Unearthing Traces

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Dismantling imperialist entanglements of archives, landscapes, and the built environment

Denise Bertschi, Julien Lafontaine Carboni, Nitin Bathla (eds.)

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Is There
a Postcolonial?

Architecture, Coloniality,
and the Archives: Reimagining
heritage, its materialities,
and speech acts

Critical Fabulations,
Imagined Records... Paths
toward anti-imperialist archival
relations and gestures

Jasmine Benhaida
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Marlene Wagner

Anna Karla de Almeida Santos
Lena Stina Andersson
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Tafrata Bouchra
Safiya El Ghmari
Rohit Jain
Sıla Karataş
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Lea Marie Nienhoff
Rebecca J. Squires

Mari Bastashevski
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George Jepson
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Lukas Pauer
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Unearthing Traces—an Introduction

*Denise Bertschi, Julien Lafontaine Carboni,
and Nitin Bathla*

This book builds upon the instigations and openings from the *Unearthing Traces* conference and workshop to dismantle the "neutrality" and past silences of archives by engaging with and expanding on the field of critical archival studies[1] in the context of architecture, landscape, and urban studies. The contributions in this book explore a diverse range of topics that not only challenge the objectivity surrounding current archival practices and archival institutions, but also question the archive itself—what they are comprised of and what kind of work they can perform in an increasingly uncertain and fragmented planet. The contributors of this book collectively perform a kind of "epistemic disobedience"[2] by unearthing the traces of power, toxicity, and violence produced by archival practices. Several of the contributors in this volume propose counter methods for archiving, whereas others focus on "landscape and urban space as a material witness"[3] while dwelling upon absences, silences, and erasures of history and memory. The book concludes with potential openings towards the future of the archive and speculation on what decolonial perspectives could look like for architecture, landscape, and urban practice.

This book embodies the many voices and disciplines that gathered together during three intense days of discussions, lectures, and debates on the occasion of the conference and doctoral workshop *Unearthing Traces: Dismantling the Imperialist Entanglements of Archives and the Built Environment* between May 27 and 29, 2021. Amidst a surging second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, our meeting was shifted online for the first two days, and some of us met physically in Neuchâtel for the last day of the workshop. *Unearthing Traces* was initiated with the intention of bringing critical voices and discourses around archives, memory politics, landscape, and the built environment into a transdisciplinary dialogue in postcolonial Switzerland. This publication is intended as an extension to continue and share some of the discussions that emerged during the workshop.

Unearthing Traces took place exactly one year after the horrific murder of George Floyd by white police officers in Minneapolis, United States, and the global Black Lives Matter movement it catalyzed. BLM protests gathered thousands of people in the streets of Swiss cities such as Zurich, St. Gallen, Basel, Neuchâtel, Bern, Lausanne, and Geneva for several weeks in a row in an effort to unmask Swiss neutrality and challenge deep-seated issues of structural racism and the celebration of Swiss colonialism through monuments within urban environments. At the moment the conference happened, in May 2021, antiracist and anticolonial struggles worldwide were visible anew. They once again helped energize the demand for reparations in all its multiplicities—financial, psychological, epistemic, memorial, historical, etc. Academia has a lot to learn and unlearn from and with these social movements, and in order to start getting back on track, there is a huge amount of institutional and scientific work ahead, particularly for architecture schools and universities in Europe. *Unearthing Traces* was intended to serve as a contact zone[4] between activists and academics that have been and continue to be directly involved with the imperialist entanglements of archives, landscapes, and built environments.

What to learn and unlearn from these public debates and actions? How can academics contribute to these movements? Which epistemologies, methodologies, and media can we work with to unearth the traces of coloniality acting in the present and to dismantle the

imperialist entanglements of archives, landscapes, and built environments on which our urban spaces and memory politics are still constructed? What are the forms of power enacted by imperial archives on our lives and environments, and how can we turn them against themselves or annihilate them? What is the role for archival practices in these struggles? How are silences and absences in archives produced, and how should we work with them in academia toward repair? Which resources and sources can be mobilized for such research? This book explores effective archival gestures and practices which might be non- or even anti-imperialist and suggests openings for an architectural landscape and urban practice yet to come.

Unearthing Traces

As young doctoral scholars based in Swiss universities, we have observed a severe lack of transdisciplinary exchange and expertise necessary to unearth traces of coloniality and dismantle the imperialist entanglements of archives, landscapes, and the built environment. These shortcomings are in themselves systemic traces of coloniality within European and Swiss universities. *Unearthing Traces* attempts to catalyze critical discussions between the disciplines of history, memory politics, critical theory, and archival practices together with the fields of the built environment, landscape, urban studies, architecture, and the arts in order to develop methodologies and epistemologies, thereby hopefully addressing and thwarting imperial entanglements. This book contains research, discussions, positions, and tools and provides a critical resource for scholars, architects, artists, activists, and archivists who want to engage with landscapes and built environments in a critical and postcolonial perspective in relation to archival materials and practices.

The transdisciplinarity of the conference is strongly mirrored in this book through the media and methods mobilized by the contributors, in an attempt to widen academic publishing formats. Drawings, photography, films, collage, diagrams, visual analysis, creative writing, and poetry, together with academic texts, provide multiple ways of getting in contact with and creating knowledge. It felt urgent to open scientific publications up to other formats in order to unfold archival imaginaries against the standardization of knowledge and

memories into documents and initiate contact zones with architectural and archival potential histories.[5]

Unearthing traces of coloniality in our landscapes and built environments is an immense yet vital program. To address it, the first part, "Is There a Postcolonial?" gathers contributions that propose a renewed approach to our urban environments and archives thanks to postcolonial and decolonial theories. Part I lays bare the premise that colonialism is a thing of the past. Many people and lands are still subjected to colonialism, as in Western Sahara and Palestine, but coloniality profoundly structures many *postcolonial* realities and their urban environments, landscapes, bodies, and interactions. This part aims to help readers understand how coloniality remains in place and in bodies and what some of the current issues are in engaging with postcoloniality and urban environments.

Archival powers

The spread of archival practices is one of the major issues communities face in the decolonization process and postcolonial reality. Many records, witnesses, and stories—other than the dominant ones—are silenced, buried, and/or subjugated by imperial powers.[6] As an essential part of this imperialist infrastructure, archives were instrumental in enacting the monopoly on and destruction of knowledge forms.

On the one hand, Archives are referred to as a system of classifying and producing documents and knowledge.[7] In colonial (and certain postcolonial) contexts, archives are a technology that reduces lives "to a mere succession of instantaneous presents, which leave behind no trace, or rather, the trace of which they hate as something irrational, superfluous, utterly obsolete."[8] The production of documents enacts power over their subjects while sustaining them as mere numbers. As written by Saidiya Hartman, in the Archives and their narratives, "the stories that exist are not about them [Venus and colonial subjects], but rather about the violence, excess, mendacity, and reason that seized hold of their lives, transformed them into commodities and corpses, and identified them with names tossed-off as insults and crass jokes."[9] The Archives create power over subjects and their bodies—transforming them into colonized subjects—and legitimize exogenous sovereignty over them.

On the other hand, the Archives refer to epistemic and institutional infrastructures producing *radical pasts*, able to extract knowledge and human and non-human bodies from their ecologies and relations with worlds. In doing so, Imperial Archives, together with infrastructures of *official knowledge production*, "dispossessed the vast majority of knowledge keepers, forever relegating their knowledge to witchcraft, tradition, superstition, folkways or, at best, some form of common sense."[10] This gesture of removal from the world deprives knowledge and bodies of their political agencies and futurities[11] and arranges them in the linear chronologies of Imperialism and extractivist Capitalism. These infinite libraries of knowledge have been coined as *subjugated*[12] and/or *subaltern* when it comes to people that cannot express their native ways of knowing and must *adapt* or *conform* to colonial and imperial ways of expressing and knowing the world.[13]

Far from inscribing everything that has happened, archives are full of gaps, absences, and silences. But beyond intentional segregation of archival documents, the absences are based on the limits of the sayable issued from epistemologies and techniques.[14] It means that the materialities and formats of the archival media also produce obscure zones that delimit, through internal walls, what can be said about the past. By standardizing the ontology of their documents, reducing subjects to mere numbers, and producing linear chronologies, Western archives hid, erased, obstructed, and devalued certain (organic) forms of knowledge,[15] creating and amplifying the biases of misrepresentation.

The second part, "Built Environment, Landscape, Coloniality, and the Archives," addresses these gaps, absences, and silences. The contributions draw upon specific and located *study cases* in which memory, material, and archival politics are entangled. All contributors depart from and uncover the co-construction of archives, collective memory, and urban environments through politics, providing the readers with tools and methodologies to unearth traces of coloniality, grasp them as entanglements of archival, material, and spatial realities, and discover routes to dismantle them.

Anticolonial and antiracist movements, researchers, archivists, and activists in different areas, locations, and fields have made vast inroads to remediate this situation and unsettle the power of *imperial infrastructures*

and versions of truth upon our bodies and lives. Many paths have been developed, and they are often intermingled and entangled. Here we propose a non-exhaustive list that could provide the reader with the means to understand this book within a more comprehensive collective endeavor:

— Firstly, activists, historians, archivists, and scholars have worked toward producing an *alternative* history that can bear diverse names—minor, counter, subaltern, etc.—mobilizing both official sources and methods and direct and indirect witnesses and actors of histories. These *alternatives* provide immediate answers to the dominant historical discourses.[16]

— In parallel, the *archival turn* occurred, describing the move from *archives-as-sources* to *archives-as-subjects* of history.[17] This means that archives (and particularly imperial archives) are no longer a place to store what can be said about the past, but are instead an infrastructure and series of practices analyzed as producers of knowledge and then of power.[18]

— In response to the absences, gaps, and silences that reduced lives to mere numbers in the corridors of history, many practices imagined "what cannot be verified, a realm of experience which is situated between two zones of death—social and corporeal death—[in order] to reckon with the precarious lives which are visible only in the moment of their disappearance."[19] These works at the intersection of archival research, critical speculation, poetry, fiction, art, and literature, do not *give voice* but establish contact with ghosts of lives[20] that have been expelled to produce what has been coined as *imagined records*,[21] as so many speculative documents toward reparative justice.[22]

— In continuation, but beyond the dominant and the absences, many have worked to restitute legitimacy and authority upon histories of plural knowledge forms. This requires a deep unlearning of Western episteme, because if "a certain written story is an alternative to imperial premises, it cannot be new: it is always already known, and it is only its authors that had to unlearn its imperial version in order to utter it properly, that is, from the

point of view of those who never accepted its imperial version as truth."[23] In this perspective, scholars have criticized, deconstructed, and re-built epistemologies and methodologies to reconfigure the uneven relationships between subjects and objects, knowledge production, and fields. These works uncover the imperial premises on which the historical discourses, archival practices, and knowledge production in Western frameworks lie, opening up avenues for research with worlds and voices that are impossible to unpack in their full diversity here. Still, we can at least cite black,[24] indigenous,[25] postcolonial,[26] and decolonial[27] theories and studies.

—The flourishing of (critical) archival studies has enabled the unpacking of the coloniality of archives' relationship with the world, allowing for myriad counter, minor, and reparative practices to emerge or be restored.[28] Many community archives have been created to take care of records excluded from institutional archives and provide alternative (re)sources for community memories, knowledge production, and the transmission of struggles, empowering people to narrate from their perspective and enlarging what can be said about pasts.

The plurality of contributions to the book engages with these heritages, perspectives, and practices. We are grateful to the communities and individuals for their commitment and what has been, is being, and will be achieved toward the repair and dismantlement of capitalism, white supremacy, and the patriarchy.

Imperial entanglements of archives, landscapes, and built environments

The rejection of other records and knowledge forms and the misrepresentation of lives in the archives still constitute a major obstacle to legitimizing cultures and narratives and, sometimes, to achieving justice.[29] Partly due to archival silences and misrepresentations, European urban environments support and perpetuate the economies of colonialism,[30] both in their physicality and virtuality, from the origins of materials to the toponymy of their places. However, memory politics are just one side of this economy; flesh is marked to its depth[31] and, as Françoise Vergès states in her contribution to this book, cities are not equally accessible to all bodies,

remaining segregated in time and space by visible and invisible borders. The uneven right to breathe[32] around the world, including in European urban environments, sheds light on these new forms of borders, violently enforced even if not as clearly drawn as the ones of the colonial city described by Frantz Fanon.[33]

European built environments and knowledge about them still perpetuates borders and violence upon many racialized, feminized, queer, trans, migrant, and non-valid bodies. There, in the production and reproduction of these borders and violence, archives and the built environment are entangled amongst one another, supporting the politics and economies of symbols of the other. As such, there is an urge to deconstruct and re-ground our understanding and reading of our archives and environments in relation to one another, unearth buried traces, exhume obstructed narratives, and give ground to *potential histories*.[34] It consists in considering built environments and their experiences as sources, entering in dialogue with them as material witnesses,[35] and working against, with, and beyond the archives-as-subjects and the knowledge they enact of our built environment. It is then an invitation that demands we unlearn imperialist epistemologies and listen to the narratives they shuttered, in order to overthrow the actual power of "past" coloniality on our environments and ourselves.

We strongly believe that these debates should be situated in the Swiss urban environment in order to deconstruct and disable the colonial symbolism they continue to deeply embody. Although Switzerland isn't known as a major colonial power, Swiss elites, academia, and institutions were deeply engaged in colonial practices through *colonialism without colonies*.[36] There is a long record of artists[37] and researchers unearthing Swiss colonial histories and challenging the collective amnesia around it. As a result, the city of Zurich has supported research at the University of Zurich[38] that showed the extent to which the city was implicated in slavery and the slave trade in the eighteenth century through direct (and indirect) financial involvement in the plantation economy, commodity trade, and global supply chain. These colonial practices, in return, shaped the Swiss urban environment through its toponyms, building materials, economic currents underpinning urban development and the construction of villas, the growth of universities, the development of collective imaginaries, and many other dimensions of Swiss landscapes.

These entanglements of Swiss institutions with colonial practices have raised discussions about restitution, as in the Swiss Benin Initiative led by the Rietberg Museum, which is trying to retrace the origins and biographies of eight museum collections. Several institutions have attempted to render Swiss colonial histories visible, for example, in *Indiennes: A Material for a Thousand Stories* at the Landesmuseum in Zürich in 2019/2020, the forthcoming exhibition *Colonial Switzerland* also at the Landesmuseum, and *Exotic? Switzerland Looking Outward in the Age of Enlightenment* at the Palais de Rumine, Lausanne, in 2020/2021.[39]

However, Swiss landscapes and urban environments remain populated by traces of coloniality that still possess power over our lives and bodies. Streets, buildings, and statues celebrate colonial figures and slave traders, such as David de Pury and his statues in Neuchâtel, or the naming of Geneva's university buildings and boulevard after Carl Vogt. Struggles to recognize these traces of coloniality and ask for a radical change in memory politics are ongoing, led by antiracist and anticolonial social movements, such as the Collectif pour la mémoire in Neuchâtel, which participated in the conference. After the murder of George Floyd and the worldwide social movements that followed, these struggles are finally being echoed in popular media, allowing the public debate to engage with Swiss coloniality and memory politics.

But reparative and social justice must engage beyond memory politics and address the visible and invisible borders that segregate our landscapes and urban environments in space and time. To do so, our disciplines need to provide the methodologies and tools to address the imperialist entanglements of built environments, landscapes, and archives and break the vicious circles upon which they are built. The third part, "Paths toward Anti-Imperialist Archival Gestures," brings together contributions narrating potential histories and futurities of anti-imperialist archival gestures. Departing from landscapes, urban environments, or related archives, the contributions provide a glimpse into worlds beyond imperialism and/or capitalism and their archival and memory politics. These tracks to actual potentialities of reparative justice open up imaginaries at the End of Time and World.

How to Unearth Traces?

While serving as an important tool for the preservation and restitution of archival materials, and opening accessibility to scholars at the margins, the ongoing digitalization of archives around the world also masks critical questions. The contributions by Jasmine Benhaida and Fares Damien in this volume offer important observations through an analysis of digitalization of the League of Nations archive based in Geneva, Switzerland. Both Benhaida and Damien argue that while the digitalization process increases accessibility to researchers, especially from former colonial peripheries that are rife with conflicts and uncertainty, this "digital turn"[40] needs urgent critical engagement. Benhaida, reflecting on her personal experiences of dealing with the digital archives, finds that digitalization produces silences and absences in the archives through foreclosing the possibility of chance discoveries. Not only can one no longer find and analyze accidental scribbles and imprints or traces on the archival documents, she argues, but there are often related documents that are not digitalized and are housed in related collections, which only come to view upon chance meetings with archivists. Damien on the other hand discusses the argument that enabling access from everywhere through digitalization of archives in fact helps mask deep-seated and inherited power structures of the core-periphery, which cannot and should not be neglected.

What constitutes an archive beyond the traditional institutions that have been associated with it, and what work can archives perform for ongoing and future issues and urgencies? In her powerful study of the work of the independent, community-run archive Interference Archive in Brooklyn in the context of the ongoing climate emergency, Estefania Mompean Botias considers the agency of the archive and the role of community archives in archiving the "living."[41] Mompean discusses how community archives are open, responsive, inclusive, collaborative, and generative places where the community actively constructs and archives history. She discusses the soil as an archive of buried toxicities and how it can be mobilized to narrate the stories of historically racialized communities that have faced ecological marginalization. Mompean's article resonates with Hollyamber Kennedy's thoughtful reflections on Frantz Fanon's ideas on earthing and burying the colonial world, and the Earth's record keeping. Kennedy brings

forth some important ideas from her work on rural modernization[42] in illustrating the unsettling of territory and unearthing traces in the land. The contribution by Anna Karla de Almeida Santos offers another perspective on the living archive by describing how business archives are integrated into the living history of company towns and industry in Northern Italy. Santos notes how the city and industry intertwine in the business archives of the *Fondazione Dalmine,* thus representing another form of intergenerational living archive and memory. Although the living archives of Mompean and Santos both shape memory,[43] they are radically different in the work they perform. The latter is shaped by communities and voices that have been intrinsic to capitalism and its workings, the former serves as a counter-archive by communities that have historically been surplus to it and continue to be so. As Mathilde Chénin aptly reminds us in her contribution in this volume, we should be cautious about the tendency of private actors to coopt and commodify archives, as with the archiving around the Occupy Wall Street protests by US art institutions.

We also operate within and inhabit a colonial continuum.[44] As an example of this, while we were organizing the *Unearthing Traces* conference, thousands of bombs rained down over the Gaza Strip in Palestine, and then while writing this introduction, we witnessed the extraordinary state-mandated violence and demolition of Muslim neighborhoods in India. In her contribution, Atiya Hussain reflects on the conjuncture of the colonial continuum, drawing attention to how postcolonial states such as India and Israel have inherited and inflict colonial forms of violence. She poses the question: If the very institutions that we look to for justice are bathed in toxicity, where can we turn to find peace? In her poetic piece in this volume, Stéphanie Savio offers a perhaps fitting response to Hussain's investigations. Savio employs poetry to narrate her sensory surroundingss while doing archival work in a zone of conflict in Israel-Palestine. She narrates how the conflict and everyday life bleed and intermingle into each other and how peace occurs in the liminal moments. Similarly, Nolan Oswald Dennis's visual contribution in this volume, "A curriculum for mud" draws upon his earlier works,[45] where he expands upon Audre Lorde's[46] warning that "the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house." Dennis asserts that they may temporarily allow us to beat him at his own game, but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change. Through this visual contribution,

Dennis explores the material-discursive agency of art-making as meaning-making and world-making, interpreting what Walter Mignolo has called the geopolitics of knowing.

Silences and absences in the archives have served as important tools to inflict and justify colonial violence with continued resonances in the production of post-colonial cities and urban space. There is a long tradition in postcolonial urban studies whereby scholars such as Ananya Roy, Gautam Bhan,[47] Asher Ghertner,[48] and Bathla[49] have reflected on how postcolonial master-plans produce and regulate an urban apartheid,[50] inflicting violence upon "informal" or "grey spaces" through absences, erasure, and classification. In their chapter in this volume, Safiya El Ghmari and Bouchra Tafrata question the binaries of formality and informality in their attempts at "unmapping informality." They describe how informality is not only an antonym of formality but is in fact produced through archival violence of erasure on maps and other documents, thus serving as a post-colonial testament to colonial violence. Borrowing from AbdouMaliq Simone's work, *Improvised Lives*,[51] they describe how the informal can serve as an incommensurable testimonial archive of urbanization. Moreover, as Léopold Lambert highlights in an interview in this volume, the colonial continuum manifests today through counter-revolutionary[52] strategies meted out against racialized youth protesting structural exclusion in France's *banlieues*. Following Lambert's cues in their *longue dureé* analysis of housing policies in colonial and post-colonial France and its colonies, Nagy Makhlouf casts a critical look on what he describes as the "architect-legal history" of social housing policies in France. Makhlouf powerfully locates how these policies were aimed at preventing colonized populations from taking root or leaving traces of their presence in the urban space. He further analyzes how the French government achieved this through regulation, firstly by making North African migrants ineligible for public housing and then by regulating "informal" housing markets that emerged in response to this deficiency, before finally relegating the male North African body to dormitory housing, which makes it impossible to have a family or leave traces. Bathla has written elsewhere about the contemporary resonances of tenements and dormitories and their power to regulate the circulation and inhabitation of bodies.[53] Makhlouf further emphasizes the application of categories such as "transit housing" to the

inhabitation of certain bodies in urban space. They describe how these policies continue to haunt the postcolonial world and how decolonial futures are improbable without retracing the problematic colonial continuum in public housing policies. Françoise Vergès similarly reflects on the possibilities of repair through navigating the entanglements between the decolonization of the city and the world which unveils the complicity of colonial monuments and memory politics in the fabrication of hostile and segregated[54] urban environments. She argues that these politics, together with many other forces, produce invisible and nonlinear borders in European cities that emerge around race and gender, a colonial continuum that regulates and enforces who is allowed to freely circulate and who is not.

The neoliberal economic paradigm, however, has not only permeated housing and urban space,[55] it has also been detrimental to conversations around restitution and repair. In their contribution on "a museum of empire," George Jepson and Lukas Pauer tease out critical links between public disinvestment in the United Kingdom and the rise of a triumphalist attitude in British history. Jepson and Pauer make an interesting reading between funding cuts to Arts Council England and the co-optation of a cultural history of deindustrialized towns for real estate speculation, such as in the case of "the Factory" starchitect project in Manchester. They discuss the lack of a "museum of the empire"; where one can learn about the violence that has enabled the UK's status in the world. Though such a museum was established in Bristol in 2002 (it was dissolved in 2013 due to underfunding), their proposal attempts to provide openings for what a "museum of the empire" could look like. In her multi-layered commentary on the Marshall Plan, Sıla Karataş employs gospel as a way to re-narrate the story of US postwar imperialism and anti-communist propaganda. She takes the captions from the documentary photography of the US-Austrian photographer Ernst Haas at the Marseille Docks and reinterprets them in order to unearth the US doctrine of the "good life." In her robust analytical work, Karataş highlights how the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) employed photography and print media as a part of its propaganda against the communist threat emanating from labor unions. Marlene Wagner on the other hand offers reflections on more recent conduits of developmentalism. Specifically, the aid-assisted crossovers of the Design Build movement between the United States, Austria, and

South Africa. Wagner draws upon her own archives of the reenactment of the self-build movement between Austria and South Africa and provides a strong auto-ethnography to position her own agentivity and heritage within this entangled postcolonial landscape.

While museums, archives, and archival institutions have traditionally been concerned with provenance in terms of the origin of artifacts and their reparations, recent critical discussions, such as that surrounding the Benin Bronzes, has pushed this discussion even further into tracing the material fragments[56] entangled with them. How do such objects entangle fragments of cities, for example, or of toxic traces and other material fragments? Lena Stina Andersson, in her powerful analytical work on the Nationalmuseum in Stockholm, Sweden, confronts this question by attempting to "unsilence" the museum building as a neutral container. Andersson lays bare the origin and toxic materiality of the museum itself by tracing the colonial entanglements and noxious traces of the composite material Celotex, which was used in the renovation of the Nationalmuseum in the 1920s and 1930s. What would a museum that acknowledges the provenance of its material culture[57] as a charged building container look like? Andersson asks. Employing the lens of toxicity, Lea Marie Nienhoff, on the other hand, attempts to unmask and deconstruct the uncomfortable truths that floral displays hide. She deconstructs how plant symbolism dictionaries have produced associations between emotions and cut flowers, and how states have mobilized the symbology and iconography of flowers to cement certain relations and alliances. Behind these culturally inflicted meanings, however, she analyses how cut flowers hide uncomfortable truths about the slow destruction[58] they produce elsewhere. Nienhoff specifically follows the links between cut flowers in Europe and their production in Kenya. She reflects on how the pesticides and chemicals used to grow these flowers leave toxic traces in the soil and bodies of the "wretched of the earth."[59] However, as Nienhoff adds, these toxic traces also travel back to Europe on the surface of the flowers. Rebecca J. Squires traces another form of toxicity through her vivid analysis of the mid-eighteenth to mid-nineteenth century European garden movement. Squires traces links between the garden movement and parliamentary enclosure of agrarian land[60] in the English and European countryside. She explores how the European garden movement emerged as a symbol epitomizing colonization, the

seizure of land, and the subjugation of people. Collectively, the careful analysis of Nienhoff and Squires references and echoes Achille Mbembe's call for "the Universal Right to Breathe."[61]

In his essay on Swiss Psychotropic Gold, Rohit Jain powerfully unsilences another contested commodity—gold—drawing parallels between gold and the public amnesia around Switzerland's complicity in colonial endeavors. He dwells on the commodity fetishism[62] around gold, pointing to how the Swiss public is high on psychoactive gold, which permeates its air, its spaces, and the bodies that live within it. In doing so, Jain takes apart Swiss neutrality, unmasking how Switzerland has become the world's main gold refining and trading hub through building good relations with the apartheid state in South Africa. Contrary to the associations of gold with banking secrecy laws or Nazi history, Jain traces how the commodity takes on other moral associations among migrant communities in Switzerland, such as displaced Tamils. In order to confront the Swiss amnesia, Jain proposes a new universalism, which rather than building upon white guilt and its narcissism attempts to activate memories and utopias slumbering in post-migrant and postcolonial archives—migrant family albums, business protocols, state documents, old news footage, or literature.

As Patricia Purtschert, Francesca Falk, and Barbara Lüthi[63] argue, Switzerland has often portrayed itself as an "outsider within the European colonial power constellation," taking pride in its neutrality on the world stage. A number of contributions in this volume attempt to unmask and demystify Switzerland's "colonialism without colonies." Denise Bertschi in her eloquent analysis of Swiss colonialism in the Helvécia plantation in Bahia, Brazil, establishes Switzerland's complicity in direct colonialism not only through unearthing how the Swiss state facilitated the movement of white settlers to the "new world," but also how Swiss cities have been (and continue to be) built upon surplus value extracted in colonial worlds. Evoking Fanon, Bertschi notes that the colonial world is not merely where the colonizers go, but rather a system that encloses the city and suburb, countryside and wasteland, roads and waterways. In her contribution on "Suspending the Postcard Paradigm," Mari Bastashevski follows the polarized movements coalescing around the problematic legacy of David de Pury in the quaint lakeside town of Neuchâtel. De Pury,

who made his fortune through the slave trade, is boldly celebrated in the key landmarks of the city. The continuation of these landmarks draws support from groups who are interested in an asynchronous and unchanging postcard paradigm of the city, while drawing condemnation from communities who have and continue to face the brunt of systemic racism. She grounds this contestation in the struggle for the "city yet to come,"[64] which is imbued with future potential.

Following the renewed impulse to decolonize archives that swept the world after the Black Lives Matter protests, a number of contributions in the book speculate on what decolonial archival practices can look like. In her aptly titled contribution, "Back to Things," Alina Volynskaya confronts the standards, rules, and practices that are mobilized to produce a myth of objectivity around archives. She proposes to confront this through engaging with Bruno Latour's program for an object-oriented politics[65] giving voice to objects in archival systems. By dwelling on the history of a specific artifact, the Hipp Chronoscope manufactured in mid-nineteenth-century Neuchâtel and housed in several prominent archival collections across the world, she investigates the other stories that can be told about the Chronoscope. By unveiling the latent connections of the Hipp Chronoscope, she attempts to counter the idea of the "provenance" of archival objects by instead producing a cultural biography of things that can highlight their social relations and thus create new assemblages. In the same vein, in their contribution "Uneven Distances," Abdessamad El Montassir and Julien Lafontaine Carboni reflect on the past as a field of forces in which the relationship to worlds, events, and plural temporalities are produced and reproduced. Engaging with the question of affective distance within Imperial Archives, El Montassir and Lafontaine question how we can re-enact contact zones[66] as the horizons of repair and transform uneven distances into the sources of common history. In another powerful counter-proposal in this volume, "Towards a Decolonized Zurich," a contribution articulates and embodies a collaboration between VOLUMES Archive and the activist group Decolonize Zurich at the time when the Zurich Archive opened itself to "decolonization." It asks the questions: What constitutes an archive? and What can be read as an archive? Built from donations, VOLUMES Archive offers new ways of thinking about categorization, which in its own specific case manifested around differences,

associations, interstices, and lacunas. The contributors further dwell on building archives for the future and for decolonial histories and practices by reflecting on how Decolonize Zurich took up the task in the Zurich Archive by adding and making connections with post-it notes and newspaper inserts. The work of VOLUMES Archive resonates with Lambert's call for analyzing and bringing into the discussion activists' publications that have been instrumental in understanding the violence of the colonial continuum in an embodied way. But how should we build an anticolonial, decolonial memory culture? Mathilde Chénin poses this question in her analysis of archives produced by the artist group "La Déviation" through the group's practice of *parrhesia* or "productive criticism." The contributions of Volynskaya, VOLUMES and Decolonize Zurich, and Chénin offer thoughtful reflections on feminist and decolonial approaches towards archives, offering powerful openings for exploring the archive as a space for living and artistic research.

Unearthing Traces serves as an opening towards cities, archives, and worlds yet to come. *Unearthing Traces* extends the work of artists, activists, and practitioners at the margins attempting to destabilize dominant archival and memory politics. *Unearthing Traces* hopes to empower urban activists, architects, and historians to unmask colonial entanglements and move towards decolonization, reconciliation, and repair.

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The De-patriarcalization of Public Spaces

Françoise Vergès

A segregated city

I wish to talk about a book I wrote and that Seumboy illustrated. It started with a session organized by the university, "Decolonizing the Arts," in September 2019 on the bas relief of the Museum of National History about Immigration in Paris and a colonial monument that faces it. In the book, I argued that colonial monuments contribute to building a hostile and segregated urban environment that has bourgeois, patriarchal, colonial, and capitalist origins. The European city is hostile to women, migrants, oppressed people, non-valid people, queer people, sex workers, black and brown people, and Arab people—especially in France with its state Islamophobia.

Frantz Fanon described the colonial city as being split between the settlers and the colonized; the border was enforced and clearly drawn. In Paris today, there are apparently no colonial spatial laws, but borders still exist and are enforced. Black and brown bodies enter the city under certain conditions, there is no freedom of circulation. Who freely enters the city, and when, is a central question. Black women who clean hotels and offices are allowed to enter but only at certain times and

to accomplish a function. Delivery people, often young, racialized men, or workers in services and building industries, are also allowed to enter to fulfill their task, but only that. Paris, the "romantic" city, the "city of love" is a city organized on the basis of social class, gender, and race.

If you look at the statues in Paris, you will see that out of 350 statues, only 37 are women, practically all white. Though when we say "women," we have to distinguish between actual people and the female representations of symbols (liberty, the Republic, the Nation…). Otherwise, there are white men: writers, artists, philosophers, politicians, and colonial officers of the slavery and post-slavery colonial empire. The latter are often represented in virile and masculine poses.

The colonial triangle

To return to September 2019, the visit for "Decolonizing the Arts" focused on what I called in the book the *colonial triangle*, at the Porte Dorée. It consists of a statue of France as Athena, the National Museum of the History of Immigration (ex-Museum of the Colonies), and a monument to a colonial officer, Jean-Baptiste Marchand. We focused on the bas relief of the façade, which is huge and covers the entire building. The monumentality of the museum celebrated the grandeur of the French colonial empire in 1931. There are no white people on the bas relief, which features Asians, Africans, and all the other peoples of the French colonies. Whites are on the mural inside the museum. In the bas relief the sculptor chose to portray colonial exuberance—everyone is at work; people are seen in profile, alongside representations of animals and plants. This served to bring exoticism to the public and hint at the civilizing colonial mission—these peoples would be tamed and disciplined and put to work, thanks to French colonialism. All of the products exploited in the colonies and sent to France appear as well. It is a celebration of extractivism and exploitation, but one that is *aestheticized*.

The celebration of the civilizing mission occurred at a moment when the colonial empire was being contested by insurrections and rebellions. The monumentality operated as a form of compensation and denial: the foundations of the empire were shaky but it remained strong! It is easy to draw a connection with current

French capitalist extractivism in Africa mainly, but also in Asia and the Pacific…

On the other side, a huge monument celebrates Jean-Baptiste Marchand's military mission from 1896 to 1899 that advanced through the Congo to the Nile River. The expedition across Africa involved forced labor, enslavement, rape, and looting. But Marchand came back a national hero. The interesting thing about this monument is that it was only inaugurated in 1949, many years after the mission (Marchand died in 1904). In other words, a monument to a colonial criminal was inaugurated once racism had been universally condemned and the right to self-determination recognized, but also at a time when the French colonial empire was brutally crushing revolts whose demands were freedom, justice, and equality, such as those in Sétif and Guelma (Algeria), Thiaroye (Sénégal), Madagascar, and Vietnam. These monuments are both a celebration of the colonial empire and a masking of its weakness.

In 1984, the Caribbean Revolutionary Alliance bombed the statue, but the story was never told. The statue has not been replaced.

Liberating the city

In 2020, the murder of George Floyd triggered a round of statues being toppled, including in Bristol on June 7, 2020. However, that was not where it all began. In March 2020, in Martinique, a group of young people knocked down two statues of Victor Schoelcher. What is interesting with the Martinican toppling is that it did not target a slave trader, slave owner, or colonial criminal but a "good" republican, who pushed for the final abolition of slavery in 1848. The toppling demonstrated that the abolition of slavery is impossible; it can never be complete. It has simply been replaced by forced labor, white rights to private property, and unaddressed structural racism.

The toppling in Martinique pointed to the impossibility of abolition in racial capitalism. It opened up new perspectives on politics of repair. Repair is not just the toppling of statues, though the latter is very important. It is about annihilating the forms of power that these statues embody.

We are still living in the world created by the master and the plantation. Private property, which was a foundation of slavery—not just owning land, but owning people, transforming human beings into objects of property—has not been abolished. The border around the plantation created an environment where freedom of circulation did not exist for non-white people, who were strongly policed. When an enslaved person went out of a plantation, they had to carry a pass or risked being arrested, tortured, or killed. The master was connected to the global market and banking. This law of who is allowed to freely circulate and who is not still organizes our world.

The plantation world was heavily racialized and gendered, and gender was racialized. Black women were worked as harshly as enslaved men; they were both "ungendered" and "gendered" within the Western understanding of gender, for they were "women" when they were raped and ungendered when they were put to work or punished.

Slavery also dictated who could bear arms and who could not. Whites could and white violence was legitimated, but the Blacks who bore arms were criminalized. This is reflected today in police violence, in the militarized police, in prisons targeting Blacks, brown, indigenous, trans, sex workers, refugees—all those who are considered disposable.

The city will be decolonized when we will live in a decolonized world. In the meantime, we can contribute to decolonizing and depatriarchalizing the city. We must win the freedom to circulate within the city and the freedom to inhabit the city.

Breathing is a political struggle

We work with entangled temporalities. We still live with many past injuries and wounds, psychic and physical, that have not been repaired—land being stolen, worlds being depleted. We must repair the present. With the pandemic, we saw the damage that racial capitalism produces: a lack of health services, a lack of oxygen. So many people were literally not breathing. We must repair the future because we know that if we don't act now, the lives of future generations will be threatened. International health organizations say that more people

die every year from polluted air than from any other cause. Breathing is a political struggle. We must re-imagine a place that we can inhabit without being under the threat of dying, a place in which we can breathe. Making architecture "green" will not let us breathe. Green architecture masks the consequences of extractivism. Extraction requires terror. Capitalism must terrorize and exhaust people. There is no organization of the master's house without rape. Rape is systemic.

Is There
a Postcolonial?

Fig. 1: Façade of the National Museum of the History
of Immigration. Credit: Lferreira

Fig. 2: Monument to Marchand's mission. Credit: Mbzt

Q&A

Stéphanie Savio: I have a question that I would like to ask Françoise about the idea of the politics of repair, in particular about what could it mean in diverse contexts. I would add that I am speaking from Israel, and I feel that the thematization (even if it is an academic analysis, obviously) and violence echo more abroad. The people on the ground need another kind of discourse, and the discourse of repairing the present is one of them, so what could it look like?

Françoise Vergès: I cannot say what *a* politics of repair would be. It has to do with contexts, but to me, there is no reparation without dismantling patriarchy, capitalism, and racism. And politics of reparation cannot come from experts. The people must decide what they need.

Immediate reparation can occur: people need housing, the state must provide housing; people need water, the state must provide infrastructure for water. But to move towards political reparation, in the twenty-first century, we have to talk about the re-abolition of slavery, the abolition of racial capitalism and racism. Humanizing the world.

In terms of what we have to do day-by-day, I would emphasize a focus on pedagogy and education. To respond to the doubts raised by the question: Where do we start? It seems that to make sense of what is around us, we must de-normalize the history of progress by showing that progress is always the result of a struggle, it is not "natural," rights are fragile and are always contested by those in power. What is the pedagogy of unlearning to learn? What is the pedagogy of de-normalizing and denaturalizing injustice and inequalities?

We must look at repair outside of the Western tradition (repair and forget) and develop a profoundly revolutionary politics of repair, connecting us to the many struggles of Indigenous people for land, of women against feminicide, of Palestinians against occupation, and against different forms of Apartheid today.

To talk about architecture is to talk about the war. War instigates a particular kind of architecture, leaving behind ruins and pollution. Iraq has been heavily polluted by US bombs and the tanks left behind. Vietnam is still having to deal with the consequences of Agent Orange. So, we have to go deep, deep, deep, and work rigorously with repair politics. We also have to consider what is irreparable. What do we do with the irreparable? We must think about what we will not be able to repair.

Jasper Walgrave: In terms of the violence of architecture, and since both of you are very familiar with French contexts and with everything that happened around Notre-Dame, how do we deal with architecture as a place of heritage? Heritage that represents a single, local history. To what extent can we think about city and architecture in ways that are not inclusive? Do we devote too much care and attention to maintaining heritage sites? Do we look to the past too much? How does this fit within the theoretical framework you both work in?

The mobilization around Notre-Dame was more about State politics than about saving heritage. Billionaires rushed to give money. I look at this from a political point of view, in relation to the burning of places where migrants lived and many other destructions. In France, the presidents always says: "We will not touch any monuments or any statues." France has been transformed into a museum to power. The political elite in France is looking to a past that protects power and obscures the present, but even more the future.

Look at the arguments around the statue of Colbert, who initiated the Black Code. It is in front of the National Assembly. Politicians say, it has to stay there because it's a part of history. But whose history? The history of white men. Whose heritage is it?

Replacing statues of white men with women and black people is not, for me, a radical proposal. Why not replace them with trees? A tree and a bench for sitting on, reading, and listening to birds. And imagining other ways to inscribe struggles in the city (murals, gardens, anticolonial schools).

Notre-Dame, why not. Otherwise, France would lose a lot of tourists. But there is no history around

Notre-Dame. Heritage is about building a national narrative that hides, in this case the power of the Church. Heritage is about what we choose to keep, and when we receive a legacy, we choose what we want to keep and what we want to put aside. We do not have to keep everything.

It's a dynamic process of decision-making and constant rethinking. There are things that we can decide to keep and others that we can choose to transform. It could be places where people gather to meet. Then it's also about the relationship between the building itself and what you do inside.

Sıla Karataş: My question is about the use of language. When you use the word "reparation," what do you mean by it? You mentioned that revolution should come as real emancipation and should come with its own violence. There is real violence through the master's house or capitalist oppression, so there should also be violence from the community. When we talk about reparation and the politics of repair, it doesn't sound violent from a revolutionary perspective. For example, when we discuss organizations working against the occupation that philanthropic foundations financially support, isn't it also a form of silent coloniality which is not discussed at all? Isn't the word "reclamation" more fitting to describe these struggles?

You are right. We are constantly fooled by words, especially now with the much greater capacity of neoliberalism to reappropriate words that are used with a radical dimension. It goes much faster than it used to. To answer your question, whether we speak of reparation, restitution, or reclamation, the most important thing is to clarify the content we are giving to these notions. Look at feminism, today, anyone can say they are feminist, even far-right women. Thus, there is a need to say that there are feminisms, plural, and this is the feminism that I defend.

To give thought to reparation is to give thought to the possibility of repairing the world with an anti-racist, anti-patriarchal, anti-capitalist, and anti-imperialist critique and practice. It shows us the potential for a world that is not constantly damaged by extractivism, in which many people are condemned to premature death, to use the words of

Ruth Wilson Gilmore. That's the real value that reparation can bring. It is not just reparation in an abstract sense. How can we accept the gap between the incredible scientific and technological discoveries that are being made today and the fact that most people around the world don't have access to clean water or clean air? This growing gap is also about the brutality of the current system. Reparation is not peaceful politics because it's not as if people would say: "Oh god, we were so wrong, we will change everything today." They have to be punched in the face to understand things. I would like us to discuss revolutionary violence and the theories of violence, and how we can talk about the permanent state of war that has existed for the last seventy years. I would like us to discuss this famous "moment of peace" after WWII that the West brags about when, in fact, there were wars in Algeria, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, South Africa… What do we think about peace and war? And what about in terms of revolution and reparation? How are we making the question more complicated? How can we take the time to think through this difficult question together?

Reparation raises this question, but restitution will raise the same questions of incomplete reparation, the irreparable, and how can we even think about it?

Françoise Vergès (Reunion Island) held different jobs before obtaining a PhD in political theory (Berkeley, 1995). She is a decolonial feminist and antiracist activist, co-founder of Decolonize the Arts, and independent curator. Her most recent publication is *Une théorie féministe de la violence. Pour une politique antiraciste de la protection* (Paris: La Fabrique, 2020).

The De-part
of Public Space

A Curriculum for Mud

Nolan Oswald Dennis

objects (3) hidden object operations (1)
1> master 1> _____ 1> dismantle
2> tools hidden operation(1)
3> house 1> ownership

notes from the master's house
<part one> preparatory work
or what to do with scyborg selves*ᵃ?

(n) (v)

be   do

*ᵃ Colonial schools are machines running on
desires for a colonizer's future and, paradoxi-
cally, desires for Indigenous futures... the
present of school is permeable to the time of
now (colonization), the time before that
(precolonial) and the time beyond of all that
(decolonial).

the spatiotemporal gap inherent in all histories after racial-capitalism

possession is nine-tenths of the law

that which possesses   U+0027

absence

the dispossessor

the colonizer

*ᵇ Theorizing Black bodies as forms of flux or
space in process rather than as human... enables
at least a momentary reflection upon the other
kinds of (and often forgotten) relationships that
Black bodies have to plants, objects, and
non-human life forms.

who/what is the master?

the unspoken

what is this relation?

the unloved

composed of s+cyborg,
offered by la paperson to name the
structural agency of persons who have
picked up colonial technologies and
reassembled them to decolonizing purposes

misaligned process
misappropriated purpose

enslaved
used things
exploited labour
misallied technology

¹ the master's
tools

the untrusted

*ᶜ A black slave is a cybernetic organism, a
hybrid of machine and organism, a creature
of social reality as well as a creature of
fiction. Social reality is lived social relations,
our most important political construction, a
world-changing fiction.

(n)	(v)
lord	overcome
ruler	conquer
sovereign	surppress
monarch	overpower
suzerain	triumph
overseer	restrain
director	subdue
controller	vanquish
leader	subjugate
head	curb
principal	learn
employer	acquire
professional	grasp
authority	understand
owner	pick up
keeper	gain proficiency
instructor	hegemonize
teacher	tame
guru	defeat
mentor	govern
prototype	
archetype	

³ the master's
house

stolen
not built

a co-dependency

defend
maintain
nurture
justify
endorse

*ᵈ When there are no longer slaves, there are no longer masters.

I hope I have shown that here the master differs basically from
the master described by Hegel. For Hegel there is reciprocity;
here the master laughs at the consciousness of the slave. What
he wants from the slave is not recognition but work.

tools build house

house contains tools

limits

indicating an
interdependency

*ᵉ ...In real life where every action affects
spiritual and physical existence, the world is
always the brain of mankind...

the master's
what is not the house?

the master's
what are not the tools?

who/what is NOT the master?
who/what is NOT the master's?
who/what is NOT mastered?

what is unmastered?

whom

three nots

whatever is not
owned, accumulated, traded, tokenized,
commodified, sold, bought, stolen, rented,
extorted, exploited, fixed, bound, enclosed, etc...

not us
not here
not this

the rematriated land
the regenerated relations
the resurrected living
the returned planet

an apostrophe marks
the possessive case of
english nouns

.that which is possessed

that which is dispossessed.

people

what is the house?

what are the tools?

objects or agents?

or subjects or processes

or those who
are dispossessed?

us

being in
the zone of
non being

things in a relation of ownership
(ƒx) private property

n v
implement   shape
instrument   work
utensil   ornament
device
machine
mechanism
puppet
pawn
equipment
aid

redistribution

the unlikely

those who
are disposed?

disposable

what is the anti-never?

² will never dismantle

what is this relation?

the absent

n v
home   accommodate
lineage   harbour
enterprise   shelter
institution   take in
organization   contain
parliament   store
council   cover
audience   protect
crowd   enclose
assembly   make space for
congregation
hotel
restaurant
ancestry
dwelling
residence
refuge

a settler fantasy

an occupied
territory

a linear boundary

spatiotemporal
gaps (the present)

irreversibility (a colonial fiction)

dispossession is (one-tenth) of the law

symmetrical
illusion of change

asymmetries

a decimation

nonlinear ruptures

the mysteries

the uncontained

or
which tools are not the master's?
which house is not the master's?

Unearthing Traces

visionary driven conscientiousness

mud worker

mud teacher   mud holder

* see:
a> A Third University is Possible (la paperson, 2017)
b> The labor of (Re)reading Plantation Landscapes Fungible(ly)
      (Tiffany Lethabo King, 2016)
c> From Cyborg to Black Slave: A find replace edit by Jade
      (Jade E. Davis, 2011 after Haraway, 1991)
d> Black Skins, White Masks (Frantz Fanon, 1952)
e> Address to 2nd Congress of Black Writers and Artists, Rome
      (Ahmed Sekou Toure, 1959)
f> Speech at the passing of the new Constitution of South Africa
      (Thabo Mbeki, 1996)
g> For Each of You (Audre Lorde)
h> The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house
      (Audre Lorde, 1979)
i>In the Raw (Denise Ferreira da Silva, 2018)

*ᵃRegardless of its colonial structure, because
school is an assemblage of machine and not a
monolithic institution, its machinery is always
being subverted toward decolonizing
purposes.

*ᶠ At times, and in fear, I have wondered
whether I should concede equal citizenship of
our country to the leopard and the lion, the
elephant and the springbok, the hyena, the
black mamba and the pestilential mosquito.

*ᵍDo not let your head deny
your hands
any memory of what passes through them
nor your eyes nor your heart
everything can be used
except what is wasteful
(you will need to remember this
when you are accused of destruction).
Even when they are dangerous
examine the heart of those machines
which you hate.

*ʰ What does it mean when the tools of a
racist patriarchy are used to examine the
fruits of that same patriarchy? It means that
only the most narrow parameters of change
are possible and allowable.

