accessed 16 September 2024.

2 The International Organization for Migration (IOM)'s Missing Migrants Project (2023), 'Migration within the Mediterranean'. https://missingmigrants.iom.int/region/mediterranean. Accessed 16 September 2024.

3 For example, see the work of Lesvos Solidarity: Lesvos Solidarity – Our History. https://www.lesvossolidarity.org/en/who-we-are/history. Accessed 20 October 2023.

4 European Commission, "Managing migration better in all aspects: A European Agenda on Migration', Published 13 May, 2015. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_15_4956. Accessed 26 September 2023.

5 A hotspot consists of facilities and infrastructure for the various national and international agencies involved in the processing of arrivals and asylum claims. It also provides temporary accommodation such as containers and 'isoboxes' for

refugees waiting for their registration or asylum claim to be processed. See: Vradis, A., Papada, E., Painter, J. & Papoutsi, A. *New Borders. Hotspots and the European Migration Regime*, (London: Pluto Press, 2019).

6 Papoutsi, A., Painter, J., Papada, E., & Vradis, A., The EC hotspot approach in Greece: creating liminal EU territory. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 45(12), 2200–2212. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183x.2018.1468351. Accessed 16 September 2024.

7 European Parliament (2018), 'Briefing: hotspots at EU external borders. State of play'. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2018/623563/EPRS_BRI(2018)623563_EN.pdf. Accessed 29 September 2019.

8 Papoutsi, A., Painter, J., Papada, E., & Vradis, A., The EC hotspot approach in Greece: creating liminal EU territory. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 45(12), 2200–2212. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183x.2018.1468351. Accessed 16 September 2024.

9 Vradis, A., Papada, E., Painter, J. and Papoutsi, A. *New Borders. Hotspots and the European Migration Regime*, (London: Pluto Press, 2019).

10 Dimitriadi, A. & Sarantaki, A. M., 'National report on the governance of the asylum reception system in Greece', Ceaseval Research on the Common European Asylum System (2019). https://www.eliamep.gr/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/WP3_Greece.pdf. Accessed 20 September 2023.

11 Papadopoulou, A., Maimone, E., Tsipoura, V. & Drakopoulou, K. (2016), 'The implementation of the hotspots in Italy and Greece. A study, Dutch Council for refugees, Amsterdam'. https://www.ecre.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/HOTSPOTS-Report-5.12.2016.pdf. Accessed 20 September 2023.

12 Paidakaki, Angeliki, Rani De Becker, Yana De Reu, Febe Viaene, Shareen Elnaschie, & Pieter Van den Broeck, 'How can Community Architects Build Socially Resilient Refugee Camps? Lessons from the Office of Displaced Designers in Lesvos, Greece.' *ArchNet-IJAR: International Journal of Architectural Research* 15 (3) (2021), 800–22. https://doi.org/10.1108/ARCH-11-2020-0276. Accessed 16 September 2024; https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/how-can-community-architects-build-socially/docview/2586721001/se-2. Accessed 16 September 2024.

13 The New Humanitarian, 'Briefing: how will Greece's new asylum law affect refugees? "There's no justification for what we're seeing"'. https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news/2019/11/04/Greece-new-asylum-law-refugees. Accessed 10 September 2023.

14 Ibid.

15 Forensic Architecture, Fire in Moria Refugee Camp. (06.03.2023). https://forensic-architecture.org/investigation/fire-in-moria-refugee-camp. Accessed 5 September 2023.

16 Ibid.

17 Paidakaki, Angeliki, Rani De Becker, Yana De Reu, Febe Viaene, Shareen Elnaschie & Pieter Van den Broeck, 'How can Community Architects Build Socially Resilient Refugee Camps? Lessons from the Office of Displaced Designers in Lesvos, Greece.' *ArchNet-IJAR: International Journal of Architectural Research* 15 (3) (2021), 800–22. https://doi.org/10.1108/ARCH-11-2020-0276. Accessed 16 September 2024; https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/how-can-community-architects-build-socially/docview/2586721001/se-2. Accessed 16 September 2024.

18 Refugee Support Aegean, 'What is happening today in the refugee structures on the Aegean islands'. https://rsaegean.org/en/ccac-aegean-islands-greece. Accessed 17 October 2023.

19 Ibid.

20 Mare Liberum, 'Camp Vastria – the new hell on Lesvos?', 17.02.2023. https://www.facebook.com/MareLiberumOfficial/posts/517254347121628. Accessed 2 September 2023.

21 ZDF Magazin, Research by Katy Fallon, Elisa Perrigueur, Franziska Grillmeier & Vera Deleja-Hotko. 'The new Moria', 2023. https://dasneuemoria.eu/#die-lager. Accessed 15 October 2023.

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid.

24 Le Monde *diplomatique*, Michel Agier, 'Twenty million in camps around the world: Migrant nation', June 2017. https://mondediplo.com/2017/06/08camps. Accessed 14 April 2019.

25 Refugee Support Aegean, 'What is happening today in the refugee structures on the Aegean islands', 2023. https://rsaegean.org/en/ccac-aegean-islands-greece. Accessed 17 October 2023.

26 Mare Liberum, 'Camp Vastria – the new hell on Lesvos?', 17.02.2023, https://www.facebook.com/MareLiberumOfficial/posts/517254347121628. Accessed 2 September 2023.

27 Refugee Support Aegean, 'What is happening today in the refugee structures on the Aegean islands', 2023. https://rsaegean.org/en/ccac-aegean-islands-greece. Accessed 17 October 2023.