*ⁱ The return of the total value
expropriated from conquered
lands and enslaved bodies.
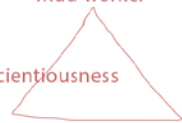
Nolan Oswald Dennis is an interdisciplinary artist from Johannesburg, South Africa. His practice explores the material and metaphysical conditions of decolonization, questioning the politics of space (and time) through a system-specific, rather than site-specific, approach. He holds a bachelor's degree in architecture from the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) and a master of science in art, culture and technology from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). He is a founding member of tech healing agency NTU, as well as the Index Literacy Program, a collaborative research project between the US, Brazil, and South Africa collecting new theory for our indexical present. Nolan Oswald Dennis is a research associate at the Visual Identities in Art and Design (VIAD) research center at the University of Johannesburg; a Digital Earth research fellow in the Planetary Sensorium program; and 2021 artist-in-residence at ntu-cca, Singapore. He is currently co-editor of Indexing Imaginaries, the 8th volume in the Data Browser book series published by Open Humanities Press.

The Impossibility of an Architecture of Emancipation

Léopold Lambert (LL)
interviewed by Denise Bertschi (DB)
and Julien Lafontaine Carboni (JLC)

JLC   In your research and the book you just publish-
        ed, you address the notion of the *French
Colonial Continuum*. You develop it while unearthing its
relations to states of emergency declared in counter-
revolutionary contexts in Algeria, the 1984—1988 indi-
genous insurrection in Kanak, and the uprisings in
French *banlieues* in 2005. Can you define the notion of
continuum as being spatiotemporal but also constituted
of people and skills? Do you believe that we are obser-
ving a perpetuation of the French colonial project and
imperialism through this instrumentalization of the
state of emergency?

LL   The concept of the Colonial Continuum in
        the French context is not one of my in-
ventions. It is something that you hear frequently in
any anticolonial and decolonial intellectual milieu
in France, but I came to notice that this concept was
interchangeable with the concept of continuity.
What I found interesting in the concept of a con-
tinuum as physics defines it is that it is a surface of
space and time together, so a four-dimensional
surface.

I should say that this is by far the most abstract part of the book; the rest is much less "theoretical." I want to take seriously the idea that this four-dimensional surface should be read topologically (as opposed to in a Euclidean way). In this continuum, points far from each other at first glance can be brought together within a sort of tectonics—if we stay with physics or geology—by political forces applied to this historical reading.

As an example, the book starts with the political encounter between the former insurgents of the 1871 Paris Commune who were deported to Kanaky (the indigenous name of New Caledonia) and Kabyle anticolonial militants who resisted the French colonization of Algeria and were also deported, and who together were forced to confront the Kanak people, in particular during the Indigenous revolt of 1878 against the French colonial authorities. Suddenly, these three points—Parisian proletarian neighborhoods, Kabylia or Algeria at large, and the Kanak people—came together in a topological operation. They are still together in many ways, insofar as today there are many descendants from these encounters.

These examples are from the nineteenth century, but most of the book examines three twentieth-century space-times: the Algerian Revolution, the Kanak insurrection of 1984—1988, and the space-time of the *banlieue* uprising and political organization. The book tries to detail the specificities of each while building bridges between them. People constitute a vital part of those bridges—colonized people, of course, the most obvious being post-colonial immigration to France, especially of Algerians, which is the biggest diaspora in France today.

But there are other forms of bridges and people as well, including a certain number of high-ranking public servants, military officers, police officers, politicians, and ministers who navigate within this French colonial continuum, for example, as the prefect of one of France's oversea colonies that still exists today, perhaps in Martinique or Guadeloupe, then moving to another one, perhaps in Mayotte or Reunion Island, in Kanaky, in the Pacific Ocean or Tahiti. It is also the case in the *banlieues*, or what we call in France the *quartiers populaires*, a term

Fig. 1: Chronocartography of the content of the book *États d'urgence: une histoire spatiale du continuum colonial français* (*States of Emergency: A Spatial History of the French Colonial Continuum*, PMN, 2021). It attempts to bridge space-time that would ordinarily be assumed as distinct, as well as to show the stretchability and compressibility of what we designate as "time." The red areas visualize phases of state of emergency or other legalized exacerbation of colonial violence in Algeria, Kanaky, Tahiti, the French banlieues, and in other so-called "overseas territories."
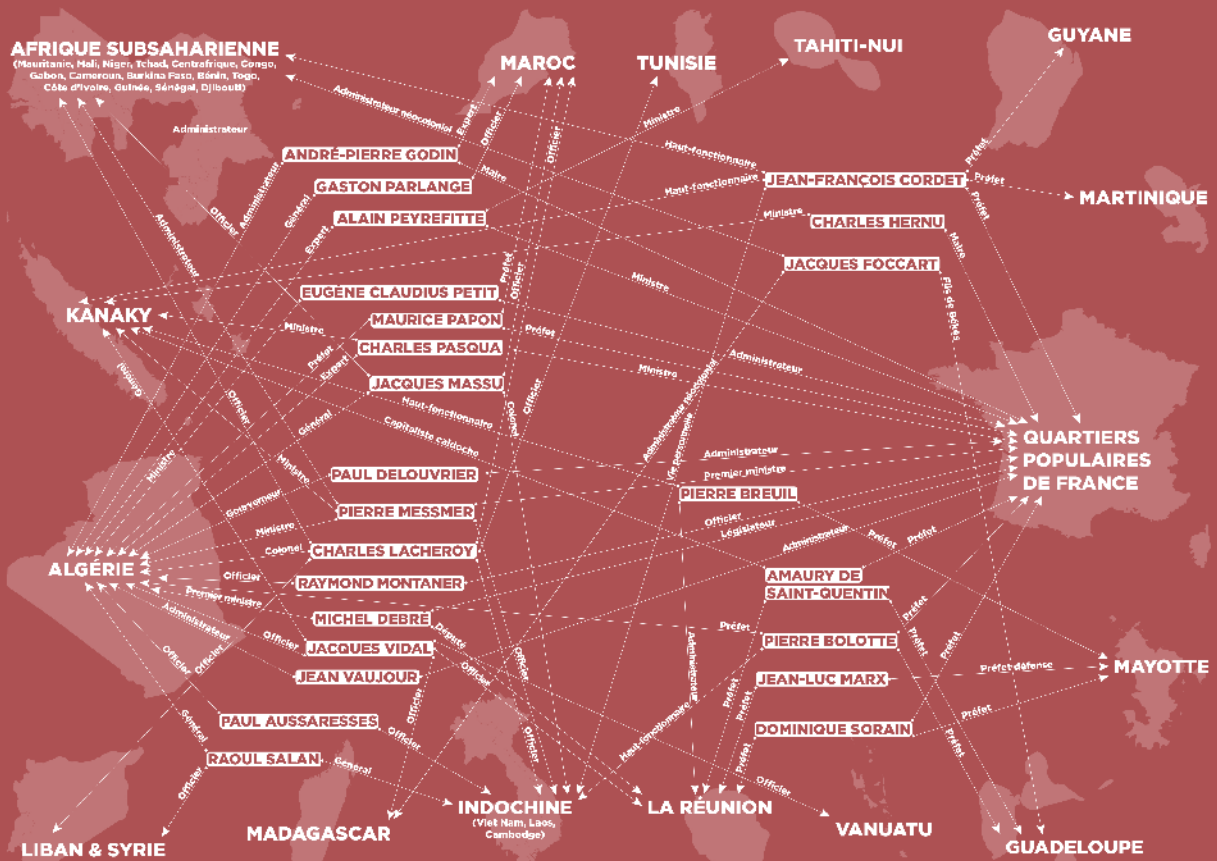
Fig. 2: Islamic center in Nessadiou (Kanaky), where the Caledonian descendant community of Maghrebi deportees was formed.

Fig. 3: Administrators, public servants, and military officers navigating within the French colonial continuum.

that is hard to translate, but that at the risk of being simplistic we can define as racialized working-class neighborhoods, connected to the French colonial continuum or at least the European colonial continuum.

Public servants and military personnel acquire certain skills in terms of counter-revolutionary techniques and strategies that they can then import to other parts of the French colonial continuum, including the *banlieues* where France's racialized youth is revolting against the perpetuation of structural violence.

JLC   The publication we are working on has been designed as an extension of the conference and doctoral course in which we investigated methodologies located partway between architecture, the arts, archival practices, and the field of history. In this regard, could you explain how you carried out this research? Which tools, methodologies, and sources did you use to follow the tracks of the French Colonial Continuum? To what extent did you have to unlearn some of them?

LL   I often say that as an architect I was not trained to do much serious research. Probably many of us can relate to this, and I still feel I am quite amateurish. There are many conversations about the classification or declassification of archives in France. Someone like Samia Henni is directly affected by the refusal to declassify documents. I always feel a bit like an impostor, if I can put it like that, because I don't go into State-controlled archives to any great depth.

However, I allow myself to be strongly influenced by people whose work I really trust and respect. For example, I mentioned Samia Henni. I can also point to Mathieu Rigouste for the link between the Algerian Revolution and the recent *banlieue* uprisings or Mogniss H. Abdallah, on the last forty years of antiracist organization in France, as well as many more.

For this research, I studied an extensive range of newspaper articles, using microfilms from French newspapers on the various space-times I was investigating. Although they are limiting, they are inscribed into their temporality, beyond simply

political subjectivities and agendas. There is also something about time and reactivity to situations that makes the information they contain untrustworthy. But sometimes, you do get some excellent details about one event or another.

What I found the most remarkable after reading all those newspapers was that you can connect the space-time you are working on to others that are mobilized through global politics. This is how you come to realize that the putsch of the colonial officers in Algeria in 1961 was committed just a few days after the invasion of Cuba by US military groups in the Bay of Pigs. These are encounters that the newspapers allow us to grasp. One that I had discovered earlier, but that is worth mentioning, is that the end of the Kanak insurrection was contemporary to the first Intifada in Gaza. These kinds of bridges are extremely interesting.

Then a third source, even if the sources I am citing are primarily text-based, is activist publications, which have been instrumental in understanding a sort of embodied perspective of the violence I was attempting to describe and the various means of organizing against it. Especially in the case of the Kanak people, which has been a journey on its own and a very emotional one, I should add.

The fourth source is encounters with people. Even the oldest cases in the book are from 1954, so they're not that old. It's better to ask the people that have experienced these space-times, to hear from them and learn or, as you say, unlearn from them. One thing that I can say of unlearning is that it includes, especially if we don't go back to the source of the archive, the unlearning of the snowball effect of research, which places increasing importance on a certain space-time through the accumulation of documents and research. Here I am especially thinking of what has been called the Battle of Algiers in the Algerian Revolution. Algiers was not the main geographical focal point of the Algerian Revolution. But somehow, because of the French military, because of the international gaze, and because of Gillo Pontecorvo's 1966 film *The Battle of Algiers*, an entire imaginary was created, dedicated to that particular space-time, which makes us think that it was a crucial piece of the

Algerian Revolution. Although this is not entirely untrue, it was not the main arena for the Revolution. It's interesting to see how easily we contribute to that snowball effect. I am not saying I haven't done that myself, I most probably have.

JLC   In his work, Aimé Césaire outlined what he called the "boomerang effect," especially in his *Discourse on Colonialism,* saying that Hitler applied colonialist procedures to Europe, which until then had been reserved exclusively for the colonies, an idea that was later brought up by many theorists and historians with regard to WWII, in this case known as "the Imperial boomerang." Would you say that the French colonies were laboratories to develop counter-revolutionary skills that were then used back on mainland France to control space and bodies? To what extent were architecture and its disciplines, people, and practices involved in this boomerang effect? Can we extend this hypothesis to international modernist styles, in particular the French *banlieues*? And finally, how do current architectural practices participate in the reproduction of this violence and system of domination?

LL   I am not the right person to critique Aimé Césaire's concept of the boomerang effect. When I come across it, I always feel that the boomerang effect very much implies an understanding of Ashkenazi Jews as part of Europe's establishment, when we know that that has never been the case. So, I try not to engage with the idea of boomerang effect and the concept of laboratories. The laboratory question has been present in France to suggest that the police violence unleashed against the mostly white *gilets jaunes* was tested in the *banlieues* on Black, Arab, and Roma people before it was applied for *real* against white working-class or lower middle-class.

I try to never really think in terms of a laboratory, even if there are probably some aspects of French colonialism that touch on that—for example, the nuclear bombings organized first in the Algerian Sahara between 1960 and 1966, then in Oceania, in the Mururoa atoll, which is in what I prefer to call Maohi'Nui (what the French call French Polynesia), from 1966 to 1996, with disastrous consequences on both the environment and the health of the Tahitian people. I think about it less in terms of the

Fig. 4: Police stations in Garges-lès-Gonesses, Fontenay-sous-Bois, Massy, Aubervilliers, Nanterre, Gagny, Bobigny, and others from the Paris region. Taken between 2015 and 2019.
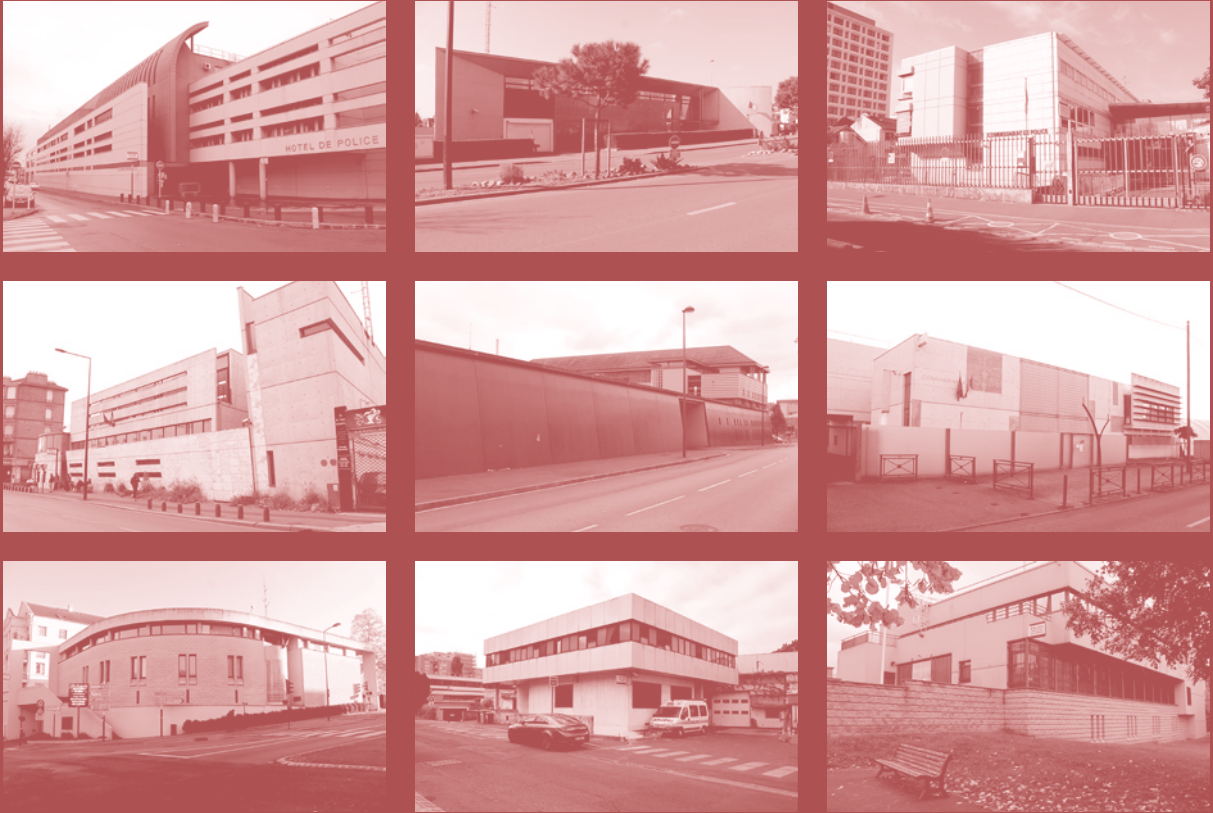

Fig. 5: The debris of the Petit-Debussy bar, in the Cité des 4000 in La Courneuve (May 2018, with Chayma Drira and Tomi Laja).

boomerang effect and more in terms of a continuum, also noting that the people subjected to that violence are fundamentally the same, or are part of the same families.

Architecturally we saw it first in the contemporaneity of the widespread construction of mass housing for populations that were exogenous to the architects who were designing those buildings. First in Algeria in the early sixties, through what de Gaulle called the Constantine Plan, and which Samia Henni describes in great detail in her book. Then the same sort of architecture in the French *banlieues* replaced, in many ways, the shantytowns in which a lot of Algerians, Tunisians, Moroccans, but also Portuguese, Spanish, and Italians had been living in. Their habitat was systematically destroyed without leaving any traces that could attest to the many histories that had happened there, including some political stories.

The Algerian shantytown was instrumental in the Algerian Revolution on the north side of the Mediterranean, as well as for the south side, but that's another story.

There is an architectural continuum, and that might be what you refer to when you talk about the Modernist International Style, but I also see it, for example, in the architecture of the police stations in the Parisian *banlieue*. When it comes to an old *banlieue* police station, you can see a sort of unapologetic hardcore concrete aggressiveness. Over the last twenty years, it has involved many relatively renowned architectural studios; when they are not designing a police station, they are designing a school or a museum or something like that, which probably leads us to Foucault and how spaces can be instruments of discipline. These police stations barely conceal the fact that they are absolute castles or bastions, military bastions within a milieu that they consider hostile to them, in a sort of self-induced myth of a civil war that fascists in France have been fantasizing about for quite a long time now, and that they keep saying will happen and that in fact they will, at some point, trigger themselves.

Similarly, in the past fifteen years, we have seen how many of those *banlieues* have been subjected to

what is known here as "urban renovation" with a positivist imaginary applied to it. However, it hardly hides how police logic is working even more to try and control spaces and the people that live in them. If not to even destroy the neighborhood altogether and replace it with a whiter, more middle-class neighborhood that is better connected to the transportation system.

DB   You suggested during the conference discussions that we cannot decolonize the European urban environment. Can you develop this idea and, as a sub-question, define the context in which we can call a struggle "decolonial"? What can we call antiracist struggles in Europe and active demand for change in memory politics and the objects celebrated through it? As a continuation, what do you believe are some of the main spatial issues we have to work on in the European urban context?

LL   This touches on the definition we give to words such as decolonizing. We can be broad about what it means, but I fear the word "decolonization" might lose its power in places where I think it is fitting to speak about decolonizing in an almost old-fashioned sense. Whenever I see slogans that call for us to decolonize a museum or decolonize the university, I often say, well, if we go that way, we might end up decolonizing the police! Similarly, I think we can't decolonize architecture, as many have been deluded enough to propose. Still, I think it has much to do with the definition of decolonization related to land and resources and various criteria that qualify the situation as properly colonial.

Julien has a Western Sahara flag behind them. I have the Kanaky and Palestine flags behind me. I think those situations mobilize the term "decolonization" without us having to say anything else about it. This is what decolonization is about. For the three geographies I just mentioned, thanks to the flags surrounding us, we can also see that even though it is no longer a European settler-colonial situation for two of them, it is very much a continuation of the settler-colonial logics that has never left these three countries.

Fig. 6: Control perimeters around the border areas of Paris airports superimposed onto the priority districts defined by the city's policies.

The Impossibility of an
Architecture of Emancipation
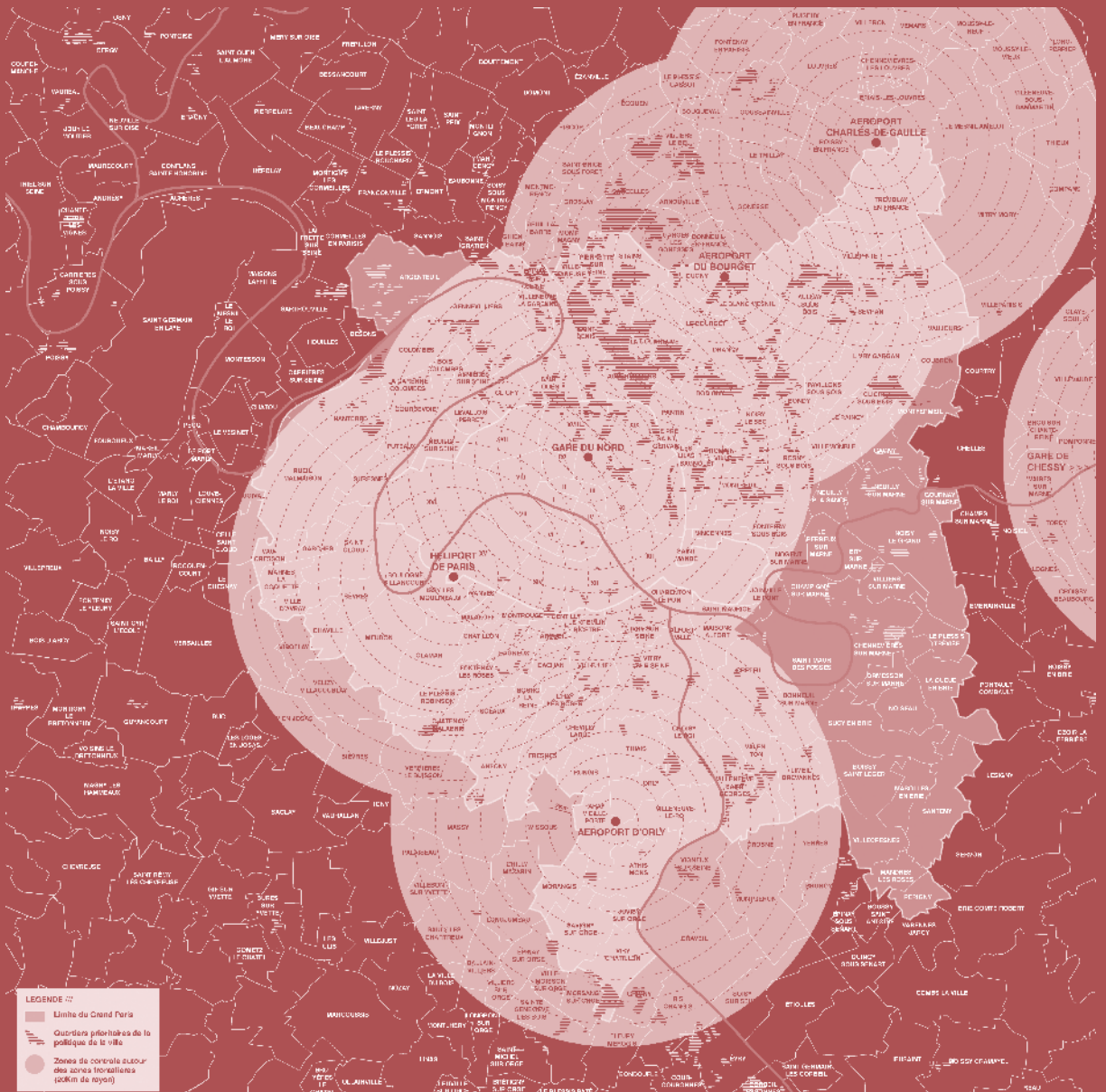
I do think we should be talking about decolonization when it makes sense to claim the "landback," to cite a useful, powerful, and beautiful slogan that Indigenous peoples in the Americas and the Turtle Islands, in particular, have come up with, probably as they have seen that "decolonization" is becoming vague, due to the many meanings now associated with it.

Saying that decolonization is not appropriate in European cities does not reduce the energy we should put into fighting for the dismantlement of white supremacy and its continuation of associated colonial logics and imaginaries. In the context of France, in particular when it comes to Islam, somehow someone could probably argue that in France, we need to decolonize this. The effort is different, significantly different from the one claiming sovereignty for land. In the book, I tried to be very careful about it. That's definitely what the Algerian Revolution was about, what the Kanaky Independence Movement was about and continues to be about, but when it comes to the *banlieue* political antiracist uprising, it is different. We have the right to draw comparisons without them being perfect. However, we need to respect the specificities of each situation.

In the context of European cities, especially in the "architecture world," we are very conscious that architecture is more of a problem than a solution. In ninety-nine percent of cases, architecture enforces systems of domination from which we wish to detach ourselves. In this sense, the first thing is not to see architecture as a sort of neutral discipline that allows us to do "good" or "bad" things. Instead, we have to try and see how architecture could potentially be seen as something that works against itself, against its logic, making it so easy to enforce systems of domination and segregation in the way it organizes bodies and spaces.

DB   You have almost answered the next question, but it might be helpful to mention the word "violence." Going back to your talk, you were suggesting that there is no architecture of emancipation and that architecture in itself is violent. Can you define architecture within this scope and the type of violence it implies on bodies and societies? Can you give examples of how certain architectural elements produce this violence?

LL   First of all, I must be clear about what I mean by "there is no architecture of emancipation." What I mean is that architecture is not a neutral discipline—there are types of architecture that when you enter, you are no longer free, your status changes for the worse. This is what we call a prison, particularly for the most extreme example of architectural violence on bodies. There is no space that you enter to become an emancipated person. Space does not emancipate. Space can make you a prisoner, but space cannot emancipate you. That's what I mean by it. It's very simple, if not simplistic.

What I mean by violence when it comes to architecture implies two layers. The first is purely physical. It comes from how I was influenced, as a young student reading a lot of Spinoza, by the idea of losing structural integrity when encountering architecture. It's a straightforward kind of hitting-a-wall situation.

The second layer is political and points to how this physical dimension of violence is instrumentalized. For better or worse, it's not a matter of saying that architecture is always bad, but that political regimes always instrumentalize this physical violence.

DB   In an interview, Michel Foucault said, "architecture can and does produce positive effects when the liberating intentions of the architect coincide with the real practice of people in the exercise of freedom." Would you agree with this? What are we to think of the inherent architectural violence in these practices of liberation?

LL   Is that from the interview with Paul Rabinow, or is it from somewhere else?

JLC   Yes, it is.

LL   It's so funny how this interview has had such a negative impact on the architecture world and that architects keep reading it! Sometimes I say as a joke that Foucault was not very awake that day or maybe he hadn't slept well. He was not entirely himself, I suppose. I fundamentally disagree with this. I don't understand what the architect's intentions or even what liberating intentions mean. It has little if any effect on emancipation

processes, which is not to say that architecture has never influenced people's emancipation processes, but the architect's intention, I mean. We can talk about a few cases where perhaps this would coincidently happen.

I don't really believe this, and I think the way we should think of emancipation with this inherent architectural violence has more to do with, again, in a very Spinozist way, the reciprocity of affects insofar that if I am being hurt by architecture, I can also hurt architecture myself. If I run into a wall, I will probably hurt myself much more than the wall, but there are also other ways of destroying walls. I think that's one of the ways in which we can think about it. We can stop opposing this question of violence with what we want architecture to do. I believe that we should use violence for our political agendas, turning the violence of architecture against systems of domination, which usually do a great job in embodying themselves in architecture.

Perhaps we need to start thinking of violence not as a concept we should immediately get as far away from as possible in our politics, but rather in terms of what it does and what it can do for us, of course, as a means rather than an end. Only people in very comfortable situations can have the luxury of living without violence. The same thing is true for the practice of architecture.

JLC   In the context of South Africa, Nolan Oswald Denis unveiled the revolutionary potential of Audre Lorde's consideration of the master's tools: "The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house." In this regard, how are we to consider the architect's tools? What would be an architecture of self-defense, referring back to the first question about the French Colonial Continuum?

LL   There is a crucial distinction that is obvious for almost all humanity except for architects themselves, which is that architecture and architects are not the same thing, and that very often architecture is quite separate from architects. In the context of the book there are many examples of what we might go so far as to call revolutionary architecture, which is not an architecture of emancipation—that is something different—but an

Fig. 7: Graffiti made by activists in many places in Paris related to the massacre of October 17, 1961, here on the Place Saint-Michel (October 2019).

Fig. 8: Casbah of Algiers.

architecture in which there are probably no architects involved in its making, and even if it is described as issuing from the architects' intentions, that is perhaps irrelevant.

One common characteristic of these revolutionary architectures is that they do not obey an order that is easy for a military entity to read, understand, appropriate, and therefore control. Of course, the quintessential example of that, going back to my snowball effect, is the Algiers Casbah.

It is the oldest neighborhood in Algiers and, of course, there is no architect who "planned" or designed it. Half of the neighborhood was destroyed after the French invaded Algiers in 1830, which shows that the colonizers feared its urban fabric. During the Algerian Revolution, the density and sinuosity of this urban fabric were essential for the people acting from it and the people living in it. It made a massive difference from the eternally exogenous forces that colonial militaries represent, exogenous to the place itself and even to the country. This difference allows me to go back to the previous question about architectural elements: something that I find fascinating about the Algerian Casbah are keys.

Keys are tiny objects that crystalize the implementation of architectural violence and architecture's enforcement of political regimes, where there is private property, settler colonialism, and carceralism. For example, during the Algerian Revolution, the people in the Casbah would not lock their doors, thus allowing the National Liberation Front (FLN) militants to open any door and find refuge in any of the buildings, which is indeed a way to turn architecture against itself. But, of course, these doors were made to work with a lock. Therefore, those doors were all made to function as walls, so what happens when the order inscribed in those walls is disrupted? Well, then you may win anticolonial revolutions. That's truly remarkable, and architects have nothing to do with it.

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LA VILLE DE NEUCHATEL COMMUNIQUE

Aux représentant-e-s des médias

L'autorité exécutive prend acte de la pétition

Statue de David de Pury : le Conseil communal veut ouvrir un débat démocratique

Aujourd'hui, lors de sa séance de rentrée, le Conseil communal de la Ville de Neuchâtel a pris acte de la pétition, déposée à la mi-juillet avec plus de 2'500 signatures, demandant le retrait de la statue de David de Pury. L'autorité exécutive, soucieuse d'ouvrir ce débat de fond, prendra position en concertation avec le Conseil général. La Ville mettra par ailleurs tout en œuvre pour approfondir la recherche historique sur les activités commerciales en lien avec la traite des esclaves, et diffuser ces connaissances auprès d'un large public.

La pétition en ligne, intitulée « On ne veut plus de statue d'esclavagiste! Pour que la statue de David de Pury soit retirée » a été déposée le 17 juillet dernier à la Chancellerie communale munie de 2'549 signatures. Un peu moins des deux tiers des signataires sont domicilié-e-s en Suisse, dont 283 dans le canton de Neuchâtel (142 en ville de Neuchâtel). 320 paraphes proviennent de France et 87 d'autres pays européens. A noter aussi 169 pétitionnaires domicilié-e-s aux Etats-Unis.

Le Conseil communal a tout d'abord pris acte de cette pétition, qui soulève des questions importantes, à la fois liées à l'histoire de la région avec ses zones d'ombre, mais aussi à celle du racisme et des discriminations au quotidien. « Notre Conseil est très sensible à la problématique du racisme et estime qu'il est crucial de mener un travail de mémoire sur des faits historiques bien établis », a résumé Thomas Facchinetti, président de la Ville.

Concertation avec le Conseil général

Afin de respecter le processus démocratique, et d'ouvrir le débat sur la question soulevée par la pétition – qui, pour mémoire, demande le retrait de la statue et son remplacement « par une plaque commémorative en hommage à toutes les personnes ayant subi et subissant encore aujourd'hui le racisme et la suprématie blanche » - le Conseil communal transmettra la pétition au bureau du Conseil général, l'organe directeur du parlement de la Ville. Ce texte fera aussi l'objet d'une discussion en commission de politique culturelle lors de sa prochaine séance le 20 août. Les autorités cantonales et fédérales, également destinataires de la pétition, seront aussi dûment consultées.

Entering Archives: Field Notes and Reflections on the Production of Silences

Jasmine Benhaida

Archives, the Digital Turn, Movement, and Postcolonial Peripheries

Fares Damien

Entering the archive

In exploring the social history of Jordan in the first half of the twentieth century, archival research becomes a crucial method as the historical documents I gather are the foundation of my research. I am interested in unearthing the question of multiple intersectional silences in the writing and narration of history through accessing and examining a variety of archives. I am particularly inspired by Michel-Rolph Trouillot's (2015) invocation of silences:

By silences, I mean an active and transitive process: one "silences" a fact or an individual as a silencer silences a gun. One engages in the practice of silencing. Mentions and silences are thus active, dialectical

Tuesday 6 July 2021: My first encounter with the League of Nations' archives in Geneva, which I visited with a colleague. Upon our arrival, the archivist welcomed us while reminding us that the section we were interested in was digitized and thus no longer physically accessible. All-in-all, the visit proved successful, and it was an enjoyable experience, similar to a child visiting an amusement park or to opening Narnia's wardrobe onto other worlds. It was a way to have a physical, rather than simply digital, interaction with the archives, even though there is a very effective online database.

Indeed, digital access would have been enough to consult specific documents and go further with our work. However, as has been problematized in critical literature, the digital turn in archives also raises some important questions related to access and intellectual property to the center of the debate and discussion.[1] Visiting an archive center

counterparts of which history is the synthesis.[1]

While it is important to mention that silencing is understood as a practice in an active and transitive process, it might not be obvious to read mentions as constitutive of silences and vice versa. Trouillot locates silences in four critical moments of historical production: the moment of fact creation, fact assembly, fact retrieval, and retrospective significance.[2] In this contribution I focus on accessing archives as a practice located in the moment of fact retrieval. How does the archives' accessibility configure the moment of fact retrieval, and thus impact the production of silences? I will engage with this question by tracing my digital and physical experience in the archives. The reflections presented here were initially sparked during my three-day visit to the archives of the League of Nations (LoN) in Geneva in July 2021.

The League of Nations

The LoN was established in 1920 in the aftermath of the First World War with the following three main objectives: "to ensure collective security, assure functional cooperation, and execute the mandates of peace treaties."[3] International peace was to be brought about through arbitrating disputes between the members of the League of Nations. The establishment of the institution can be located in the aftermath of collapsing empires; thus, it was also designed as a guarantee to the sovereignty of emerging states of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire. In contrast, the capacity of self-

is a radically different experience than consulting an archive online. Not only do you miss the place, procedure, effort, and experience of getting there when working with digital archival material, but also the process of going through hard copies of petitions, reports, minutes of meetings, etc. The accidental findings and discoveries that can occur as documents and papers are unfolded before you are more likely than when searching digitally for keywords. While going through documents on Iraq under the British mandate, I discovered communities established in Baghdad that I never thought or heard of, such as an Indian community in Baghdad or some that addressed petitions to the League of Nations and British authorities. Occurring only every so often, these discoveries are serendipitous and, if I may say so, priceless! The difference between digital research, with its constantly updated tools, and the physical visit to the archives is not only a matter of a physical presence, but it also implies questions of access, movement, and power.

It is necessary to discuss the importance of physical access to archives and the work that comes along with it in order to find the best archival conservation practices. At the same time, we need to sustain the interaction between the historian or the researcher and the material of the work by bringing together archival and historical studies in a dialogue that would seek preservation as a top priority whilst trying to find a potential middle ground for historians. The digital turn might have answers and solutions that have not yet surfaced for these issues! That said, the opportunity to visit the archives physically also relies on other accesses: first to the host country and second to the

government of the territories of the former Ottoman Empire and German colonies was denied.[4] Article 22 of the Covenant of the LoN renders the inherently colonial logic of the institution visible and thus indicates the archives' logic of fact creation and fact assembly. It states that the:

> colonies and territories which as a consequence of the late war have ceased to be under the sovereignty of the States which formerly governed them and which are inhabited by peoples not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world (…).

The Article further elaborates that the best method to ensure the well-being of these peoples is by entrusting "*the tutelage of such peoples […] to advanced nations.*"

Part I—Digital

Several months before my visit to the LoN archives, I participated in a digital introduction to the archives which was conducted in French—the language the archivist felt most comfortable with. He explained the typologies of the documents, the scope of the content, and the organization of the archives. After participating in the helpful meeting, each member of our team received a link to access the documents online.

host institution. These two obstacles are not mere details, as access is sometimes the main difficulty hindering research for many across the world. The advantages of the digital turn at the League of Nations, for instance, is the door it opens for researchers "to provide a new perspective, a new historiography […] and to provide another voice that will maybe complement, maybe contest what we think is the truth"[2] from their respective locations. However—and this will need further reflection but it is the main argument advanced in this short text—the digital turn also sustains certain power structures that cannot be ignored within the production of history by the justification that access from everywhere is now guaranteed through digitization.

The claim that the digital turn sustains power structures is not by essence as such. Indeed, in the context of debate and discussions on decolonizing historical spaces, archives, and minds, it is worth bringing the digital turn observed in the archives to the conversation, as it also implies space. Theoretically, the space dealt with here is considered permanently accessible (or rather with long life expectancies since ways of preserving the material are still to be settled[2]) making research and access technically and logistically easier. By extension, this space comes as an alternative to places that were previously often inaccessible and to difficulties of access such as "tortuous security clearances, for example, or the impossibility of archival access in times of wars or revolutionary upheavals"[3] which are "so intensified"[4] in what is known as "postcolonial contexts."[5] Moreover, it also comes as an alternative for scholars of these same "postcolonial" contexts and "peripheries" that have been faced

Is There
a Postcolonial?

Fig. 1: Screenshot of the Digital United Nations Archives Website. Credit: Jasmine Benhaida, 2021

Digital access
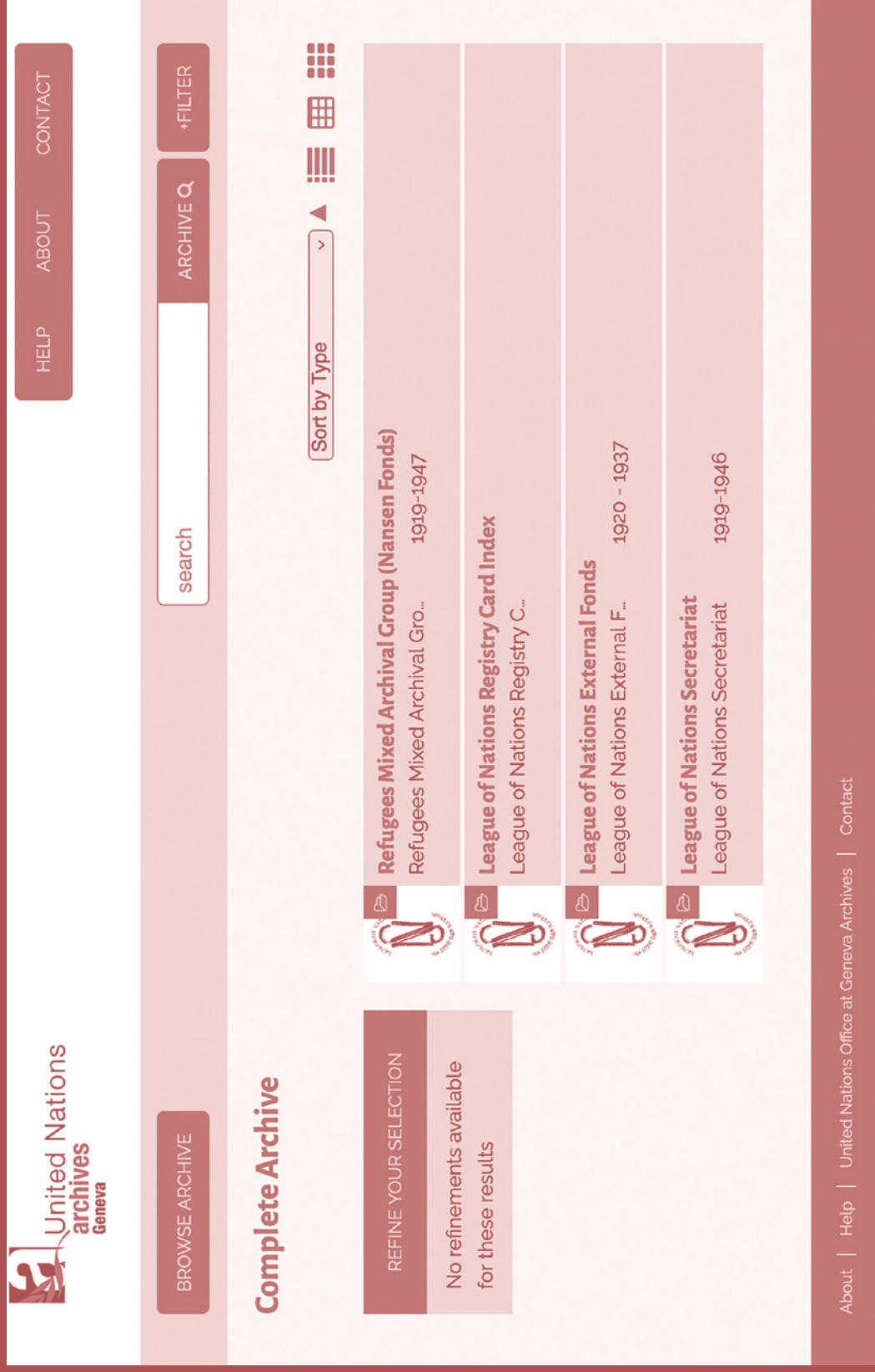
The virtual appearance of the League of Nations archives is clean. There are different ways to look for documents: by clicking through the presented options, searching by keywords, or entering the registry number of the document gathered from the *Répertoire.* The *Répertoire* was completed in 1969 through a project that aimed at making the LoN archives more accessible to researchers.[5]

The search by keywords provides an overwhelming amount of documents. The enumeration of the documents is derived from the physical boxes. However, I had no physical box—nor a digital imitation of one—to open and see how the documents were assembled and related to each other. The only thing connecting the documents on my screen to each other was the keyword or registry number I had typed in only short moments before. How could I read along the grain,[6] thus critically assessing the process of fact creation and fact assembly by the LoN, while having the documents all scattered in front of me? Considering the moment of fact retrieval, the archives' digital structure facilitates the research of known documents, which in turn diminishes the possibility of accidental findings. This could result in the reproduction, and thus solidification, of existing dialectics of mentions and silences: creating a cycle which is hard to break through with the digital tools at hand.

with different types of obstacles and difficulties accessing archives due to politics, security, and various justified or unjustified reasons that crystalize the continuous colonial dynamics between the center and the periphery and that epitomize yet another colonial mode of production. Having sketched the frame in which these questions evolve, let us try to observe, concretely, how these dynamics can materialize.

The digitization of archival material might imply questions of movement, return, decolonization, or dematerialization, as observed by Chamelot, Hiribarren, and Rodet[6] in their work on African archives and the digital turn. The reflections made in their work is also of great importance for other territories with similar colonial experiences, such as the Middle East and North Africa. As this work explores the omnipresent notion of the movement of archives, it would be worth examining this question beyond materials from colonial archives to the movement of archival material from contemporary archives. This topic has been much debated, as highlighted in the work of Michelle Caswell on the Ba'ath Party archives,[7] which bears witness to debates not only in spheres of archival studies but also history, politics, and law. This almost overarching inclusion of different fields probably emphasizes the importance of dealing with the topic of archives in a more holistic approach should we really wish to decolonize archives and the infrastructures entangled within them. On the question of movement, recent discussions on the Lebanese civil war archive at the UMAM Centre for Documentation and Research in Beirut[8] raised issues of access, ownership, and

LONTAD

I consulted the "*The Total Digital Access to the League of Nations Archives Project*" (LONTAD) looking for further information about the process and selection of the documents. The description states that the process started in 2017 with the intention of digitalizing the entirety of the LoN's archives by 2022, in order to improve the archives' long-term physical and digital preservation.[7] Browsing for more information, I learned that an anonymous Geneva-based foundation funds the project. Its anonymity made me wonder even more about the foundation's motivation to fund LONTAD. The article included comments by the historian working on the project, who described the project as enabling "*inclusivity in looking at the past.*"[8] Despite partially agreeing with this statement, I argue that the term inclusivity, used in this context, might lack content. The digitalization of the LoN archives provides access to a wider audience, which evidently includes previously excluded people. However, this does not automatically imply new readings of the documents, which challenge existing power-structures in the production of history. Additionally, as shown above, the digital access to the archives is organized through institutional processes, which are intrinsically selective in providing access. Secondly, the collected documents in the archives stem from a particular perspective and process of fact production. The digital access veils the latter in the moment of fact retrieval, because it complicates the critical assessment of the fact assembly. In addition, contrary to what is stated in the LONTAD project description, the archives are not digitalized in their

knowledge production, as the archives will probably no longer be as easily accessible to everyone. Assuming that the movement of some of the archival materials to Geneva does happen, the action would be understandable, as it would be legitimized by the unstable situation in Lebanon, in addition to the assassination of the UMAM center founder Lokman Slim.[9] It would be a blow for local academia and historical research while simultaneously becoming more accessible to foreign and international researchers. However, the main concern here, and in other contexts, is the local researcher, who would probably be the first interested in the history of these archives and what they have to say. By that logic, one could wonder what guarantees facilitated access to archives in places like Geneva, given that different obstacles stand in the way of researchers from the Middle East, starting with visas. The second question to be asked here is that of the further centralization of archives in an imperialist center of power and knowledge, since Geneva is already host to the League of Nations archives mentioned previously. The example given here is not unique, and this article is not trying to denounce UMAM because they have expressed the desire to move some of the archives —especially because their work is highly valuable in regards to archiving and dealing with Lebanon's past and recent critical issues—but rather reflect on these movements more broadly and think of best practices and ways of dealing with these dynamics, which aim at not only preserving but also restricting knowledge. It finally seeks to reflect on and identify the structures sustaining these movements and consider

entirety. Finally, the fact that the digital space facilitates access for researchers and also creates a digital space for archives does not mean that it neutralizes center-periphery relations. Who has the means to digitalize? The prestigious archives' narrative of *inclusivity* based on the digital access risks disguising problematics of production of silences in the moment of fact retrieval in a two-fold way. Firstly, the possibility of accessing archives virtually potentially heightens the obstacles of accessing non-digitalized documents. Why fund a researcher's travel expenses if there are digital archives available? Secondly, digital archives reduce space and resources for non-digitalized archives.[9] This produces silences, not simply because the archives themselves are shaped by the abstinence and erasure of facts based on its colonial logic, but also because it is limiting the production of other possible histories through "*reduce(s)-ing the room available to other facts.*"[10] Similar to the facts, the archives' digital presence reduces available room for other archives, which turns archives themselves into the objects of mentions and silences. Considering these points, describing the digitalization process as enabling "*inclusivity in looking at the past*" might suggest more a "*move to innocence*" than a challenge to existing dialectics of mentions and silences.[11]

Part II—Analogue

The archives of the League of Nations are located in the Palais des Nations in Geneva, Switzerland, which also serves as the UN office. The name (Palace of the Nations) indicates fairly explicitly the institu-

solutions to address the core of the problem.

It is understandable that the movement of archives may be legitimized, but unfortunately it is impossible to justify. In addition, such movements, even though sometimes understandable and pragmatic, should not represent a passive turn—and a similar claim can be made when it comes to the digital turn, since it is also a movement of archival material from one space to another. Centers welcoming archives from abroad should also be centers of solidarity within and outside of academia. In this sense, the question of archives goes beyond mere reflections on decolonizing the archives themselves, but rather extends to decolonizing the structures that withhold their coloniality. For instance, in the movement of archives from the "peripheries" to the centers of knowledge production. It also allows us to reflect on how to address the questions of decolonization within archival research and better position ourselves and our work towards the "coloniality of archives," and their appropriation and "centralization."[10] These thoughts finally lead to dismantling not only the coloniality of archives but also the power structures sustaining their coloniality, as one sustains the other at the expense of the "peripheries" in a move to address the implicit imbrications that lie at the core of these systems of exploitation. In these attempts to decolonize archives, it is further worth bringing into conversation Mehdi Amel's theorization of colonial modes of production, that is, the representation of "a colonial formation, or a capitalist formation whose development is governed by the structural relations

tion's (self-)perception. In the neighborhood we find several international institutions ranging from the aforementioned United Nations to the World Health Organization, which together create a web of legitimacy and importance. Opposite the United Nations building, across the street, one finds oneself standing on a public space where water fountains poetically wet the ground by successively hurling water into the air. It emphasizes the entrance to the palace, with its alley of flags behind the fence, by giving it a certain ceremonial ambiance yet prohibiting unauthorized gatherings through aesthetic violence.

The institution's aura of importance is reinforced by the mandatory administrative process for gaining access to the building. It includes an online registration which involves handing in a copy of an identity document and a form issued by the archives. On site, at the entrance, one has to go through a security scanning procedure. The visual experience inside is marked by squares: the doors, the books, the rooms, the artwork, the elevator, the windows, the flyers, the symmetry of the buildings, the books, the corridors, the boxes.

In the archives'
reading room

Two archivists were always present during my stay at the archives —I have named them *Archivist A* (who did the online introduction mentioned above) and *Archivist B*. They welcomed my colleague and me warmly, and even allowed us to look at the original documents, which since

of dependency with the imperialist centre" with "a broadly defined dependency framework."[11] Furthermore, these same reflections could be applied to academia and would be of great use above all in the fields of area studies, such as Near and Middle Eastern and African studies. The latter brings forth the notions of decolonization and deals with similar topics while still inheriting colonial traditions. It is not to criticize fields or scholars, but rather to take our collective and individual reflections and thoughts forward in an effort to produce more inclusive and more understanding frames of knowledge production that would truly be decentralized, decolonizing, and decolonized.

In conclusion, the visit to the League of Nations archives sparked many queries pertaining to the digital turn and led to further questions regarding more global access to archives and the movement of archival materials, and to potential answers that could accompany the digital turn that is being observed in several archives today. The reflection is not binary but, to make it simple, let us consider that the observations made here highlight a positive side to this digital turn in matters related to access to the archives from anywhere at any time and in regard to the protection of the archival material. However, they also highlight downsides of the digital turn in relation to sites where the archives are held, to the material when manipulated in hand, and to the potential unexpected discoveries one can make while going through archival material at the host institution or place. In addition, and by analogy, the digital turn is an effort of preservation comparable to efforts of preservation justifying the movement of archives (or archaeological

their digitalization are no longer permitted to be handed out.

While examining the books in the shelves closely during a break, I eventually stumbled upon documents I had not previously considered. I asked *Archivist B* about their digital availability, and he informed me that they are only accessible physically. The same day, the entrance to the archives was temporarily closed because of renovations. The archivists took us on a tour through long underground corridors to show us an alternative entrance to the archives' reading room. The walk was an opportunity to talk to *Archivist A* about my current work. I mentioned the lack of time to photograph documents that I had just found and their importance for my research. It was the first time he engaged in a conversation with me—he usually addressed his answers to my male colleague. I do not know if this was based on gender or an assumed language issue or a combination of both. It is only at this point that *Archivist A* told me that not all of the archive documents are part of the LONTAD. He informed me that the corpus I am interested in is partially accessible digitally on a different platform. Even though the online platform of the LoN archives provides the opportunity to ask an archivist, what could I have possibly asked if I did not know about the books' existence? Especially considering that there is no information available about the documents, which are not part of the LONTAD. Such information could be crucial for people who are exclusively accessing the digital archives and even for researchers who have the opportunity to be on-site, as they depend on the archivist's knowledge and willingness to share.

artifacts, etc.) from one place to another. By extension, what applies to physical spaces may be applied to digital spaces. Therefore, reflection on access should be further extended in order to call into question archival access in places constructed as peripheries. In this sense, the ongoing digitization in these same geographies of imperial power continue to reproduce the dynamics of center and peripheries while offering a form of access. It might also downplay archives in spaces coined as colonial and postcolonial where the digital turn might not be as central or important, or even where it might not be an archival tool, leading to a sensitive situation for the archives in question, which itself would lead to a justification for the movement of material. That may eventually lead to pillaging, which would put at risk the preservation in the archive of reminders of the colonial plague without addressing the root causes of the problems that impede, in the first place, prioritizing archives, archival research, and security. Eventually, digitization could serve as an alternative tool—especially with the technological innovations that might find a way to replace the physical experience altogether—for uncovering archives on the condition that it goes hand-in-hand with a process of critical questioning on notions of power, possession, ownership, and movement.

Finally, all these different questions will require further work, discussion, and papers to bring forward answers. In addition, these reflections and conversations on the best ways to decolonize the archives, making them accessible to all without sustaining power dynamics and colonial modes of production, are not only a conversation

Fig. 3: Picture of ordered boxes in the reading room with bookshelves in the back. Credit: Jasmine Benhaida, 2021

Accessing the archives and meeting the archivists in person provided me with valuable information I could not have obtained otherwise. At the same time, I benefit from the online platform: I do not have to be on site to access the sources. However, both points of entrance produce silences. The silencing does not simply lie in the colonial logic of the fact creation and assembly, it concerns likewise the moment of fact retrieval. While some aspects of this process are being resolved through the digitalization process, such as the reach to a wider audience, others are reinforced through the archive's digital structure. As argued, existing dialectics of mentions and silences are potentially reproduced through the methods of research encouraged by the platform's structure. Examining the moment of fact retrieval invites one to reflect upon the archives' digital structure and their possibility to access the digital sphere— the latter turning the archives themselves into objects of mentions and silences.

outside of academia as academia, but also within. Indeed, this conversation is much needed in the academic world since the latter is not only involved in knowledge production alone but also deeply reflective of the same dynamics of center-peripheries.

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6   Chamelot, Hiribarren, and Rodet, "Archives, the Digital Turn, and Governance in Africa."
7   Michelle Caswell, "'Thank You Very Much, Now Give Them Back': Cultural Property and the Fight over the Iraqi Baath Party Records," *The American Archivist* 74, no. 1 (2011): 211—40.
8   On June 22, 2021, the screening of the movie *Massaker* was followed by a discussion and the archives were briefly mentioned. See also Luisa Ballin, "La Veuve de Lokman Slim demande une enquête indépendante sur l'assassinat de son mari | Global Geneva," www.global-geneva.com/la-veuve-de-lokman-slim-demande-une-enquete-independante-sur-lassassinat-de-son-mari/, accessed August 2, 2021.
9   "Lokman Lives in Us and through Us…," UMAM D&R, www.umam-dr.org//blog_detail/28/, accessed July 14, 2021; "L'intellectuel libanais Lokman Slim assassiné au Liban-Sud," *L'Orient-Le Jour*, 4 February 2021, www.lorientlejour.com/article/1250717/lintellectuel-libanais-lokman-slim-porte-disparu-au-liban-sud.html; "Lokman Slim: Prominent Hezbollah Critic Shot Dead in Lebanon." *BBC News*, February 4, 2021, www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-55933222.
10   Centralization, as in bringing them to centers of power and knowledge production.
11   For more in English on Amel's thought, see Nadia Bou Ali, "Mahdi Amel's Colonial Mode of Production and Politics in the Last Instance," *Critical Historical Studies* 7, no. 2 (September 1, 2020): 241—69, doi.org/10.1086/710800; Hicham Safieddine, "Mahdi Amel: On Colonialism, Sectarianism and Hegemony," *Middle East Critique* 30, no. 1 (January 2, 2021): 41—56, available at doi.org/10.1080/19436149.2021.1876397; Samer Frangie, "Theorizing from the Periphery: The Intellectual Project of Mahdi 'Amil," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 44, no. 3 (August 2012): 465—82, available at doi.org/10.1017/S0020743812000426.

QUE ... PARIS

Traces of Beginnings, Endings, and (dis)Continuities within My Own Postcolonial Archive

Marlene Wagner

Jyoti Hosagrahar, in the *Sage Handbook of Architectural Theory*, states that: "Postcolonial perspectives in architecture and urbanism offer ways of thinking about built form and space as cultural landscapes that are at once globally interconnected and precisely situated in space and time."[1] This raises the question of how these relational landscapes are to be comprehended and mediated in order to navigate and ultimately transcend them together. Furthermore, there is a need to critically understand the designers and builders of these cultural landscapes, as an *acting*, *(dis)connecting* and innate *partial perspective* in space and time.

On the basis of my own practice, positioned at the margins of architecture between Austria and South Africa, beyond teaching method and service delivery, and deeply entangled in colonial, patriarchal, and material conditions, my doctoral research aims to translate and imagine knowledge from the (post)colonial building construction site.

Fig. 1: Exhibition and installation "Mapping 'Social Architecture'—Between Search and Effect" by Marlene Wagner, at Magazin—Space for Contemporary Architecture, Vienna, November 24, 2018. Credit: Richard Pobaschnig, 2018

Hosagrahar further describes the cultural landscapes of built form and space through postcolonial perspectives as "historically constituted, culturally constructed political artefacts whose forms are dynamic and meanings constantly negotiated."[2] In order to approach these dynamic, interconnected landscapes and translate and imagine knowledge from the (post)colonial building construction site entangled in colonial, patriarchal, and material conditions, I would like to begin by outlining a critical guiding discourse and situating my own position and practice.

In the early 1960s, Frantz Fanon described decolonization as a historical process that can only be understood "in the exact measure that we can discern the movements which give it historical form and content."[3] Nearly sixty years after Fanon, in a contribution on "Decolonizing Architecture," architect Lesley Lokko pointed to the impossibility of architecture as pure critique, instead presenting the act of designing as a proposal and offer of "implicit faith in the idea of something that isn't yet here, something that's about to come."[4] According to the Austrian architecture critic Christian Kühn, a critical-projective practice must disguise itself as *cynicism* or *naivety* to position "architecture explicitly and critically *in the world*, in the right point between culture and form."[5] Criticality as a deviation and alternative presupposes that one is aware of the actual state or problem that needs to be changed. In practice, however, as design researcher Donald Schön notes in the *Reflective Practitioner*, this does not present itself as a given. A problem to be changed is only "constructed from the materials of problem situations which are puzzling, troubling and uncertain."[6] Cultural critic and professor of critical spatial practice Jane Rendell, on the other hand, situates these transformative problems at the "triple crossroads of theory and practice, public and private, art and architecture."[7]

From 2005 onwards I have been co-initiating, funding, (re)designing, (re)building, (re)using, repairing, managing, maintaining, and exhibiting educational and communal facilities, technical infrastructure, and housing. My own work in different roles and in the context of diverse organizational setups is debated as *Social Architecture*, documented and internationally published in

the framing of "Architecture in a Democratic South Africa,"[8] "Afritecture: Building Social Change"[9] or as "Building for People with Low Income."[10] For example, Nina Pawlicki of the Natural Building Lab at TU Berlin categorized my practice buildCollective as a *connector* defined by its deep rooting in local contexts and in a global network of institutions of higher education.[11] BuildCollective is further referenced as a model of practice, placed in the missing middle, and its tactics have been described as a hacking of international aid by the architectural theorist and educator Hannah le Roux at the Witwatersrand University, Johannesburg.[12]

While my own projects of educational and communal buildings developed between continents were published as part of the *Think Global, Build Social* exhibition,[13] my understanding of architecture and the world is also shaped by "dwell*ing* and think*ing* in the border" and centers on the clash of *Global Designs/Local Histories.*[14]

Hosagrahar's article "Interrogation of Difference" concludes with three entangled threads for further investigation: "multiplicity in the process of material production, practices of inhabitation and structures of representation."[15] In the words of the South African human rights activist and spokesperson for the partnering community that commissioned us in 2014 on the planning and construction of a bridge, Nonhle Mbuthuma: "We need to change the way things are put in our minds."[16]

Designing and building:
'Social Architecture'
(how something begins?)

The DesignBuild movement emerged in German-speaking countries in the early 2000s, inspired by the *Just Build It!* exhibition about Rural Studio buildings in the US state of Alabama. In 2003, the Architekturzentrum Wien (Austrian Architecture Museum) exhibited the full-scale (1:1) projects of Auburn University's off-campus architecture education, built since the 1990s. As with Rural Studio's premise of "critiquing the status quo […] bringing about responsible structural, environmental and social change,"[17] DesignBuild, explicitly and critically, foregrounded a transformative intention that "challenges the existing academic system."[18] The joint operation of the Austrian institutions of architecture *museum, university and NGO* found its field of action through

an existing aid-route between Austria and postapartheid South Africa. This enabled me to actively enter the field with the designbuild studio at TU Wien in the winter semester of 2005. In the same year, the kindergarten in Orangefarm Township, built by students and local community members, was exhibited alongside eight other social and educational building projects designed by Austrian and German universities in Johannesburg. The exhibition entitled *Bottom Up. Building for a Better World* was later also exhibited at the Architekturzentrum Wien.

Curator Johannes Porsch attached the metaphor of the Wintergarden (Un jardin d'hiver presents:)[19] to the exhibition title, and as a construction of enclosing, added transparent partition walls inside the museum's exhibition space. This led to the disruption of the usual relations of gaze and movement between subject and object. The posters and models of the exhibited Design-Build projects in South Africa were pushed against the outer walls of the inserted Wintergarden and decentered. The inside of the Wintergarden, on the other hand, presented a non-linear bricolage of images of Western architectural history from the eighteenth century to the present. Furthermore, the exhibition connected this visual *cultural archive* of the discipline, to a collection of quotes on *knowledge, power, and action b*y Michel Foucault, Gayatri Spivak, and Donna Haraway.

Spivak places the focus on power and knowledge relations introduced by Foucault with the critical reflection on one's own position in order to look for possibilities of change and "persistently to critique a structure that one cannot not (wish to) inhabit."[20] Whereas Donna Haraway offers tactics to approach the transformative agenda from a feminist standpoint through hybridized roles, mobile positioning, and its visions.[21] The cultural landscape of the discipline and related theory, assembled by Porsch, was further questioned with reference to Louis Althusser's critique of ideology, as an unconscious system of ideas whose functionalizing process, through images, concepts and structures, escapes us.[22]

The DesignBuild movement between Austria and South Africa and the postcolonial critique of its representation with the exhibition around the Wintergarden in 2006 shaped the foundation and practices of my own not-for-profit organization for architecture and development, buildCollective. In the years following its founding, the designing and building across geographical, disciplinary,

Fig. 2: Cenk Güzelis, 3D Scan of the exhibition and installation "Mapping 'Social Architecture'–Between Search and Effect" by Marlene Wagner, at Magazin—Space for Contemporary Architecture, Vienna, November 24, 2018.

cultural, and political boundaries were guided less by a conscious perception or articulation of an explicitly critical transformation of architectural education or the architectural canon than by the tacit dimension of knowledge through inherited practices, experience, memory, and conviction.[23] Built from the *materials of problem situations which are puzzling, troubling, and uncertain*. In the entanglement, interrelationships, intersections, crossings, and borders in different roles, between the "local" building site and the "global" architectural discourse, to teaching methods and service delivery, of architecture and "development." As an act, a design of action, and a proposition of collective building and the building of a collective.[24]

Mapping 'Social Architecture':
between search and effect
(how something ends?)

An understanding of designing and building as an activity, beyond the label of a university teaching method (DesignBuild)[25] or a professional service (design-build),[26] entails thinking about community practice and a *Community of Practice* in the fulfilment of values and basic needs. This enables us to unearth traces of the formative relationship of the university, the museum, and the development aid organization, the typologies of educational, social, and cultural buildings and of Architecture as a discipline, as well as to follow one's own entanglements through connecting and disconnecting practices.

With "architecture as a technology" as a "set of forms of action,"[27] I address the cultural landscapes, built form and space, through a critical re-reading and reflecting on one's own archive. The (cultural) archive, itself a metaphor and architectural image, not only contains artifacts of its own (architectural) culture but also is a cultural artifact in itself.[28] A collectively built "storehouse of ideas, practices and affects."[29] The work in the storage is dedicated to the embodied knowledge "within invisible 'global paths' that we are pursuing (and tracing), aspects of unseen, 'infinite moving gazes,' that we let circulate, where 'action' not only arises, begins, but interrupts itself."[30] The act of mapping "allows designers and planners not only to see certain possibilities in the complexity and contradiction of what already exists but also to actualize that potential."[31] Mapping as auto-ethnography is guided by questions of (dis)continuities of

functional agency through images, concepts, and structures and the knowledge through inherited practices, experience, memory, and conviction, which give form and content to one's practices. Autoethnography in turn relates to *self, culture,* and *description* (analysis), and is explicitly dedicated to the entanglements of product, method, and process. The I and the we, the knower and the known, and recognized methodological construction and the act of writing as a design process.[32] *Mapping "Social Architecture"* thus locates itself in "the question of its own impossibility" inside the gap or blank space, "a dislocation, [a rupture within] in the known, the learned." (Un)earthing the "trace of otherness, which as an instance of the indefinite and uncertain co-produces one's own expression and action."[33]

Dipl.Ing. Marlene Wagner graduated with honors in architecture at the Vienna University of Technology and is co-founder of the NPO buildCollective for architecture and development. In collaboration with international NGOs, universities, community advocacy organizations, and diverse public and private partnerships, she has realized a large number of educational buildings, social and technical infrastructure, and art and public space projects, as well as organizational and educational development frameworks. Besides projects and teaching Marlene is pursuing her doctoral studies: "Mapping 'Social Architecture': Critical Reflection and Methodological Experiment on Cross-cultural and Trans-disciplinary Practice." Her great interest lies in the connection of design and artistic research, participatory action, postcolonial critique, intersectionality, and decolonial theory and praxis.

1   Jyoti Hosagrahar, "Interrogating Difference: Postcolonial Perspectives in Architecture and Urbanism," in *The Sage Handbook of Architectural Theory* eds. C. Greig Crysler, Stephen Cairns, and Hilde Heynen (London: SAGE Publications, 2012) 70.

2   Hosagrahar, "Interrogating Difference: Postcolonial Perspectives in Architecture and Urbanism," 73.

3   Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove, 1961), 29.

4   "Lesley Lokko: Decolonising Architecture | Assemble Papers," September 4, 2019, assemblepapers.com.au/2019/09/04/lesley-lokko-decolonising-architecture/.

5   Christian Kühn, "The Crisis of Criticality: Becoming Critically Projective," in *Building Critique: Architecture and Its Discontent*, eds. Gabu Heindl, Michael Klein, and Christina Linortner (Leipzig: Spector Books, 2019).

6   Donald A. Schön, *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action* (New York: Basic Books, 1983), 40.

7   Jane Rendell, "Critical Spatial Practice," Critical Spatial Practice | Critical Spatial Practice (blog), criticalspatialpractice.co.uk/, accessed March 2, 2019.

8   'Ora Joubert and Karel Bakker, eds., *10+ Years 100+ Buildings: Architecture in a Democratic South Africa* (Cape Town: Bell-Roberts, 2009).

9   Andres Lepik et al., eds., *Afritecture: Bauen mit der Gemeinschaft ; [anlässlich der Ausstellung "Afritecture – Bauen mit der Gemeinschaft" im Architekturmuseum der TU München in der Pinakothek der Moderne, 13. September 2013 bis 12. Januar 2014]* (Ausstellung "Afritecture–Bauen mit der Gemeinschaft," Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2013).

10   Marlene Wagner, "Mzaba Bridge, Eastern Cape, South Africa 2015," *World Architecture Magazin* (2018).

11   Nina Maria Pawlicki, *Agency in DesignBuild: Die Handlungsfähigkeit von DesignBuild Im Spannungsfeld von Architekturausbildung, -Praxis Und Gesellschaft* (Berlin, Technischen Universität Berlin, 2019).

12   Hannah le Roux, "Design for the Missing Middle: Architecture in a Context of Inequality," *Journal of Architectural Education* 66, no. 2 (2014): 160—61, doi.org/10.1080/10464883.2014.937228.

13   Andres Lepik, "Think Global, Build Social!," *ARCH+* 211/212 (June 17, 2013), www.archplus.net/home/archiv/ausgabe/46,208,1,0.html.

14   Walter Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking*, Princeton Studies in Culture/Power/History (Princeton, NJ; Princeton University Press, 2012).

15   Hosagrahar, "Interrogating Difference: Postcolonial Perspectives in Architecture and Urbanism," 83.

16   Nonhle Mbuthuma, "Discussion Round on Mapping Social Architecture – between Search and Effect," at Magazin – Space for Contemporary Architecture, Vienna, November 24, 2018. The ACC – Amadiba Crisis Committee has been opposing a mining development in Xolobeni, Eastern Cape South Africa for more than fifteen years. For more information on this landscape of resistance, see, for example, www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2021-07-11-how-to-keep-a-movement-alive-lessons-from-14-years-of-sustained-activism-in-xolobeni-on-the-wild-coast/.

17   Architekturzentrum Wien, ed., *Just Build It! Die Bauten Des Rural Studio*, vol. 18, Hintergrund (Vienna: Architekturzentrum Wien, 2003).

18   Dietmat Steiner, "The Design-build Movement in Lepik, 'Think Global, Build Social!'," *ARCH+* 211/212 (June 2013): 154.

19   A reference to the Marcel Broodthaers unfinished exhibition project "Un jardin d'hiver (object-subject)," in Johannes Porsch, "Un Jardin d'hiver, Präsentiert, " Hintergrund 32 (Vienna: Architekturzentrum Wien, 2006).

20   Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Outside in the Teaching Machine* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 284

21   Donna Jeanne Haraway, *The Haraway Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2004).

22   Porsch, "Un Jardin d'hiver*, Präsentiert."

23   See Michael Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966).

24   "BuildCollective," available at www.buildcollective.net/, accessed September 15, 2021.

25   dbXchange, "Design Build," n.d., www.dbxchange.eu.

26   Babasola Olubunmi Ilori, "The Practice of Design-Build Procurement Method in South Africa," presentation at the postgraduate conference, "Emerging Trends in Construction Organisational Practices and Project Management Knowledge Area," February 2—4, 2016, Cape Town, South Africa.

27   Porsch, "Un Jardin d'hiver*, Präsentiert."

28   Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (London/Dunedin, NZ/New York: Zed Books/University of Otago Press/Distributed in the USA exclusively by St. Martin's Press, 1999).

29   Gloria Wekker, *White Innocence: Paradoxes of Colonialism and Race* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016), 30.

30   Porsch, "Un Jardin d'hiver*."

31   James Corner, "The Agency of Mapping: Speculation, Critique and Invention," in *Mappings*, ed. Denis Cosgrove (London: Reaktion, 1999), 213—52, 214.

32   Stacy Linn Holman Jones, Tony E. Adams, and Carolyn Ellis, *Handbook of Autoethnography* (Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 2013).

33   Porsch, "Un Jardin d'hiver*, Präsentiert."

Unearthing Traces:
Postcolonial Pieces

Atiya Hussain

Postcolonial Pieces

Alongside colonial heritages, still toxic in the Algerian sands and embodied symbolically in the bombs and humiliations raining down on Palestine, questions about present-day linkages and continuities with imperialism were lent greater solemnity by world events coinciding with the conference that brought together the contributors of this book. As part of our collective efforts to renegotiate methodological boundaries and theoretical assumptions, Samia Henni unveiled the institutionalized amnesia of colonial France's nuclear programs in the Sahara, and new methodologies were in evidence from Shourideh C. Molavi's usage of forensic architecture to investigate state and corporate violence and distinguish between "fast" and "slow" violence.[1]

This text was written shortly before the seminar *Unearthing Traces*, from the medium-sized city of Rehovot in Israel. It is an attempt to portray the complexity of a situation from the perspective of a Swiss person in a place of conflict, one I have visited regularly since 2017. This war, which the Hamas named "Sword of Jerusalem Battle" and the Israeli Defense Force "Operation Guardian of the Walls," lasted from May 10 to 21, 2021. I lived through this conflict in real time, from one side. I compared several media accounts and listened to various people describing their experiences. This portrayal is not linear or definitive but reflects my confused impressions, as an accumulation of events. I wished to share my point of view from a non-European location and convey a feeling for place filled with a variety of opinions.

In the month of May 2021 alone, when the *Unearthing Traces* conference was held, at least 248 people in the Gaza Strip and 12 people in Israel were killed, and more than 3,000 Palestinians in the West Bank, Jerusalem and 1948-occupied territories were arrested.[2] The conference opened with the announcement that Germany had concluded eight years of discussions about its brutal colonial legacy with the Namibian government. On the second day of the conference, French President Emmanuel Macron, speaking from Rwanda, took partial responsibility for his country's involvement in the 1994 genocide against Tutsis in Rwanda.[3]

The headlines combined with the presentations in ways that highlighted colonial entanglements, even within the internationalism of the League of Nations and the United Nations, and the disjuncture that increasingly separates the nation-state form from Fanon's magnificent hopes for postcolonial justice and peace.[4]

Where is the postcolonial?

Recent admissions by Germany and France that they bear some responsibility for genocidal violence in both imperial and postcolonial contexts seem to suggest a break from the colonial. Yet, just days before the conference, Israeli ground and air strikes in Gaza had shaken the land and turned its urban fabric into rubble, in an action that the Human Rights Watch subsequently described as "apparently unlawful."[5] In the words of Shourideh Molavi, the violence in Jerusalem and in Gaza was violence of a very colonial nature.

Paradise Lost

I awake to my hands brushing away
    the mosquitoes
In a subtropical garden
And a cacophony of birds
    performing a live concert

The neighbors are busy until
    Friday evening
When rest suddenly becomes all
We continue our digital activities

One day, around noon, we hear
    muffled sounds, and the walls
    begin to shake
Puzzled, we wonder if there is
    a construction site nearby
At dusk, the first siren sounds out
    across the neighborhood
We step out onto the landing
    and exchange looks
    with Omri's grandparents
High above, I see flashes of light,
    like solitary displays of fireworks

With steady, calm steps, Patricia
    walks towards the gate
And checks whether the public
    shelter on the corner is open,
    for us
At their age they won't run to it;
    they'll stay with friends if need be

I look, watchfully, into the night,
    hear a peaceful snore
Here antimissiles never sleep
In the Gaza Strip, they do not exist

Everyday life seems to go on,
    yet my mind is in shock
Offices keep their tight deadlines;
    remote work is recommended
Omri's students switch between
    the shelter and their desks,
    staring at AutoCAD

In much the same ways in which postcolonial critique was unable to contend with geopolitical problems in the 1990s, the term appears equally unable to contend with the mutations of colonialism, even in regions that have been "decolonized."[6] In spite of the implied temporal break within the term "postcolonial," formal independence precludes neither economic nor cultural continuities with colonial arrangements.[7] Nor does the postcolonial preclude mutations of nationalisms that have recently reworked conceptions of race and religion, knitting together settler colonialism, colonial science, and authoritarianism.[8]

Indeed, the toxic half-life of imperial violence may well entail unheard of mutations. In the contested and highly militarized region of Kashmir, for example, India has been concocting forms of control that, while new in a state that has very consciously projected itself as "postcolonial," would be familiar to Palestinians. In the words of a senior Indian diplomat: "If the Israeli people can do it, we can also do it."[9]

Those words were prophetic. Kashmir has been a test case for democracy in South Asia since the very transfer of colonial power to India and Pakistan in 1947, and as the Indian state is continuing with colonial traditions of re-shaping sovereignties.[10] With the change in August 2019 to the autonomous status of Jammu and Kashmir, observers warn that the postcolonial Indian state is imposing a new order, that of postcolonial settler colonialism.[11] The Indian state's adventures in Kashmir, as seen in the light of the fetishization of territory that is typical of settler colonial projects, blurs

After several days at home,
   we drive to Tel Aviv to exercise
   our free will
We tuck our heads into our shoulders;
   roads are still deserted
If a siren goes off? I ask; we lie down
   on the roadside, he answers
Our voices are low; he seems to be
   in a familiar mode of operation

I have fleeting memories of the city,
   that symbol of hi-tech and
   artistic freedom
A man smoking as he strides along,
   staring blankly, just like
   a Giacometti statue
French music from a nearly empty
   café-kiosk
A cat and a dog greeting each other
   in the street

We pretend to relax for five minutes
   with a coffee, then leave
The waiter farewells us with
   a "peace and love"

Once back in Rehovot, my anxious
   mood remains despite
   the Mediterranean climate
Politicians talk about "surprises"
   and "dream attacks"
Live updates from *Haaretz* make us
   feel alienated from our lives
Despite the heat I dress in black,
   thinking it means something

The birdsong is still just as loud—
   a meeting in progress
Interrupted by a meow or
   the croaking of frogs
On the other side of the asbestos-
   plaster wall, Patricia voices
   her outrage on the phone

any distinctions between the colonial empire and the postcolonial nation-state.[12] Postcolonial India routinely withdraws from distribution published maps displaying Kashmir's effective borders, aggressively enforcing the display of state-sanctioned maps that depict Kashmir as belonging in its entirety to India.[13]

This concern with an exactly imagined "image" of India predates the current right-wing regime in Delhi and is almost entirely produced for domestic consumption; it is in turn sustained by Indian newspapers, movies, and popular culture, a societal self-censorship that has allowed the Indian government to hollow out Kashmir's autonomy since the retreat of the British Raj. Indeed, the festering antagonism between India and Pakistan over Kashmir is part of a "dissonant heritage" of unsolved political and societal issues that casts a shadow over public acts of memorializing and remembering to this day, more than seventy years after decolonization.[14] My interest in the *Unearthing Traces* conference stems from the material history of late colonial economic nationalism, forgotten in postcolonial Mumbai, in part because of this dissonance. Instead, I found myself struck by postcoloniality's failings.

When is the postcolonial?

In the middle of a pandemic, with national governments scrambling to control a virus that knows no borders, France and Germany admitted to their involvement in genocides conducted during their rule over the African continent. Yet, in light of Molavi's warning about the suspect

The outside world doesn't need
    much news from us;
    the media have taken over
Journalists select what to omit
    and what to report
Mixed (coexistence and) peace
    protests don't make the cut

The sound of birthday songs comes
    out of half-opened windows

A Rocket Ballet

Before going to bed, Tullio leaves
    the mechanical gate open
    by just a meter
The key stays in the door
I find myself becoming a night warden

When a rocket is launched
    from Gaza – the launching zone
    is better hidden at night –
    its trajectory is calculated by
    Israeli radars; sirens go off
    in the target zones. In the middle
    of the night, in our pajamas
    and with dogs and telephones,
    we join the neighbors in
    the shelter; we wait for the anti-
    missiles to fire and, usually,
    for the debris to fall; we go back
    to bed, and then we come
    back again

After two days, and for a long while,
    we start at the slightest noise;
    at each rapid acceleration of
    a vehicle; my eyes lose focus as
    defense aircraft fly over.
    "Sometimes the pilots all refuse
    to fly over Gaza," Omri tells me.
    A young father is called up to the
    reserves; his children spend
    the night in their grandparents'
    shelter

Fig. 1: Celestial Sphere, Palais des Nations, Geneva.
Credit: Yann Forget/Wikimedia Commons

Fig. 1: Celestial Sphere, Palais des Nations, Geneva.
Credit: Yann Forget/Wikimedia Commons

temporality of the term, France's acceptance of a limited responsibility for its involvement in the 1994 genocide in Rwanda struck me as curious. Would this be a postcolonial genocide, then?

More curious even than the violence that cuts across these, and other parts of our globe, was the pedantic wording that frames the acknowledgement of otherwise unspeakable violence. In qualifying its responsibility for the Rwandan genocide as partial—"*responsable, mais pas coupable*," accountable but not culpable—the speech by the French President, Emmanuel Macron pontificated: "A genocide cannot be compared. It has a genealogy. It has a history. It is unique."[15] Does realpolitik attribute value to the acknowledgement of a small responsibility in an (in)famous disaster, rather than more significant responsibility in its continuing fall-out and in other ongoing disasters?

The German statement apologizing for the genocide of Herero and Nama people between 1904 and 1908, in what is now Namibia, describes this colonial event, somewhat strangely, as the "darkest chapter of our shared history." The statement, presumably agonized over and rewritten many times, accepts as "given" the "historical and moral responsibility" and testifies to its intent to "ask Namibia and the descendants of the victims for forgiveness."[16]

Historical violence may have been shared, but not the present. It appears that a separation from Germany and direct descendants of the victims had to be maintained; over the many years of negotiations

After a lynching happens just below
    their new home, by extremists
    in a night of rioting, two friends go
    and sleep at their sister's house

Post-traumatic messages flare up
    after professors at an Arts
    Academy show support for their
    Palestinian students, attracting
    media attention. The government
    announces it is withdrawing
    funding

There are barely any reports on
    the situation in the Gaza Strip

The hope of a ceasefire becomes
    our *Salam*
Dull noises and shaking provide
    the backdrop to our meals

Patricia tells me about the Gulf War
    and wearing gas masks.
    About Italy and its sky, dark with
    American and English airplanes
    dropping bombs, sometimes
    exploded by antimissiles; pilots
    descending from the sky
    in parachutes

On the eve of the ceasefire,
    traditional celebrations are put
    on hold
Should we meet cousins of military
    service age that soon

I awake from the loud passage of
    the trash collectors; the air now
    seems light to me
Omri's face closes in, assailed by
    mosquitoes

As children mimic the sound of
    the siren, we walk through
    the neighborhood

between the governments of Germany and Namibia, it remained too much of a challenge for the German state to satisfactorily involve the communities affected by the genocide. Destruction is followed by neglect, containing the toxicity of long-lasting denial and silence, even as the descendants of the victims of the genocide feel excluded as a result of Namibia's negotiations with Germany.[17]

Here again, we have a postcolonial state betwixt and between the justice due to victims of colonial violence, but these tensions are not addressed. Germany's apology comes instead with another lecture: "Meaningful reconciliation cannot be decreed from above."

Even when wrong, they know better. They know better, even when historians have suggested restorative possibilities particular to these pandemic times, which underscored the universal fragility of humankind, in the name of historical responsibility.[18] Just as the mere "Transfer of Power" from British hands to Indian hands in 1947 or the conferment of "independence" from the metropole does not address linkages to the metropole—gentlemanly, financial, or otherwise—that linger beyond transfer dates, we are again confronted with announcements that appear to be mere gestures.[19]

Another chapter ends; but we continue to hold in our hands the volume of violent power. Can we resolve the past, and courageously move into the future, not examining the contradictions of dealing with a postcoloniality that may not be fully engaged with communities, while blithely accepting—albeit seriously

and soberly—the structural advantages of having benefited from racialized violence in the past? Efficiency at the cost of the painstaking work of addressing the costs to some—and benefits to others—of violence that continues to structure what we can say or cannot say.

Indeed, in the German context this had been revealed to be particularly difficult after the heated debates of 2020 pitting Postcolonial studies against Holocaust studies, which resulted in the "disinvitation" of African philosopher Achille Mbembe amid allegations of anti-Semitism. Several scholars who participated in the *Journal of Genocide Research*'s Forum dedicated to the "Mbembe debate" drew attention to the well-established academic debate about the colonial origins of the Holocaust that had blown up into a second *Historikerstreit* in Germany.[20]

Where is peace?

I am writing this paper from Geneva, *Ville de Paix* or the City of Peace, as it was once again dubbed when the leaders of the United States and Russia held a summit at a lakeside villa in June 2021. Only months later, peace would once again prove elusive, as the ongoing war in Ukraine has increasingly made clear. Similarly, the international face of Geneva, which like so many things disappeared behind fences and security after the 9/11 attacks that levelled New York's twin towers, also remains shrouded in a mythical peace.

Often invoked by political leaders, such as the Swiss President Guy Parmelin in his welcome address to

the Biden-Putin summit, this peace is symbolized by the massive Celestial Sphere in the *Cour d'Honneur* of the buildings of the former League of Nations. Originally created as a memorial for the founding father of the League of Nations, US President Woodrow Wilson, the Celestial Sphere symbolized the hope of a peaceful world under international law. Installed in the Palais des Nations in Geneva in August 1939, it was intended to slowly rotate and be illuminated at night. Instead, the sphere began to have significant problems as early as 1942.[21]

Mirroring, perhaps, the complicated legacy of Wilson's racist Southern roots, the armillary sphere never quite lived up to the ambitions of its creator. The promulgation of the Fourteen Points in January 1918 helped make anticolonial nationalism a global trend and crystallised the emergence of the self-determining nation-state as the sole legitimate unit of international society, but Wilson himself was wary of the "Wilsonian moment." It soon became clear that by the spring of 1919, the principle of self-determination would not be immediately applied anywhere outside Europe.[22] "For the inhabitants of the world, there were two Wilsons: Wilson the liberator, Wilson the racist." [23]

Our post-war history is no more enchanting. Indeed, historian Mark Mazower has pointed to the troubling role of internationalist and white supremacist Jan Smuts in championing the United Nations at its foundation in San Francisco. Smuts, who also contributed to Woodrow Wilson's ideas for the League of Nations, had gone to San Francisco wary of the "strong humanitarian tendency" in the wake of World War II and yet it is to him that we owe the phrase "fundamental human rights" in the preamble to the UN charter.[24] That Smuts, the "soldier-statesman," was influential beyond the merely political is apparent in his exuberant endorsement of US post-war reconstruction efforts, which would "save" Western civilization.[25]

Mazower poses a difficult question: "Could it be, in short, that the United Nations started out life not as the instrument to end colonialism, but rather—at least in the minds of men like Smuts—as the means to preserve it?"[26] Writing before the controversial German summer of 2020, Mbembe explicitly defined the colonial and slave systems as the bedrock of democracy, a "fantasy of separation" that is "gradually replacing the proposition of universal equality which, not so long ago, made it possible to contest substantial injustices."[27]

If the very institutions that we look to for justice are bathed in toxicity, where can we turn to find peace?

The aim of postcolonial studies was to rescue us from the straits of male-gendered Eurocentric thinking, an inimical hierarchy embodied in, say, Smuts and Wilson.[28] Just as nations such as Britain—and France and Germany—have yet to contend with their own postcolonial status beyond the mere presence of the formerly colonized, we may also have to rethink and un-think humanity to contend with the ever-receding horizon of the globe.

Our global lessons are becoming more, not less, complicated. We

have been flailing since the tumultuous 1940s in our attempts to deal with massive displacements of people in Europe as in other parts of the world. To this it appears, we have added problems associated with the chronic ruination of the environment, as well as a world-wide pandemic. Perhaps the answers cannot now come from above.

The solutions may well come from below, from those who watch nation-state after nation-state fail to rise to these extraordinary—global—problems. My scant hope is based on the musings of one young student in our classroom discussion on environmental history in late-2021. Participating through her screen from halfway around the world, this student asked how it was that humans in the 1950s did not take into consideration that their actions and their pollution would harm other humans, when it was clearly affecting other animals such as birds. It did not strike her, nor did it strike her classmates, that the humans of the 1950s were scientifically segregated by race. In the face of escalating global threats, we may finally have to redefine our humanity to supersede the increasingly narrow straits of long-standing fantasies of separation that have fuelled so much strife.

Atiya Hussain brings a world history approach
to decolonization and state-making in British India.
Her contribution to Partition Studies is based on
microhistorical case studies that allow for new per-
spectives on the violent and chaotic partition of
the sub-continent, with a particular focus on the eco-
nomic aspects of the transition/break from Empire.

Stéphanie Savio wrote her maturity thesis in Fribourg
on the *Remaining Outcome of Apartheid in South
Africa* (2008) and studied architecture at ETH Zurich
and TU Delft. She is currently preparing a doctoral
thesis on the work of architects Hannes Meyer
(1889—1954) and Arieh Sharon (1900—1984) for co-
operative and union movements of national
scale in Federal Switzerland, Mandatory Palestine
and the Weimar Republic between 1919 and 1948.

1   Samia Henni, "Colonial Ramifications," e-flux Architecture, History/Theory (October, 31 2018), www.e-flux.com/architecture/history-theory/225180/colonial-ramifications/.

2   "Live Updates: Hamas Chief: We will continue fighting until Al-Aqsa Mosque is liberated," *Haaretz*, May 20, 2021, www.haaretz.com/israel-news/israeli-workers-threaten-not-to-repair-power-in-gaza-until-bodies-of-soldiers-return-1.9826004 (accessed December 28, 2021); "Thousands of Palestinians swept up in Israeli arrest campaign," *Al Jazeera*, October 4, 2021, www.aljazeera.comnews/2021/6/30/thousands-of-palestinians-swept-up-in-israeli-arrest-campaign (accessed December 28, 2021).

3   In March 2021, an expert commission headed by French historian Vincent Duclert found that France had borne "heavy and overwhelming responsibility" for the genocide but had not been complicit, www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-57270099; www.jeuneafrique.com/1149023/politique/vincent-duclert-au-rwanda-la-france-a-ecarte-la-realite/.

4   Early in his piece analyzing the fluidity of categories such as "the West," Coronil writes: "Imagining a future that builds on the past but is not imprisoned by its horror, Fanon visualizes the making of a magnificent monument." Fernando Coronil, "Beyond Occidentalism: Toward Nonimperial Geohistorical Categories," *Cultural Anthropology* 11, no. 1 (1996): 51—87. More recently, scholars have blurred the historiographical line between empires, on the one hand, and nationalism and the nation-state on the other; see A. I. Miller and Stefan Berger, eds., *Nationalizing Empires* (Budapest/New York: Central European University Press, 2015), 1—7.

5   "Gaza: Israel's May airstrikes on high-rises," *Human Rights Watch*, August 23, 2021, www.hrw.org/news/2021/08/23/gaza-israels-may-airstrikes-high-rises (accessed December 22, 2021). "The apparently unlawful Israeli strikes on four high-rise towers in Gaza City caused serious, lasting harm for countless Palestinians who lived, worked, shopped, or benefited from businesses based there," said Human Rights Watch crisis and conflict researcher, Richard Weir.

6   During the Gulf War, Ella Shohat pointedly noted the absence of "postcolonial" criticisms of the war. Ella Shohat, "Notes on the 'Post-Colonial'," *Social Text* 31/32 (1992): 99—113; Ishan Ashutosh, "Postcolonial Geographies and Colonialism's Mutations: The Geo-graphing of South Asia," *Geography Compass* 14, no. 2 (February 2020), doi.org/10.1111/gec3.12478.

7   Ania Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* (London/New York: Routledge, 2007), 7.

8   Ishan Ashutosh, "The Transnational Routes of White and Hindu Nationalisms," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 45, no. 2 (January 25, 2022): 319—39, doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2021.1924392.

9   "Anger over India's Diplomat Calling for 'Israel Model' in Kashmir," *Al Jazeera*, November 28, 2019, www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/11/28/anger-over-indias-diplomat-calling-for-israel-model-in-kashmir/ (accessed December 30, 2021).

10   Anil Kalhan et al., "Colonial Continuities: Human Rights, Terrorism, and Security Laws in India," Columbia Journal of Asian Law 20, no. 1 (2006): 110—20.

11   Josef Korbel, "From Domicile to Dominion: India's Settler Colonial Agenda in Kashmir," *Harvard Law Review* 134, no. 7 (May 2021): 2530—51.

12   Ibid., 2532.

13   George Vasilev, "Methodological Nationalism and the Politics of History-writing: How Imaginary Scholarship Perpetuates the Nation," *Nations and Nationalism* 25, no. 2 (April 2019): 499—522. The Indian government regularly forces international publications to conform, see Eli Rosenberg, "India Orders *The Economist* to Place Stickers in 28'000 Magazines," *The Atlantic*, May 14, 2011, www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2011/05/india-forces-economist-place-stickers-28000-copies/351031/ (accessed December 30, 2021). The editor-in-chief of the affected publication, *The Economist*, said in 2011: "India is meant to be a democracy that approves of freedom of speech […] but they take a much more hostile attitude on this matter than either Pakistan or China."

14   Ted Svensson, "Curating the Partition: Dissonant Heritage and Indian Nation Building," *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 27, no. 2 (February 1, 2021): 217—18, doi.org/10.1080/13527258.2020.1781679.

15   L'Elysée, "Discours du Président Emmanuel Macron depuis le Mémorial du génocide perpétré contre les Tutsis en 1994," 27 May 2021, www.elysee.fr/emmanuel-macron/2021/05/27/discours-du-president-emmanuel-macron-depuis-le-memorial-du-genocide-perpetre-contre-les-tutsis-en-1994 (accessed December 28, 2021). "Un génocide ne se compare pas. Il a une généalogie. Il a une histoire. Il est unique." Translations in the text from the French are mine.

16   "Foreign Minister Maas on the conclusion of negotiations with Namibia," Press Release, Federal Foreign Office, 28 May 2021, www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/newsroom/news/-/2463598 (accessed December 28, 2021).

17   "Namibia's Ovaherero, Nama Slam Exclusion from Germany Deal," *Al Jazeera*, June 1, 2021, www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/6/1/ovaherero-nama-descendants-criticise-germanys-reconciliation (accessed December 28, 2021).

18   Jürgen Zimmerer, Tweet posted June 30, 2021, 10:48 a.m. "Because of historical responsibility and as an attempt at #restorativejustice I have called upon the German government to send Covid19 vaccines to Namibia to help protect #Herero & #Nama and all Namibians from corona, which is hitting the country hard." twitter.com/juergenzimmerer/status/1410158163165421568 (accessed December 28, 2021).

19   P. J. Cain and A. G. Hopkins, "Gentlemanly Capitalism and British Expansion Overseas II: New Imperialism, 1850—1945," *Economic History Review* vol. 40, no. 1 (1987): 1—26; B. R. Tomlinson, *The Political Economy of the Raj, 1914—1947: The Economics of Decolonization in India, Cambridge Commonwealth Series* (London: Macmillan Press, 1979), 131—44. Tomlinson notes that the British Treasury and the India Office considered constitutional change in India only after 1945, when India had replaced the sterling debt owed to Britain with balances almost four times higher owed to British India.

20   Ulrike Capdepón and A. Dirk Moses, "Introduction," Journal of Genocide Research 23, no. 3 (July 3, 2021): 371—73; Aleida Assmann, "A Spectre Is Haunting Germany: The Mbembe Debate and the New Antisemitism," *Journal of Genocide Research* 23, no. 3 (July 3, 2021): 400—41; Natan Sznaider, "The Summer of Discontent: Achille Mbembe in Germany," *Journal of Genocide Research* 23, no. 3 (July 3, 2021): 412—19.

21   The Maecenas World Patrimony Foundation, "The Sphere," http://worldpatrimony.org/celestialsphere/ (accessed December 31, 2021).

22   Erez Manela, "Dawn of a New Era: The 'Wilsonian Moment' in Colonial Contexts and the Transformation of the World Order, 1917—1920," in *Competing Visions of World Order: Global Moments and Movements, 1880s—1930s* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 122—26.

23   Daniel Immerwahr, *How to Hide an Empire* (London: The Bodley Head, an imprint of Vintage, 2019), 117; Robert G. Parkinson, *Thirteen Clocks How Race United the Colonies and Made the Declaration of Independence* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2021).

24   Saul Dubow, "South Africa's Racist Founding Father Was also a Human Rights Pioneer," New York Times, May 18, 2019, www.nytimes.com/2019/05/18/opinion/jan-smuts-south-africa.html (accessed December 28, 2021).

25   "Smuts Says Veto Will Wreck U.N. – Also Tells Interviewer That the Marshall Plan Will Save Western Civilization," The New York Times, August 14, 1947, page 8, timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1947/08/14/issue.html (accessed May 30, 2022).

26   Mark Mazower, No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009), 30—31.

27   Achille Mbembe, "Exit from Democracy," in *Necropolitics* (Duke University Press, 2019), 38.

28   Peter Hulme, "Beyond the Straits: Postcolonial Allegories of the Globe," in *Postcolonial Studies and Beyond* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 41—61. In this most hopeful text, Hulme introduces a number of ideas that I rely on, notably that postcoloniality must be reckoned with in both former colonies and the metropole. This question is, of course, particularly relevant during this time of Brexit.