28 Ibid.

29 Legal Centre Lesvos, 'Joint Letter: No to Vastria Controlled Access Centre - An Open Letter to The Greek Government and EU Commissioners', 30 October 2024. https://legalcentrelesvos.org/2024/10/30/joint-letter-no-to-vastria-closed-controlled-access-centre-an-open-letter-to-the-greek-government-and-eu-commissioners/. Accessed 18 December 2024.

30 Painter J, Papada E, Papoutsi A, et al., 'Hotspot politics-or, when the EU state gets real.' *Political Geography* 60, (2017), 259–60.

31 Brown, W. 'Border barriers as sovereign swords: Rethinking Walled States in light of the EU migrant and fiscal crises'. *Political Geography* 59 (2017), 2–4.

32 Tazzioli, M. & Garelli, G., 'Containment beyond detention: The hotspot system and disrupted migration movements across Europe.' *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 38(6) (2020), 1009–27. https://doi.org/10.1177/0263775818759335. Accessed 16 September 2024.

33 Jeandesboz J. & Pallister-Wilkins P, 'Crisis, routine, consolidation: The politics of the Mediterranean migration crisis.' *Mediterranean Politics* 21(2) (2016), 316–20.

34 European Commission, 'Next operational steps in EU–Turkey cooperation in the field of Migration.' COM (2016) 166, 16 March 2016. https://www.refworld.org/policy/legalguidance/eucommission/2016/en/109498. Accessed 1 May 2024.

35 Maritime pushbacks around the Aegean Islands typically involve taking migrants who have either entered Greek territorial waters or landed on Greek islands

and depositing them in Turkish territorial waters on craft without any means of propulsion. See Cortinovis, Roberto. 'Pushbacks and lack of accountability at the Greek-Turkish borders.' CEPS Papers in Liberty and Sedurity in Europe (2021).

36 Tazzioli, M. & Garelli, G., 'Containment beyond detention: The hotspot system and disrupted migration movements across Europe.' *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 38(6) (2020), 1009-27. https://doi.org/10.1177/0263775818759335. Accessed 16 September 2024.

37 Pallister-Wilkins, Polly. 'Hotspots and the geographies of humanitarianism.' *Environment and planning D: Society and Space* 38, no. 6 (2020), 991-1008.

38 Van der Heiden, G.J.,'Foreword', in Agamben, G. (Ed.), Agamben, Giorgio. *Homo sacer: Sovereign power and bare life*. (Amsterdam: Boom/Parresia, 2002), 7-21.

39 Diken, Bülent. 'From refugee camps to gated communities: biopolitics and the end of the city.' *Citizenship Studies* 8, no. 1 (2004), 83-106.

40 Augé, Marc. *Non-places: An introduction to supermodernity*. (London: Verso Books, 2020), 72.

41 Mare Liberum, 'Camp Vastria – the new hell on Lesvos?', 17.02.2023. https://www.facebook.com/MareLiberumOfficial/posts/517254347121628. Accessed 2 September 2023.

42 Koselleck, Reinhart & Michaela W. Richter. 'Crisis.' *Journal of the History of Ideas* 67, no. 2 (2006), 357–400. http://www.jstor.org/stable/30141882. Accessed 16 September 2024.

43 Ibid, 358.

44 Agamben, Giorgio. *Homo sacer: Sovereign power and bare life*. (Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998).

45 For a comprehensive reconstruction of the main line of Foucault's argumentation in the lectures held in 1979 ('La naissance de la biopolitique'), see: Lemke, Thomas. '"The birth of bio-politics": Michel Foucault's lecture at the Collège de France on neo-liberal governmentality.' *Economy and Society* 30, no. 2 (2001), 190-207.

46 Katz, Irit. 'Between bare life and everyday life: Spatializing Europe's migrant camps.' *Architecture_MPS* 12, no. 2 (2017), 1-20, 2.

47 Butler, Judith and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. *Who Sings the Nation-state*. (Calcutta: Seagull Books, 2007).

48 Arendt, Hannah. *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, (London: Allen and Unwin, 1967).

49 Butler, Judith and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. *Who Sings the Nation-state*. (Calcutta: Seagull Books, 2007), 30.

50 Ibid, 32.

51 Ibid, 42.

52 Ibid, 42.

53 Katz, Irit. 'Between bare life and everyday life: Spatializing Europe's migrant camps.' *Architecture_MPS* 12, no. 2 (2017), 1-20. 2.

54 For more on material as witness and the evidential role of matter as register to external events, see: Schuppli, Susan. *Material Witness: Media, Forensics, Evidence*. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2020).

55 'About Pikpa Camp,' Lesvos Solidarity. https://www.lesvossolidarity.org/en/who-we-are/history/pikpa-camp. Accessed 12 December 2023.

56 Ibid.

57 Ibid.

58 Mbembe, Achille. *Necropolitics*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2019).

59 Ibid, 92.

60 Ibid, 71.

61 Ibid, 93.

62 Ibid, 97.

63 As we write this closing chapter in early 2024, the Israeli military's bombing campaign in Gaza is ongoing, using an AI-powered database called 'Lavender' to identify potential targets. See Bethan McKernan & Harry Davies, '"The machine did it coldly": Israel used AI to identify 37,000 Hamas targets,' *The Guardian*, Apr 3, 2024.https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/apr/03/israel-gaza-ai-database-hamas-airstrikes. Accessed 4 May 2024.

64 Mbembe, Achille. *Necropolitics*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2019), 99.

65 Ibid, 104.

66 Ibid, 188.

67 Ibid, 189.

68 Glissant, Édouard. *Poetics of Relation*. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997).

69 Ibid, 138.

70 Ibid, 143.

71 Ibid, 33.

72 Ibid, 144.

73 Ibid, 154–155.

74 Ibid, 34.

75 Ibid, 34.

76 Ibid, 146.

77 Ibid, 146.

INDEX