(De)colonial Social Housing:
A French Legal-architectural History

Nagy Makhlouf

In France and its former colonial empire, social housing policies were designed to exclude colonized populations, preventing them from taking root and from leaving traces of their presence. These policies consisted of articulations of laws, architectural types, and government regulations. While these policies were abandoned in the 1970s, others have perpetuated systemic racial discrimination and continue to haunt the postcolonial future of these populations. In order to decolonize social housing today, it is therefore necessary to retrace the entangled history of architecture and law within the French colonial continuum—what is known as a legal-architectural history—and pave the way for other policies. This article analyzes the status of paradigmatic colonial social housing policies in the Luth district in Gennevilliers, a Parisian *banlieue*.[1]

If you arrive in the Luth district from the Courtilles metro station, the first thing you will see is a vast wasteland that has emerged on two large empty plots of land. The first is used as a car park, and the second is overgrown with grass and littered with trash. Close by stand two slab housing blocks that an avenue abruptly cuts off in the middle. Additionally, there are smaller and newer buildings leaning against the housing slabs on either

side of the avenue. In 1965, the municipality built the Gérard Philippe block on the two empty plots. Then, in 2001, it demolished it, pierced the two other parallel blocks, and created traffic routes. At the time of demolition, the neighborhood was mainly inhabited by low-income families of African descent. Demolishing and transforming the urban grid is a routine part of public powers' "urban renewal" operations (*rénovation urbaine*). Retracing the steps that led to demolition allows us to address the intermingling of social housing policies and discriminatory management of immigrant populations within the French colonial continuum.

The first step in this history is the 1894 Siegfried Law, the founding legal act for the construction of social housing in France. The act discriminated against foreign residents by selectively offering accommodation only to French citizens, recognizing them as full members of society and giving them full political rights. On the other hand, it excluded immigrant populations from national belonging and thus access to public goods. It was within this framework that the communist municipality of Gennevilliers constructed its social housing. As noted by the sociologist Olivier Masclet, the city aimed to enhance the living conditions of the French working class, its main constituency, while excluding African workers. From the 1920s and especially after 1945, businesses in Gennevilliers relied heavily on the Moroccan and Algerian workforce. In the deliberate absence of rights, employers, or access to social housing, these populations were often subjected to exploitation and forced to live in shantytowns. In 1924, the municipality first banned the construction of furnished accommodation for North African immigrants by French developers. This was followed by the construction of state-built dormitories for North African male migrants. The austere architecture of these dormitories was designed to prevent migrants from bringing their families, and it embodied their transitory presence in Gennevilliers.[2]

Beginning in 1945, the municipality of Gennevilliers launched ambitious urban projects for social housing and public services in the form of *grands ensembles*—slab housing blocks—steered by modernist architectural ideology. These architectural ideas were deeply entangled with communist ideals and aimed towards a classless city that could provide excellent living conditions for everyone.[3] From 1965 to 1978, the town municipality built the Luth *grands ensembles* accordingly,

Fig. 1: The bar-shaped housing slabs of the Luth neighborhood, in 1965 (top) and in 2021 (bottom). The Gérard Philippe block and its traces are seen on the right as empty plots. Notice how the four blocks adjacent to the Gérard Philippe block have been cut in half. Screenshots made via the French governmental website "Géoportail", www.geoportail.gouv.fr.

providing unequaled comfort to the qualified French workers who inhabited them.

In the case of Gennevilliers and other communist municipalities around Paris, however, urban projects continued to exclude North African workers. On the one hand, the absence of rights and lower wages prevented them from accessing high-quality rental market housing. On the other hand, the housing standards, such as the size of the flats, made them unsuitable for North African families with a large multi-family structure. At the same time, the State had been accommodating these households in a substandard social housing sector of transit complexes (*cités de transit*). French architects and officials defined substandard legal-architectural categories in the 1958 Constantine Plan (*plan de Constantine*). At the height of the war, they applied it in Algeria and metropolitan France. Thereafter, the "Muslim habitat" category housed the Algerian population within transit complexes. It replaced the "native habitat" (*habitat indigène*) category that the Indigenous code (*Code de l'indigénat*) defined and which was in force until 1946. In contrast, the settler population was able to benefit from the same standards enjoyed by French workers in Gennevilliers.[4] Discriminating through categories of social housing such as "transit" emphasized how French public authorities wanted colonized populations neither to settle nor to leave traces in their cities. These policies are part of a "colonial history of the experimentation of *grands ensembles.*"[5]

The multiplication of shantytowns around Paris led public authorities to enact a decree in 1968 that compelled social housing organizations to accommodate a third of inadequately housed people. The order marked the beginning of a widespread admission of foreigners into social housing projects. Thereafter, the state enacted laws to stop subsidizing public housing, prohibiting non-market housing forms, and granting financial credits for individual homeownership. Moreover, the 1971 Chalandon Law terminated cooperative housing. The following 1973 Guichard Act ended the construction of *grands ensembles* by denouncing their architecture but disregarding their actual uses, qualities, and potential. In addition, the 1977 Barre Law actively promoted and subsidized the industrial production of detached individual housing through financial credit lines. Finally, since 2018, the ELAN law has been promoting the sale of social housing, hence pursuing a policy that has been con-

sistent for four decades. Overall, the State has actively conditioned the (housing) market to support individual homeownership. It did so through easy lending. To sum up, the State enacted a "neoliberal housing policy"[6]: it shifted from a common right to housing to an individual right to buy, or in other words, from citizenship to clientele relations.

Consequently, the upper fractions of the local French working and middle classes left the *grands ensembles* in massive numbers in the 1970s. Their departure forced social housing organizations to accommodate as many immigrant families as possible in order to maximize housing profitability. Subsequent overcrowding and reduced means allocated to cleaning and maintenance resulted in a rapid deterioration in neighborhoods like Le Luth.[7] At the same time, households who bought detached houses on credit were often unable to pay the loans back. Thus, the debt burden accompanied and resulted in less public spending, material degradation, and a decline in public services. Concomitantly, the single-family home typology resulted in massive urban sprawl, remoteness from job centers, and subsequent socio-economic exclusion.[8]

Against this backdrop, in the 1980s, public authorities conflated cause and effect of social problems encountered in *grands ensembles* and their architecture.[9]

To address these problems, Charles Pasqua, Minister of the Interior (1986—1988 and 1993—1995) and head of the Gennevilliers department (1988—2004), defined national policies for urban renewal. They notably consist of an architectural formula and protocol for intervening in the *grands ensembles*. At the same time, Pasqua modified the Nationality code to restrict immigration (*Code de la nationalité*, Pasqua Laws, 1986 and 1993) and enacted safety laws to extend police resources. In 1995, urban renewal began near Le Luth by the splitting and demolition of the Caravelle *grand ensemble*, inhabited by similar social groups. In the process, hundreds of housing units were removed and new traffic lanes were created. These operations were soon repeated in Le Luth in 2001 and codified in the 2003 Borloo Law. While it planned to rebuild as many housing units as it destroyed, rebuilt dwellings often had higher rents and were less spacious.[10] Hence, the law enactment excluded low-income and larger families who are often from previously colonized and racialized populations.

It mirrored discriminatory policies that were at work during the building of the first *grands ensembles*. According to the French sociologist Mathieu Rigouste, new traffic lanes have especially facilitated police interventions in Le Luth.[11] These interventions consist notably of identity checks on racialized populations, which are often numerous and arbitrary.[12] These checks are complemented by the yearly murder, in the *banlieues*, of up to 30 youths of North African and Black descent.[13] The intermingling of demolition policies, police interventions, and anti-immigration laws under Pasqua has thus made urban renewal the latest legal-architectural step in the French colonial continuum.

The current phase of renewing Le Luth fits into both the colonial and neoliberal continuum that started in the 1970s. As we have seen, its development is inseparable from socio-spatial discrimination. It triggered the concentration of immigrant households in the *grands ensembles*, their deterioration, and the concentration of French households in detached housing. In 2017, the city of Gennevilliers decided to build on the plot of the demolished Gérard Philippe housing block. It followed another general legal-architectural formula in France: the concerted development area (*zone d'aménagement concerté—*ZAC), as defined in the town planning code (*Code de l'urbanisme*). This formula often consists of an "ecological neighborhood" defined by energy-consumption labels. According to the city's website, the neighborhood will feature a "maker space," "coworking spaces," "business incubators," and at least 25% social housing.[14] As its name indicates, the "Talent Maker Lab" ZAC that replaces the housing block focuses on the Maker movement. Yet, neither the municipality's website nor the developer mentions the memory of Le Luth and its inhabitants. At the same time, scholars prove how the Maker movement has been essentially composed of white, male, and middle- to upper-class social groups.[15] One can observe this focus in other French cities, such as Marseille and its ZAC, called The Factories (*Les Fabriques*), which is rebuilding an urban fabric formerly inhabited by immigrant populations. The so-called Maker ZAC is symptomatic of neoliberal urban policies: cities compete by promoting a milieu suitable for the "creative class" and investments.[16] Within the ZAC scheme, the neoliberal temporality completes the colonial continuum in disregarding and erasing the traces of colonized populations.

Finally, what legal-architectural means might exist for the *grands ensembles* to leave the colonial and neo-liberal continuums and support households in taking root and transmitting traces? Two exemplary approaches outline alternatives by refusing erasure, one through *droit de jouissance* and the other through differentiated regulatory regimes.

First, social housing inhabitants are still legally prohibited from leaving traces of their life there, as if they were still in transit cities. Instead, inhabitants could be owners—not in the sense of land and property ownership but in the sense of having a right of use. The latter follows the idea that dwellers co-author social housing by their use and transmit it. Use transforms architecture, which is passed on and evolves cumulatively by "keeping track of uses," as the architect Patrick Bouchain writes. Hence, the value of a home depends notably on such use. Furthermore, Bouchain calls for recreating "a link between the power to act individually on one's built environment and the collective modes of democratic representation, based on smaller scales, particularly communal ones."[17] On one hand, these collective modes of democratic representation can notably exist through the 2014 ALUR Law, which re-establishes possibilities for participation in cooperative housing, governance, and rental, which the 1971 Chalandon Law had suspended for decades. On the other hand, the various uses and traces that transformed dwellings create a diverse housing stock. Therefore, they enable a meaningful choice by households instead of a mere allocation.

The other approach developed by the architects Charlotte Malterre-Barthes, Julian Schubert, and Marc Angélil focuses on large courtyards widespread within *grands ensembles* blocks and suggests zoning them as "less regulated pockets."[18] There would thus be the opportunity to trade at low tax rates for those who suffer from an intersection of social stigma and do not fit into traditional workplaces. The proposal is all the more potent since the courtyards are the very ones criticized by public powers for creating "enclaves," which they remove by demolishing or by cutting blocks in half.

To sum up, one can distinguish several phases of French colonial social housing. From 1894 to 1945, the law reserved the right to social housing only to French citizens; when it came to accommodating the colonized workforce, the State kept construction to a quantitative and
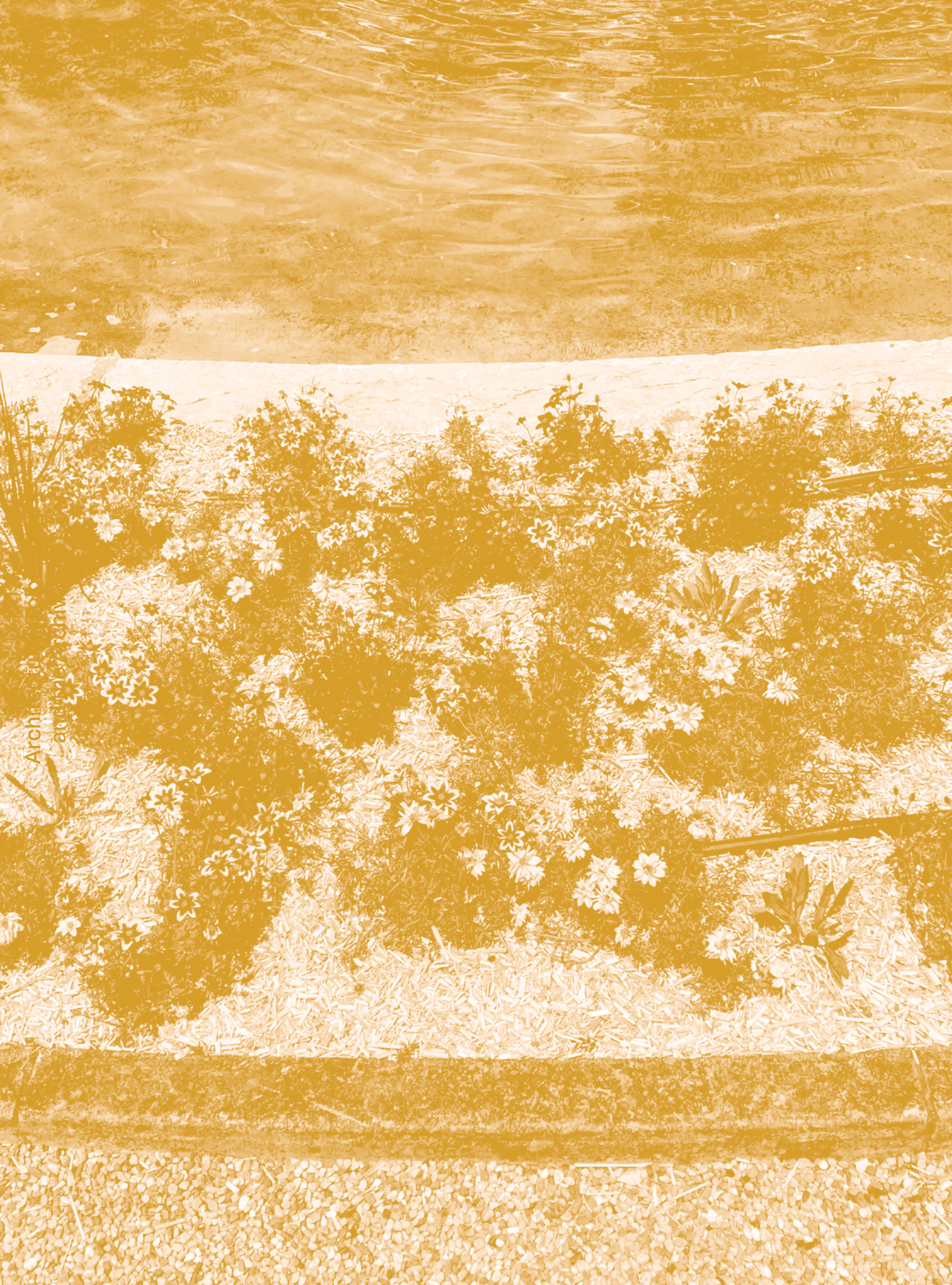
qualitative minimum. From 1945 to 1971, in metropolitan France and occupied Algeria, *grands ensembles* were hierarchically divided between two sets of housing standards, the first for French citizens and the second for immigrant populations. From 1971 to 1992, public policies shifted towards a neoliberal restructuring, stopping the construction of *grands ensembles*, reducing subsidies for social housing, and fostering individual housing and access to private ownership. French workers deserted the *grands ensembles,* which then primarily accommodated immigrants and deteriorated. After that, "urban renewal" demolition was undertaken alongside the enactment of safety and anti-immigration laws. Subsequent reconstruction has focused on the white "creative class" and disregards the presence of immigrants. These last steps of neoliberal restructuring intermingle with the colonial continuum. Finally, to make ground for a decolonial approach to urban renewal, architects must use and invent legal-architectural means that support the inhabitants' material involvement, memory, and role within modes of self-organization.

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1   The term often refers to marginalized French suburbs with significant immigrant populations.

2   Olivier Masclet, "Du 'bastion' au 'ghetto': Le communisme municipal en butte à l'immigration," *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* 159 (2005): 4.

3   Anatole Kopp, *Quand le moderne n'était pas un style mais une cause* (Paris: École nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts, 1987).

4   Samia Henni, *Architecture of Counterrevolution: The French Army in Northern Algeria* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017).

5   Mathieu Rigouste, interview by Léopold Lambert, "Le Luth, Gennevilliers," transcript, Quartiers populaires: episode 6, *The Funambulist*, June 17, 2020.

6   Pierre Bourdieu, *Contre-feux: propos pour servir à la résistance contre l'invasion néo-libérale* (Paris: Éditions Liber, 1998).

7   Masclet, "Du 'bastion' au 'ghetto': Le communisme municipal en butte à l'immigration."

8   Anne Lambert, *"Tous propriétaires!" L'envers du décor pavillonnaire* (Paris: Seuil, 2015).

9   Sociologist David Madden analyzed similar conflation in the American context through the lens of the Pruitt-Igoe myth, bearing the name of the modernist public housing project torn down in 1972. He described it as a "neoliberal fable used to justify dynamiting other social housing developments." See David J. Madden, "Poor Man's Penthouse," City 16, 3 (2012): 377—381.

10 Gilles Pinson, *La ville néolibérale* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2020).

11 Rigouste, "Le Luth, Gennevilliers."

12 Fabien Jobard, René Lévy, *Police et minorités visibles: les contrôles d'identité à Paris* (New York: Open Society Institute, 2009).

13 Ivan du Roy, Ludo Simbille, "Morts à la suite d'interventions policières," Bastamag, available at bastamag.net/webdocs/police/ (accessed July 28, 2021).

14 Ville de Gennevilliers, "ZAC du Luth - TML", www.ville-gennevilliers.fr/468/cadre-de-vie/projets-d-amenagement-et-d-equipements-publics/zac-du-luth-tml.htm (accessed January 23, 2021).

15 Vasilis Niaros et al., "Making (in) the Smart City: The Emergence of Makerspaces," *Telematics and Informatics*, 34, no. 7 (2017).

16 Philipp Lawton et al., "Neoliberalising the City 'Creative-class' Style," in *Neoliberal Urban Policy and the Transformation of the City*, ed. Andrew MacLaran and Sinéad Kelly (Berlin: Springer, 2014), 189—202.

17 Bouchain, Patrick et al., *Construire ensemble le grand ensemble: habiter autrement* (Paris: Actes Sud, 2010).

18 Marc Angélil, Charlotte Malterre-Barthes, Julian Schubert, *Migrant Marseille* (Berlin: Ruby Press, 2020).

Architecture, Coloniality, and the Archives: Reimagining heritage, its materialities, and speech acts

Hollyamber Kennedy

"To destroy the colonial world," wrote Frantz Fanon, "means nothing less than burying it deep within the earth or banishing it from the territory."[1] It was not Fanon's project to worry over the meaning of the earth's record keeping. When he described the colonial world as "a compartmentalized world," one whose geographies could be mentally pierced and infiltrated, he was reflecting on its spatial rules of difference, a spatiality that worked on the registers of the mind as well as upon the living and designed terrains of the material realm.[2] The land as a space of burial and, in its earthen depths, of a decolonizing banishment, as Fanon imagined it, can also be understood as a space of collection, of narrative gatherings—a repository of stories, marked by an entanglement of human and non-human articulations, a space that exceeds, as Fanon appears to suggest, the multi-scalar spatial violence and rewritings of colonialism's division of the world and its legislated dispossessions.

As part of the land-terrain-territory triad discussed by Stuart Elden, land has emerged, in Western political theory, as a space of abstraction, a realm for political economic rationalization. This heritage of thought continues to leave its imprint on other disciplinary

understandings. Even for a writer such as Tim Ingold, so perceptively in tune with the richness of the stories captured by and entangled within the landscape, land is stationary, homogenous, and silent. "You can ask of land, as of weight, how much there is, but not what it is like," he writes. "But where land is thus quantitative and homogenous, the landscape is qualitative and hetero-genous."[3] This muting of land leaves us with a one-dimensional, unvoiced, quantitative space of ownership and boundary-drawing, but not necessarily of place-making. Moreover, it is only through conflict, Elden notes, that its dual resonance is revealed. "Conflict over land is unique," he writes, "in that it is always two-fold, both over its possession and conducted upon its terrain."[4] Land thus acquires in this context two resounding con-cept forms; it becomes, at once and in a circular move-ment, the site and the stake of the struggles that define it. Land, in this case, bears echoes of itself that are different from those envisioned by Fanon. What Elden's analysis overlooks, or to be fair, is not interested in, are the multiple and not always synched epistemologies of that space, the other and quite radically different meanings of land, place, terrain, and territory that pre-exist, converge around, and are obscured by this double movement of conflict and ownership.

This dynamic, fundamental to imperial and colonial structures, and to their territorialities, has been central to the development of modern architecture. This per-spective serves to ground, earths even, the material and infrastructural crossings of space and power and, importantly, reveals long-standing but overlooked en-tanglements between land and architecture. Approach-ing these connections from the standpoint of the land and landscape, rather than privileging the architectural, places the relationship between settlement and land within an expanded field. It shifts how we understand its many temporalities, its other more local geographies, its scalar embodiments, and its forgotten agencies. There are certain spatial types (a temporary dwelling in the form of a repurposed wagon (fig.1), for example) and particular artifacts (a seasonal passport for the tracking of migrant workers, or, in its more severe form, a colo-nial pass mark to monitor the restricted mobilities of indentured and racialized labor (fig.2)) that relay those entanglements of land and architecture in ways that capture different understandings of their relation and unsettle our focus, as architectural historians, on certain scales and temporalities. Transient dwelling and

precarious forms of inhabitation, preserved in fragmentary ways by these artifacts, are embedded in histories of land dispossession and offer, from the vantage point of an undervalued domain of knowledge, new perspectives on the relation between modern architecture, modernization, and development.[5]

In a recent essay, "Architectural History or a Geography of Small Spaces?," Swati Chattopadhyay has argued for a similar shift of scale in our historical imagination, a shift in how, and along what measured parameters, we trace the racialized aesthetics of imperialism.[6] She argues for a pivot to small spaces, spaces neither entirely about size nor about scale itself, but which often, "by themselves or as collectivities, occupy large areas." Spaces "such as verandahs, courtyards, terraces, fire escapes, and stoops" that are "part of a global lexicon of spatial types and yet are rarely deemed sufficiently important to merit close reading."[7] The ordinary domestic landscape, shaped by these marginalized spatial types—a marginalization in scholarship that confers invisibility on those whose lives are shaped by their occupation, or labor, within these spaces, as Chattopadhyay notes—"throws up unexpected connections, unanticipated convergences, and laboring bodies that worked, waited, and rebelled."[8] I have elsewhere written about such small and overlooked spaces of inhabitation, which share a condition similar to the spatial types discussed by Chattopadhyay; spaces that are at once woven into the fabric of empire and yet, in their patterning of equally "small" insurgencies, transcend its disciplinary constraints. Architectural stories, such as those archived by the land and landscape, flow through these disregarded, often ephemeral, and unfixed spaces and the artifacts they enfold and in which they are captured. In the same way that inhabitation of these spaces, to borrow from Anooradha Iyer Siddiqi, generates "theory, practices, and ritual knowledges of its own."[9]

Unsettling territory:
Traces in the land

In my own work, I have attempted to unearth and to trace an architectural history of rural modernization that linked European countryside to colony, to track an archive of stories about territory, "reclaimed" and "cleansed" landscapes, and shared "frontiers" of agrarian development (fig.3), the grafting of one space over another in

distinct and disparate locations, subject to different but communicating ministerial bureaucracies, whose legacies continue to pattern today's enclosed spaces of extraction.[10] In the context of this research on land reclamations and the architectures of coerced migration and resettlement, I began to imagine the dissonant co-ordinates of what Edward Said referred to as a counter-map, a space of "overlapping territories and intertwined histories," a variegated sphere where multiple and not always aligned modernities co-exist, a space of con-flicting and possibly disobedient representation—other "small" spaces—through which the complex inter-subjectivities and vital non-human agencies of colonial land histories and their internal colonial mediations could be traced; situated, as Said writes, in their "global and earthly context."[11]

I was recently asked, while Said's notion of overlapping territories and their earthen roots played on my mind, to contribute to an exhibition and catalogue project ex-ploring the globalism of German colonial building cultures.[12] The idea was to select and briefly situate a single primary source text. This was not difficult. I was at the time inspecting a book on the German colonial economy written by the one-time settlement commis-sioner for German South-West Africa, Paul Rohrbach, who served in this capacity between the years of 1903 to 1906. That Rohrbach arrived in this region at the onset of the administration's counterinsurgency efforts to subdue Herero and Nama resistance to further German presence is not insignificant. In studying the book (fig. 4), it became clear that the unattributed land-scape painting reprinted on its cover, like Drzymała's wagon and its daily meter-by-meter circulations, or the haunting pass mark to which it was in a certain sense aligned, provided an unexpected entry point, another "small" space of empire, through which to re-read and to unsettle the scales and temporalities of colonial territory and to trace the interconnected dispersals of its cultural landscapes.

To understand the painting in this way is to practice a disobedient form of interpretation, to read in the artifact what it has obscured, to reassign its certainty of vision, its verisimilitude, as precariously balanced. It means seeing it as an incomplete grafting in which the tensions of empire are subtly transmitted. This practice of disobedient looking, or listening, is described by Walter D. Mignolo as a method for unveiling epistemic

silences, a mode of positioning—an unearthing of traces, as Denise Bertschi, Julien Lafontaine Carboni, and Nitin Bathla, the editors of this volume, put it—that allows "the silences to build arguments" to confront the very mechanisms and aesthetic systems that have authored such concealments.[13]

Rohrbach's book, *Deutsche Kolonialwirtschaft: Südwest-Africa,* was released in 1907 by Deutscher Werkbund co-founder Friedrich Naumann, by his liberal-leaning publishing house der "Hilfe," a press that helped place German modernism into print circulation.[14] The book's narrative is configured in two parts. The first centers questions of land, and the second engages its mediation through the colonial economy. What were the circumstances of its making? Trained as a geographer, Protestant theologian, and economist, Rohrbach had been dispatched by the Colonial Division of the Department of Foreign Affairs as an expert on settlement issues, based in part on his geographical studies of settlement histories in the Middle East and Central Asia, undertaken after his training at the University of Berlin (now Humboldt University) with the prominent geographer Ferdinand von Richthofen, who in 1877 had popularized the concept-term "Silk Road," having extensively mapped its topographies.[15] The book's composition, like the author's own itinerary and of those with whom he studied, is reflective of the interlocking dynamic of expertise that shaped the racialized terrains of German empire, both in the domain of the settler-colonial imagination and in the contested realm of its material cultures, environmental and territorial ecologies, and architectural inhabitations.

A different condition of dissonance informs the painting on the book's cover. The image depicts a pastoral earthen paradise and a landscape transmuted, a colonial picturesque that stakes a visual, environmental, and architectural claim to African space—printed, circulated, and sold in a time of genocide. The illustration and its dream space, seeded in the imagined Arcadian fields of empire and graphically constitutive of its scopic regime, provide the verdant frame through which we enter Rohrbach's narrative. Led to an overlook cresting a valley expanse, Rohrbach's reader is situated, first, as a passing observer, and second, in direct relation to the book, as a witness to its ideas. What are its readers being asked to see? One overarching idea, I would suggest, that is strongly mediated by the relation

between the painting and the text. Here, in this Arcadian imaginary, we may observe the effort to mediate colonization through the use of a screen on which imperialism was reimagined as part of a natural and harmonious order, a dream space that obscured of empire's violent territorializations of land and bodies. As Jill Casid and others have discussed, including as noted in the recent architectural research of Metaxia Markaki, this narrative of rightful possession, achieved by the superimposition of an ancient and mythic story on a contemporary field, repeats itself on the ground as spatial practice.[16]

The image that shepherds the reader into the narrative is a picture of fertile bounty and agrarian harmony, a promise of plenty. This abundance, signaling a latent mineral wealth, is secondary however, to the central theme of the image, the community of modest single-story buildings to which the observer's eye is unmistakably drawn, framed by a pair of trees in early blossom. The story of German settlement naturalized by this image of emergence serves to focus and prefigure the reader's imaginative gaze, earths it, even, in Rohrbach's frontier ideal, while masking both the reality of settlement planning on the ground and the structural brutality of its political economy, which was grounded in the wide-scale expropriation of Herero and Nama land. Guided by Rohrbach's vision of a "settlement land" for white colonial society (fig.5), this approach required, alongside large-scale land divestment, the comprehensive destruction of local structures of sovereignty and of communal relationships to and pastoralist use of the land. The administration's later land practices, informed by Rohrbach's recommendations, aimed to parcel and to enclose, to supersede existing traditions that organized, negotiated, and made customs of common place. This rationalization of the landscape, the administration of space and the punishing wage labor system it reproduced, featured as part of a strategy of "tribal dissolution," as described at the time by the governor of the colony, Theodor Leutwein.[17] If, as Casid writes, "every spatial practice traces a particular kind of narrative," then we may read the pastoral imaginary on the book's cover, dissonant with the actual pastoral relationship on the ground that the Germans sought to supersede, as a critical part of this concealed circuit of dispossession.[18]

As I read its picture plane, accompanied by Mignolo's concept of epistemic disobedience, I saw, in place of its rural ideal, the genocide that had in fact precipitated its repurposed Germanness and, alongside this disavowed death, the worlding practiced by the Nama and Herero in resurgent defiance of German incursion. That decolonial moment represented in their worlding, here a refusal of the forms of spatial over-writing, of servitude and appropriation, an uprising met by asymmetrical war, resonates today in the words of Achille Mbembe, as "a promise whose main mode of existence was its futurity." A pathway for the "departitioning" and "disenclosure of the world."[19] I wondered, then, if the testimonies lodged in the earth by empire's recursive conflicts and its spatial over-writings—or cartographies—might be understood as features of the land's own discourse, one that is unfixed, adaptive, in flux, a discourse woven by diverse objects and artifacts whose numerous and overlapping temporalities and shifting scales of meaning surpass in spectacular excess the scope of how we have come to understand who and what has shaped the architectural past. I find much affinity in the evocative and vital image recently proposed by two emerging scholars, Sara Frikech and Daphne Bakker, of "the unquiet land," a concept-form that framed their project to write a botanical biography of the colonial past of Suriname, informed by their reading of Caribbean literature that has rigorously confronted the ongoing legacies and landed embodiments of the transatlantic slave trade.[20] "Our landscape is its own monument," writes Edouard Glissant, "the trace that signifies it is traceable within it. It is all history," drawing a link to Said's statement that all of human history "is rooted in the earth."[21] This thinking, of the land's entanglement with the architectural, with the ecologies of settlement, of its capacity to enfold and capture conflicting narratives, to signal the places where certain concealed stories about power, seizure, and enclosure have been preserved, in chemical markers, for example, as Shourideh C. Molavi has so powerfully shown, comes from many overlapping fields of inquiry, seeded by early discourses on decolonization.[22]

Now, new lines of thought at the crossing of the natural sciences and the humanities are proliferating, lines of thought distinguished by an undisguised urgency and, for many, a politics. The intensification of the global, as Dipesh Chakrabarty has recently argued, an age created by European empires and capitalism, "has made

us encounter the planet."[23] As the reach of capitalism expands, as the domain of work and the technology of work continue their unrelenting and entangled acceleration, deep earth and the biosphere have become pierced by our demands, by more extreme resource mobilization, as global processes and their exhaustion have given way to planetary processes. For Chakrabarty, this encounter with the planetary, coldly indifferent to the notion of our centrality to the scale of the Earth's story—"we now increasingly know that the planet was not made with humans in view"—presents two possible responses. One, "to continue and intensify the work of the global and to try and fold the planetary back into its reach"; and the other, "is to work toward a planet that no longer belongs to the human-dominant order that European empires, postcolonial and modernizing nationalisms, and capitalist and consumerist globalization created over the last five hundred years."[24] This encounter, he writes, has taken us to the place we now in live, "on the cusp of the global and the planetary."[25] For thinkers such as Achille Mbembe, this movement is embodied in the decolonial. Decolonial futurities, the field of possibility opened by a fundamental shift away from empire and capital's worlding of the Earth, beyond its partitions, its enclosures, and its extractivism, beyond certain approaches to settlement in the land, can lead us, Mbembe writes, "out of the dark night."[26] Architectural history can contribute to these futurities, can draw attention to the stories being spoken, in the words of Frikech and Bakker, by "the unquiet land." Allowing the silences and the sites of capitalist concealment or imperial over-writing to build narratives opens the space for other stories, so radically different from the ones we have been told.

1 Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Richard Philcox, intro. Homi Bhabha (New York: Grove Press, 2021), 6.

2 Fanon's full quote is revealing: "The colonial world is a compartmentalized world. It is obviously as superfluous to recall the existence of 'native' towns and European towns, of schools for 'natives' and schools for Europeans, as it is to recall apartheid in South Africa. Yet if we penetrate inside this compartmentalization we shall at least bring to light some of its key aspects. By penetrating its geographical configuration and classification we shall be able to delineate the backbone on which the decolonized society is reorganized." Ibid., 3.

3 Tim Ingold, "The Temporality of the Landscape," *World Archeology* 25, no. 2, Conceptions of Time and Ancient Society (Oct. 1993): 153—54.

4 Stuart Elden, *The Birth of Territory* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2013), 11. See also Elden, "Land, Terrain, Territory," *Progress in Human Geography* 34, no. 6 (2010): 799—817.

5 For more on these links, see the timely and excellent new publication *Architecture in Development: Systems and the Emergence of the Global South*, ed. Aggregate Architectural History Collaborative (London: Routledge, 2022).

6 Swati Chattopadhyay, "Architectural History or a Geography of Small Spaces?" *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 81, no.1 (March 2022): 5—20.

7 Ibid., 5.

8 Ibid., 18.

9 Anooradha Iyer Siddiqi, "The University and The Camp," *Ardeth: A Magazine on the Power of the Project* 6 (2020): 139. DOI 10.17454/ARDETH06.11.

10 Hollyamber Kennedy, "Infrastructures of 'Legitimate Violence': The Prussian Settlement Commission, Internal Colonization, and the Migrant Remainder," *Grey Room* 76 (Summer 2019): 58—97; Kennedy, "A Spatial Writing of the Earth: The Design of Colonial Territory in South-West Africa," in *German Colonialism in Africa and Its Legacies: Architecture, Art, Urbanism & Visual Culture*, ed. Itohan I. Osayimwese (London: Bloomsbury Academic Press, forthcoming fall/ winter 2022), 128—71; Kennedy, "Architectures of Unsettlement," in *The Making of Identity Through Rural Space: Scenarios, Experiences, and Contestations in the Rural Built Environment*, eds. Vera Egbers and Özge Sezer (Basel: Birkhäuser Verlag, forthcoming 2023).

11 Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Grove Press, 1993). "Overlapping Territories and Intertwined Histories" is the title of chapter one of this book, the notion is explained in the opening section, "Empire, Geography, and Culture," 3—15.

12 "Siedlungskolonialismus: Crafting a 'Settlement Land' for German Colonial Society," in *German-Colonial Building Cultures/Deutsch-Koloniale Baukulturen. Eine globale Architekturgeschichte in 100 visuellen Primärquellen* ed. Michael Falser. Catalogue publication and exhibition project (Munich: Zentralinstitut für Kunstgeschichte München, forthcoming 2023). Michael Falser is the director, editor, and curator of the upcoming exhibition and its attendant publication.

13 Walter D. Mignolo, "Epistemic Disobedience, Independent Thought and Decolonial Freedom," *Theory, Culture & Society* 26, no. 7-8 (2009): 159—81. "My humble claim," writes Mignolo, "is that geo- and body-politics of knowledge has been hidden from the self-serving interests of Western epistemology and that a task of decolonial thinking is the unveiling of epistemic silences of Western epistemology and affirming the epistemic rights of the racially devalued, and decolonial options to allow the silences to build arguments to confront those who take 'originality' as the ultimate criterion for the final judgement." Mignolo, 162.

14 Paul Rohrbach, *Deutsche Kolonialwirtschaft: Südwest-Africa* (Berlin-Schöneberg, Buchverlag der "Hilfe," 1907).

15 For more on Rohrbach's significance to the colonial connections between these linked spheres of rural modernization and agrarian development, see Dörte Lerp, "Farmers to the Frontier. Settler Colonialism in the Eastern Prussian Provinces and German Southwest Africa," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth Studies* 41 (2013): 567—83. For more on Ferdinand von Richthofen, see Dirk Van Laak, *Imperiale Infrastruktur. Deutsche Planungen für eine Erschließung Afrikas, 1880 bis 1960*, (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2004).

16 See Jill H. Casid, *Sowing Empire: Landscape and Colonization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005). Metaxia Markaki, "Arcadia: Politics of Land and Nature in Greek Peripheral Landscapes," ongoing doctoral dissertation at ETH Zurich.

17 Theodor Leutwein, *Elf Jahre Gouverneur in Deutsch-Südwestafrika [1906]* (Windhoek: Namibia Wissenschaftliche Gesellschaft, 1997).

18 Casid, *Sowing Empire*, 53.

19 Achille Mbembe, *Out of the Dark Night: Essays on Decolonization* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2021), 43—44.

20 Daphne Bakker and Sara Frikech, "The Unquiet Land," research project at the Het Nieuwe Institute, where Bakker and Frikech were Fellows, 2017—2018. For further reference, see research-development.hetnieuweinstituut.nl/en/ fellows/sara-frikech-and-daphne-bakker. I have been very lucky over the past several years to be in conversation with Sara Frikech, a doctoral student at the ETH Zürich, at the Institute for the History and Theory of Architecture, where I have been teaching as Guest Professor and Senior Researcher since 2020.

21 Edouard Glissant, *Le discours antillais* (Paris: Gallimard-Folio, 1997), 32. Also quoted by Frikech and Bakker, "The Unquiet Land," 2017. *Said, Culture and Imperialism*.

22 See the research and publications of Shourideh C. Molavi, notably, *Stateless Citizenship: The Palestinian-Arab Citizens of Israel* (Brill, 2013).

23 Dipesh Chakrabarty, *The Climate of History in a Planetary Age* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2021).

24 Ibid., 203.

25 Ibid., 204.

26 Mbembe, *Out of the Dark Night: Essays on Decolonization*.

Fig. 1: Drzymała family wagon, Podgradowice (Kaisertreu), 1904. In 1904, Michał and Józefa Drzymała, peasant farmers, were prohibited by the local building authorities from constructing a home on a small plot of land they had recently purchased in the village of Kaisertreu, which had formerly been known, before Prussian annexation in 1793, as Podgradowice. This village was located in the Grodzisk district, in the province of Poznań. The legal foundation for the building department's decision had been provided by a 1904 amendment to the 1886 Settlement Law, an anti-Slavic, anti-migrant land use and resettlement project drafted by legislators under the banner of internal colonization. Devised "to prevent the flooding of these regions by the Polish element," as the Minister of Agriculture put it at the time, and drawing upon the territorial imperative of colonial settlement, the purpose of the 1904 amendment was to enhance the power of local German administrators to deny building permits to Polish applicants on the grounds of ethnicity. "In order to ward off such dangers," the law stated, "the provision of 13b is to be used emphatically and unrestrictedly everywhere." In a transgressive response, Michał and Józefa moved their family into an out-of-use circus wagon. To circumvent a further restriction, they were later forced to shift their wagon several meters each day, tracing a pattern of continual and coerced movement across their own land. As a witness to the family's refusal to accept the logic of partition, their wagon, a space of ritual objection and a space of knowledge, has passed into folklore. Songs, sung in its memory, continue to unearth its daily rite of migration.

Fig. 2: Metal Pass Mark, South-West Africa, circa 1907. Credit: bpk/ Deutsches Historisches Museum/Indra Desnica. Between 1906 and 1907, amid the colonial war against the uprising Herero and Nama populations of South-West Africa (present-day Namibia), the German administration issued a series of legal ordinances that applied to all non-whites in the occupied regions. Described as "native decrees," these regulations formed part of an infrastructure of control that established a rigid system of localized surveillance over non-white mobility. Starting at the age of seven, all Herero and Nama were required to visibly wear a numbered metal plate, a pass mark, such as the one seen here, indicating their district. The numbers were unique and kept as part of a colonial census within the offices of each administrative center. Those mandated to bear the pass mark were required to seek the consent of their employer in order to leave their sector or district. The rule of enclosure signaled by the pass mark constituted a system of control over both labor and land, part of a political economy rooted in notions of indigenous rightlessness that was long in the making. The Germans had largely acquired their sovereignty over the region, beginning in the early 1880s, through the ruthless appropriation of common lands, thereby voiding existing customs and lines of inheritance in the land. These appropriations later acquired both a national and international legal framework, a rubric that grafted a space of centralized colonial administration, which relayed across scales, over the pastoralist landscape. The pass mark that you see here, a thin metal tag stamped with a serialized number, linking surveilled body and indentured laborer to district survey, is an artifact of that legislative system, a material remnant of the structural brutality of colonial bureaucracy. Yet it is also something else entirely; a trace of the uprising that refused the image of a "world-outside," marking a space of resistance against the representation of a barren and lawless frontier expanse—as a legal concept, *terra nullius*—where Europe could violently and with impunity cultivate itself.
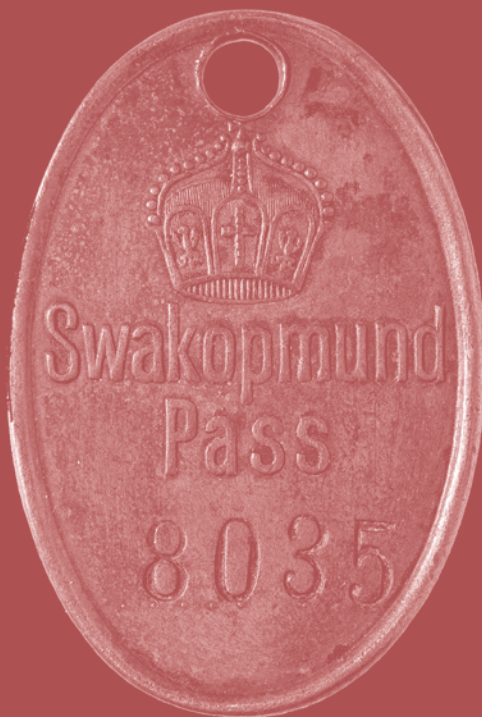
Fig. 3: Paul Fischer, Market Square, Golenhofen, c. 1906. Source: *Königlich Preußische Ansiedlungskommission, Zwanzig Jahre deutscher Kulturarbeit: Tätigkeit und Aufgabe neupreußischer Kolonisation in Westpreußen und Posen*, 1907. Architecture as an instrument of rule. This model village was planned on behalf of the Royal Prussian Settlement Commission (RPSC), an agency established in 1886 to carry out the mandates of the Settlement Law. It was overseen by the Ministry of Agriculture in Berlin, with local headquarters in Posen. Its executive office included economists, accountants, appraisers, surveyors, builders, a chief architect and planner, settlement managers, and five parliamentary ministers. The Commission was assembled in the wake of several mass expulsions, in 1882 and 1883, in which over 30,000 non-citizens were deported from the eastern provinces to Russia and Galicia. When it was understood that the population expulsions had not achieved their stated purpose, to "cleanse" the Slavic and Jewish "element" from the hinterlands and to re-civilize its landscape, the settlement policy was proposed by the Ministry of Agriculture as a means to accomplish, on the scale of territory, upon its terrain and over its land, what the more radical measures of outright deportation could not. To grasp the meaning of this reclamation project, which linked countryside to colony, and to understand it as a window onto the broader colonial-territorial moment of the late 1880s, is to see it relationally, alongside, interacting with, and as co-produced by the architectures of migration, the spatial histories of expropriation and land divestment, the divergent forms of precarious and regimented settlement, and the insurgencies to which it gave rise—linking wagon to pass mark to market square.

Fig. 4: Paul Rohrbach, *Deutsche Kolonialwirtschaft: Südwest-Afrika*, Buchverlag der "Hilfe," Berlin-Schöneberg, 1907. In 1907, the Protestant theologian, economist, geographer, and journalist Paul Rohrbach published his first major study of the German colonial economy, *Deutsche Kolonialwirtschaft: Südwest-Afrika*, for his friend and associate Friedrich Naumann's publishing house, der "Hilfe." Rohrbach met Naumann, co-founder of the *Deutscher Werkbund*, in 1891 in Berlin, shortly after Naumann's tenure at the Inner Mission in Frankfurt and not long before Rohrbach began his own theological studies. The book was commissioned upon Rohrbach's return to Berlin, after serving for several years, beginning in 1903, as the settlement commissioner and economic expert for the colony of German South-West Africa. After travels in Cameroon and Togo, German occupied territories, Rohrbach took up a teaching post as lecturer in colonial economics at the Berliner Handelshochschule. In his subsequent publications, he continued to position labor exploitation and land appropriation as elemental tools of empire, writing in 1907 that "the two basic questions of the colonial economy are land use, on the one hand, and the use of the indigenous population, on the other." The racialized terrains of empire were outlined by figures such as Rohrbach and its epistemological traditions strengthened.

Fig. 5: E. Schoedder, *Drei Villen am Hügel*, Windhoek, Namibia, photograph not dated. Credit: National Archives of Namibia. Among the earliest of ordinances issued in South-West Africa during the war against the Herero and Nama, which together would comprise the so-called "native decrees," was a new set of settlement regulations that included a vague clause announcing the expropriation of all indigenous land. More specific regulations followed in 1907, which, together with the earlier declaration, enabled the local authorities to officially expropriate remaining common land within the Central Plateau. Much of this was then parceled and gifted in deeds to the German soldiers who remained as settlers after 1908. After the issue of this ordinance and until 1915 (and continued thereafter under South African colonial rule), the subsequent urban and architectural development of Namibia, as illustrated in Schoedder's photograph, owed much to this legacy of dispossession. The "model village" architectures of Posen and West Prussia, the site of the state's internal colonization campaign, were similarly contoured by what Helmut Walser Smith describes as "the imagination of expulsion" scripted by the 1886 Settlement Law and its later amendments.

To Unearth and to Trace,
To Bury and to Banish

Hollyamber Kennedy is a historian of modern architecture and a postdoctoral fellow at the Institute for the History and Theory of Architecture at the ETH in Zurich, Switzerland. Her work explores the intersection of modern architecture, colonial science, and processes of territorialization, and her research centers the role of anti-colonial and anti-partition resistance in the shaping of the colonial built environment. She previously held a postdoctoral research fellowship at the Mahindra Humanities Center, Harvard University, as part of a four-year project on migration and the humanities. Her research has been supported by the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts, the Mellon Foundation, the Social Science Research Council, the DAAD, SAH, and CAA. Her writing has been published by Grey Room, the University of Chicago Press, Avery Review, MIT Press, and Whitechapel Gallery. She has an essay forthcoming with Aggregate that is a part of the Feminist Architectural Histories of Migration series, and a chapter in a forthcoming book edited by Itohan Osayimwese on *The Architectural Legacies of German Colonialism in Africa*. She is currently working on a long-term collaborative project with Anooradha Iyer Siddiqi exploring concept histories of settlement. She received her PhD in architectural history and theory from Columbia University's Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation.

Swiss Psychotropic Gold Refinery: Ethnographic Explorations into Postcolonial Amnesia and Beyond…

Rohit Jain

To walk through the Gold Museum is to become vaguely conscious of how for millennia the mystery of gold has through myth and stories sustained the basis of money worldwide. But one story is missing. The museum is silent as to the fact that for more than three centuries of Spanish occupation, what the colony stood for and deepened upon was the labor of slaves from Africa in the gold mines. Indeed, this gold, along with silver from Mexico and Peru, was what primed the pump of the capitalist takeoff in Europe, its primitive accumulation.[1]

Gold drives man crazy because the desire it stimulates is boundless, reeking of danger that needs to be hemmed in by a firewall of fairy tales and superstition.[2]

[If only] we could strip these fetishes of their mythology and thus expose the true and real substances themselves, naked and alone in the primal state of natural being. Yet even if we could, we would thereby destroy what animates us, those subtle tricks played on human understanding by substances that appear to speak for themselves. That language I want is just that language that runs along the seam where matter and myth connect and disconnect continuously.[3]

In *My Cocaine Museum*,[4] the anthropologist Michael Taussig attempts to find a language, both ethnographic and poetic, to understand and express how contemporary Colombia is haunted by the violent history of gold. He draws on the display in the Gold Museum of Bogotá, adjunct to the Federal Bank of Colombia, to think through the past and present violence that colonial capitalism has inflicted on Latin America. Out of the rainforests, local mythologies, and the everyday sufferings and dreams of miners, and emerges a thick description of how the history of violence and desire has haunted the political ecologies of Colombia to this day. Gold has always been entangled in a translocal metabolism of mining, trading, and desiring. How is gold mythologically, morally, economically, and affectively active in different times and places, and at the opposite pole of post-colonial hierarchy?

In 2017, 2,761 tons of raw gold were imported to Switzerland for refinement. This amounted to 65 percent of global demand. In the 1970s, Switzerland traded and refined up to 75 percent of South African gold and saved the apartheid regime from an economic, and therefore political and existential crisis. Further back, Switzerland was the main gold hub during World War II, when it bought and traded over 2,000 tons of gold for Nazi Germany and its allies.

Switzerland, standing upright when times are well and ducking down in times of geopolitical uncertainty, has become a political and economic space for "neutralizing" the origins of gold. This alluring ore has a formidable quality whereby it can be melted down and given ever-changing forms such as bars, coins, jewelry, and medicine. In Switzerland gold is chemically—or rather alchemically—and simultaneously cleansed of its often violent and physical history and transformed into an ephemeral and material agent of power, status, and purity—into condensed wealth.

There are two ethnographic and political issues at stake when exploring how gold is processed in, through, and by the Swiss public space.

The first is global in scope and points to the political aesthetics of a transit hub, which seems to be fundamental for gold's global metabolism to work—a transnational

network of investing, extracting, transporting, trading, speculating, refining, consuming, and recycling. While gold mining and transporting is physical, poisonous, coarse, and violent, investment and trading is done in anonymous hotel rooms or offices, in generic urban business districts and via virtual electronic networks. While gold jewelry can be worn elegantly or opulently, gold bars and reserves are hidden discreetly in highly securitized spaces and safes. How are materials, images, affects, moralities, experiences, and social relations transformed and negotiated within this many-faceted global metabolism of gold?

The second issue focuses on the production of locality and concerns the workings of the Swiss public and the postcolonial amnesia that permeates its air. For centuries, Switzerland has been systematically involved in colonial endeavors and global exploitation, which have fueled Switzerland's project for modernity, its wealth, and its self-image of supremacy; from mercenary services in early modern times to the financing of slavery and from colonial and postcolonial commodity trading to global finance. In all these cases, Switzerland adopted a position of (postcolonial) complicity and benefited from it economically, while refusing responsibility—let alone the hopeful path of political reparation. A public amnesia—connected to the Swiss mythology of neutrality, righteousness, cleanliness, and economic discipline—seems to reproduce violence over and over again. How is such a powerful mythological machine effected and (re)produced aesthetically, morally, and affectively?

In recent decades, Swiss involvement in global gold trading and its violent underpinnings has been investigated and denounced by NGOs, scientific historical commissions, and political movements. Yet, it seems that all this produced knowledge is vaporized in the public debate. Is it possible that this knowledge is unable to penetrate the above-mentioned amnesia because of the affective, moral, and aesthetic power of public forgetting? In this case, the postcolonial conundrum we face is not one primarily of ignorance, nor is it due to a lack of critical information or political will, but of how, if at all, one can be *affected* and set into motion politically and ethically by such knowledge.

This is the point at which we want to intervene with our artistic ethnographic explorations by way of the "Swiss

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Fig. 1: Entrance Refinery Valcambi in Balerna, Switzerland.
Credit: knowbotiq, 2016

Fig. 2: Website Valcambi SA. Credit: knowbotiq, 2016

Psychotropic Gold Refinery." The assumption is that the affective, moral, and aesthetic texture of the Swiss public is an important agent in amnesia, violence, and suffering. This Swiss public works like a well-planned, shiny, clean, and opaque surface of neutrality. Swiss public violence is different from the violence in Mexico City, Mumbai, or St Petersburg—or at the Gold Museum of Bogotá. If the citizens of Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* are high on Soma, then the Swiss public is high on psychoactive gold, which permeates its air, its spaces, and the bodies that live within it.

What does it take to keep up such a public display of wealth, self-righteousness, and discretion, while (at least, unconsciously) knowing about and suppressing a history of violence? Which historical entanglements are visible, which are made invisible in this mythopoetic space? Which experiences of violence, suffering, or guilt are recognized and mourned, and which are suppressed or ignored? What kind of cultural and psychological makeup enables the overwriting of unwanted "minor histories"? What will we find if we manage to crack the hermetic surface of amnesia? What postcolonial memories, counter-mythologies and utopias will we find in hitherto undiscovered archives waiting to be unleashed?

Invisible gold: stability,
crisis, and wealth

Valcambi SA, one of the big gold refineries in Switzerland, is situated at the Swiss-Italian border. Highly patrolled and surveilled, it lies between the southern foothills of the Alps and lakes, far from the public's eye. It was founded in 1961, when Swiss banks were beginning to build good relationships with South Africa, the world's largest exporter of gold.

South Africa's economic position was directly linked to its racist legal regulations of work, immobility, and the physical exploitation of black bodies in the apartheid regime. Segregated territorial entities were fashioned around diamond and gold mines, in order to accumulate wealth and power for the white elite. In 1968, in an economic coup Switzerland established a gold trade pool in Zurich—based on an exclusive gold deal with South Africa. In the years to follow, Switzerland traded and refined up to 75 percent of the gold extracted annually

from the country's mines. The Swiss government backed the apartheid regime in South Africa by importing gold, exporting weapons, and forging statistics and through financial support and proactive diplomatic relations. The collaboration ensured that Switzerland's infrastructure, regulations, and networks would become the main gold refining and trading hub of the world. In the 1980s, in the wake of the pressure of the global anti-apartheid movement, Swiss activists were finally successful in shedding light on Swiss-South African relations. As a result of this development, Swiss policies came to be openly debated and criticized. And yet, in 2003 when a public research project started a systematic investigation into these relations, the Swiss government suddenly closed the archives when a South African NGO claimed reparations from Switzerland in the US courts.[5]

Did these efforts to conceal history come out of the fear of paying reparations, as in the case of the scandal over the unidentifiable fortunes in Swiss bank accounts that belonged to Jewish victims of the Shoah? The scandal was triggered in 1994 by a lawsuit in the US courts against Swiss banks, and further stirred up the dubious role of Switzerland as a hub for gold transactions with Nazi Germany during WWII. The *Bergier Commission*, mandated in 1996 by the Swiss government to research this history, uncovered that the Swiss Federal Bank had bought 2,000 tons of gold that Nazi Germany had stolen from individuals and the banks of the countries it had invaded,[6] as well as gold that had been stolen from Jewish and other prisoners killed in death camps. The public anger unleashed in response to these findings resulted in anti-Semitic and anti-intellectual aggression. In 1998, when the situation reached fever pitch, Swiss banks agreed to pay USD 1.25 billion as restitution. These scandals cracked the surface of amnesia. The previously invisible gold poured out of archives and banks, and into the Swiss public space, making the history of violence and guilt embedded underneath the shiny surface of neutrality, righteousness, and innocence visible.

Fig. 3: Jewelry and pawn shop in Zürich's redlight district at Langstrasse.
Credit: Rohit Jain, 2016

Fig. 4: Fair gold shop in a middle urban class area. Credit: knowbotiq, 2016

In 2004 a group of nationalist politicians—many of whom had been involved in maintaining "good relations" with the apartheid regime—came up with a political referendum, which would ensure that a considerable part of the Swiss currency reserve would be held in gold. This was against all economic reason, as the gold standard was abolished in the 1970s. Yet it seemed that in these circles, gold was still the symbol of independence, stability, and wealth. This myth developed alongside Swiss banking secrecy in the 1930s, when Switzerland legally enforced its position as a safe haven for global capital and tax evasion. In the context of world economics, Swiss gold symbolized trust and stability—both externally and internally. The imagery of gold in alpine safes, a fortress that defies geopolitical turbulence, still lives on.

The anachronistic referendum took place and failed. But it made visible the fact that in addition to being an important business (model) for Switzerland, gold also fuels the national mythology of stability and wealth.

Visible gold: the moral grammar of
Protestant ethics, enlightenment, and guilt

While most gold is cleansed and buried in refineries, gold transporters, bank safes, and the depots of national reserve banks in this country and abroad, there are still some open and proud displays of gold in the stores of Zurich, Luzern, and Geneva, which deal in jewelry, high-end Swiss watches, and other luxury items. Huguenot migrants brought the craft of watchmaking to Switzerland in the seventeenth century. Since then, this industrial sector has been assimilated into the Swiss economy and its mythology of industrialization, making up to three percent of the gross national product.

Yet, among the bourgeois and petty bourgeois classes, showing off and enjoying luxury is despised and associated with the upper-class living of the "Gold Coast" of Lake Zurich or nouveau riche tourists from Russia, China, and India.

Gold consumption is also projected onto the racialized "other"—with an attitude of moral supremacy and jealousy. The passive-aggressive attitude imbuing the Swiss perception of gold became virulent in the 1980s, when Sri Lankan Tamils arrived as the first significant

group of non-white refugees. The media and the public were outraged that these people seeking help wore gold jewelry in public. With this display of "luxury," they disturbed the postcolonial order between the rich and benevolent Swiss and the poor and needy refugees. This was especially irritating for many members of the Swiss middle class, as they could not afford this conspicuous consumption of gold, and even if they could have, their deeply internalized Protestant ethics would probably have prevented them from purchasing it.

Although most of the Swiss middle class benefits economically from the postcolonial commodity trade, they cannot get direct gratification from it. Yet, gold as an emblem of wealth and stability is psychoactively present in the public, in the air. Gold is not shown, it is owned. And, even if one cannot afford it, as a member of the Swiss nation, one can feel it and breathe it in, along with supremacy, innocence, and righteousness.

Andreas Missbach, an NGO representative, enters the room. Self-confidently, casually and in a hurry, he puts a book on the table. "I don't know how I can help you. Everything is in this book." He is co-author of the book *Rohstoff* (Raw Material/Commodity), published in 2012 by the NGO Erklärung von Bern (now Public Eye), which stirred up a fresh debate on Swiss commodity trading. "Not much is known about this business, which contributes as much to the GDP as mechanical engineering industries [that is to say four percent]. The traders in Geneva work in a hidden zone, which is morally highly dubious."[7]

Commodity trading, the book argues, is not only ecologically and economically disastrous for the populations involved in mining, but also damaging for the Swiss image—and thus, a "ticking bomb." In saying so, the authors allude to the political and economic damage incurred after Swiss bank secrecy was destroyed by US tax authorities in 2014, forcing Switzerland to surrender after eighty years of economic warfare. In order to continue its successful model of growth, Switzerland would have to comply with human rights, moral standards, and self-regulate its interest and greed.

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Fig. 5: Campaign billboard "When gold loses its glamour"
by Swiss NGO's. Credit: Rohit Jain, 2016

Fig. 6: Bernese guild. Credit: Rohit Jain, 2016

This argument, part of an influential, self-critical NGO discourse rooted in the Third World and the anti-apartheid movement, comes with its own particular politics of affect and moral grammar. An NGO campaign poster against gold mining, by Brot für Alle and Fasten-opfer, shows the décolleté of a white woman in a black evening dress, wearing a heavy gold necklace. Through the magnifying glass, the viewer can see another world with black people running wildly, fleeing a large mining complex. The glossy image is given meaning with the following text: When gold loses its glamour. The hunt for gold displaces people from their homeland. Be aware and act."

The aim of the magnifying glass, that is to say, the optical and intellectual intervention of the NGO, is to make people aware of the postcolonial connection between gold production and consumption. It reveals the truth beneath the surface of wealth, neutrality, and cleanliness. The dramatic visual and textual grammar of the campaign is designed to highlight the causal connection between Swiss wealth and African poverty, opening up a moral abyss of guilt, hypocrisy, decadence, and opportunism. In this public politics of representation, knowledge triumphs over ignorance, enlightenment over dark and twilight zones. A guilty conscience is the affective currency that accompanies this narrative and bridges the geographical, historical, racial, and economic gap opened up by the staged postcolonial and racialized tragedy.

NGO activists are aware of the ambivalences in playing the "guilty conscience" card in their public communication. But this was a strategy to raise attention, support, and money before launching a referendum in 2020 on the responsibility of multinational commodity traders that aimed to force corporations based in Switzerland to comply with human rights and environmental standards.

Besides the NGO debate, there is also a visible academic discourse on Swiss gold. Jakob Tanner is a renowned economic historian and expert on the role of gold in the Swiss economy. He was a member of the Bergier Commission, which investigated Swiss relations with Nazi Germany, and he also intervened in the debate on Swiss banks engaged in gold trade with South Africa during

apartheid. Sitting in his office, he eloquently and meticulously explains how gold is not just a business model, it is part of Swiss political mythology. Decades of critiquing and investigating Swiss gold, academically and publicly, have not tired him out. Does he not find it frustrating that academic knowledge and intellectual engagement has not been able to transform this public amnesia? Have not the Bergier Commission's report—the most significant attempt to come to terms with Switzerland's post-World War II history—almost been forgotten, as if it were never written? He agrees, but stubbornly and impressively maintains trust in the power of knowledge, of shedding light on the invisible, of denouncing Swiss moral failures, and of taking responsibility.

Besides NGO and academic discourses, this ethnographic artistic exploration has yielded another way to link the visibility of gold with the taking on of responsibility. A goldsmith based in a well-to-do neighborhood in Bern has established a certified supply for fairly produced gold to Switzerland, with which he produces his jewelry. When the goldsmith realized that the precious metal he crafted was involved in the violence of commercial mining and commodity wars, he was shocked and determined to take responsibility. He teamed up with other international goldsmiths, in order to build a supply chain of fair-trade gold to Switzerland —which is ironically refined by the companies mentioned earlier in the essay. By combining his professional acumen with a Protestant ethos, the goldsmith found a practical solution to his personal as well as Switzerland's moral dilemma around "dirty gold," and also established a sound business model. Fair-trade gold allows consumption of gold in a modest and just way.

While the NGO uses spectacle and a guilty conscience as a currency, so that the public can confront Swiss business opportunism, the historian incorporates a liberal and intellectual gesture of enlightenment and critical information, and the goldsmith applies the puritanical ethos of craftsmanship to offer customers a way out of their moral dilemma. They all want to make the history of violence materialized in Swiss gold visible and offer more or less practical solutions—to donate to an NGO, vote for a referendum to enforce human rights and environmental standards on commodity traders, buy fair gold, circulate critical knowledge, and make their voices heard. Yet, in addition to the different strategies

they have adopted, there is something astonishingly similar in the affective and moral position of the goldsmith, activist, and historian. They acknowledge and even despise the colonial complicity of Swiss enterprises, the state, and the mainstream public and cannot identify with this national project. They expose themselves and confront public myths, despite the increasing risk of being alienated and attacked by conservatives or the mainstream public. And yet, all of them stay sober and rational in their arguments and attitude. Could this be because they are all not directly affected by the violence and injustice they criticize, because they are socially positioned as white males with a specific class position and professional habitus? Could it be that they are motivated by a desire to compensate for a (white) guilt incurred by an earlier generation? A desire to be Swiss "in a different way," compared to the mainstream position of ignorance, opportunism, and denial? And are there any other ways of being affected by the presence of gold in this postcolonial public space?

Postcolonial amnesia and new affective communities

All said, there is something disturbing in the idea that a discourse that critically acknowledges the presence of gold in the Swiss public space and develops tactics of political and ethical change could be based on the political affect of "white guilt." To put it bluntly, would it be possible for me, a second-generation Indian who grew up in Switzerland, to be affected by the discourse of "white guilt" in order to fight global social injustice? Furthermore, would the suggested practical solutions concerning commodity trade be able to change anything within an assemblage of Swiss postcolonial amnesia which has not only been concealing Swiss involvement in post-/colonial projects abroad but has also resulted in the ceaseless reproduction of institutional and everyday racism "here"? To put it more generally: what affective, moral, or aesthetic resources and identities would a discourse of white guilt and responsibility offer to people of color and/or with migration backgrounds?

The NGO billboard above, depicting a woman wearing a gold necklace, when read as an epitome of the discourse of white guilt and responsibility, could provide insights into the contradictions. The juxtaposition of

glamour and disaster, of white and black, wealth and poverty, clean and dirty is embedded in postcolonial geography of "us here" and "them there." But who is the public, the "we" being addressed by the poster? How, for example, are Afro-Swiss people, other people of color, and immigrants, who live, love, and work here, addressed in this discourse? People who either have family in countries affected by the postcolonial commodity trade or who have had to leave countries where commodity wars were or are taking place. Their perspectives, their untold biographies, utopias, aspirations, and identities are neither present nor addressed. I would argue that this discourse, and the affective logic it is driven by, may in fact be contributing to the continued racialized segregation of the public space that exists in Switzerland, and, thus, may paradoxically be playing a part in maintaining postcolonial amnesia.

More than one third of the Swiss population is of color or has migration woven into their biographies. Twenty-five percent of the entire population has few political rights because they don't have Swiss citizenship, as a result of Europe's harsh and racialized naturalization laws. Within the national public space and on many levels, they are the "other"; they work and pay taxes, without having the right to participate. Their transnational life-worlds, their sufferings and dreams are not debated by a larger national public. They are mocked when they speak up about everyday racism and asked to go back "home." They feel that they don't fully belong in this public display of neutrality and innocence. Can they adopt the position of white guilt when dealing with global social injustice? Can social change in the context of postcolonial amnesia start from that position?

There is no "here" and "there." They are here, now! We are here, now! Today we need a new cartography of Switzerland to engage with global geographies of inequality and to build spaces of solidarity. Liberal or humanitarian discourses calling for universalism and responsibility are often motivated by the legacy of Eurocentrism, where white guilt is the countercurrent to blunt white supremacy, yet where both are embedded in the assumption that values of freedom, equality, and social justice were invented in Europe and that they should be applied all over the world—either with the goal of continuing domination or of making up for wrongdoings of the past and present. Neither position can enter into a real encounter with the "other" on

equal terms. To come up with a new universalism, one that is not burdened by white guilt and its narcissism, it would be necessary to recover the social, ethical, and affective relations harmed by the post-/colonial history of violence and its ongoing denial. To do so, memories and utopias slumbering in postmigrant and postcolonial archives have to be activated, be it in life stories, migrant family albums, company protocols, state documents, old news footage, or literature. They not only yield forgotten histories of violence and suffering, but also of solidarity, friendship, and cosmopolitanism. To acknowledge and debate these realities as legitimate and shared would allow society to tackle postcolonial amnesia by rewriting the past in the present and by entering a process of political and moral reparation. Yet, this process requires new affective communities, collectives, and spaces that are willing to refashion the racialized and patriarchal boundaries of "us" and "them," and to envision images, histories, relations, and imaginations of a new "we." I suggest that, beyond practical solutions in global commodity trade, it is only on this moral and affective ground that we will truly be able to pacify the ghosts of the past, which still trouble us today, even if we are not affected in the same way.

Rohit Jain is a social anthropologist, artistic researcher, and anti-racism activist based in Bern and Zurich. His aim is to understand how postcolonial public spaces can be re-arranged, in order to transform histories of violence into new beginnings. Since receiving his PhD from the University of Zurich, he has been engaged in collaborative artistic projects on the Swiss involvement in the gold trade, urban citizenship, and antiracist humor, amongst other topics, at Shedhalle Zurich, Ausstellungsraum Klingenthal Basel, and Zurich University of the Arts. Lately, he has published pieces on postmigrant memory politics, decolonizing art institutions, and postcolonial amnesia in the Swiss gold hub. With many friends and allies, he has been engaged in building up Institute New Switzerland, a young Think & Act Tank on postmigration and antiracism.

1   Michael Taussig, *My Cocaine Museum* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), x.
2   Ibid., 5
3   Ibid., xvii
4   Ibid.
5   For a more detailed discussion of this history, see Jakob Tanner, "Goldrausch und Kulturrevolution: Pretoria–Zürich Paradeplatz," in *The Air Will Not Deny You: Zürich im Zeichen einer anderen Globalität*, eds. Franziska Koch, Daniel Kurjaković, and Lea Pfäffli (Zurich: Diaphanes, 2016).
6   *Unabhängige Expertenkommission Schweiz—Zweiter Weltkrieg, Die Schweiz und die Goldtransaktionen im Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Zurich: Chronos, 1998).
7   Erklärung von Bern, *Rohstoff: Das gefährliche Geschäft der Schweiz* (Zurich: Salis Verlag, 2012), 19.

Denise Bertschi

In recent years, public realization about the *longue-durée* (long-term) implications of Switzerland's role in colonialism and slavery has unfolded. This article seeks to uproot traces and overgrown paths, forcefully forgotten or, on the contrary, hyper-present for the people that lived through this historical reality. As artist-researcher, I revisit the plantation through a series of video works that seek to spatialize and give an image to signifying spaces of the plantation. Guided by the inhabitants of today's Quilombo community Helvécia, we root out such places of memory—the former coffee plantation, the *Casa Grande*, the slave owner's house, the old cemetery, or the slave port—in order to undo the erasure of this chapter from Swiss history and take responsibility for its past.

The historical example of the plantation Helvécia, founded in the early nineteenth century, was embedded in a conglomerate of plantations run by several Swiss families as well as some Germans under the name Colônia Leopoldina. These Swiss plantation owners were white settlers who left Switzerland for the so-called New World to profit from land grabs by the empire of Brazil. As is often mentioned, to speak about a purely individual enterprise would not be justified, as the wider

colony of which Helvécia was a part, was managed, supported, overseen, and regulated by a Swiss national vice-consulate (fig. 1), one of the first to be founded in Brazil after 1848. This date also represents a foundational nation-building moment, when Switzerland received its first Federal Constitution under the name of *Confoederatio Helvetica.* Therefore, Colônia Leopoldina is a good example of the state's involvement with colonialism and that it cannot be reduced to private actors or individual companies by any means.

Where is Helvécia? How can the distance of seemingly faraway places be minimized? How can terrains of colonial capitalism be put in relation to the built environment in Switzerland? Frantz Fanon noted that "the colonial world is not only where colonizers go. It is a system that encloses city and suburb, rural and wasteland, and the roads and waterways that provide or are carved to provide transport."[1] Our wealthy Swiss cities are built from considerable capital flows of surplus value extracted from colonial worlds of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. "As human and nonhuman worlds were ripped from one place to produce wealth in another," says Elizabeth Povinelli in a precise explanation of how these dynamics in rural areas become vast reservoirs of toxicity.[2]

The notion of Switzerland's "colonialism without colonies"[3] has recently started to make its mark on a certain stratum of national historiography. Switzerland's colonial entanglements and role as a free rider of its imperial European neighbors are being increasingly scrutinized. I argue that a spatialization of such geopolitical places, where capitalist colonial extraction occurred, is crucial and necessary. Such a long tradition of invisibilization underneath the *white coat* of neutrality has manufactured a positivist self-image. Behind the protective shield of a neutral position, Switzerland's global economic expansion has flourished over the last 200 years. A radical recognition of these interconnected spatialities—from the place of colonial extractivism to the place of accumulation, Switzerland itself—is needed.

The willful and longstanding ignorance of official Switzerland toward its colonial entanglement is remarkable. In 2017, a member of the Swiss Federal Council visited Ouidah, a coastal city in Benin that had one of the largest slave ports in the triangular trade. While fulfilling an official state visit, she was broadcast on local TV while

Fig. 1: Logo stamp of Vice-consulate of the Swiss Confederation "Colônia Leopoldina", found in the Swiss Federal Archives (E2200.89-01#1000/704#26*, 1862). Credit: Denise Bertschi, 2019

standing under the monument arch *The Door of No Return*, which commemorates the place from which countless enslaved Africans were forcefully shipped to the Americas. Obviously emotionally touched by the violent history of the place, she recognized it as a *tragedy*. Nevertheless, she expressed how glad she was that "Switzerland never participated in these histories of slavery nor in colonization."[4]

This deliberately constructed blind spot is now slowly coming into view to reveal far-reaching effects. To tackle this blind spot and shed light on neglected historical vistas, the figure of the ghost can be helpful. Sociologist Avery Gordon suggests considering the ghostly as a political mediator that can revise historical memory. "It is about putting life back in where only a vague memory or a bare trace was visible to those who bothered to look. It is about writing ghost stories, stories that not only repair representational mistakes, but also strive to understand the conditions under which a memory was produced in the first place, toward a counter-memory for the future."[5] To repair representational mistakes is to repair their traces and open the net of connections. Helvécia in Brazil bears in its livelihood a meshwork[6] of such lines of connectedness, as its name already reveals. This is where landscape comes into play. Landscapes are palimpsests of historical strata that can reveal evidence and cultural memory of the humans and non-humans that inhabit and shape it.

What role does landscape play in memory processes in post-colonial contexts? During my visit to Helvécia, in the north-eastern state of Bahia in Brazil, I was particularly interested in exploring the links between memory, body, and landscape. Applying a methodology based on walking, I tried to discover how Helvécia's inhabitants moved in their familiar environment. Some of the locals led me to places of relevance according to their own lived history and the intergenerational memory transmitted by their ancestors, most of whom were enslaved Afro-Brazilians. In the case of the widely invisibilized implications of Swiss colonialism, how can the land of this former Swiss colony become the material witness[7] to a conflictual past?
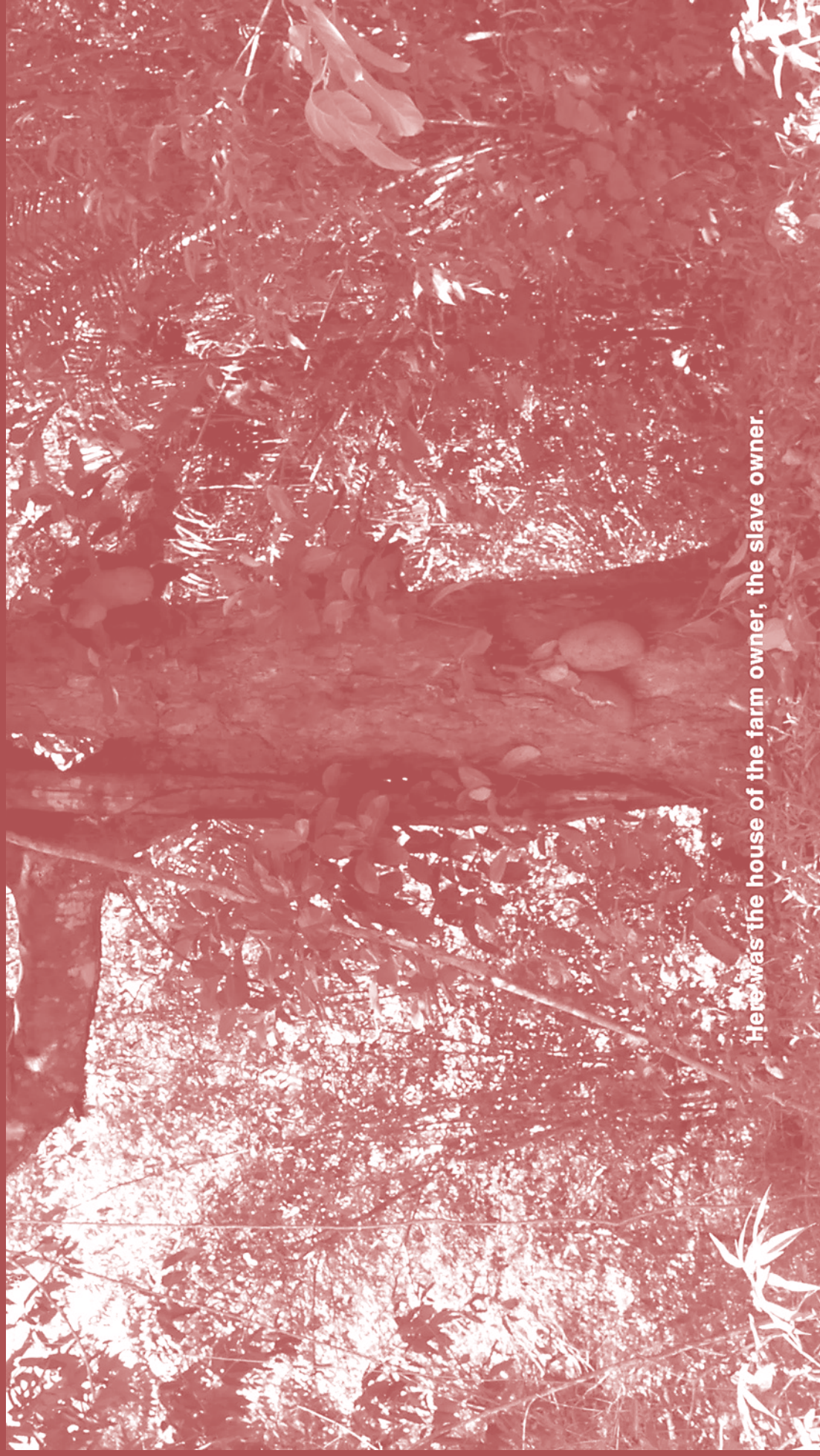
Landscapes do not always reveal their complex histories to the visual realm of the spectator. But as Avery Gordon puts it: "Invisible things are not necessarily not

there,"[8] therefore landscapes can carry within them complex histories, layers of transformation of soil, a palimpsest of time and space. They are markers of a human-made evolution over time, a transformation and restructuring of the shaped land. The format of video-making is therefore particularly interesting to me, as this time-based medium seems to be able to "push to the surface events that had been spirited away," as the artist Joachim Koester writes. "Everything is there, even if it is concealed."[9]

Most of the archives I consulted for my research are filled with written documents of the white colonial administration, such as consular data of plantation inventories and minute books of the plantocracy, but they largely stay silent on the lived experiences of their exploited laborers. As Saidiya Hartmann emphasizes: "History pledges to be faithful to the limits of fact, evidence, and archive, even as those dead certainties are produced by terror."[10] It is therefore specifically important to listen to the voices of the communities and their own historiography through oral history. During one of our excursions, Zé da Paz, an elderly man from Helvécia, took us on a car trip out of the village. Passing by some of the geometric monocultures of eucalyptus encircling the village, we stopped at a small side street near some undergrowth. At a determined pace, he approached the robust trunk of a jacca fruit tree from which large fruit hung. This fruit tree indicated the place where the *Casa Grande* had once stood, the plantation owner's house (fig. 2). Zé da Paz told me that the owner had been a man from Switzerland, a colonialist who named his coffee plantation Helvécia, after (what he believed was) a city in Switzerland.

As an outside observer, I was not able to recognize the meaning of this seemingly inconspicuous tree at the side of the road outside the Quilombo village in southern Bahia. The jacca tree has become a sign, a sign of Swiss colonial history, a material-witness deeply inscribed in the cultural memory of its inhabitants. Our companion Danilo, a member of the Quilombo Association, picked up some ceramic fragments from the dusty road next to the tree with some with blue floral drawings on it. Maybe it was from a plate or some other vessel? "It's left for us to see, how it used to be," he added (fig. 3.). One of the oldest inhabitants, known in the village by the name of Balango, recalled: "The house where [the slave owners] lived, it was a big house. A house as tall as this,

Here was the house of the farm owner, the slave owner.

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Fig. 2: Film still "Helvécia, Brazil", depicting the jacca fruit tree at the outskirts of Helvécia. Credit: Denise Bertschi, 2017

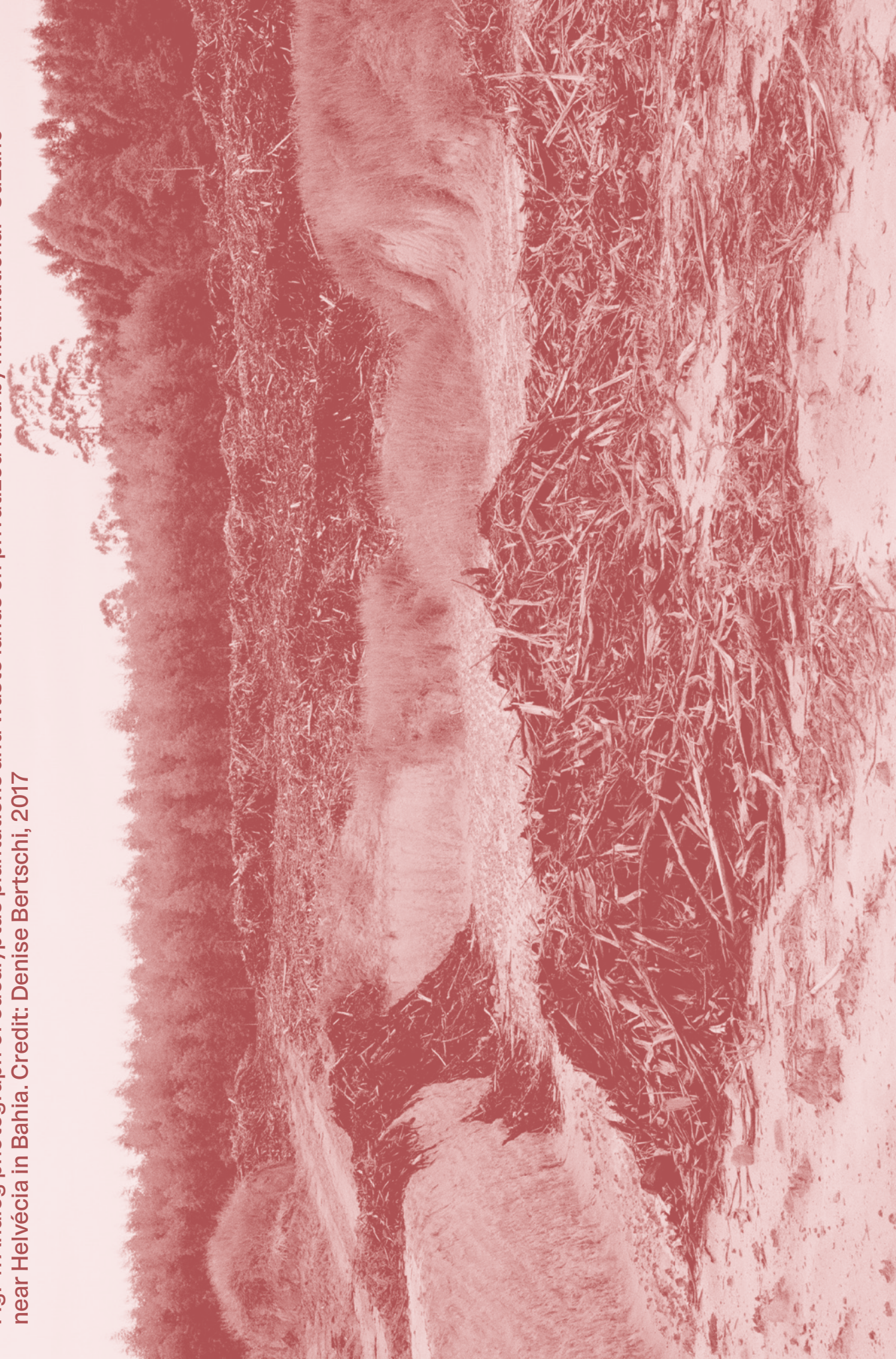Fig. 3: Film still "Helvécia, Brazil". Credit: Denise Bertschi, 2017

It is left here for us to see, how it used to be. Got it?

Fig. 4: Analog photograph of eucalyptus plantations and waste lands on privatized land by multinational "Suzano" near Helvécia in Bahia. Credit: Denise Bertschi, 2017

from the ground, a big house like you can't imagine. But it was such a house, my dear, with good wood. When I had to go to the house to work, the beams on the ceiling, it was crazy, those beams. All made of very good wood. They were all people from abroad. You know, they would come to Brazil and ended up staying here…" According to other family members, Balango was over 100 years old, which means that his parents were probably enslaved Africans in the one of the plantations in Colônia Leopoldina. His way of telling the history of Helvécia was fragmented, yet clear. The memories of places, the way they had been constructed, the social relations and material cultures within the social order of the racial capitalist plantation; all were clearly signified. He perceived this *Casa Grande* with astonishment, observing its grandeur and its solid and high-quality materials, for example, the good wood of the beams. He also described the people who lived in it—people that came from abroad, and that would stay. He spoke of what we might call settler colonialists.

The territory of Helvécia in southern Bahia should be recognized as a significant site in Switzerland's global history, a territory for which Switzerland was responsible. "The global nature of climate change, capital, toxicity, and discursivity immediately demand that we look elsewhere than where we are standing."[11] While standing on the ground of Helvécia in Brazil, our gaze must go beyond the local and read the global into this very place. While we follow the trails of production and the trade routes of its produce—be it historically coffee or nowadays eucalyptus—these crops lay their toxic global nets, leaving *longue-durée* changes to the earth system.

Reading the deep strata of this patch of land involves reading the traces of colonial history in its name, a name that also holds the erasure of its pre-colonial conditions. Today, exploitative monoculture of eucalyptus has almost completely replaced the former coffee plantation and the interdependent socio-ecological system of the Atlantic rainforest in the region of Helvécia (fig. 4). The only fragments of the original forest are along the rivers, where the heavy machinery of deforestation cannot reach.

An early written report describing this first cut to the ecosystem through deforestation, in order to install the first plantations at the beginning of the long nineteenth

century, is written from the perspective of Carl August Toelsner, a German colonist and doctor, and member of the plantocracy. It provides evidence of a first discontinuity—the drastic loss of biodiversity and mass extinction—through the human modification of the biosphere. Only 4% of the *Mata Atlântica* still exists today, due to the re-emergence of capitalist agriculture, which illustrates the effects of capitalist urbanization and the expansionary dynamics of global capital. He describes how "clearing the ground" (meaning the violent deforestation of the indigenous coastal forest *Mata Atlântica*) was conducted: "With few means and hands, with the help of a few N*, the heavy work of clearing the ground had to be started and carried out. Several times in the beginning the growing of the cultivated plants, namely coffee, failed or only small harvests were won." After the initial difficult work of assimilating the coffee plant onto this foreign soil, the colony became more and more lucrative. "All the more reason for the present state of the colony to rejoice. It currently consists of 40 plantations where 200 white people and 2,000 N* live."[12]

Deforestation is the erasure of other forms of existence. Environmental historian Jason W. Moore states that "with the rise of capitalism, sooner or later everything returned to the forest. Every decisive commodity sector in early capitalism found its life-blood in the Forest."[13] If we continue reading the doctor's description of the colony, the life-blood in the forest not only took away the life and habitat of the more-than-human world, but the life-blood of its human inhabitants, the indigenous peoples of the *Mata Atlântica*. According to the depicted map from 1822, not only the now extinct Botocudos lived in the region of Colônia Leopoldina, but also other indigenous groups as the Pataxó, Camacan and the Maxacalí (fig. 5). "With the forest knife, all bushes, creepers and other plants on the ground are cut down, and then the trees are felled with the axe. The trees often make an unforeseen turn or twist as they fall, falling to a completely different side than one had expected, and sometimes dragging several of the others along with them. It is therefore easy to understand that many accidents occur during this work, especially when it is done by [Amer-]Indians, who, even though they are particularly well suited for it, are too careless. During the entire duration of my stay, many people were killed in the process." It is remarkable that this text is written in a passive tense: "the plants are cut down."[14]

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Fig. 5: Detail with labels of "Carte de la côte de l'ouest du Brésil entre le 15me et le 23me degrés de latitude du sud d'après J. Arrowsmith avec quelques rectifications." Printed in Munich (Germany) in 1822, Fundação Biblioteca Nacional (ARC.009.02.020), /objdigital.bn.br/objdigital2/acervo_digital/div_cartografia/cart530855/cart530855.html, accessed February 20, 2021.

Only at the very end of the passage is it mentioned who actually executed this dangerous work: the indigenous peoples, often exploited into doing it through being paid simple objects like shiny pearls, munitions, or food.

If we understand nature as a spatial view where dynamics of nature happen, independently of humans, then nature has disappeared due to the unstoppable deforestation carried out by the colonialists. Plants have been instrumentalized to serve an appetite for profit. "On the inexhaustibly fertile soil, thrive and are successfully cultivated in the blessed climate of the colony: the coffee tree..."[15] the doctor goes on. That this very same "inexhaustible fertile soil" was soon to be exhausted into a deserted ecological disaster was not yet in his anthropocentric perspective. Defining nature is a political act. During the Christianization of Western Europe in medieval times and the elimination of pagananimism, nature got degraded to the material world, as opposed to the non-material divine world.[16] Nature did not belong to the sacred world anymore, in contrast to polytheistic belief systems and spiritualities. "Replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over [...] every living thing that moveth upon the earth."[17] This passage from the Old Testament was interpreted as the legitimization of exploitation. With nature losing its sacred property, it existed solely to be appropriated and exploited, to serve men. Swiss migration to the colonies peaked during Protestant capitalism, so it is no surprise that the Swiss who left for the "New World" to start plantations like those in Colonîa Leopoldina were predominantly from Protestant cities such as Neuchâtel.

It is remarkable that Lynn White argued as early as the 1950s for a connection between the unique role of religion, especially Christianity, and its human relation to the natural world. With reference to Christianity as the most anthropocentric religion, White states that "a tree can be no more than a physical fact. The whole concept of the sacred grove is alien to Christianity and to the ethos of the West."[18] It is therefore unsurprising that this labor and suppression of soil by the (Swiss) Protestant planters went hand in hand with Christianization. Toelsner recounted that the 2,000 enslaved people living on the colony were "all baptized, educated as Christians and well kept. Most boys are admitted to learning a craft, the girls are taught in all female works..."[19] What he meant by "well-kept" in the context of

enforced labor and enslaved ways of life including the erasure of their own cultural heritage is left open.

In the context of the plantation, what looks like nature can no longer be called nature. It instead represents an operationalized landscape,[20] efficiently planned as a monoculture system, geometrically measured and laid out. Plants are instrumentalized as crops. The goal of this meticulous efficiency is productivity of land and soil and its economic benefit, now and then.

The Swiss family-run plantations, in the racial capitalist order of the nineteenth century, have been replaced today by multinationals using the fast-growing eucalyptus tree as their business model. These companies create *nature* beyond life. A nature of death, of life-sucking forces instrumentalizing plants into productive machines. Geometrically aligned, they enter the circle of production: a reproduced monoculture, growing, while draining the soil and becoming toxified by pesticides, cut down and transported to the harbor for the global economy. On a barrier at the side of a path through the eucalyptus plantation, a billboard (fig. 6) prohibiting entrance to these so-called forests, as if to protect the animals living within it, reads: "Help protect nature." The owners of the plantation, the multinational company Suzano, are tricksters. They have instrumentalized the notion of nature, although their activity has nothing to do with nature. Their call to "save" the forest is instead a safety restriction deterring humans from entering their field of production on privatized land.

The multinational Suzano, a Brazilian-based paper and pulp company, has created a strong dependency, not only in terms of achieving their strict growth plan, but in terms of the local Quilombo community Helvécia. Each infrastructure investment—such as installing street signs (fig. 7) or building a school or cultural center in the village—is financed by the plantation firm, upholding a framework of dependency within a strong hierarchical power relation that materializes on many levels. Most of Helvécia's inhabitants work locally as a cheap labor force called "bóia-frias" in the all-encompassing eucalyptus plantation. One of the founding members of the female-dominated Quilombo characterized these working conditions as neo-colonial and similar to the forced labor of slaves, referring to their ancestors working in the Swiss coffee plantations.

Fig. 6: Analog photograph of a sign saying "AJUDE A CONSERVAR A NATUREZA" at the side of a Suzano owned eucalyptus plantation near Helvécia in Bahia. Credit: Denise Bertschi, 2017

Fig. 7: Analog photograph of a village sign at the entrance of the Quilombo community Helvécia in Bahia. The sign contains the logo of the eucalyptus plantation firm Fibria, which was later merged with Suzano, the largest paper and pulp production company in Latin America, chaired by David Feffer, who is listed on the global billionaires' list of Forbes.com 2022. Credit: Denise Bertschi, 2017

Just 500 meters past the village along the main road lies a compound containing Suzano's nursery of eucalyptus trees (fig. 8). It is a place of seemingly never-ending production, where the eucalyptus trees are multiplied. It is significant that most of Helvécia's workers for the multinational are present at the very beginning of this production cycle: the nursery. The development of these planted forests starts in the nurseries, where the most up-to-date cloning technology is available. According to internal reviews, Suzano's eucalyptus harvest rotation is approximately seven years, a period shorter than in any other region of the world. The eucalyptus tree is a highly genetically modified and sculpted plant, modelled for the highest possible productivity. Helvécia's village inhabitants working for the nursery cut the cloned hybrids with their hands, in a specially developed technique for highest surplus value, a technique the company calls "assisted growth." Thirty million cloned eucalyptus seedlings a year are produced by the low-wage work of Helvécia's residents, whose income is dependent on the surrounding 173,000-hectare plantation. Suzano is the owner of 1,250 hectares of eucalyptus plantation in Brazil. This is an unimaginable sum of privatized land, exploited to provide the world's consumerist demand for pulp in the form of packaging, paper, and tissues.

In this article, my aim is to tie the *longue-durée* connection between Switzerland and Helvécia in southern Bahia. In the early nineteenth century, the Swiss coffee plantocracy deforested large surfaces of the *Mata Atlântica* with forced labor of indigenous peoples. It is note-worthy that today, Suzano's headquarters for foreign sales is based in Switzerland, in an inconspicuous office building above a shopping center in Signy-Avenex. Its CEO was trained in a Swiss business school and is an active member of another major Swiss construction materials multinational. Nowadays, nationalities seem to play a less important role in this entangled network of a globalized capitalist extraction economy. Outside of Brazil, Switzerland is the main location for Suzano's operating sales, next to the US, Argentina, and the Cayman Islands, a British Overseas Territory in the western Caribbean Sea and known as a major off-shore financial haven. With the example of the land on which Helvécia lies, we can unfold hundreds of years of old entanglements of nature and capitalism to still the appetite of the trader. "Terror makes nature its ally," as Michael Taussig accurately formulates.[21]

However, despite the repressive manifestation of this system, it is important to highlight the agency and resistance that characterizes the Quilombo community of Helvécia. In opposition to the *longue-dur*ée of exploitation stands the *longue-dur*ée of rebellion of Afro-Brazilians through slave revolts or the formation of Quilombo communities, the most common form of slave resistance in Bahia since the sixteenth century. Maroon settlements were built on the fringes of plantations by fugitive slaves. The ignorance and suppression of the cultural and cosmological heritage that African enslaved people brought with them over the Atlantic to Brazil was the ground for the trauma and revolts of black Africans in Brazil. These revolts were common in Colônia Leopoldina.[22]

In order to decenter the exclusive focus on Swiss settlers in the historiography of Colônia Leopoldina as is the case in archives and in popular accounts by historians[23], I attempted to pay attention to the oppressed voices of the enslaved African workers on these plantations. Among the mass of handwritten correspondences in the Swiss Federal Archives, I chanced upon a collection of letters entitled "Affaire Maulaz". These letters, written between 1850 and 1860 refer to Louis Maulaz, a plantation owner from the Swiss city of Morges (Canton of Vaud). Maulaz spent almost three and a half decades in Brazil, where he held most of his personal fortune. His plantation was part of the conglomerate of Colônia Leopoldina, located on the northern bank of the Peruípe river (fig. 9). He became entangled in a long administrative affair between the Swiss Federal Council, the Swiss consular agents of Colônia Leopoldina in Southern Bahia, the Consul of the Swiss Confederation in Rio de Janeiro, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Imperial Government of Brazil. Maulaz was the owner of 44 enslaved people (fig. 10) who were forced to produce coffee destined for the European export market. These facts however do not explain the existence of the numerous folders of decaying archived documents that form a significant portion of correspondence between the Swiss and Brazilian authorities during this period. The significance of the "Affaire Maulaz" boils down to only one phrase: *Les noirs de Maulaz se sont révolté et sa propriété était incendiée*"[24] ("The black people of Maulaz revolted and burnt down his property"). For reasons that are not clearly discernible or apparent, the revolt on Maulaz's plantation happened during his absence, while he was away in Europe.

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Fig. 8: Analog photograph of Suzano's clonal eucalyptus tree nursery "Helvécia", located next to the Quilombo community Helvécia in the South of Bahia, where many of Helvécia's inhabitants work. Credit: Denise Bertschi, 2017
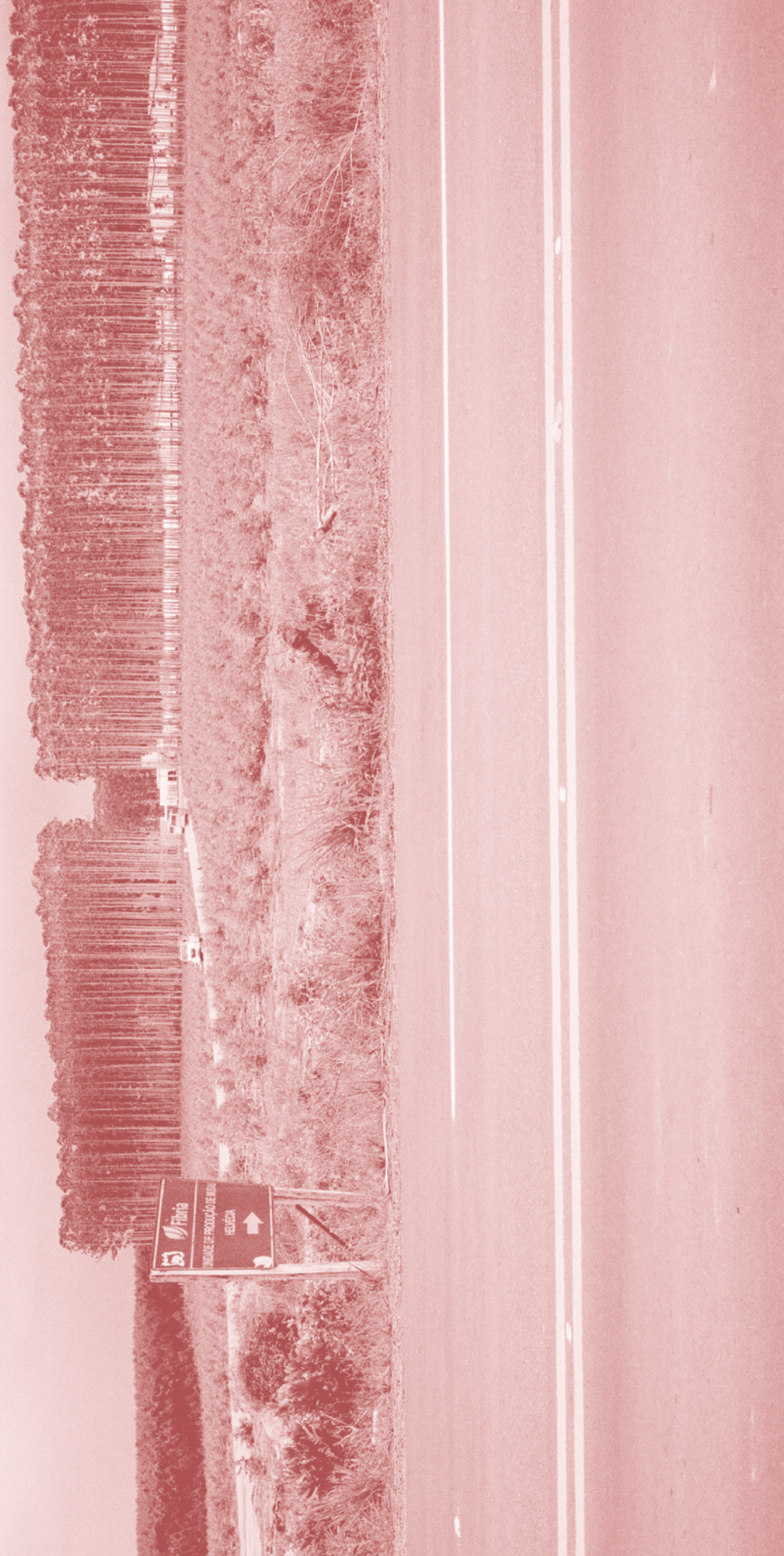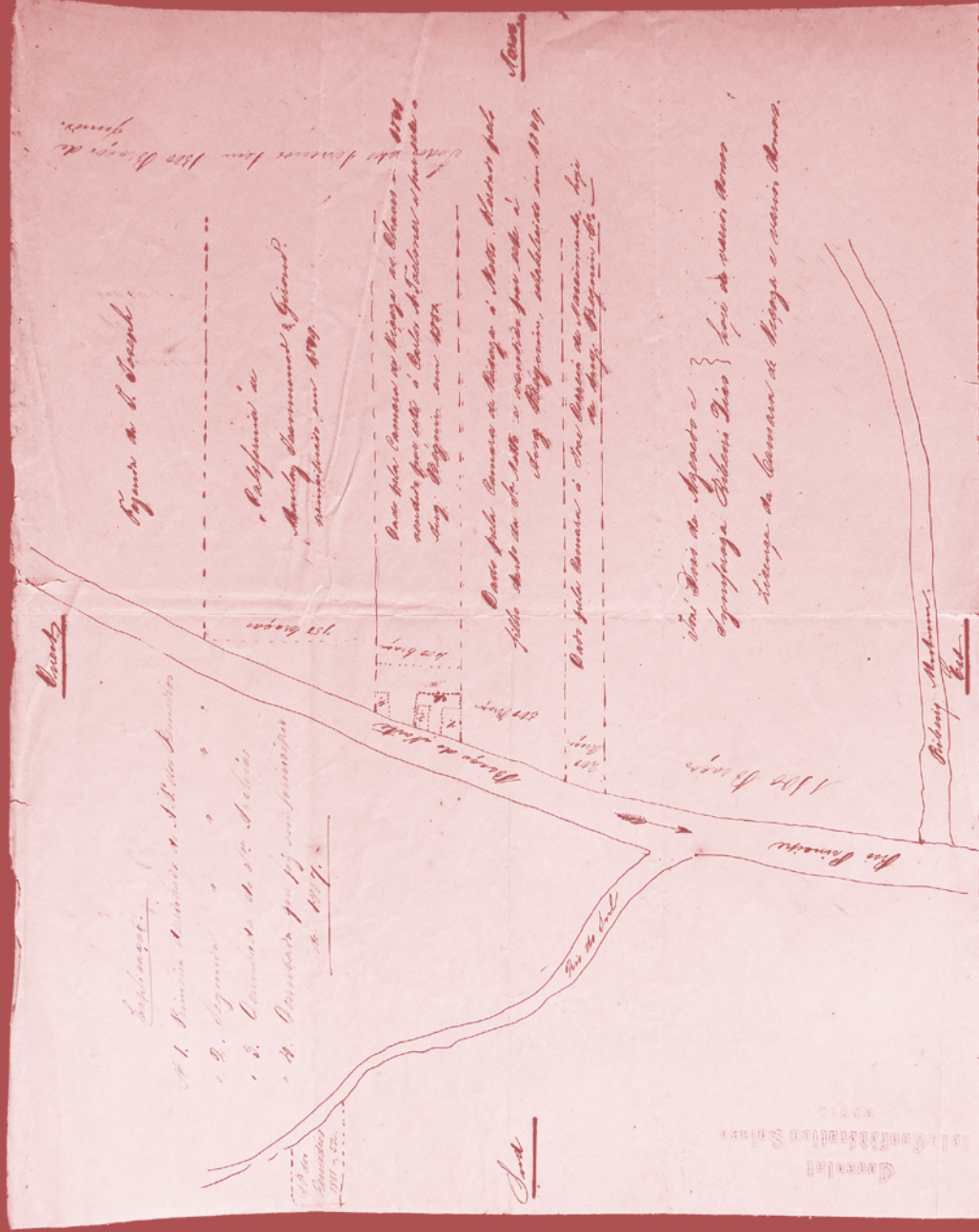
Fig. 9: Archival document I photographed in 2019 in the Swiss Federal Archives in Bern on a paper embossed with the logo of the "Consulat de la Confédération Suisse BAHIA". Hand-drawn croquis of land parcel distribution in Colônia Leopoldina on the northern affluent of the Peruípe river. The sizes of the plantations were measured in "braços" (engl. "arms"). Louiz Maulaz's plantation "California" was 750 braços wide, equivalent to 1.65 km. (E2200.67–02#1000/675#82*, Bund 1: 1863)

Fig. 10: Archival document I photographed in the "Arquivo Público do Estado da Bahia" in Salvador (Denise Bertschi, 2017). The paper lists the planters' and plantations' names, as well as the number of "whites" and "slaves" of each plantation on Colônia Leopoldina at the North and South of the Peruípe River. (4603-3: Colonial e Provincial, Série Agricultura, "Colonias et colonos: Colônia Leopoldina) – (An extended analysis of this list will be included in mys doctoral thesis, forthcoming at EPFL Lausanne in spring 2023.)

Following the incident, Maulaz sought reparations for "the great expenses and the huge losses" on his so-called property.

By this time, reparation payments to plantation owners were already common in the British empire, where slavery had been abolished since 1833. It was thereby a common practice to ask for financial reparations, once plantation owners lost "their property" due to rebellions by the enslaved. Contradictorily, however, enslaved peoples were not entitled to any reparations, financial or otherwise. The case of Maulaz is interesting as the president of the Swiss Confederation was personally involved in fighting and protecting Swiss slave owners—in this case in Brazil—and took the effort and time to engage in years-long correspondence with the Emperors of Brazil to ask for justice and financial reparations. Significantly, the reason for the loss—rebellion by the Black enslaved peoples—is often only mentioned in one short sentence, in contrast to the numerous letters detailing the great losses endured by the plantation owner. These official consular papers maintain silence over the exploitative "expenses and huge losses" suffered by the enslaved workers of Maulaz's plantation.

As I am reading from records of the former Helvécia plantation, the ratio of white colonists to enslaved Africans was about 1:10. The average plantation in *Colonîa Leopoldina* included around 1 white to 10 Black people, with a total of 130 whites to 1,267 enslaved people in 1848 (fig. 10), a number which still increased in the following years. In such an oppressive slave labor plantation system, security measures were put in place in order to gain control over the enslaved workers, including torture and violence against the revolting slaves. What Cedric Robinson calls "the specter of punishment"[25] was part of this institutionalized brutality. To this day, the trauma of these punishments is ever present in the long memory of the community of Helvécia. Furthermore, these traumatic memories are spatial. I argue that they are inscribed to very specific places in the village and in its landscape, where violence against slaves presumably happened. Memories strongly linked to signifiers in the landscape are distributed in the form of rumors and local historical experience. Luise White argues that rumors, in colonial contexts, "can be a source for local history that reveals the passionate contradictions and anxieties of specific places with specific histories."[26] Such rumors make local concerns,

no matter how fragmented, apparent. Oral histories are testimonies of a terrain of memory.

During conversations we conducted with descendants of enslaved people in Helvécia in 2017, we were often told many different versions of how the colonists killed and burnt their ancestors' babies. These brutal testimonies are in stark contrast with the positivist narrative which suggests that Swiss slave owners were *better* colonizers, morally superior to their counterparts. It is therefore important to distinguish the teller of each story in order to legitimize what it says. The latter presumption is an interpretation of Itaberaba Sulz, the descendent of a Swiss colonist in Helvécia who owns an important document, the planter's minute-book, regularly used by his forefathers to record proceedings when they met to administer the plantations. Sulz argues that the word *escravo* ("slave" in Portuguese) was never used in the book, and the word *negro* ("black person" in Portuguese) was instead. Therefore, the Swiss plantation owners must not have seen those they enslaved as slaves. Again, this narrative stands in stark contrast with the embodied generational oral history of the Afro-Brazilians in Helvécia. To give an example, the Quilombo leader and women's group initiator Titinha, who was the main activist behind the legal fight for recognizing Helvécia as Quilombo, invited us to her house for a refreshment and some fruit. Sitting on the veranda, she moved towards the yard and pointed to a glade amongst the trees in her garden. Titinha explained that this was the space where the *tronco* was placed, the trunk where the enslaved were punished. The simultaneity of remembered time and present time was demonstrated in her words. The place of violence of forced labor in enslaved conditions is constantly remembered, as it is in the backyard of the family home. For an external visitor, no visible signs can be read in the landscape of this rural village. The villagers include these imagined memorized places of violence and torture quite intimately in their way of life in the village. The relationship with this landscape is at the heart of the memory process.

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When the Industry Built the City: Business Archives, Memory, and Community in a Contemporary Company Town

Anna Karla de Almeida Santos

This short essay illustrates the role of the business archive in the transmission and maintenance of contemporary industrial culture, with a focus on the company town of Dalmine. In the context of Dalmine, the business archive managed by the Fondazione Dalmine emerges as a place of dialogue integrating historical documentation with the active memory of the community through collaborative and intergenerational projects and initiatives that promote the history of the town, which is, in part, the history of the industry itself.

The company town of Dalmine

Company towns are cities founded during the Industrial Revolution by single enterprises operating as employers and landlords, enforcers of security, promoters of social harmony, and providers of services and goods for workers to enhance the living and health conditions of the production sites and the surrounding settlements. This phenomenon was also prevalent in Italy, where fruitful social, historical, and economic conditions favored the emergence of various company town models, as in the cases of Ivrea or Crespi D'Adda. Although less documented, the city of Dalmine (located in the province

of Bergamo, in Northern Italy) represents another relevant archetype of the Italian company town. This is partly because the company is still active today and contributes to the construction of the town's identity while most Italian company towns suffered decline and the consequent cessation of activities in the second half of the twentieth century.

The Dalmine historical heritage began in 1906, when a steel-pipe manufacturing company (currently known as TenarisDalmine)[1] capitalized on the presence of a rural area lacking basic infrastructure to establish itself as the leader of urban development in the area, over time constructing all the major infrastructure that constitutes the city, including roads, sanitation, housing, and services. The company has maintained its political and social control over the territory since then, first by itself building—through the work of architect Giovanni Greppi—working-class neighborhoods inspired by the garden city principles,[2] and after—following the fall of Fascism and the end of the Second World War—building projects and initiatives in collaboration with city-government programs that strengthened the social fabric and drove social transformations. Note that over one hundred years after its foundation, the city and the industry continue to share the name, space, and close social and political ties, as if to stress the industry's relevance for the city of Dalmine itself.[3]

The business archive of the Fondazione Dalmine

The spatial, economic, and social activities of the company have been meticulously documented since its establishment, but it was only in 1999 that the company created the Fondazione Dalmine with the aim of safeguarding the heritage of the company town in the form of a business archive (fig. 1). The Fondazione Dalmine archives comprise about 140,000 files, 100,000 photographs, 5,800 drawings and sketches, 900 objects, 900 audiovisuals, 2,000 historical volumes, and 6,000 current volumes.[4] These records include various contents such as housing and neighborhood masterplans, photographs of cultural activities provided by the industry, and technical and management reports, and they shed light on the city's industrial memory. Indeed, the business archive is the fundamental resource for unearthing the traces of the twentieth-century company town of Dalmine.

When the Industry Built the City:
Business Archives, Memory [...]

Fig. 1: An archival image of one of G. Greppi's masterplans for the Dalmine city center, "property of the Dalmine S.p.A.".
Credit: Dalmine Foundation Archives, 2021

The business archive, however, is not merely a private space in which the company traces and relives its past, but is an emerging place of dialogue, which seeks through numerous projects to involve citizens and create new memories of contemporary industrial culture. In this respect, the Fondazione Dalmine integrates the industrial records with the active memory of the citizens of Dalmine, searching through collaborative methods for new stories, materials, and personal anecdotes that can help keep its cultural identity alive for present and future generations.

Dialogues with local community

The company acknowledges that the history of the industry is the history of the city itself. The difference is that there is currently no unilateral exchange of records. Today, citizens and workers are active voices in an ongoing collaborative process "that welcomes diverse input, not an end-product (such as a finding aid) that presents an authoritative or definitive voice."[5] At the Fondazione Dalmine, city and industry intertwine in a dialogue in which "content, context and structure of record creation (are) inextricably bound together."[6] In this perspective, the business archives play the role of promoters of intergenerational cultural connections between the industry and the local community, offering free activities open to the whole community. In other words, through collaborative processes, the Fondazione Dalmine encourages a type of living archives that creates a bridge with the residents of Dalmine so that citizens can strengthen their connection with the local industrial culture. Two initiatives among the various projects undertaken by the Fondazione Dalmine are an authentic reflection of this strategy: The "Face to Face" project and the industry-funded 3—19 series of educational programs.

The "Face to Face" project revolves around photographic exhibitions organized by the Fondazione Dalmine.[7] The community, comprising current and former workers, is invited to contribute by identifying traces of their past in the photographs exposed. Specifically, participants can identify themselves (or their family, friends, or colleagues) and their lived places in the photographs, writing notes next to each face and place displayed. In addition, the community can enrich the archive by donating their materials to the company archive. From

these exhibitions (and more than three hundred portraits and group photographs), the Fondazione Dalmine has conceived a virtual album that reconstructs a hundred years of history of the company town from the point of view of its protagonists.[8] The archive thus becomes a sharing space that through collective memory processes, narrates the social changes of the city in its hundred years of existence.

The educational program 3—19 is another example of the intergenerational cultural connection between the archive and the community. Under this program, students from the regional schools can discover the history of the industry (and the city) of Dalmine through several activities comprising guided walks through the city, critical readings of the iconographic archive, and thematic learning labs. These activities have a dual function. On one hand, the younger generations familiarize themselves with the company's industrial heritage by learning about the economic and social history of the city. On the other hand, the company profits from these exchanges to develop its social project and integrate the contemporary needs and concerns of young people into its activities.

Some considerations

The outreach work of the Fondazione Dalmine archives to share the city's industrial heritage is a sign of the company's desire to transfer its cultural importance to future generations. The company's interest in continuing to record social activities and welfare services promotes the idea of community and redefines the concept of a company town in contemporaneity. The purpose behind these activities appears to be in keeping with the company's early role in the territory: an established consensus that the industry was and is a key actor preserving and sustaining the industrial legacy of the company town and, as such, should be recognized as a giver of well-being and cultural identity.

Architecture, Coloniality, and the Archives [...]

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1 TenarisDalmine, the largest global manufacturer and supplier of pipes and services for oil and gas exploration and production, is still an important driver of the economic growth and development of the city, the surrounding territories, and the whole country.
2 Davide Pagliarini, *La città paesaggio. 1925—2015* (Libria, 2016).
3 Carolina Lussana, Manoel Tonolini, "Dalmine: dall'impresa alla città", in *Dalmine dall'impresa alla città. Committenza industriale e architettura*, ed. Carolina Lussana (Dalmine: Fondazione Dalmine, 2003).
4 Fondazione Dalmine. "Archivio," www.fondazionedalmine.org/it/archivio/, accessed July 29, 2021.
5 Michelle Caswell, "'The Archive' Is Not an Archives: On Acknowledging the Intellectual Contributions of Archival Studies," escholarship.org/uc/item/7bn4v1fk (UCLA, 2021).
6 Jeannette Bastian, "Reading Colonial Records Through an Archival Lens: The Provenance of Place, Space, and Creation", *Archival Science* 6 (2006): 269.
7 "Faccia a Faccia," www.facciaafaccia.org/en/, accessed July 30, 2021.
8 "Tenaris Today," *Faccia a facia con la storia*, March 1, 2007.

When the Industry Built the City:
Business Archives, Memory [...]

The Provenance of Buildings

Lena Stina Andersson

Unearthing Traces

Provenance

A prevailing discussion within the field of museology is concerned with the provenance of artifacts and collections housed in museum buildings, tracing origins, methods of appropriation, and questions of ownership and restitution. This field has grown out of ambitions voiced by nations reclaiming looted collections, together with activists and academics, and is increasingly part of the institutional role of the museum.[1] In Sweden, discussions have included the possible restitution of Benin Bronzes now at the Museum of Ethnography, fine art located at the Moderna Museet and the return of Sami art and artifacts at the Nordiska Museet. At Nationalmuseum, steps towards furthering research on provenance and restitution have been taken after finding out that collection items had been stolen in the aftermath of the Second World War.[2]

Buildings are to a growing extent discussed in similar terms, following trajectories of money and wealth that enabled monumental architecture in the so-called Global North and revealing misconduct and concealed crimes.[3] Less attention has been paid to the building materials used to construct and reconstruct these

monuments. This text draws attention to the material history of Celotex, a composite board material used in the technical upgrades done in the late 1920s and early 1930s to renovate the Nationalmuseum in Stockholm, Sweden. By tracing the material history of this composite product via sites of material extraction and production, the provenance of this building material offers new and difficult histories that can be tied to the museum institution.

Tracing building materials

Since the mid-nineteenth century, spatial ambitions and ideas for exhibiting the collection of art, design, and prints have defined the successive construction and reconstruction of the Nationalmuseum in Stockholm, Sweden. It is the first purpose-built museum building in Sweden, and the constant need for its alteration has necessitated procurement of construction materials through complex commodity chains that stretch across the planet.

The Swedish Nationalmuseum exemplifies the nineteenth-century national museum boom, when the construction of such buildings was in its heyday.[4] The collections were transferred from royal to state ownership in 1792, following the developments of the French Revolution, and the new building was inaugurated in 1866. Soon after the building was completed, new spatial needs arose, and the museum has been built and rebuilt several times throughout the twentieth century.

The period between the late 1920s and 1930s was a time of intense alteration and technical upgrades to the Nationalmuseum building. New technological demands were put on the museum building in the form of climate control to protect the artifacts and the installation of electrical lighting. The archives provide little detail of the construction materials used during the upgrade, and the very few materials that did make it to the archives are of a more unique or atypical character. Even the few examples that have been documented in the archives demonstrate origins that extend far beyond the nation that the building was supposed to represent.

Tracing the history of building materials from different decades entails several difficulties. Although twenty-first-century construction projects are becoming

Fig. 1: Renovation work including the installation of a new ventilation system at Nationalmuseum, ca. 1930. Credit: Nationalmuseum
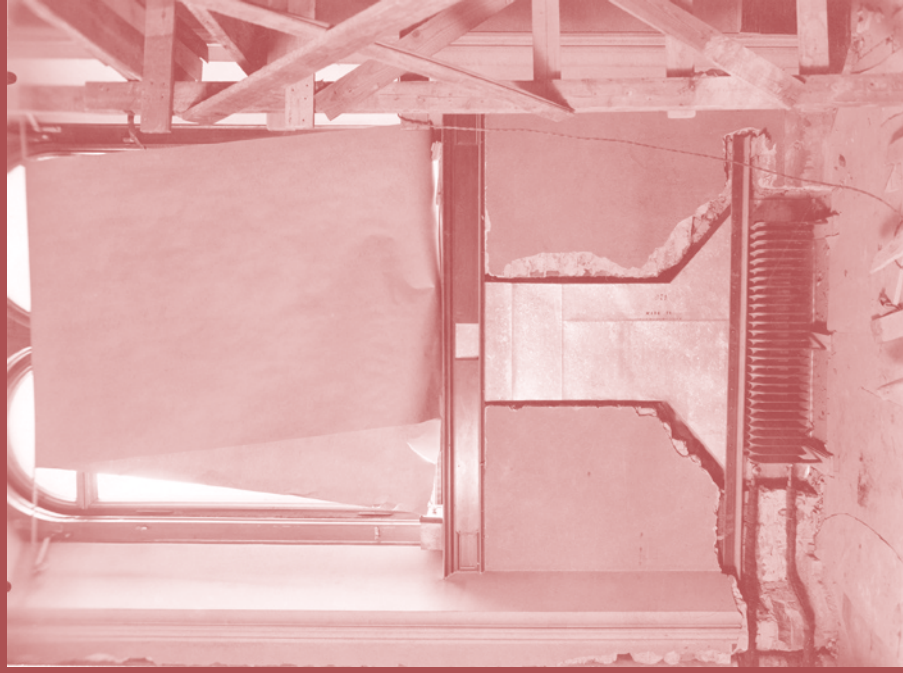
Fig. 2: Front page of a commercial brochure for Celotex, 1923, found at archive.org/details/CelotexCompany.

increasingly transparent through sustainability certification systems that demand traceability and production information, the material supply chains of extracting, processing, transporting, and installing have become more complex than ever before.

Construction materials from pre–twenty-first-century constructions present other challenges, as the documentation of building materials, and in particular alterations, has been sparsely preserved or documented, as have the traces and biographies of the construction workers.

One material documented in the archives is mahogany wood, imported and used for the cladding of Balder, a marble statue depicting the Norse god. Although the exact source of the mahogany is unaccounted for in the archives, in the early twentieth century the vast majority of the mahogany imported into Europe was sourced from Western Africa.

A second material documented in the archives, Celotex, represents a new type of composite branded material developed around the time of the upgrade to the Nationalmuseum.

Celotex, bagasse, and asbestos

The first mention of the material "Celotex" in the museum archives is in the documentation of electrical and heating system installations between the years 1929 and 1930, issued as instructions to builders dated November 24, 1928.[5]

Celotex, a 11-mm-thick fiberboard, was prescribed to be installed as insulation underneath the windowsills and around showcases in areas close to new radiators.

The company Celotex was founded in the early 1920s in Chicago, United States, and it initially produced fiberboard insulation. The Celotex Corporation was part of a larger company structure, owned by Philip Carey Corporation, and its first factory was located in Louisiana, United States. The company soon expanded into new markets, establishing itself in the United Kingdom in the same decade. The raw materials required for this composite material were derived mainly from North and Central America. The main material used for the fiberboards was initially *bagasse*, a sugar cane fiber that

is a byproduct of the sugar industry. Before the idea to use bagasse as a building material was born, it was mainly used as combustion in the sugar extracting process.[6] Once the production of Celotex started, it was soon used for a variety of new tasks, such as insulating buildings and pipes, roofing etc.

Bagasse, the primary material used for the fiberboards, was derived from various locations, such as Florida and Louisiana in the United States, as well as imported bagasse from Cuba and Trinidad during periods of low sugar cane production.[7] To further control the availability of bagasse, the president of the Celotex Corporation, Bror G. Dahlberg, expanded the company's ambitions to also become a producer in the sugar industry, an industry accused of exploiting labor and destroying environmental assets such as the Everglades in the early twentieth century.[8]

Questions of production and procurement become even more relevant as a second trail of Celotex production leads us towards Canada and the mining of asbestos. Asbestos, used during this period due to its resistance to fire, decay, and rust, was found in various Celotex products, sometimes in combination with bagasse.[9] Even though Celotex Corporation was the largest producer of insulation board in the United States in 1986,[10] the company had to file for bankruptcy in 1990 after receiving a large number of lawsuits.[11] It is difficult to know for certain whether asbestos was a raw material in the Celotex product used for the Nationalmuseum renovation. Although asbestos was found and removed from the museum building at later stages, the archival documents do not list all material sources containing the hazardous mineral. The specifications on which exact Celotex product was used in the late 1920s and early 1930s extends to the thickness of the board, and all we know from the documentation is the brand name and that the board was 11 mm thick.

The provenance of buildings

At the Nationalmuseum and similar museum institutions, provenance and restitution research is focusing on collections of art and artifacts, unfolding histories of colonial operations, looting, and illegal confiscation. The provenance of the buildings, as well as the building materials used, has generated less interest but is

in similar ways carrying narratives of misconduct. These processes can also be understood as neutralizations, where violent and dirty material production processes become disguised, as discussed by Bandi, Jain, and knowbotiq, reflecting on "what kind of bodies, affects and powers are involved and produced when different routes of visibility and invisibility, of materiality, and affectability are taken?"[12]

Scratching on the material surface of this building structure, this text aims to unfold material traces that can be linked to exploitation of labor, environmental degradation, and health risks threatening producers and users. By shifting the focus toward the provenance of buildings and their makers,[13] these architectural monuments also become enablers of distant sites of material extraction and production.

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1   See, for example, the report commissioned by Emmanuel Macron; Felwine Sarr, Bénédicte Savoy, Isabelle Maréchal, Vincent Négri, and Drew S. Burk, *The Restitution of African Cultural Heritage: Toward a New Relational Ethics* (France: Ministère de la Culture, 2018).

2   Susanna Pettersson, "Dags att satsa på proveniens- och restitutionsforskning," Nationalmuseum, www.nationalmuseum.se/om-nationalmuseum/några-rad-er-från-överintendenten/dags-att-satsa-på-proveniens-och-restitutionsforskning, accessed December 26, 2021.

3   For buildings, see, for example, Norimitsu Onishi, "George Floyd's Killing Forces Wider Debate on France's Slave-Trading Past," *The New York Times*, June 24, 2020, section World

4   Gabriella Elgenius, "National Museums as National Symbols: A Survey of Strategic Nation-Building and Identity Politics; Nations as Symbolic Regimes," in *National Museums and Nation-Building in Europe, 1750—2010*, eds. Peter Aronsson, Gabriella Elgenius (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2015).

5   "Arbetsbeskrivning Beträffande Byggandsarbeten i Samband Med Anordnandet Av Ny Värmeledning Samt Elektrisk Installation m.m. Inom Nationalmuseum" (Nationalmuseum Myndighetsarkiv, 1928), 17, 31.

6   Elbert C. Lathrop, "The Celotex and Cane-Sugar Industries: Bagasse or Sugar a By Product?," *Industrial & Engineering Chemistry* 22, no. 5 (1930): 450.

7   Ibid., 458.

8   John A. Heitmann, "The Beginnings of Big Sugar in Florida, 1920—1945," *The Florida Historical Quarterly* 77, no. 1 (1998): 39—61 (48).

9   Jessica van Horssen, *A Town Called Asbestos: Environmental Contamination, Health, and Resilience in a Resource Community* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2016), 4; Jack Breihan, "Glenn L. Martin Aircraft Company," Newsletter Docomomo Us 15 (Summer 2008): 7.

10 Otto Suchsland and George E. Woodson, *Fiberboard Manufacturing Practices in the United States* (US Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, 1987), 5.

11 "Celotex Trust," 2021, web.archive.org/web/20210629223515/http://www.celotextrust.com/, accessed August 13, 2021.

12 Nina Bandi, Rohit Jain, and knowbotiq, "Swiss Psychotropic Gold: A Critical Fabulation," in *Swiss Psychotropic Gold*, ed. Nani Bandi, section 600 (Basel: Christoph Merian Verlag, 2020).

13 "Who Builds Your Architecture? (WBYA?)," www.whobuilds.org, accessed August 20, 2021.

PROMENADES

MEMORIES

PERSONNALISATION VÊTEMENTS
MARQUES SUISSES

Plan de Neuchâtel avec tracé des promenades

Jardin botanique

A
Chemin de Maujobia
Avenue des Alpes
Rue Auguste-Bachelin
Ch. des Grillons
Rue de la Côte
Rue des Parcs

B
Rue du Plan
Rue Charles-Knapp
Rue de la Cassarde
Rue des Pavés
Sentier du Clos-des-Auges
Rue de Comba-Borel
Rue de la Côte
Rue des Sablons

Rue Georges-Auguste-Matile
Rue du Rocher
Rue de la Côte
Faubourg de la Gare

C
Chemin du Perthuis-du-Sault

D
Rue de l'Orée
Rue des Petits-Chênes
Rue de Fontaine-André
Rue des Fahys
Chemin de Chantemerle
Chemin des Mulets

Rue Louis-Favre
Place de la Gare
LA POSTE
Rue du Crêt-Taconnet
Avenue de Clos-Brochet
Rue de Gibraltar
Avenue de Bellevaux
Rue Jaquet-Droz
Avenue du Mail

R. de l'Evole
Quai Louis-Perrier
Quai Philippe-Godet
Quai Osterwald
Esplanade du Mont-Blanc
Faubourg de l'Hôpital
Faubourg du Lac
Place A.-M.-Piaget
Avenue du Premier-Mars
Place Numa-Droz
Rue des Beaux-Arts
Place du Port
Quai Léopold-Robert
Rue de Vieux-Châtel
Rue de la Maladière
Rue de la Pierre-à-Mazel
Rue Abram-Louis-Breguet
Quai Robert-Comtesse
Espace Louis-Agassiz
Rue des Saars
Route des Falaises
R. du Littoral
Port du Nid-du-Crô
Rue des Sa...

Place du 12-Septembre

Ville de Neuchâtel

LAC DE NEU...

Répertoire des rues et légendes

Abram-Louis-Breguet, rue	C2	
Alexis-Marie-Piaget, place	B2	
Alpes, avenue des	A1	
Auguste-Bachelin, rue	A1	
Bassin, rue du	B2	
Beaux-Arts, rue des	B2	
Bellevaux, avenue de	B-C2	
Bordes, rue des	D2	
Borthoudes, rue des	B1-2	
	F-G1	

Cassarde, rue de la	B1	
Cèdres, rue des	E1	
Châble, chemin du	G1	
Champreveyres, rue de	F-G1	
Chantemerle, chemin de	D1	
Charles-Knapp, rue	B1	
Clos-Brochet, avenue de	C-D1-2	
Evole, rue de l'	A1	
	A-B1	
Côte, rue de la	A-B-C1	

Crêt-Taconnet, rue du	C-D1	
Croix-du-Marché	B2	
Dîme, rue de la	G1	
Douze-Septembre, place du	C2-3	
Eclusе, rue de l'	C1	
Eugène-Borel, quai	C1	
Evole, rue de l'	B1	
Fahys, rue des	C-D1	
Falaises, route des	D-E-F2	
Favarge, chemin de la	F1	
Fontaine-André, rue de	C1	
Frédéric-Carle-de-Marval, rue	E-F1	
Gare, avenue de la	B1-2	
Gare, faubourg de la	A2	
Gare, place de la	A2	
Georges-A.-Matile, rue	B-C1	
Gibraltar, rue de	D1-2	
Gouttes-d'Or, route des	F-G1	
Grillons, chemin des	A1	

Halles, place des	B2	
Hôpital, faubourg de l'	B-C2	
Hôpital, rue de l'	B2	
Jaquet-Droz, rue	C1	
Jehanne-de-Hochberg, rue	D2	
Lac, faubourg du	A2	
Maladière, rue de la	D-E2	
Matthias-Hipp, rue	C-D2	
Maujobia, chemin de	F1	
Monruz, rue de	A1	
Mont-Blanc, esplanade du	A2	

Louis-Agassiz, espace	C2	
Louis-Bourguet, rue	E1	
Louis-Favre, rue	B1	
Louis-Perrier, quai	A2	
Mail, avenue du	D-E2	
Moulins, rue des	B2	
Mulets, chemin des	E-F1	
Musée, rue du	B2	
Musée d'archéologie, site du	G1-2	
Nid-du-Crô, port du	D2	
Numa-Droz, place	B2	
Orée, rue de l'	D-E-F1	
Ostervald, quai	A-B2	
Parcs, rue des	A1	

Paul-Bouvier, rue ... B2
Pavés, chemin des ... E-F1
Pertuis-du-Sault, ch. a ... B2
Petit-Catéchisme, ...
Petit-Pontarlier, ...
Petits-Chênes, rue des ...
Philippe-Godet, ...
Pierre-à-Mazel, rue ...
Plan, rue du ...

1 De la gare à la place

2

The Picturesque Deception: The Eighteenth-Century Picturesque View as Imperialist Mechanism

Rebecca J. Squires

The European landscape garden was a symbol of nation, land, landowner, and citizen, epitomizing the seizure of land as leading to the subjugation of peoples (fig. 1). Appearing at the apex of the Enclosure Movement that took place from the mid-eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth century in England and industrialized parts of Northern Europe, the landscape garden was marked by fences, boundaries, and barriers.[1] This marred the picturesque view, heralding the importation of the ha-ha, or sunken wall, from France so that vast, unencumbered prospects swept the horizon, continuing the eye's subsumption of land and landscape, disguising within the illusion of expansive freedom, the imperialist appropriation of life and land (fig. 2).[2]

Hovering aesthetically between the sublime and the beautiful, the landscape featured tantalizing outlooks, peephole glimpses, and borrowed scenery, or *jièjǐng*, which visually annexed distant prospects, leading to a picturesque illusion. Horace Walpole describes this as a "delicious contrast of hill and valley changing imperceptibly into each other."[3] Walpole writes that "loose groves […] called in the distant view between their graceful stems, removed and extended the perspective by delusive comparison" (fig. 3).[4]

Fig. 2: *Ha-ha at the Grand Trianon*, Versailles, architect
Jules Hardouin-Mansart, digital photograph.
Credit: Rebecca J. Squires, 2022

Fig. 1: Thomas Gainsborough, *Mr. and Mrs. Andrews*,
ca. 1750, oil on canvas, 69.8 x 119.4 cm, London,
The National Gallery.

The Picturesque Deception:
The Eighteenth-Century Picturesque […]

Fig. 3: Landscape architect and artist Humphry Repton created a series of Red Books which proposed landscape improvements to wealthy landowners. In Repton's Red Books, a paper flap illustrating the actual landscape was lifted to reveal its prospective conversion beneath. In this picturesque transformation, the optical seizure of the distant prospect was effectuated within the image itself in a blink-of-an-eye glimpse, or *coup d'œil*. While this conversion likely reveals the estate's manor, the appropriation of distant, or borrowed scenery demonstrated the imperialistic impulse behind the picturesque view. Humphry Repton, *The Red Book of Ferney Hall*, pen and ink and watercolor on paper, 216 x 292 mm, New York, The Morgan Library and Museum. Illustration with folding paper flap, Top: flap closed, bottom: flap open.

The half-wild, half-domesticated landscape of irregularity, contrast, and surprise, along with the "delusive" expansion of perspective through the confiscation of the view, invoked sensory disorientation, a requisite for changing consciousness, thus establishing the in-between space of the picturesque as a locus of transformation (fig. 4). This outdoor laboratory gave physical and psychic space to the development and display of Western European artistic, philosophical, and scientific innovations; however, this advancement was built upon the mechanisms of brutality and domination. Caught in the furrows of this mechanism was the chattel slave, who served as both labor and grist, chafing in this in-between space (fig. 5).

It is hardly coincidental that industrialization in Europe rose alongside the enslavement of the other in the eighteenth century, as western advancement relied on a forced labor economy (fig. 6). Jean-Jacques Rousseau depicted the picturesque deception behind western progress as a "hideous cyclops," countering the illusion of the bucolic landscape farmed by rustic laborers in his 1782 *Reveries of the Solitary Walker*.[5] Rousseau rebukes the avaricious impulse leading to extractionism as resulting in the live burial of humanity, driven deep into "the bowels of the earth […] no longer deserving to exist by day-light."[6] In his 1755 *Discourse on Inequality*, Rousseau attributed this ravaging of nature and humanity to the nascence of civil society, which through its notion of ownership of the earth's resources, led to the conquering of land and peoples:

> The first man who, having enclosed a piece of ground, bethought himself of saying *This is mine*, and found people simple enough to believe him, was the real founder of civil society. From how many crimes, wars and murders, from how many horrors and misfortunes might not any one have saved mankind, by pulling up the stakes, or filling up the ditch, and crying to his fellows, "Beware of listening to this impostor; you are undone if you once forget that the fruits of the earth belong to us all, and the earth itself to nobody.[7]

The rise of civilization as yoked to privatization was echoed in the garden literature in 1780 when Horace Walpole, the 4th Earl of Orford, writer, art historian, Whig politician, and son of the very first British Prime Minister, posited that the garden was the natural

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Fig. 4: Hubert Robert, *Garden of an Italian Villa*, 1764, oil on canvas, 93.5 x 133 cm, Ottawa, National Gallery of Canada.

Fig. 5: Enslaved people in a Dutch-owned sugar mill, engraving, seventeenth century.
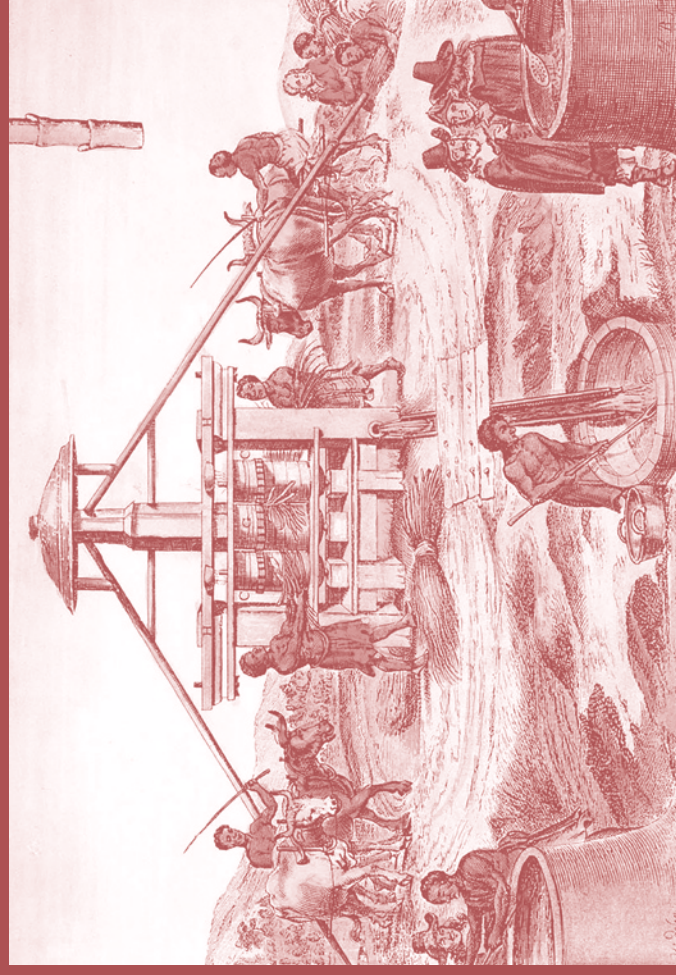
Fig. 6: *Europe Supported by Africa & America* shows Europe, the central figure, personified as a demure white woman with downcast eyes, her hair modestly covering her lower half, while the personifications of Africa and America promiscuously engage the gaze of the spectator. "Europe" grasps "Africa" by the wrist, while extending her other arm over the shoulder of "America", binding them with green garland. William Blake, from drawings by John Gabriel Stedman, *Europe Supported by Africa & America*, in John Gabriel Stedman's *Narrative of a Five Years' Expedition, Against the Revolted Negros of Surinam in Guiana, on the Wild Coast of South America from the year 1772—1777*, London: J. Johnson, 1796.

Europe supported by Africa & America.

London, Published Dec.r 1.st 1792, by J. Johnson, St Pauls Church Yard.
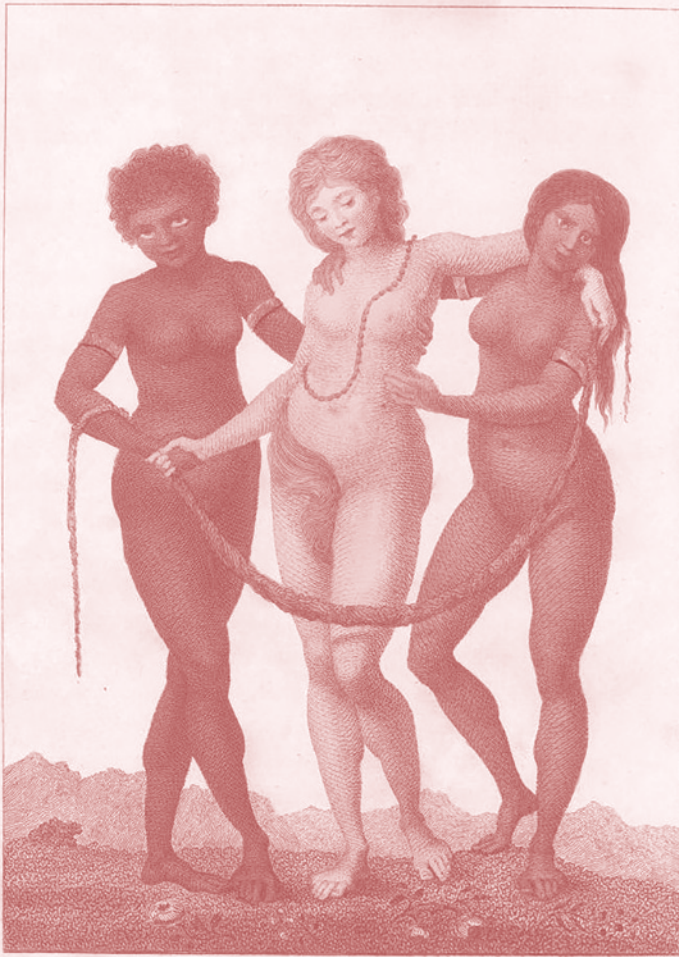
outcome of land possession. He wrote: "Gardening was probably one of the first arts that succeeded to that of building houses, and naturally attended property and individual possession."[8] Walpole's account of the advent of the picturesque garden had as its nationalist mission the garden's establishment as purely English.[9] Walpole credits architect, garden designer, and painter William Kent with originating the picturesque garden due to his being "bold and opinionative [sic] enough to dare and dictate" that "the garden in its turn was to be set free from its prim regularity, that it might assort with the wilder country without." Kent thus set the visual imagination free and "leaped the fence, and saw that all nature was a garden" (fig. 7).[10] In other words, the entire natural world was England's garden to be possessed and plundered, while the unrestricted view unleashed England's imperialist ambition.[11]

As the view opened onto the imperialist project, it necessarily closed for the other. Rousseau, who was persecuted, mocked, and exiled for his politically and religiously subversive publications, was caught in the rift of the picturesque. His field of vision narrowed as he was "forced to abstain from thinking [...] forced to contain the remains of a pleasing but languishing imagination."[12] The circumscribed prospect of the other impeded the projection of self onto the greater world. Rousseau writes: "I cannot, however, contract myself within myself, because my expansive soul seeks, in spite of myself, to extend its feelings and existence on other beings."[13]

This contraction of aspirations meant that Rousseau operated functionally within the interstice of the other. However, as a white male born in Geneva, he retained, what Hannah Arendt, in 1949, called "the right to have rights" as a citizen and thus as a human.[14] Even when Rousseau's citizenship was revoked, and he was exiled from France, Geneva, Yverdon, Môtiers, and St. Peter's Island on Lake Bienne, even when his home in Môtiers was stoned by a religious mob, even when his books were burnt in Paris and Geneva, he still possessed basic human rights, and when stripped of those, had the protection of the elite. "The right to have rights" was never extended to the African chattel slave, whose assignment to a sub-human status was rationalized through racist ethnographies and eugenics.

The right to be recognized as human was and still is determined and conditioned by place of origin,

citizenship, gender, sexual orientation, religion, status, wealth, and property ownership. Property, once again, becomes a determiner of social class. Rousseau, in owning no property, operated as an outsider. In Rousseau's posthumously published *Confessions*, an earnest, if semi-factual, account of his public and private life, he elucidates his social condition:

> If experience and observation are considered worthwhile, I am, in this respect, in perhaps the most advantageous situation in which a mortal has ever found himself, because, having no particular estate myself, I have known all the estates; I have lived in every social condition, from the lowest to the highest, except for that of the throne.[15]

Accorded the status of non-being, Rousseau observed from an unseen vantage point, underscoring his reliance on so-called "great men" in maintaining his relative freedom:

> Moving freely, as a man without pretension or significance, I have observed them [great men] at my leisure. When they stopped disguising themselves, I was able to compare man to man and condition to condition. Being nothing and desiring nothing, I encumbered and bothered no one. Attached to nothing, I freely passed everywhere, sometimes dining with princes and supping with peasants.[16]

While Rousseau's social invisibility conferred a type of freedom, at least in the absence of desire, it also implied a dependence on "great men" in the realization of his potential. Rousseau seemed to have had no moral compunction in relying on influential patrons whose lives exemplified the opposite of his professed egalitarian and abolitionist ethics. Pierre-Alexandre DuPeyrou, Rousseau's devoted friend and supporter, entrusted with publishing Rousseau's works after his death, derived his wealth from multiple slave plantations in Surinam (fig. 8). DuPeyrou's palace in Neuchâtel, built upon the fruits of forced labor: coffee, sugar cane, cacao, and cotton, features prominently in the town today (fig. 9). The palace's once grand garden, garlanded in grape vines, is today circumscribed by few topiary, wedged between public thoroughfares, where it formerly stretched all the way to the lakeshore unchecked, appropriating all in its path.

The Picturesque Deception:
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Fig. 7: *L'Allée des hâ-hâs, Parc de Trianon*, Versailles, by the architect Jules Hardouin-Mansart, digital photograph.
Credit: Rebecca J. Squires, 2022

Fig. 8: *A Surinam Planter in his Morning Dress* by William Blake is after John Gabriel Stedman's drawings that recorded the slave revolt in Surinam and Guiana from 1772 to 1777. The Surinam slave owner represents figures not unlike Pierre-Alexandre DuPeyrou. Smoking a pipe, he surveys his lands at leisure, aware of but unengaged in eye contact with the half-naked enslaved woman. She looks up at him, seeking approval while serving him. Receding to the middle ground, the woman is dwarfed by his towering figure in the foreground, while the plantation house in the background consolidates his locus of power. Horace Walpole's picturesque interplay between the "prim regularity" of the harvested field is contrasted by the luxuriant, untamed land at its borders, so that his property "might assort with the wilder country without," foretelling its eventual annexation. William Blake, from drawings by John Gabriel Stedman, *A Surinam Planter in his Morning Dress*, in John Gabriel Stedman's *Narrative of a Five Years' Expedition, Against the Revolted Negros of Surinam in Guiana, on the Wild Coast of South America from the year 1772—1777*, London: J. Johnson, 1796.

Fig. 9: Even by the end of the nineteenth century, DuPeyrou's estate and formal gardens still stretched nearly to the lakeshore, as seen on the right side of this illustration of Neuchâtel from around 1891. Anne-Laure Juillerat, Claire Piguet and Jean-Pierre Jelmini, *DuPeyrou: un homme et son hôtel*, Pontarlier et Fleurier, Editions Belvédère, 2011.

Fig. 10: Illustration by William Blake from drawings by John Gabriel Stedman, *A Negro Hung Alive by the Ribs to a Gallows*, in John Gabriel Stedman's *Narrative of a Five Years' Expedition, Against the Revolted Negros of Surinam in Guiana, on the Wild Coast of South America from the year 1772–1777*, London: J. Johnson, 1796.
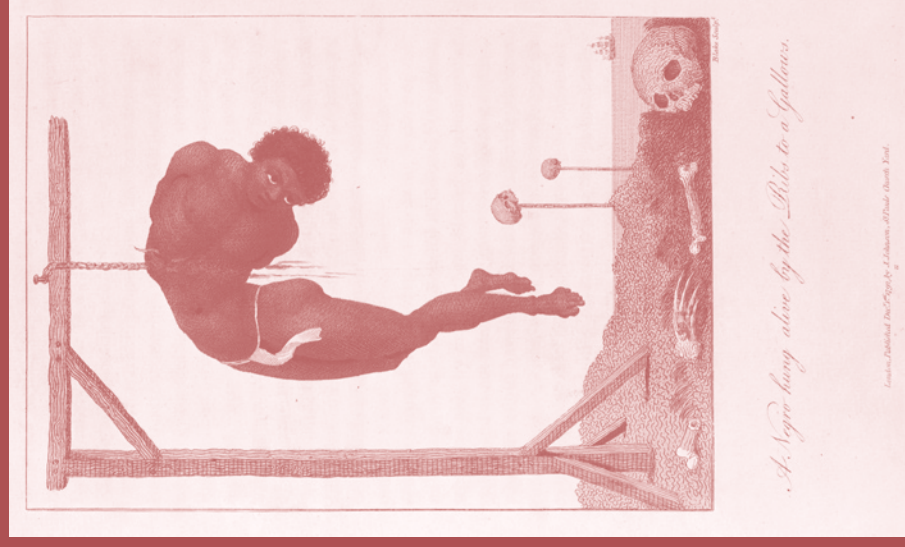
DuPeyrou's outlook onto the lake and the horizon beyond swept over the atrocities committed abroad in pursuit of enrichment at home, just as the Enclosure Movement concealed the obstructions that characterized it (fig. 10). These "delusive" visual devices were critical to the imperialist project. As the picturesque landscape dazzled with myriad viewpoints and shifting scenery, faraway lands were purloined in a *coup d'œil*, or blink-of-an-eye glimpse.[17] The imperialist view of elision, deflection, and conquest was contrived within the eye, requiring the complicity of the spectator in the picturesque deception.

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1   The eighteenth-century Enclosure Movement or Parliamentary Enclosure was the governmentally sanctioned appropriation, privatization, and enclosure of commonly owned, traditionally used, or publicly accessible land in the British Isles, the Netherlands, and parts of the industrial North. Farmers had previously cultivated smallholdings, or strips of land, which after harvest became common grazing land. Accompanying enclosure was the engrossment of these smallholdings into larger parcels of land which were then let at higher values, leading to the abandonment of surrounding cottages and farmhouses, and the migration of agricultural workers to the city, augmenting the factory labor force during the industrial revolution. Prior to 1700, the enclosure of land had mainly occurred through private agreement, as previous legislatures had been opposed to it. The first surge of enclosure occurred between 1750 and 1780, and then again in 1793, coinciding with the outbreak of the French Revolutionary Wars. Following this, parliament passed the General Enclosure Act of 1801 and the Enclosure Act of 1845. S. J. Thompson, "Parliamentary Enclosure, Property, Population, and the Decline of Classical Republicanism in Eighteenth-Century Britain," *The Historical Journal* 51, no. 3 (2008): 621—42.

2   Horace Walpole, *The History of the Modern Taste in Gardening* [Written 1750—1770, published 1780] (New York: Ursus Press, 1995), 43; Walpole refers to the ha-ha as a "sunk fence," usually a stone or brick wall sunken to the level of the terrain, with a ditch at its base, resembling today's retaining wall. The ha-ha allowed for unimpeded views, thus visually vanquishing the surrounding countryside. The sunken wall separated gardens from pasturelands, restricted unsanctioned grazing, and established ownership without giving the appearance of doing so. The ha-ha, while having ancient roots, took its example from France at the time. The name is said to come from the French "ah! ah!", an exclamation of surprise when encountering this landscape feature.

3   The Chinese term *jièjǐng* commonly refers to "borrowed scenery," a garden design feature that incorporates the distant prospect into the garden composition. However, Wybe Kuitert explains that *jièjǐng* is a comprehensive landscape design concept according to his analysis of the final chapter of Ji Cheng's 1631 *The Craft of Gardens*. Wybe Kuitert, "Borrowing Scenery and the Landscape that Lends—the Final Chapter of Yuanye," *Journal of Landscape Architecture* 10, Issue 2 (2015); the Chinese garden, or western interpretations of it, influenced the character of the eighteenth-century picturesque or landscape garden; Walpole, *The History of the Modern Taste in Gardening*, 43—44.

4   Ibid.

5   Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Reveries of the Solitary Walker* [Written 1776—1778] in *The Confessions of J.J. Rousseau with the Reveries of the Solitary Walker*, Vol. 1 (London: J. Bew, 1783), Seventh Walk, 249.

6   Rousseau, *Reveries*, 248—49.

7   Rousseau, *Discourse on Inequality (Second Discourse)* [1755] in *The Social Contract & Discourses*, Everyman's Library ed. Ernest Rhys, transl. G.D.H. Cole (London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1923), The Second Part, 207.

8   Walpole, *The History of the Modern Taste in Gardening*, opening line, 17.

9   Ibid.

10 Ibid., 43.

11 Walpole's modern garden, known as the picturesque or landscape garden, was also called the English garden, or even the French garden, evidencing the nationalist sentiment associated with it. The landscape garden was, in actuality, loosely based on notions of naturalistic Greek or Roman gardens, Italian renaissance gardens, and sharawadgi, a design principle of asymmetry, surprise, and contrast, as described in Sir William Temple's 1685 description of the Chinese garden in "Upon the Gardens of Epicurus; Or, of Gardening, in the Year of 1685," in *Miscellanea, the Second Part*. (London: Ri. and Ra. Simpson, 1690), 75—141. The resultant informal garden, a departure from the formal symmetry of the seventeenth-century Le Nôtre garden, was actually an interchange between England, France, and other parts of Europe.

12 Rousseau, *Reveries*, 248.

13 Ibid.

14 Hannah Arendt, "The Rights of Man: What are They?" *Modern Review* 3/1 (Summer 1949): 24—37.

15 Rousseau, *Ébauches des Confessions*, in *Oeuvres complètes de Jean-Jacques Rousseau* [Written 1769, publ. 1782], eds. Bernard Gagnebin and Marcel Raymond, 4 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 1959—1969, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade), vol. 1, 1150—51.

16 Ibid.

17 Modes of visual apprehension were theorized upon and discussed in the eighteenth century as part of the rising scientific, philosophical, and artistic fascination with perceptual processes and cognition. The instantaneous capturing glance was expressed in the eighteenth century as the *coup d'œil*, which Edmund Burke applied to the optical apprehension of the sublime, positing it as either "painted on the eye in such a manner as to be perceived at once," or sequentially revealed in the point-by-point movement of *papillotage*, which "by moving the eye, we gather up with great celerity, the several parts of the object, so as to form one uniform piece." Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* (London: Thomas M'Lean, [1757] 1823), 198—200.

A SES BIENFAITEURS
LA VILLE DE NEUCHATEL RECONNAISSANTE

ULRICH ET BERTHOLD DE NEUCHATEL, CHARTE DE FRANCHISES 1214
LOUIS D'ORLEANS ET JEANNE DE HOCHBERG, ACCENSEMENT DES FORÊTS
DES JOUX, DE SERROUE ET DE CHAUMONT 1512 1537
JEAN JACQUES LALLEMAND, FONDATION DE LA MAISON DES ORPHELINS 1733.
DAVID DE PURRY, HÔPITAL HÔTEL DE VILLE HÉRITAGE TESTAMENTAIRE 1786
JACQUES LOUIS DE POURTALÈS, FONDATION DE L'HÔPITAL POURTALÈS 1808.
EDOUARD DESOR, HÉRITAGE TESTAMENTAIRE 1882.
CÉCILE JEANJAQUET, FONDATION DE L'HÔPITAL DES ENFANTS 1892.
MATHILDE JEANRENAUD, HÉRITAGE TESTAMENTAIRE 1900.
JAMES DE PURY, LEGS DE LA PROPRIÉTÉ DE ST NICOLAS 1902.
ERHARD BOREL, HÉRITAGE TESTAMENTAIRE 1905

(Un)mapping Formality: An Informal Epistemology

Safiya El Ghmari and Bouchra Tafrata

In studying informality, it is almost tacitly consensual to begin with the clear assumption of opposing formality with informality. Whereas in reality, a clear definition of informality that directly stipulates what it is, rather than what it is not, is absent.[1] In this essay we attempt to define informality by what it entails and offers to the study of city dynamics. Like many other scholars, we believe that cities are "social processes, political assemblages where formal and informal institutions of governance are forged and continue to be shaped."[2]

In fact, Roy has already pointed out that "informality is an important epistemology for planning."[3] Therefore, understanding informality is a core task in the decolonization of urban practices and the keeping of records of indigenous and subaltern culture.

Informality is a spectrum

This dynamic relationship between informality and formality could also be described as a dialectic *va et vient*, failing any reductionist approach. Firstly, not only is an opposing stance misleading, but urban life has seldom succeeded in being either purely formal or completely

informal. Even in the most formal processes of city making, there is a significant amount of informality: if only in the process of law and rules, and retractions and negotiations that happens at the level of planning authorities. Of all the approaches to informality, the dualistic approach outlined by Roy and Alsayyad[4] is the one that best encapsulates this idea. Still, it is worth bearing in mind that informality was coined to describe different economic processes outside of the formal economy, including traditional and local economic systems.[5]

However, in opposition to the legalist and structuralist approach, the distinction matters less than the interaction between formality and informality, in both high and low levels of urban planning.[6] Both are modes through which space is produced and regulated, which is why we cannot study informality outside of a relational continuum.[7]

Informality is a reorientation
of state violence

In his essay on informality published in *The Funambulist*, Léopold Lambert declares it to be a fallacy since it is not a subaltern way of making cities or an exotic architecture without architects, but rather it includes areas that were prevented from becoming and existing.[8] In the end, these areas are caught between formality and non-existence. In a way this joins Jane Jacobs' theory on informal areas or slums, which describes the process of "formalization" of informal areas: "unslumification."[9] In her research she demonstrates that when these areas were not subject to state programs or institutional violence, they were able to become formal districts.

Violence by the state is not only synonymous with policing policies but also with practices of ambiguity in recognizing certain informal proceedings (which usually happen in higher decision-making spheres) and sanctioning others, to the extent that this ambiguity hides elite forms of informality and sheds light only on impoverished and marginalized settlements.[10] This informality particularly characterizes areas that are not recognized by the dominant power.[11]

In addition, planning has always served as a governmental tool to make the urban space more transparent

in order to control it.[12] Hence, informality is not only the absence of cities but also the absence of the state. The opacity of informal settlements results in a "penalty for daring to become, unsanctioned and ungraspable."[13] Informality is a testimony.

In his work covering the methods by which these "improvised lives" endure the uninhabitable, AbdouMaliq Simone delivers a testimony of social practices that gives an account of the incurred violence and oppression.[14] His interest goes beyond that of a quantitative account to understand the coping mechanisms of informal areas. In this sense, his work is that of a testimonial archive of the incommensurable.

Most formal urban areas are well documented and preserved through maps, inventories, and indicators etc., while informal areas are subject to archival violence.[15] This excludes the essential corpus of urban dynamics, given that throughout urban history, all cities start from mud. In other words, cities have their roots in informality, as the "formal" and "informal" are entwined.[16]

However, the absence of records and the memory of what is constructed as informality deprives us of the ability to lead any form of archival studies to understand the dynamics of power and oppression in urban areas. Especially as for the most part, this oppression and control was originally a product of colonialism.[17] To some extent, documenting informality is also building an inclusive archive that sheds light on the past architecture of colonial power.[18]

Informality is decolonial

In Doreen Mende's words, studying informality might deliver essential lessons that could help us to "learn how to unlearn imperialism."[19] This is visible in the continuing colonial treatment of French *banlieues* and their immigrant residents by the French state.[20] Furthermore, the treatment of informality as an unnatural phenomenon allows the authorities to justify failing policies.[21] This remains true for many African ex-colonies where remnants of colonization are not only still visible but preserved to this day.[22]

If we reflect on the preceding ideas, it is clear that informality is not simply an antonym to formality, as it doesn't just describe a survival strategy by marginalized groups but also covers a wide array of elite informal practices. And on another, deeper level, informality serves as a postcolonial testimony unveiling power structures in urban planning and state violence with regard to marginalized groups and as a postcolonial testament to power maps. Its study offers an opportunity to reinvent and transcribe the relationship between communities and their urban space beyond a Eurocentric intermediary.

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Gospel of the Marseille Docker— Nicholas Derybolsky from 1952

Sıla Karataş

"Il n'y a pas de hors texte."[1]
Jacques Derrida

Prologue

May 7, 1952. Ernst Haas (1921—1986), an Austrian-born photojournalist soon to be naturalized as an American citizen, took a series of black and white (B&W) photographs for the European Recovery Program (ERP), also known as the Marshall Plan. Shot in Marseille, this photographic documentary narrated the working day of a "typical Marseille docker" including his leisure time after hours at home with his family. Filed as "[Marseille Docker—Nicholas Derybolsky (Magazine Unit Negs)]" at the National Archives and Records of the United States (NARA), the documentary is composed of 68 B&W photographs.[2]

On May 10, 1952, Haas took another series of B&W photographs in the port of Marseille, this time depicting a "typical" day at the port with dockers, cranes, and ships unloading and assembling food, raw materials, goods, and machinery imported from the United States as part of the Marshall Plan. This record, filed as "['The Sleepless

Port'—(Magazine Unit)]" at the NARA, is composed of 165 B&W photographs.[3]

Both series, which I discovered in the NARA's archival records, seem to have been commissioned by the "Magazine Unit" of the Economic Cooperation Administration (ECA) in Paris to advertise the Marshall Plan's activity in France. It is hard to know exactly how much time Ernst Haas spent in Marseille taking hundreds of photographs documenting the postwar everyday life of dockers in the port and in their homes. His two series of Marseille photographs from May 1952, however, evoke an overlooked yet fruitful cooperation agenda of the Marshall Plan for US postwar imperialism and anti-communist propaganda—although further knowledge on the "RMVH Magazine Unit," addressed in the caption index file, still needs to be unearthed.

> "History decays into images, not into stories."[4]
> Walter Benjamin

This text, accompanied by a "gospel" that I made by *montaging* the US-recorded captions, is an attempt to re-narrate the Marshall Plan's discourse on the working class—the so-called "free labor" of the United States against the "communist labor" of the "Soviet threat."[5] I use gospel writing as a form of critical analysis to unearth the US doctrine on the "good life" of the postwar labor force. My purpose is to deconstruct how the postwar economic, political, and cultural imperialism of the United States was embodied in time, space, body, and mind of postwar labor, reporting from the "peacetime" operational field by hiring "independent" reporters from the war front. On the one hand, the article attempts a forensic analysis of US-narrated postwar documentary photography and journalism; and on the other, it aims to reveal the extent of the Cold War US practice of disseminating its anti-communist ideology on postwar labor from text to image, from time to space, and from body to mind.

Visual and textual records of photographs taken in Marseille in 1952 after the official ending of the Marshall Plan are the primary source of data analyzed in this text. This data itself serves as critique and counter-argument to reveal the postwar "soft power" discourse and practice of the United States in Marshall Plan countries. Yet, this text is not about visuality or photography, it is rather about textuality and text, that is,

about textual records accompanying photographs for filing and publicizing the Marshall Plan in the "soft" war front and home front. For this purpose, it uses captions, referred to as "picture stories" by the NARA, as evidence instead of Haas's photographs, and analyzes captions as a means of historiographical practice for the deconstruction of the publicized and archived discourse of US postwar ideology.[6]

The "gospel" of the Marseille Docker—Nicholas Derybolsky from 1952, as I made and entitled it, is a collage composed of these "picture stories" dating May 7, 1952. The captions, written either for record descriptions or as propaganda guides to accompany Haas's photos, guide the *decoupling.* I analyze repeated words and word groups that appear in the captions, and via rhythmic deconstruction of these, I form figurative statements in order to re-narrate the Marshall Plan's discourse on "free labor" over the original "picture stories." In the end, it is not the image or photo-essay but the text—caption, picture story, or gospel—which through different statements repeatedly recounts the good day of a "typical Marseille docker" of the Marshall Plan. You will find the gospel toward the end of this text.

"The object does not await in limbo the order that will free it and enable it to become embodied in a visible and prolix objectivity; it does not pre-exist itself, held back by some obstacle at the first edges of light. It exists under the positive conditions of a complex group of relations."[7]
Michel Foucault

Applied by the US Department of State between 1948 and 1952, yet continued through US transnational institutions after its official ending in 1952, the Marshall Plan was the United States' postwar foreign policy "to protect peace in the world" against the "Soviet threat."[8] In 1948, the US government founded the ECA in Paris to lead the correlation with the United States and participating countries on the amount of economic aid and field of technical assistance for European reconstruction. Next to the ECA, the United States set up an "ambassador" agency, the United States Special Representative in Europe (SRE) in order to represent the US government, with the aim "to apprise Europeans of American efforts in promoting economic recovery and to garner European support for American aid programs, especially the Marshall Plan."[9]

The SRE, located at the Office of the Special Representative (ECA/OSR) in Paris, was indeed a propaganda machine acting through its Division of Information (SREDI) which had three branches. The first of these was the Special Media Staff, which "*dealt* with publishers and representatives of European magazines, radio, and motion pictures in order to encourage favorable treatment of ECA and [its successor Mutual Security Agency] MSA activities, as well as developing plans for special informational projects such as fair exhibits, pamphlets, and posters."[10] The second was the News and Writing Staff responsible for collecting and distributing news and organizing press releases, conferences, and special reports on the Marshall Plan. The last, but not the least, was the Labor Information Division, which "prepared and distributed to labor unions in ECA countries factual information about American aid programs, established contact with leaders of non-communist unions as a means of increasing support for American aid programs, and reported to ECA and MSA missions on labor meetings throughout Europe."[11]

It cannot be a mere coincidence that the "Magazine Unit" of the Office of the Special Representative (ECA/OSR) of the US government in Paris decided to commission Haas to photograph the "typical" Marseille Docker and the "Sleepless Port" in May 1952. Dock workers at the port of Marseille had been striking since 1950. Most of the USD 2 million subsidies reserved for trade union activities of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) had been spent on preventing strikes by dock workers against the Marshall Plan shipments.[12] The postwar development boom relied on labor productivity, but the poor living conditions of the working class was resulting in strikes, seen by the US as posing a "communist threat" among workers. Through the "anti-communist Mediterranean Port Committee," Irving Brown, the director of the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO), and the Marseille unionist Pierre Ferri-Pisani were trying to organize dockers in *Force Ouvrière* (FO), the so-called "socialist" but anti-communist federation of labor unions assisted by the US, and weaken the influence of communist dockers belonging to the *Confédération Générale du Travail* (CGT) during the dockers' strike of March-April 1950.[13]

In 1950 again, a travelling exhibition entitled *D'homme à homme* was organized by the Labor Information Division of the OCR/ECA in Paris, which also displayed

sponsorship by *Force Ouvrière* (FO), the *Confédération française des travailleurs chrétiens* (CFTC), and the Organization for European Economic Co-operation (OEEC).[14] The exhibition travelled across mining regions and industrial cities in France to advertise the productivity and welfare achieved under the Marshall Plan. There was also an attempt to promote anti-communist labor unions (under the name "trade union") through magazines, including *Bulletin Syndical*.[15] The exhibition visited a total of thirty-four cities across France before finally arriving in Marseille in 1952 after "violent confrontations" between CGT guided by the *Parti communiste français* and anti-communist labor unions guided by FO and the CFTC. These "confrontations" resulted in FO membership decreasing to become a minority among unionized dockers.[16] In this sense, the 1952 commissioning of Haas cannot be a mere coincidence to "document" the "sleepless" Marseille Port and its "typical" dockers but a intentional campaign to advertise the economic and social benefits of the Marshall Plan. Le Corbusier's *Unité d'Habitation,* which was constructed with the assistance of Marshall Plan dollars, was also finished by 1952, representing the "official" ending of the Marshall Plan.

Haas began his career as a photojournalist working for magazines in Austria, initially for *Heute* in 1949. He was also working as a still and motion photographer documenting movie sets. *The Third Man*, a cult British *film-noir* from 1949 depicting the shady life of the immediate postwar period in a divided Vienna, was probably the first of these movie series. He photographed the cast and crew, as well as the shooting between 1947 and 1948.[17]

In addition to documenting the filming of *The Third Man*, Haas also produced an important exhibition in the American Red Cross Headquarters in Vienna in 1947. Following which, in 1949, he produced a photo documentary on the prisoners of war arriving in Vienna. After the original publication of Haas's series in the photo-essay "Homecoming Prisoners" in *Heute,* the series was republished by the US magazine *Life,* bringing him to the attention of Robert Capa (1913—1954) of Magnum, the photography cooperative co-founded by Capa in Paris in 1947. Haas documented postwar Marseille not only as a documentary photographer but also as a shareholder of Magnum after joining it upon the invitation of Capa in 1949; he became Vice-President of Magnum's American operations in New York in 1951.[18]

While earning a reputation as one of the pioneers of color photography and opening his first color photography exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York, Haas kept documenting the postwar US "soft" propaganda against the "Soviet threat." He published his photographs in *Life, Vogue*, and other magazines, and exhibited in several US-assisted exhibitions. In 1951, Haas was once again commissioned by the ECA, this time to photograph Matera, Italy, which was a propaganda site usedto justify and glorify the success of the Marshall Plan in southern Italy. His photographs were exhibited, next to those of other *Magnum* photographers, as part of the US government-funded exhibition *Family of Man*, organized by the United States Information Agency (USIA) in 1955 in collaboration with Edward Steichen, the director of MoMA's Department of Photography. The exhibition was later exhibited in sixty-one countries as part of US postwar propaganda.[19] *Family of Man* was only one of the numerous exhibitions organized by the United States as part of its anti-communist campaign in participating countries of the Marshall Plan, in addition to its dissemination of propaganda brochures, educational booklets, news, and articles, as well as films about the Marshall Plan.[20]

> "I photograph fiction / as you can't find
>   what I found."[21]
>   Ernst Haas

Haas's 1952 photo-essay starts with a portrait of a "typical Marseille docker" called Nicolas Derybolsky.[22] Although described as a "typical docker," Nicolas is a foreman—an "executive" worker heading a team of workers and responsible for hiring them and overseeing their labor. In Haas's photographs, we follow Nicolas as the protagonist in his workplace, the port of Marseille fully reconstructed by US dollars, overseeing eight workers, six of them Black. We witness Nicolas hiring a worker for the day in the early morning, then starting the workday with his team, unloading the "Marshall Aid" goods from a ship with brand-new cranes in the background, freshly arrived from the United States. We see him having coffee and lunch breaks, enjoying table football in a dockside cafe, smoking, posing for the camera, and finally, arriving home where he lives with his wife Odette, his seven-year-old son, and a dog. On the way home, we see Nicolas with his team of workers, encountering soldiers as well as the "bombed sites cleared for the building of huge flats" and Le Corbusier's

"experimental" apartment block, the *Unité d'Habitation.*
His "little" "2-room rental" home is perhaps not yet
considered experimental, but the 20,000 francs he earns
in a "good month" may soon help him and his family
move to one of these "experimental" "huge flats." Still,
his "tiny" "2-room apartment" seems "peaceful"
enough, with his wife cooking the evening meal for him,
his son waiting for his help with homework, and a mo-
ment of relaxation playing the *balalaika*. Unsurprisingly,
Nicolas is an *émigré* from the Soviet Union who has
been living in France for the last twenty years. Through
Haas's photographs, we see Nicolas reading the news-
paper and having a short nap after dinner, while his wife
Odette tidies the home for the next day and looks after
her son.

However, Nicolas's leisurely evening is not the final
stage in a typical day of the Marseille docker; suddenly,
the Marseille docker's peaceful day is interrupted
by communist and anti-communist "at war" poster
campaigns, followed by the hammer and sickle of the
Soviet Union versus the cross of Lorraine of Charles
de Gaulle on a warehouse window. These two final photo-
graphs are the only images without people in them, thus
forming the main theme of the Gospel of the Marseille
Docker—Nicholas Derybolsky from 1952.

Fig. 1: *Gospel of the Marseille Docker from 1952*. Collage by Sıla Karataş made of decoupling, re-assembling and re-narrating archival captions, aka "picture stories", written to describe photographs taken on May 7, 1952, by Ernst Haas.

GOSPEL
CHAPTER I.

FRANCEPIX FILE
Marseilles port
FRA 3958 thru 4019

§ I.   *Marshall Aid means more work for him.*

FRA 3958
3959
3960

1
2

- First and second LEADS
A typical Marseilles docker, 40-year-old Nicolas Derybalsky waits for a ship - and work. The rebuilt docks and flow of ships bringing Marshall Aid to Europe have meant more work for him in the past few years.

[FRA MD1952 I: 1-2]

§ II.   *Two-room apartment costs them 1,000 francs a month.*

FRA 3996
3997
FRA 4008
4009
4010
FRA 4014
4015
4016
FRA 3998
3999
4000

3

4

5

LEAD
This typical docker, 40-year-old Nicolas Exxxx Derybalsky, emigrated from Russia in his youth and has now lived in France for more than twenty years. The tiny two-room apartment he shares with his wife and son costs them 1,000 francs a month out of the 20,000 frs. he earns in a good month.
Docker Nicolas Derybalsky pays 1,000 francs a month for two rooms in this little house.

[FRA MD1952 II: 3-5]

§ III.   *His monthly wage is 20,000 francs during a good month.*

FRA 3967
FRA 3969
thru
3972
FRA 4003
4004
FRA 4008
4009
4010
FRA 3996
3997
FRA 4005
4006

6

7
8

9

Docker Nicolas Deryblansky is Chef d'Equipe in the Port of Marseille which is the hub of traffic - both freight and passenger - for the entire Mediterranean, and important center for shipbuilding, oil-refining, chemical manufacture.
- LEAD
This docker, Nicolas Deryblansky, earns 20,000 francs during a good month with Marshall Plan. A docker's average daily wage is 1,135 francs (3 dollars).
His weeklyxxxx monthly wage is around 20,000 francs during a good month, of which he pays 1,000 frs. for his two-roomed apartment he shares with his wife and son.

[FRA MD1952 III: 6-9]

§ IV.   *Strikes mean no work, Marshall Plan means more work.*

FRA 3958
thru 4019

10
11
12

13

14

Second Lead
In 1945 Marseilles was a mass of ruins. Allied bombing dynamited miles of dockfront - of 300 cranes, all but 12 were useless.
Marshall Plan counterpart funds amounting to 100,493,000 francs contributed to the repair of industry and commerce in the port.
In 1945 Communism was rife amongst the Marseilles dockers and there were many Communist-inspired strikes.
But strikes mean no work.

FRA 3996
3997

15

Ships loaded with Marshall Plan goods have meant more work for Marseille dockers who work on a day-by-day basis.

[FRA MD1952 IV: 10-15]

§ V.   *Recovery of Marseilles started in 1948, Communism is less powerful today.*

FRA 3958
thru 4019
FRA 4017
FRA 3958
thru 4019

16
17
18

19

20

21

The real recovery of Marseilles started in 1948.
Marseilles today is again France's first port, bigger, and more modern.
Communists propaganda is to be found all over Marseille but Communism is less powerful than it was a few years ago. From the ruins of yesterday rises a new port, bustling with activity, the final project will cost more than $40,000,000.
This has meant work for Marseilles' 6000 dockers and for 7000 workers in the port's many industries.
There have been less strikes as the dockers realized that the ships bringing Marshall Aid to Europe not only bring material aid but work as well.

[FRA MD1952 V: 16-21]

§ VI.   *This huge block of flats is the most spectacular of Marseilles' housing projects.*

FRA 3992
3993
3994
FRA 3958
thru 4019

FRA 3995

22
23

24

25

26

LEAD only only
Reconstruction is going on apace both inside and outside the port. Here/bombed sites are cleared for the building of/huge blocks of flats.
Marshall Plan counterpart funds amounting to 100,493,000 francs ($287,100) contributed to the repair of industry and commerce in the town and port, and 1,011,803,000 francs ($2,890,866) to rebuilding the damaged housing.
This huge block of flats, called "The Radiant City" and designed by the famous French architect Le Corbusier, is the most spectacular of Marseilles' housing projects.
More than 399 million francs were contributed towards it in counterpart funds. ($1,140,000)

[FRA MD1952 VI: 22-26]

Gospel of the Marseille Docker – Nicholas Derybolsky from 1952

OF THE MARSEILLE DOCKER FROM 1952

7th May 1952
RMVH Magazine Unit
ERNST HAAS pix

CHAPTER II.

§ VII. *Marshall Plan keeps the port busy.*

FRA 3961
    3962
FRA 3975
  thru
    3978

FRA 3958
thru 4019
FRA 3982
    3983
    3984

27 – FIRST LEAD ONLY
    Dockside scene showing a recently re-constructed warehouse and
28 a new crane.   Marseille's warehouses were among
    the first buildings to be reconstructed after the war.
29 The one shown here is one of the largest in Europe.
30 It stores dry goods from America and North Africa.
31 But as important at the time was the Marshall Plan
    share in keeping the port busy.
32 Incoming Marshall Aid goods, prominently marked with the
    Marshall Plan emblem, are checked on arrival at Marseille.
                                              [FRA MD1952 VII: 27-32]

§ VIII. *A docker's average daily wage* is 1,135 francs; his unemployment benefit is only 400 francs.

FRA 3963
    3964

FRA 3965

FRA 3967

33 The Port Labor Exchange is in a warehouse that is still
34 being reconstructed in 1951. Dockers assemble here every
    morning at 5.45 am to be allotted work.
35 Dockers who have been unable to find work line up for their
    400 francs unemployment benefit.
36 Dockers are hired by the day by dock foremen. Here a
37 docker discusses the day's work with his Chef d'Equipe
38 (left) who has hired him.   A docker's average daily
    wage is 1,135 francs (3 dollars).
                                              [FRA MD1952 VIII: 33-38]

§ IX. *Dockers amuse themselves* during their lunch break, relax on a holiday with lads.

FRA 3966

FRA 3968
FRA 3985
FRA 3979
    3979A
    3979B
  thru
    3981A
FRA 3988
    3988A
FRA 3989
    3989A
    3989B
FRA 4001
    4002 01

39 Dockers snatch a quick aperitif or coffee in a nearby
    cafe before starting work.
40 A first foreman and his crew start off for the ship   Here a docker
41 they are to unload. pauses with for a chat with two off-duty guards, who are
    African members of the French Army.
42 A crew of dockers unload a cargo of oranges at Marseille.
43 Some of the Marseilles dockers take their midday meal
    in one of the many small dockside cafes.
44 Marseille dockers amuse themselves with a pin table
    football machine in one of the many dockside cafes during
    their lunch break.
45 One docker relaxes on a holiday by playing football with
    neighboring children the local lads.
                                              [FRA MD1952 IX: 39-45]

§ X. *Docker's wife prepares the evening meal,* docker plays the balalaika after the dinner.

FRA 3998
    3999
    4000
FRA 4003
    4004

FRA 4005
    4006
FRA 4008
    4009
    4010

46 Docker Nicolas Derybalsky pays 1,000 francs a month for
    two rooms in this little house, out of his average monthly
    wage of 20,000 francs.
47 This docker's wife prepares the evening meal in the
    living room of their two-room apartment for which they
    pay 1,000 frs. a month out of the 20,000 francs earned
    by her husband in a good month.
48 Docker Nicolas Deryblansky settles down to read a paper
49 after dinner.   This docker, Nicolas Deryblansky, emigrated from
50 Russia in his youth. Here he plays the balalaika he learnt to play in Russia
    and sings songs for his seven-year old son.
                                              [FRA MD1952 X: 46-50]

§ XI. *Docker takes a quick nap on the sofa* while docker's wife tidies her sun up before bed.

FRA 4011
    4012
    4013

FRA 4014
    4015
    4016

FRA 4007

51 Docker's wife Odette Derybalsky tidies her son up before
52 he goes out. Rent for their tiny two-room apartment is
    1,000 francs a month, and the rest of the 20,000 francs
    her husband earns in a good month goes on food and clothing.
53 Docker Nicolas Deryblansky takes a quick nap on the sofa
54 after a hard day's work. The tiny two-room apartment
    he shares with his wife and son costs them 1,000 francs
    a month out of the 20,000 frs. he earns in a good month.
55 Not much of this docker's earnings can be spared for toys
    but enough was saved to buy his son this engine for Christmas.
                                              [FRA MD1952 XI: 51-55]

§ XII. *Communist and anti-communist propaganda* is constantly at war in Marseille.

FRA 4017

FRA 4018

FRA 4019

    – LEAD
56 Communists propaganda is to be found all over Marseille
    but Communism is less powerful than it was a few years
57 ago. The Communist and anti-Communist posters campaigns are
    constantly at war in Marseille.
58 Communists and anti-Communist propaganda can be found
59 everywhere in Marseille. Roughly drawn on this
    warehouse window in the port are (left) the Hammer and
    Sickle and (right) General de Gaulle's Cross of Lorraine.
                                              [FRA MD1952 XII: 56-59]
                    * * * * * * *

Every dialectically present historical circumstance polarizes itself and becomes a force field in which the confrontation between its fore-history and after-history is played out. [23]

Adorno's article "The Essay as Form" opens with an excerpt from Goethe: "Destined to see what is illuminated, not the light."[24] As an unconscious intellectual experience, an essay does not aim at a theoretical statement or propose a finished thesis but illuminates the subject through a flow of concepts which weave a theoretical texture.[25] For Adorno, the critical essay rejects the theoretical statement of deduction on the one hand; and on the other, is related to theory "by virtue of the concepts that appear in it," forming a theoretical context.[26]

As Walter Benjamin elaborates in his seminal work *Arcades Project*, what is the "historical object" in this narration of the US postwar economic, political, and cultural hegemony strategy: is it the caption or the photograph, the picture stories or the photo-essay, the text or the image? Is it the author of the Gospel who writes "picture stories" or photographs for the Gospel, or is it the historian re-narrating the story recorded in the archives? According to Benjamin, for an image to be a source of objectivity it must be seen from a dialectical—or even interpretive, by the nature of narration—perspective to be historical.[27] As a narrator of archival captions from a "specific historical interest whose legitimacy it is up to the materialist historian to establish," am I just depicting the found material or unearthing the Gospel of the Marseille Docker—the "non-communist free labor" doctrine of the Marshall Plan?[28] If the caption is sufficient to allow us to read the "objective image," what is the role of the historian?

Gospel of the Marseille Docker—Nicholas Derybolsky from 1952 is an attempt to add a "materialist presentation of history"—with Benjamin's conceptualization—to what has already been recorded (photographed, written, published, and archived) for the historical object to be the dialectical image.[29] My humble wish is to achieve a re-documentation or a dialectical recording of this strategically guided and publicized US doctrine against the so-called "Soviet threat" in Europe, as rough but as elaborate as possible, just like Honoré de Balzac (aka the Genius) was to ordinary but subtle details of the everyday. Now I invite you, dear "readers," to once again enjoy the Gospel of the Marseille Docker, to not

only re-analyze the postwar US campaign at the war and home front but also to dialectically deconstruct the "archive in action" during "peacetime" in the world, for a "historical awakening."

Gospel of the Marseille Docker – Nicholas Derybolsky from 1952

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1   Jacques Derrida, *De la grammatologie* (Paris: Les éditions de Minuit, 1967), 227.

2   The full name of the file unit is "[Marseille Docker—Nicholas Derybolsky (Magazine Unit Negs)] - [FRA-3958 through FRA-4019], 1948—1967" archived under the series "Photographs of Marshall Plan Programs, Exhibits, and Personnel, 1948—1967." The caption index file notes the record as "War Battered Marseilles Again Hums with Activity" with the header indicating "FRANCE PIX FILE, RMVH Magazine Unit and ERNST HAAS pix" next to the date of the photographs. For more information, see item 286-MP-FRA-3958_4019, Photographs of Marshall Plan Programs, Exhibits, and Personnel, 1948—1967, National Archives at College Park—Still Pictures (RDSS), College Park, MD and item 286-MP-France-1-8881-reduced.pdf, Index to the Marshall Plan Programs, Exhibits, and Personnel, 1961—1967, National Archives at College Park - Still Pictures (RDSS), College Park, MD.

3   The full name of the file unit is "['The Sleepless Port'—(Magazine Unit)] - [FRA-4020 through FRA-4189]" archived under the same series mentioned in footnote 2. For more information, see item 286-MP-FRA-4020_4189, Photographs of Marshall Plan Programs, Exhibits, and Personnel, 1948—1967, National Archives at College Park—Still Pictures (RDSS), College Park, MD.

4   Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project* (Cambridge and London: Belknap Press, 1999), 476.

5   Anon., "Truman Doctrine," in *Our Documents: 100 Milestone Documents from the National Archives*, eds. Christine Compston and Rachel Filene Seidman (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 195.

6   "Each subject listing is comprised of major picture story titles, listed in the order in which they are gathered into their respective files." See item 286-MP-France-1-8881-reduced.pdf, Index to the Marshall Plan Programs, Exhibits, and Personnel, 1961—1967, National Archives at College Park—Textual Records, College Park, MD.

7   Michel Foucault, *The Archeology of Knowledge* (London: Routledge, 2002), 49.

8   Anon., "Marshall Plan," in *Our Documents*, eds. Compston and Seidman, 199.

9   Kenneth Heger, "Publicizing the Marshall Plan: Records of the U.S. Special Representative in Europe, 1948—50," *The Record*, September 1998, Newsletter of the National Archives and Records Administration, www.archives.gov/publications/record/1998/09/marshall-plan.html (accessed July 30, 2021).

10   Ibid.

11   Ibid.

12   Irwin M. Wall, *The United States and the Making of Postwar France, 1945—1954* (Massachusetts, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 108.

13   Ibid. See also Jean-Marie Pernot, "Les relations internationales et les débuts de la CGT-FO," in *La Naissance de Force Ouvrière*, eds. Michel Dreyfus, Gérard Gautron, Jean-Louis Robert (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2003), 199—213.

14   The OEEC was founded in 1948 to guide the application of the Marshall Plan in Europe. It was renamed the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 1961. For more information see Anon., "Organisation for European Economic Co-operation," OECD, www.oecd.org/general/organisationforeuropeaneconomicco-operation.htm (accessed July 30, 2021).

15   Brian A. McKenzie, *Remaking France: Americanization, Public Diplomacy, and the Marshall Plan* (New York: Berghahn, 2007), 155—60.

16   Ibid.

17   For more information and photographs of Haas on the set of *The Third Man*, see Koraljka Suton, "Carol Reed's 'The Third Man': How Orson Welles Stole a Show He Was Barely In," cinephiliabeyond.org/the-third-man/ (accessed July 30, 2021).

18   Anon., "Chronology," Ernst Haas Estate, ernst-haas.com/chronology/ (accessed July 28, 2021). Haas was introduced to Capa by Werner Bischof (1916—1954), a war photojournalist from Switzerland who was working for *du*, a photography and art magazine headed by Arnold Kübler (1890—1983). In 1949, Bischof was the first new photographer to join Magnum after the founding members, and thanks to his introduction, Haas became the second. Bischof was also involved in the Marshall Plan, documenting Sardinia for two weeks for the ECA as well as Iceland in 1950. Anon., "1950 Europe," wernerbischof.com/europe-in-the-aftermath-of-wwii/1950-europe/ and Anon., "Glossary," wernerbischof.com/glossary-2/ (accessed July 28, 2021).

19   Anon., "Chronology, Ernst Haas Estate, ernst-haas.com/chronology/ (accessed July 28, 2021). Co-founding members of Magnum such as Capa, Cartier-Bresson, and Seymour also took part in the exhibition, as well as Werner Bischof. For Bischof's work for the ECA in Iceland discussed alongside the work of George Rodger in Africa and Ernst Haas in Matera, see Æsa Sigurjónsdóttir, "'Hot Spots in the Cold War,' Scripts, Visual Agendas, and Relocated Narratives in Cold War Photography," in *On Display: Visual Politics, Material Culture, and Education*, eds. Karin Priem and Kerstin te Heesen (Münster: Waxmann Verlag, 2016), 145—66. For a not-so-neutral review of Family of Man, see Alona Pardo, "Humanism, Magnum, and the Family of Man," www.magnumphotos.com/arts-culture/society-arts-culture/humanism-magnum-family-of-man-alona-pardo-david-seymour-edward-steichen-henri-cartier-bresson-moma-new-york/ (accessed July 30, 2021). See also "The Family of Man," Jan 24—May 8, 1955, MoMA, www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/2429 (accessed July 30, 2021). For a critique of the ideology of the exhibition that took place in Paris in 1956, see Roland Barthes, "La grande famille des hommes," in *Mythologies* (Paris: Le Seuil, 1970).

20   On the "Exhibition Program" of the Marshall Plan, see Julio Garnica, "Peter Harnden. Between the Cold War and the Mediterranean tradition," *FAM - Festival dell'Architettura Magazine* 47 (2018): 12—30, www.famagazine.it/index.php/famagazine/article/view/233/1000#2 (accessed June 16, 2022). On propaganda films of the Marshall Plan, see David W. Ellwood, *Rebuilding Europe: Western Europe, America and Postwar Reconstruction* (New York: Routledge, 1992), Evan S. Noble, "Marshall Plan Films and Americanization" (unpublished master's thesis, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 2006), Paola Bonifazio, *Schooling in Modernity: The Politics of Sponsored Films in Postwar Italy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014). For a comprehensive list of the films, see also Sandra Schulberg, "Selling Democracy: Films of The Marshall Plan, 1948—53," www.sellingdemocracy.org (accessed July 30, 2021).

21   Ernst Haas quoted in A. D. Coleman, "A Painter in a Hurry: The Photography of Ernst Haas," ernst-haas.com/essays-on-haas/#painterinahurry (accessed August 15, 2021).

22   Although the record's title mentions "Nicholas Derybolsky" on the caption index file of the NARA, the "picture story" about the "Marseilles Port" always refers to the protagonist as "Nicolas." In this section, all wordings in quotation marks are direct citations from the caption index file at the NARA. For more information, see item 286-MP-France-1-8881-reduced.pdf, Index to the Marshall Plan Programs, Exhibits, and Personnel, 1961—1967, National Archives at College Park—Textual Records, College Park, MD.

23   Ernst Haas quoted in A. D. Coleman, "A Painter in a Hurry: The Photography of Ernst Haas," ernst-haas.com/essays-on-haas/#painterinahurry (accessed August 15, 2021).

24   Theodor W. Adorno, *Notes to Literature, Volume One* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 3.

25   Ibid., 12—13.

26   Ibid., 18.

27   Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project* (Cambridge and London: Belknap Press, 1999), 463.

28   Ibid., 363.

29   Ibid., 475.

Flowers of Solidarity

Lea Marie Nienhoff

What are flowers but a decoration? The flowering plants that beautify our apartments reflect the desire to draw nature closer to us. Cut flowers hold our sorrow, they spark our joy. We care for them and yet wonder as they quickly fade away. Uprooted and controlled, floral arrangements are part of the "extractive grammars" that we attend to.[1] To slow down their decay or spark their growth, fertilizers run through their veins. The beauty we see in floral display diverts our attention from the social and ecological precariousness they produce elsewhere. The artificial environments designed to cultivate flowers are heating the planet, and the pesticides and fertilizers are contaminating our soils and water sources. Cut and adorned, the flower that lifts our spirits, the blossoming we enjoy, has a political relevance that this essay wants to bring to the fore. Thinking through the register of emotions and politics "mapped onto" cut flowers offers a space to reflect upon the way we relate to the world. This essay invites the reader to think of ecological transformation as an inherently social project and to connect our perception of flowers to a transnational politics of empathy.

Fig. 1: Erich Honecker, General Secretary of the Socialist Unity Party of East Germany, speaking at an official demonstration of the Polish-German Friendship, East Berlin,1973. Photograph taken by Klaus Franke. Credit: Bundesarchiv, Bild 183-M0620-425, "Berlin—Veranstaltung in der Werner-Seelen binder–Halle"
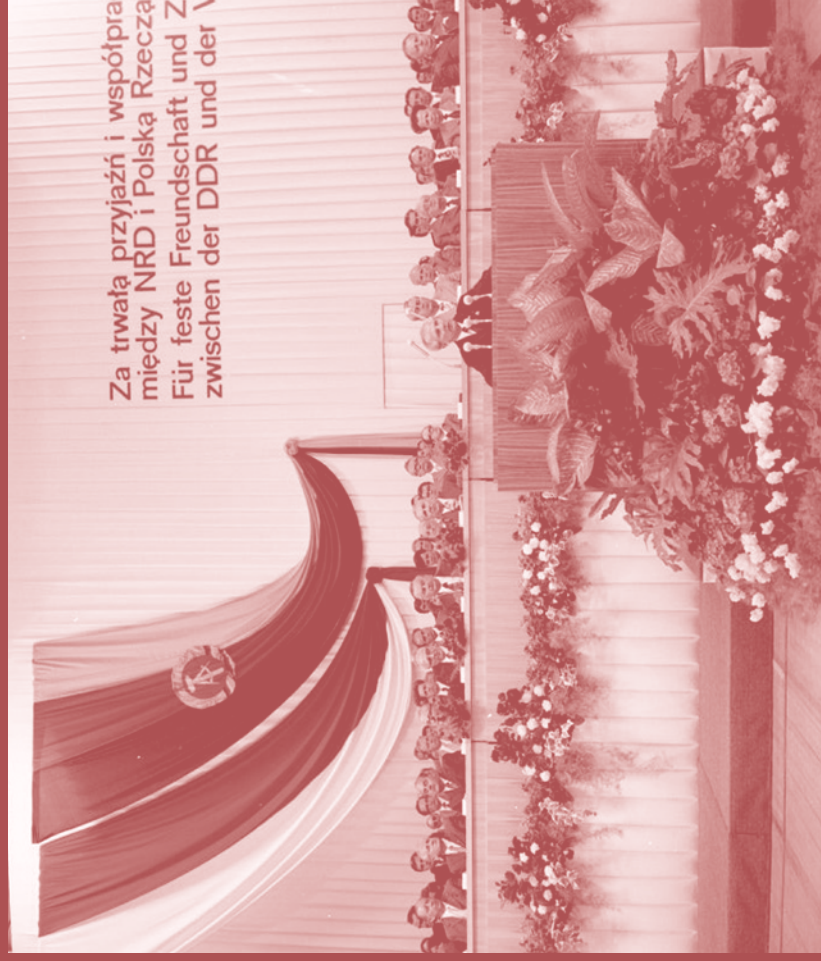
Fig. 2: Poster advertising the World Festival of Youth and Students in Berlin, 1973. Picture taken on November 29, 1972, in Sierra Cristal, Cuba, by Klaus Morgenstern. Credit: DDR Bildarchiv, "a-poster-advertises-for-the-10th-world-festival-of-youth-and-students ECPEC0.jpg"

"Every new object, clearly seen, opens up
a new organ of perception in us."
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe[2]

Flowers carry meanings that—when presented as a gift—express our relationships and affections to friends and companions. Catalogues of "plant symbolism" describe which types of flowers represent hope, which represent healing, and which represent love or good fortune. They contain culturally inflected meaning, such as white tulips say "I'm sorry" and yellow tulips translate into happiness and prosperity.[3] This emotional taxonomy of flowers is rooted in mythologies, our visual culture, and everyday practices. Once we orient our lens to the material conditions that ensure the low-cost production of tulips and roses, to the chemicals and technical infrastructures that condition their growth, flowers become visible to us as "enchanted" commodities whose environmental and social effects are mystified. Yet, flowers do carry meaning and they do help us in connecting with our social and natural environment. This essay therefore does not want to condemn our desire for cut flowers, instead it aims to strengthen our sensibility toward the modes of production and intervene into the common narratives accompanying cut flowers.

The function of indoor plants has been described as an "aide-memoire of the pre-industrial past, as a form of therapy for human beings."[4] Flowers are comforting, we consume their beauty, they color an otherwise gray or dusty built environment. Scholars stress the role of plants in the home as a counterpoint to sleek modern architectures and dense urbanization. Horticultural professors and behavior psychologists write about the emotional benefit of fresh flowers.[5] However, like other globally traded goods, flowers reproduce radically unequal geographies. While they flatter us, they can drastically affect people's lives and livelihood. The over 100,000 workers that tend to flowers in greenhouses around Lake Naivasha, Kenya, and the communities living off the floricultural industry face low wages, chronic food insecurity, the contamination of the region's soil and water, and other environmental hazards.[6] Eighty percent of all roses sold in Switzerland are imported from Kenya.[7] Yet the negative impacts of the floricultural industry are not limited to East Africa alone. The "juxtaposition of glamour and disaster, of white and black, wealth and poverty […] of 'us here' and 'them there,'" does not account for the circularity and movement of

the products, the chemicals, and the human labor invested in them.[8] Roses, the flowers that we associate most with love and care, are at the same time the most contaminated cut flowers in the world. A Belgian study from 2016 found that some active substances (such as acephate, methiocarb, monocrotophos, methomyl, deltamethrin) contained in them can have direct effects on the nervous system of florists who are exposed to contaminated flowers.[9] The pesticides that agrochemical companies are promoting for use in the floricultural industry in East Africa, Latin America, and Asia are returning to Europe on the surface of imported flowers.

In aiming to reflect on the "affective assemblage" that surround flowers, I follow the proposition of Nina Bandi, Rohit Jain, and knowbotiq who offer a "critical fabulation" on the "psychotropic dimension" of gold. The authors suggest that gold "is an aesthetic part-taking, a being affected, and affecting others, that takes place on derivative, psychotropic and molecular levels."[10] Hence, not only do materialities *affect* our feelings, but the affective is tied to our perception as well as to our political consciousness. Furthermore, the chemicals on plant surfaces can direct our attention to the way in which the health of workers employed in the floricultural industry is *being affected*. Acknowledging the affective texture and potential violence of objects that surround us requires new interpretive frameworks. Whose stories are heard? Which stories find their way into the dictionary of "plant symbolism"? And, if we had an "informed" understanding of flowers, which modes of being affected and affecting others could we arrive at?

It is the countries of the Global South that bear the greatest cost of Europe's lust for flowers. On Kenyan flower farms, protecting the health of workers is rarely a concern.[11] "Breathing issues, coughing, and asthmatic attacks are the most common health impacts of pesticide exposure reported by flower farm workers in Kenya.[12] The extensive use of insecticides and herbicides leaves the surrounding environment void of insects, harms pollinators, and eradicates other plants. Furthermore, it has left the water of Lake Naivasha heavily polluted and its fisheries critically endangered.[13] If we were to consider the very object of a flower through how it grows and how it exists in relation to other beings, the story we tell of cut flowers would be a radically different one.

At the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, Achille Mbembe wrote the article "The Universal Right to Breathe," in which he envisioned the *day after* the global pandemic as a moment of radical imagination. Mbembe points out that we need to retrieve a sense of care for all living things. The pandemic has also been a mirror for the dire consequences of the destruction of the biosphere and the continued exploitation of workers and soils.

Before this virus, humanity was already threatened with suffocation. If war there must be, it cannot so much be against a specific virus as against everything that condemns the majority of humankind to a premature cessation of breathing, everything that fundamentally attacks the respiratory tract, everything that, in the long reign of capitalism, has constrained entire segments of the world population, entire races, to a difficult, panting breath and a life of oppression.[14]

While Achille Mbembe was writing these lines, everyday life receded more and more behind computer and mobile screens, and the digital space became a bunker in which we could hide away. While we were "keeping the world at a distance," the real costs of production became even more obscure.

> "Man knows many beautiful flowers, but one of the most beautiful and adorable are those of solidarity."
> Fidel Castro[15]

Achille Mbembe reminds us that all our concerns for carbon dioxide emissions and biodiversity loss should not distract us from the suffering of the majority of humankind that continues to live and work under oppressive conditions. The flower farm often employs migrant workers from distant towns, underpaying them and denying them social security and access to housing.[16] The degradation of our environment exacerbates poverty. The flowers grown in monocultural greenhouses are often insulated from natural soil, from bacteria, fungus, and other microbiota. Just as we cannot think of plants as isolated objects, we should not think of humans as isolated beings.[17] The artist Zhen Bo proposes a shift to a new relational thinking toward a plant-human solidarity that expands the notion of an international alliance of the working class to include plants.[18]

Our knowledges and understandings of flowers are imbedded within colonial and imperial ideologies, such as those illustrated by botanical gardens. The institutionalized control and classification of plants in modern botany was closely associated with conquest and colonization. This knowledge further spurred the development of large-scale monocultural plantations in the colonies.[19] In her research on the Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden, Melanie Boehi shows how historical and present narratives of the botanical garden reproduced a colonial understanding of landscape and territory in which black labor was rendered invisible. She argues that botanical gardens functioned as sites "where knowledge and affections were produced that legitimated the colonial distribution of power."[20] Flowers—cut or potted— are an intricate part of our material culture. The activation of new stories of flowers within it should be embedded in decolonizing our conceptualization of nature in its political, social, and ecological dimensions.

"Les fleurs rouges du joli bois sortent saignantes
des branches; les bourgeons gonflés éclatent:
voici les feuilles et les fleurs nouvelles. […]
Ainsi souffle la brise matinière à la vermeille
aurore du Monde nouveau."
Louise Michel[21]

"A flower […] is the result of the roots, the trunk,
the branches and the leaves. But the flower
is special because it contains the seeds which
are the tomorrow of that plant. A product of
a dynamic past, it is pregnant with a tomorrow."
Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o[22]

Flowers can create an atmosphere of peace while speaking of war. Flowers can be conducive to stabilizing political systems. At the center of the picture that shows the public celebration of the Polish-German Friendship from 1973, is a bouquet of flowers. In this public staging of solidarity, the flowers are installed like a furniture piece, like a different form of colorful concrete, creating a stage for Man to assert his will and power. Yet flowers also spark hope, affirm alliances, and reflect new beginnings. Flowers have long been an important imaginative resource for the belief in justice and solidarity. The World Festival of Youth and Students adopted a flower as their emblem from 1975 onwards—the simplified depiction of a flower, where the petals surrounding the globe icon are each in a different color. This iconic

symbol reflects a vision for global unity, a hope for a blossoming socialist and anti-imperialist society.

The connections forged by the Eastern Bloc and the Third World were full of ambivalence and soaked with paternalism.[23] Yet the Youth Festivals were lived and are being remembered as moments of a shared sentiment for solidarity and peace. The building of ties and sympathy, the joy it allowed, was not state-decreed. As Katharina White has put it, the World Festival of Youth and Students "projected international solidarity across time and space, the festival came to embody a socialist ritual, collapsing the locus versus global divide."[24] I wonder, can the story of the World Youth Festival be an inspiration for new images, representations, and moments of coming together in the struggle for worldwide solidarity? Historically, flowers have been a medium for all sorts of politics. At times they were able to translate revolutionary struggles into peace and healing into hope. Yet most often it is only for a passing moment that flowers translate politics into care.

Abiding in the contrariness of violence and compassion in which plants are entangled, we need to find new ways to connect and listen to their breathing, instead of fetishizing their beauty. Nolan Oswald Dennis's proposition of "a curriculum for mud" asks for the capacity of materials to carry meaning. In doing so, he attempts to reinvent mud as a political object from which we can learn.[25] In this essay, I have attempted to address the question of whether we can recast the "affective assemblage" within which floral designs are embedded. Flowers that are cut, wilt, and eventually die force us to confront the transience of life. Leaves fall, the water becomes muddy—that is the moment when, after a short moment of blooming, cut flowers turn into waste. Pesticides remain on their surface even after their decomposition. They become part of "sedimentary records," records from material cultures, economies, and imaginaries.[26] What if blossoming was instead a type of becoming? How can we imagine a form of solidarity that is regenerative? One that does not exhaust itself with the short life span of a cut flower and instead turns plants into allies for a world with oxygen to breathe and care for life.

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1   Describing the legacy of colonial extractive practices, of exploiting the earth's resources to the point of exhaustion, Kathryn Yusoff speaks of the "grammar of geology." This "material language" is involved in the production of subjectivities and meaning that work toward naturalizing the theft of extraction. Our contemporary conception of land, geography, and plant life is enmeshed in the grammar of extraction. See Kathryn Yusoff, *A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2018).

2   Johann W. Goethe, *Goethe, the Collected Works: Scientific Studies*, Volume Twelve (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), 39. For an interpretation of Goethe's writings on the organs of perception, see Brent D. Robbins, "New Organs of Perception: Goethean Science as a Cultural Therapeutics," *Janus Head* 8, no. 1 (2015): 113—26.

3   Tara Carlson, "The Meaning Behind Each Tulip Color," article for 1800flowers.com, published on April 20, 2017, www.1800flowers.com/blog/flower-facts/tulip-color-meanings/.

4   Penny Sparke, *Nature Inside: Plants and Flowers in the Modern Interior* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2020).

5   "Turn to buds not bottles," if you are feeling stressed, writes Leonard Perry. "Relieve Stress with Flowers," Department of Plant and Soil Science, pss.uvm.edu/ppp/articles/relieve.html.

6   For an overview of several social and ecological effects of the industry, see Gerda Kuiper, Andreas Gemählich, "Sustainability and Depoliticisation: Certifications in the Cut-Flower Industry at Lake Naivasha, Kenya" *Africa Spectrum* 52, no. 3 (2017): 31—53; for information on the size of the industry, see Central Bank of Kenya, "Monetary Policy Committee Flower Farms Survey", January 2021, www.centralbank.go.ke/uploads/market_perception_surveys/848246841_MPC%20Survey%20of%20Flower%20Farms,%20January%202021.pdf.

7   Jolanda Riedener, "Die Reise einer Rose: So kommen die Blumen von Ostafrika zu Ihren Liebsten," *Tagblatt*, May 5, 2022, www.tagblatt.ch/leben/co2-bilanz-die-reise-einer-rose-so-kommen-die-blumen-von-ostafrika-zu-ihren-liebsten-ld.2247894.

8   Rohit Jain, "Gold Is in the Air. Ethnographic Explorations into Postcolonial Amnesia in Switzerland and Beyond," in *Swiss Psychotropic Gold* (Basel: Christoph Merian Verlag, 2020), 1570.

9   K. Toumi, et al. "Pesticide Residues on Three Cut Flower Species and Potential Exposure of Florists in Belgium," *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 13, no. 10 (2016): 943. Available online: doi.org/10.3390/ijerph13100943.

10   Nina Bandi, Rohit Jain, and knowbotiq, "Swiss Psychotropic Gold – A Critical Fabulation," in *Swiss Psychotropic Gold* (Basel: Christoph Merian Verlag, 2020), 640.

11   International Peace Information Service, "Thorns amongst the Roses. A Cross-country Analysis of Human Rights Issues in Flower Farms in East Africa," by Anna Mlynska, Flavia Amoding, Gabriella Wass, ipisresearch.be/publication/thorns-amongst-the-roses-a-cross-country-analysis-of-human-rights-issues-in-flower-farms-in-east-africa/; Fairtrade Foundation, "Blooming Back Better: Towards Living Wages and Resilience in the Flower Industry," by David Taylor, Anna Barger, Louisa Cox, http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Fairtrade-Blooming-Back-Better.pdf.

12   Pamela F. Tsimbiri et al., "Health Impact of Pesticides on Residents and Horticultural Workers in the Lake Naivasha Region, Kenya," *Occupational Diseases and Environmental Medicine*, 3 (2015): 24—34, www.scirp.org/journal/paperinformation.aspx?paperid=55949.

13   Phil Hickley et al., "Habitat Degradation and Subsequent Fishery Collapse in Lakes Naivasha and Baringo, Kenya," *Ecohydrology and Hydrobiology* 4, no. 4 (2004): 503—17.

14   Achille Mbembe, "The Universal Right to Breathe," trans. Carolyn Shread, *Critical Inquiry* 47, no. 2 (2021): 61.

15   Fidel Castro quoted from "Große Erfolge beim Aufbau des sozialistischen Kuba: Fidel Castro sprach auf Großkundgebung zum Nationalfeiertag," *Neues Deutschland*, July 28, 1977, 6.

16   International Peace Information Service, "Thorns amongst the Roses"; Anne Tallontire, Catherine Dolan, Sally Smith, and Stephanie Barrientos. "Reaching the Marginalised? Gender Value Chains and Ethical Trade in African Horticulture." *Development in Practice* 15, no. 3/4 (2005): 559—71.

17   Zhen Bo, in conversation with Frédéric Triail, "Un jardin communist chinois – A Chinese Communist Garden" (Paris: Pernod Ricard Fellowship 2016), 11.

18   Ibid., 5.

19   Cf. Zaheer Baber. "The Plants of Empire: Botanic Gardens, Colonial Power and Botanical Knowledge." *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 46, no. 4 (2016): 659—79.

20   Melanie Boehi, "Radical Stories in the Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden: Emergent Ecologies' Challenges to Colonial Narratives and Western Epistemologies," *Environmental Humanities* 13, no. 1 (2021): 66—92.

21   Louise Michel, L'Ère nouvelle (Paris, 1887), fr.wikisource.org/wiki/L'Ère_nouvelle.

22   Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, "Speaking My Language" (address at the 2012 Sunday Times Literary Awards, June 25, 2012), bookslive.co.za/blog/2012/06/25/speaking-my-language-ngugi-wa-thiongos-address-at-the-2012-sunday-times-literary-awards/.

23   Quinn Slobodian showed how, for example, the iconography of the World Youth Festival underlined difference and created divisions between social groups in "a technically non-hierarchical logic of race." Quinn Slobodian, "Socialist Chromatism: Race, Racism, and the Racial Rainbow in East Germany," in *Comrades of Color: East Germany in the Cold War World* (New York, Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2017), 24.

24   Katharine White. "East Germany's Red Woodstock: The 1973 Festival between the 'Carnivalesque' and the Everyday," *Central European History* 51, no. 4 (2018): 585—610.

25   Nolan Oswald Dennis, "A Curriculum for Mud," (talk at the École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne and Université de Lausanne, convened online, May 27, 2021).

26   This notion has been conceptualized by Jennifer Gabrys through her critical study of the meaning of electronic waste. Jennifer Gybrys, *Digital Rubbish: A Natural History of Electronics* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2011).

Critical Fabulations,
Imagined Records… Paths
toward anti-imperialist archival
relations and gestures

Uneven Distances. On the Limits of Transmission:
Acts of Remaining and Means of Reappearance
of the Sahara

*Abdessamad El Montassir and
Julien Lafontaine Carboni*

Pasts are populated by events and practices charac-
terized by their distances to our existences. These dis-
tances are plural in qualities; they can be temporal—
a long time ago—spatial—there, far from me—affective—
I am not touched anymore—epistemic—I don't under-
stand yet/anymore—etc. These distances are a multi-
tude of ways to relate to what has happened. They
create ecologies of proximities on which the possibility
of our presents and the construction of our common
histories rely.

However, these distances are not only produced by time.
They also are the product of social and historical con-
structions, shaped by multiple forces that delimit what
can be said about what has happened.[1] *Pasts* are a field
of forces in the present in which our relations to worlds,
events, and plural temporalities are produced and re-
produced, done and undone. This field is engineered by
infrastructures, techniques, and practices of distancing,
and although they can be destructive, reparative, or
both, these distances are also the proximities that en-
able us to relate to worlds and bodies. Amongst these
infrastructures are the archives, the repertoire, dance,
poetry, cooking practices, histories, historical discourses,
sciences, arts, etc.

"Several silent beings like Dah live here [...]"
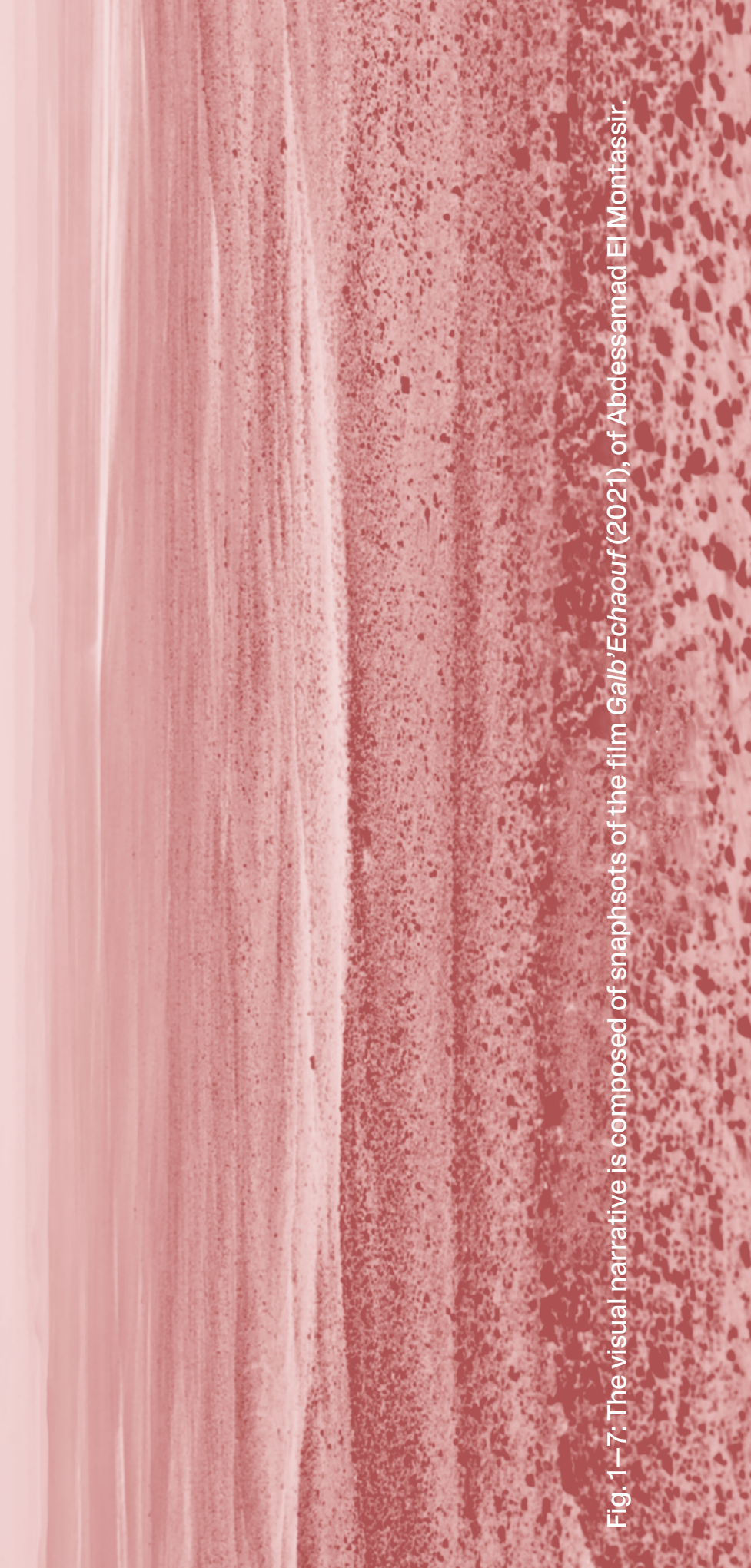
Fig.1—7: The visual narrative is composed of snaphsots of the film *Galb'Echaouf* (2021), of Abdessamad El Montassir.

Ariella Aïsha Azoulay wrote: "And if there was no past, and if the past was the invention of the imperial archive?"[2]

And what if what we call *pasts* were infrastructures of distancing? And what if what has been relegated to a past radically past was in fact there, still in place and time, inhabiting the human and non-human bodies marked by what has happened, and in the bodies of the one succeeding them?

Azoulay, amongst many others, leads us on a path to understanding the kind of distances that are produced by *past pasts* as an infrastructure, and what are its instruments. One of these instruments is chronology. The arrangement of temporalities in a linear succession of moments[3]—*pasts* as being more and more distant, the future closer and closer, the present in the middle— naturalizes an affective distance with *pasts*. It enforces a parallelism between affective and temporal distances. In this relation established by the philosophical and scientific discourse of Western thought, the more a past is distant chronologically, the less it affects us.

Classifying events, human and non-human bodies, knowledge, realities, practices as being in past pasts enables us to create distances with them while depriving them of their potential futurities.[4] The Imperial Archive and its gestures of removal from worlds is another instrument of *pasts* as infrastructure, de-membering ecologies of proximities and destroying the spatio-temporal relations between human and non-human bodies and their knowledge. While arranging the temporalities in a chronological way, that is to say, linear, the Imperial Archive naturalizes the affective distance with worlds and destroys them by relegating them to a *past past*.

Another instrument of this infrastructure is the dominant historical discourse that translates the archive from within the places of *official knowledge production*. It creates authority and legitimacy around the Archives and their practices, in defining what can be said and what can be thought of the *pasts* by enclosing them within the walls of their sources and chronology. The historical discourse then produces what has been coined as subjugations,[5] dispossessing "the vast majority of knowledge keepers, forever relegating their knowledge to witchcraft, tradition, superstition, folkways or, at best, some form of common sense."[6]

"The land witnessed many atrocities that I can't describe. [...]"

Nevertheless, *pasts*, the Imperial Archive, the historical discourse and chronologics are not the only infra-structures and instruments of distancing; many others produce distances, which can be physical, material, social, ecological, psychic, symbolic, epistemic, etc. They are often entangled, superimposed, or overlapping, especially in colonial and postcolonial contexts, to efficiently de-member ecologies of knowledge and prox-imities between human and non-human bodies, their knowledge, practices, and memories.

These uneven distances then inscribe themselves in the flesh of human and non-human bodies, which keep in themselves the traces of what is affecting them, as hosts and traces of silences. As grounds on which to reenact contact zones[7] with temporalities that escaped us, these uneven distances are manifold sources to learn what is happening and what has happened, prior even to the infrastructures of distancing.

How can we make our relationship to distance a source of common history and not an infrastructure for impe-rialist domination?

How to relate to traumas and silences through the traces of their erasure, by the distance that separates us? How to relate to these buried memories, which remain in place despite everything, minor and latent around and through us? How to do so while respecting the right to forget, the right to the distance to which our bodies are entitled?

If human bodies can't speak, the histories that shaped this silence are told and transmitted in temporalities that elude us. Khadija, in Galb'Echaouf, can't speak. The land she comes from lives what she can't describe, while her knowledge and memories don't have access to language. Khadija exercised her right to distance, a distance that protects her from the pain of proximity, from the torments of affect.

Her lands, which keep within them the traces of what affects them, are inhabited by plural forms of life, each of them transmitting parallel histories. In the Sahara, life is encounter, hybridation, creolization of these life forms weaving themselves together in an assemblage of human and non-human bodies. While the trajectories of resistance and survival do not meet or no longer meet, they come from the same space-time, the Sahara.

"Go and ask the ruins, the desert, its thorny plants, [...]. They saw and lived through everything, and have remained there. They can better tell of what happened than those of us now far away, we can't express it."

(*Atile, Eddafla, El Ralga, Daghmous*) أتيل، الغلكة، الدفلة، الدغموس.
These plants lived through the atrocities that Khadija
can't speak of. Unlike sugar cane or rubber trees, these
plant lives do not carry political, colonial, and post-
colonial histories known to all. These plants tell other
stories, other trajectories.

A legend about the plant دغموس (*daghmous*) tells us that
they were "beautiful and always in flower, that their
leaves were green all year long. And one day, their leaves
turned into spikes."

While the bodies of the دغموس cannot move, or only a little,
while they spend their lives where they are rooted,
their bodies are active. They perceive, interact with the
ecologies they belong to and which belong to them.
Within these relational fields of plural and complex tem-
poralities, the دغموس produce and reproduce the sens-
ible interaction and ecologies of proximities that are the
Sahara and its landscape. And if the temporalities of
these relations elude us, if our distance with them is too
wide, these bodies will still bear witness to and transmit
the memories of these *pasts* that our languages and
temporalities can't describe.

> And I wonder, how can we understand something
> we have not experienced but of which we keep
> the traces deep inside ourselves?
>
> When we cross this vast desert, the plants and the
> mountains remember our traces, and our stories
> spread into places we have not yet traveled through.
>
> An unknown part of us lives in this desert, and an
> unknown part of this desert lives in us.

How to re-member something we have not experienced
but whose traces we keep deep inside ourselves?
How to re-member our proximities with distanced pasts
without denying these distances? Which hospitalities
can we reenact, just like so many contact zones with
temporalities that we cannot yet understand or no longer
understand, "temporalities that elude us"?

The دغموس remember. Even if the ecologies of knowledge
and proximities that enacted their previous lives have
been destroyed, de-membered, the *events* put at a dis-
tance, beyond human listening, the دغموس actualizes
past proximities in the present as corporealities. Each

"And I wonder, how can we understand something we have not experienced but of which we keep the traces deep inside ourselves? When we cross this vast desert, the plants and the mountains remember our traces, and our stories spread into places we have not yet traveled through. An unknown part of us lives in this desert, and an unknown part of this desert lives in us."
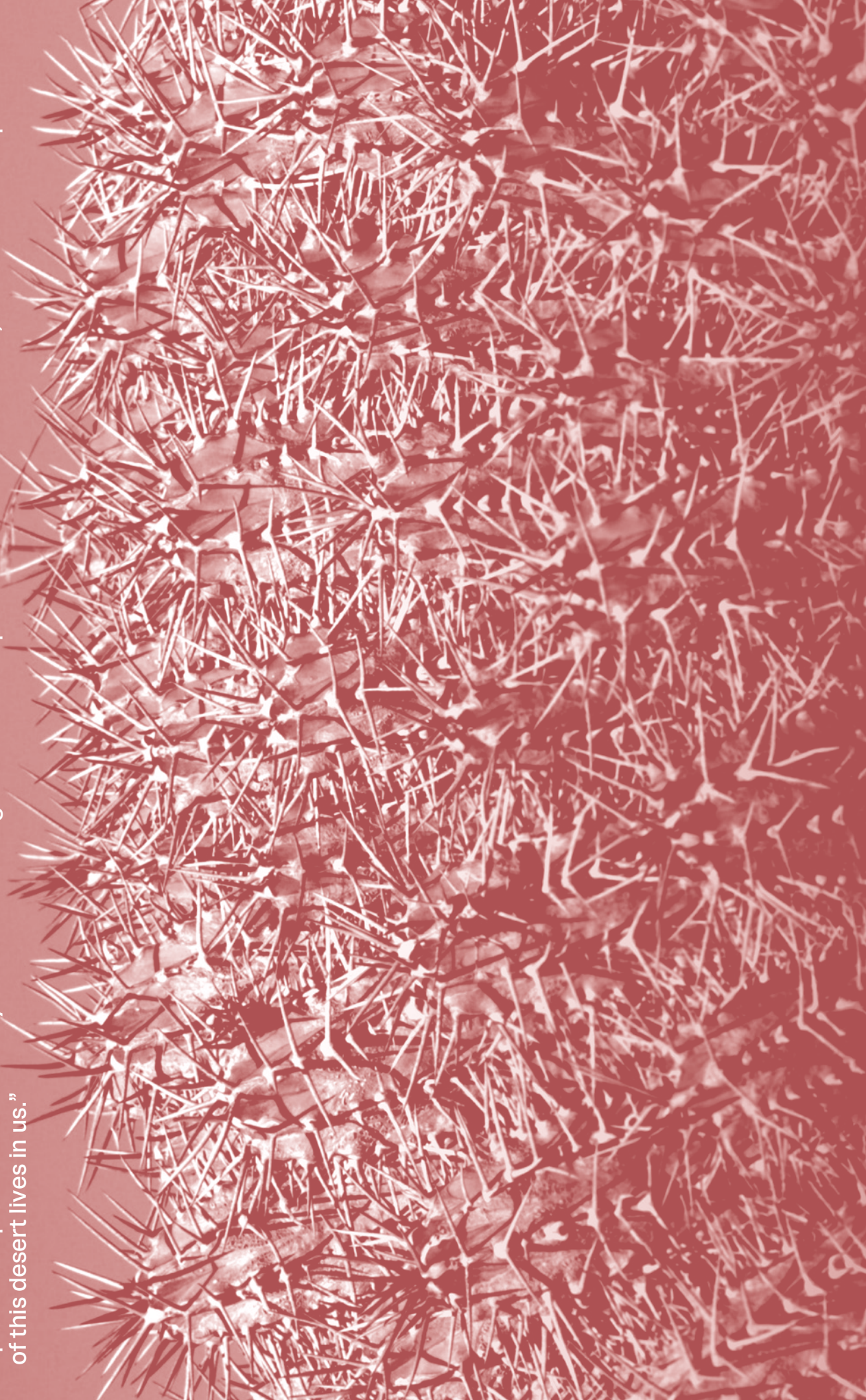
molecular, cellular, mineral, animal, living, plant, or dead
body of the Sahara exerts pressure on the presents,
re-articulating their proximities, re-membering them.
Within these damaged ecologies, de-membered by
Imperial infrastructures of distancing, memories, omis-
sions, and ghosts inhabit, act upon, and produce the
presents. It is there, at the surface of our distances with
these ecologies, that lie those contact zones, like mul-
tiple horizons of repair.

Walter Benjamin wrote: "Nothing that has ever happened
should be regarded as lost for history."[8]

Which practices, which gestures should be employed to
reenact these contact zones, to transform these un-
even distances into sources of common histories? How
to re-member (with) this knowledge that we don't yet
hold or no longer hold?

The histories we share with human and non-human
bodies are common. If nothing that has ever happened
should be regarded as lost to history, these histories
that have been buried, de-membered, distanced, still
exist in the words of those we can't listen to and in the
bodies whose temporalities elude us and our distances
to them. It is not about methods, tools, or strategies.

Azoulay also said: "If a certain written story is an alter-
native to imperial premises, it cannot be new: it is
always already known, and it is only its authors that had
to unlearn its imperial version in order to utter it prop-
erly, that is, from the point of view of those who never
accepted its imperial version as truth."[9]

It cannot be new. What if there were no alternative his-
tories just like there are no *pasts*? What if the mirage
of alternative histories was another infrastructure of dis-
tancing with presents, pasts, futures, future pasts,
and past futures? It would then not be about new meth-
odologies for an alternative history, but a question
of building new facts to contest the Imperial Archive,
chronologics, and the historical discourse.

It would then be about repair. It would then be about hos-
pitality. Hospitality to the unknown part of us that
lives beyond our skin and to the unknown parts of worlds
that live in our flesh. Re-member to re-embody these
pasts and our common histories that we have inherited.
Re-member (with) these crypts in our languages and

"[...] and as if buried secrets were hidden [...]"
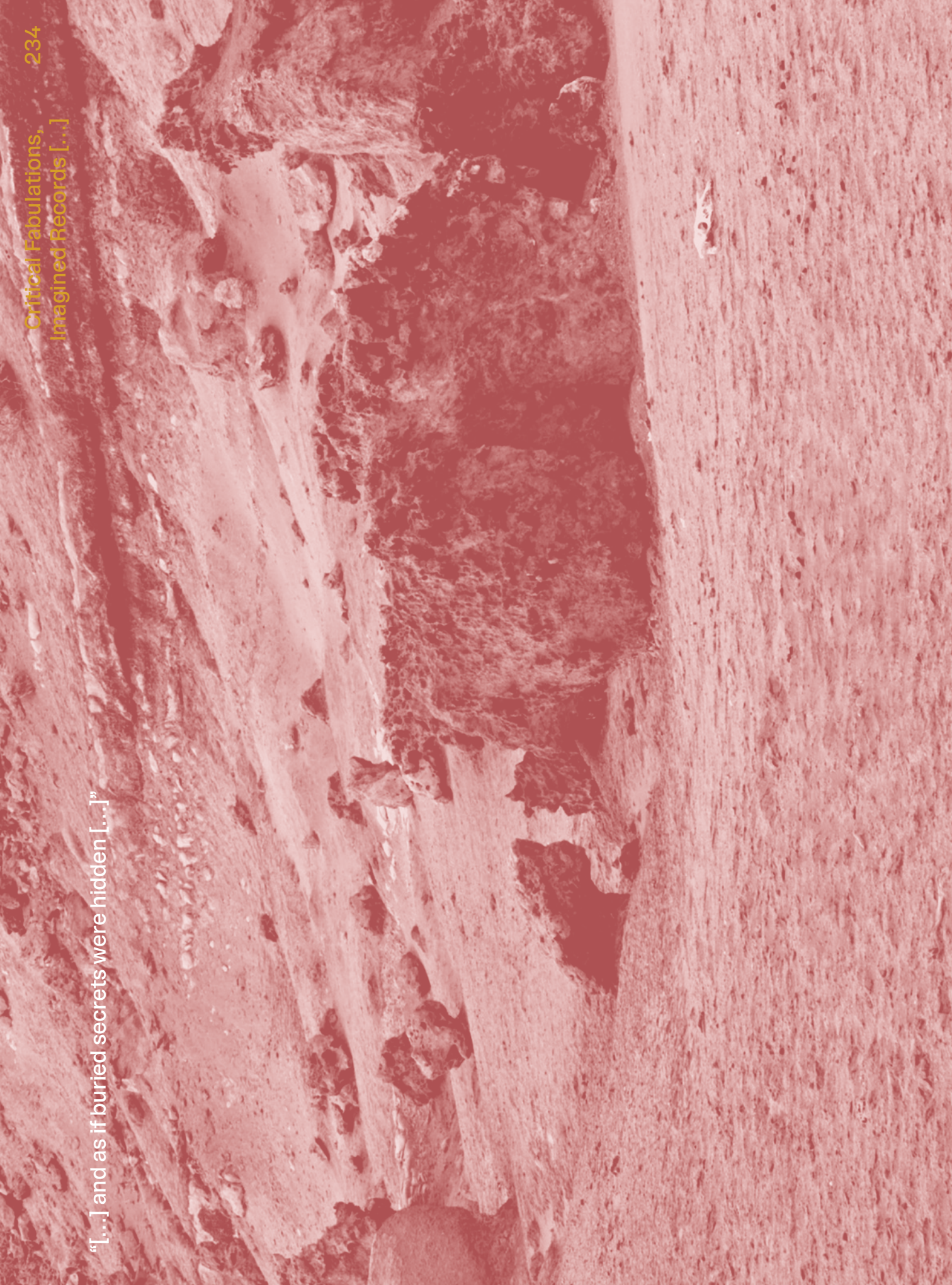
with these uneven distances to reenact contact zones. Contact zones with histories and *pasts* not to create distant objects, but common corporealities. It would then be about listening to what we cannot yet understand or no longer understand, like traces of broken relations. It would then be about gestures of hospitalities that enable repair and imagination, of solidarities with our common histories.

This plant is the only witness that can recount what Khadija cannot. But it is like Khadija: it speaks in a temporality that eludes us.

Here, poetry and fiction enable us to augment the surface of these contact zones with temporalities that elude us, without us having to pretend that we understand them. They build a relationship with plural alterity. Omissions, lacks, silences, hollows, distances are so many realities that poetry doesn't reduce. An intimate leap between the *us* and the non-human bodies speaking to us without possible translations, it opens to an incompressible and incomprehensible coexistence. As written by poet Audre Lorde: "Poetry is not a luxury. It is a vital necessity of our existence. It forms the quality of the light within which we predicate our hopes and dreams towards survival and change, first made into language, then into idea, then into more tangible action. Poetry is the way we help give name to the nameless so it can be thought."[10]

Poetry is made of the crypts we inherited from generation to generation, full of what cannot yet be said or that can no longer be said, materializing the presence of absences, re-membering the knowledge that has been detached from us and the devastated ecologies of knowledge resulting from this violence. When there is only the nothing, the emptiness, the absences, the ghosts, the distances left behind, when our histories and memories have been relegated, confiscated, when they can't be transmitted, relayed or told, then, we have these absences and distances to transmit, maintain, cherish, and love. So many distances become a source of common histories of forgetfulness narrated by the spines of دغموس.

Poetry and fiction are not a luxury. They answer to uneven distances, while transmitting knowledge and experiences that cannot be told, that elude us. They give space to minor and latent histories as potentialities

"This plant is the only witness that can recount what Khadija cannot. But it is like Khadija: it speaks in a temporality that eludes us."

for getting in contact with them, to re-member them. And if poetries and fictions don't have access to the adjective *real* and don't restitute *pasts trustfully*, they build our relations to *pasts* and memories, and shape social and political bonds to worlds and bodies.

The poetries of the Sahara build relationships to worlds and transmit what couldn't have been. Through them our common histories inhabit and shape the present, grounds for peaceful reconciliation. Saidyia Hartman wrote:

> History pledges to be faithful to the limits of fact, evidence, and archive, even as those dead certainties are produced by terror. I wanted to write a romance that exceeded the fictions of history—the rumors, scandals, lies, invented evidence, fabricated confessions, volatile facts, impossible metaphors, chance events, and fantasies that constitute the archive and determine what can be said about the past. I longed to write a new story, one unfettered by the constraints of the legal documents and exceeding the restatement and transpositions, which comprised my strategy for disordering and transgressing the protocols of the archive and the authority of its statements and which enabled me to augment and intensify its fictions.[11]

Poetry and fiction to open the determinism of archives on what can be said about what has happened or what is happening, as remembrance and knowledge with what cannot yet or can no longer be understood, on temporalities that elude us. Our uneven distances to *pasts* not as obstacles but as songs, traces, documents, and sources of common histories.

Julien Lafontaine Carboni is an architect. They graduated at ENSA Paris-Malaquais and defended the thesis "(from) the repertoire: an architectural theory of operations. Oral and embodied knowledge in architectural and spatial practices" at EPFL in April 2022. Julien has published in several architectural, philosophical, and anthropological journals such as *Architecture and Culture, Charrette, GTA Papers, and Tabula Rasa*. They investigate repertoires (repositories of oral and embodied knowledge) as mechanism of transmissions, media and collective structure of conservation of architectural knowledge, implying historicities and epistemologies concealed by the architectural disciplinarization. Their aim is to frame an architectural political agency that resides in gestures and the depth of fleshes in proposing an embodied architectural historiography which threads undrawn spatialities, reenactment and performativity as media of queer and decolonial architectural cultures. Their research is enriched by a teaching practice through radical pedagogies, curatorial practices as well as by institutional activism in the DRAGLab, EPFL.

Abdessamad El Montassir is a multi-disciplinary artist, whose research is centered on a trilogy: the right to forget, fictional and visceral narratives, and the trauma of anticipation. In his body of work and research, the artist sets reflexive processes that invite us to rethink history and cartographies through collective or fictional narratives and immaterial archives. His projects also question traumas and their impacts on individuals, their behavior, and their socio-political evolution, and reveal processes where these traumas serve historization. Abdessamad El Montassir tackles these problematics while taking into consideration knowledge on non-human identities-plants in order to trigger the emergence of renewed ways of thinking about our environments.

1   Michel Foucault, *Il faut défendre la société: cours au Collège de France, 1975—1976*, Hautes Études (Paris: Gallimard/ Seuil, 1997) and Saidiya Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts," *Small Axe* 12, no. 2 (2008): 1—14.

2   Ariella Azoulay, *Potential History. Unlearning Imperialism* (London: Verso Books, 2019), 189, yale.idm.oclc.org/login? URL=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct= true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=2033650.

3   Sylvia Wynter, "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/ Truth/Freedom: Towards the Human, After Man, Its Overrepresentation—An Argument," CR: *The New Centennial Review* 3, no. 3 (2003): 257—337, doi.org/10.1353/ncr. 2004.0015.

4   Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International* (New York: Routledge, 1994); David Scott, Conscripts of Modernity: The Tragedy of Colonial Enlightenment (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004); and Mark Fisher, *Ghosts of My Life: Writings on Depression, Hauntology and Lost Futures* (Winchester, UK: Zero Books, 2014).

5   Foucault, *Il faut défendre la société: cours au Collège de France, 1975—1976*.

6   Budd L. Hall and Rajesh Tandon, "Decolonization of Knowledge, Epistemicide, Participatory Research and Higher Education," *Research for All* (January 1, 2017): 8, doi.org/10.18546/ RFA.01.1.02.

7   Mary Louise Pratt, "Arts of the Contact Zone," *Profession* (1991): 33—40.

8   Walter Benjamin, Hannah Arendt, and Harry Zohn, *Illuminations* (New York: Schocken Books, [1968] 1986), 254.

9   Azoulay, *Potential History. Unlearning Imperialism*, 198.

10   Audre Lorde, *The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House* (London: Penguin UK, [1999] 2018).

11   Saidiya Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts," 9.

VOLUMES and Decolonize Zurich

The VOLUMES Archive is a collection of zines, artist books, and publications that exists thanks to the many donations received annually for the international open call exhibition. Taking this library as a site of investigation, VOLUMES has been asking itself what constitutes an archive and what can be read as an archive?

Archives are normally understood as a coherent form of organization, having among their objectives a desire to unify, identify, and classify elements within within a given body of documents, objects, and other artifacts. Whereas the VOLUMES Archive is a diverse collection of material that has been mostly donated to us since 2013. Therefore, it presents a challenge to the traditional idea of archival categorization because there hasn't been any systematic process of selection and articulation —besides the different sections that have been donated as such and the Zurich archive. The only common aspect within the collection is the medium: it consists of printed material, but because they are embedded in the DIY facet of art publishing, the variety of their aesthetics, goals, or themes reinforces the idea of a distinctive collection that lies beyond the "rules" of archiving. Taking this contradiction as a starting point, VOLUMES decided to research new forms of categorization and

activation that take differences, associations, interstices, and lacunas as categories to re-think the paradigm of the archive and permit us to develop new appropriate tools, asking how knowledge can be produced by libraries and archives. Since 2015, VOLUMES has therefore worked towards expanding specific sections of its collection of publications, collaborating with artists, historians, or curators. Looking at what is already there, making connections and/or frictions; but also looking at what is not there and how to invite new gazes and voices. This initiative is informed by some investigations undertaken by, for example in Switzerland, the Andreas Züst library in Oberegg or the Sitterwerk library in St. Gallen, where guest artists and researchers have been invited to question methods of describing, naming, classifying, and directing the gaze through cataloguing produced by social and historical orders and hierarchies, asking which alternative models and methods could be proposed.

Over the course of human history, archives have always had an inherent relation to knowledge, to its recording and preservation as well as its production and dissemination. But, as the so-called archive fever, "mal d'archive," reached the orbit of artists and curators, relations within, to, and against the archive have been revealed to be manifold. The VOLUMES archive is surely one example of new archival relations where its origins were almost accidental and shaped towards sections opening spaces for new actors. In this sense, this archive presents a lot of the characteristics that Okwui Enwezor has highlighted as part of the archival considerations in contemporary art: "Relationships between archive and memory, archive and public information, archive and trauma, archive and ethnography, archive and identity, archive and time." These aspects still show a dependency on the classical role of the archive as a place related to historical knowledge, historical reflection, and its ramifications with regards to power. Accordingly, the juxtaposition of artistic and decolonial approaches could bring to light new questions and constellations that break away from the idea of scientific historical interpretation and analysis. As Sven Spieker suggests, "archives promise us a sense of (and in) time," but not only regarding the past—as an historian would suggest— but also in reflecting the temporality of the present and in building archives for the future. An intrinsic relationship between a decolonial curatorial practice and the un-silencing of marginalized histories has been

Fig. 1—5: Extracts from the Zurich archive by VOLUMES, 2016—2022.

suggested by several curators. In this context, we should ask: Which decolonial histories and practices can be reconstructed within the VOLUMES Archive? What role can this archive play to enhance a decolonial practice? How can an archive go beyond issues of classification and conservation and allow a constant flux between different temporalities? Which kind of archive can be envisioned for a decolonial practice?

In November 2016, bringing together books and zines already present within its collection, as well as an open call for submissions, VOLUMES exhibited a collection of publications at its yearly book festival that were connected to the social, cultural, and political history of Zurich. The collection of works was then cataloged as the "Zurich Archive" within its library. A few publications in line with the subject were added in the following years, thanks to donations.

In 2020, VOLUMES invited Decolonize Zurich to interact with its archive and propose new compilations, readings, and additions, expand the collection of publications, and discuss strategies to decolonize existing archives. Decolonize Zurich understands decolonial action as a diverse range of practices that intervene in the colonial structures, discourses, and processes within the city of Zurich, which can raise new questions and spark discussions. In the context of the city of Zurich, where people from around 180 nations live with different and unequal residency rights, the questioning of social differences and the scope of action of marginalized individuals and groups is important and very topical. Zurich already has long-standing communities, organizations, groups, and collectives fighting against colonialism, discrimination, injustice, inequality, and racism. These social, cultural, and political actors have produced books, pamphlets, fanzines, radio transmissions, videos, websites, posters, and other works to this end. Decolonize Zurich asked themselves which decolonial histories and practices could be reconstructed within the VOLUMES Archive? What role could the Volumes Archive play to enhance a decolonial practice? How can an archive go beyond issues of classification and conservation and permit a constant flux between different temporalities? What kind of archive could be envisioned for a decolonial practice?

If the archive is understood as an apparatus that reflects a particular power dimension, the Zurich Section of the VOLUMES Archive merits a short discussion. Giorgio Agamben understands an apparatus to always be located within power and at the intersection of relations of knowledge. At the center of this intersection, we find the interdependence of institution and document. This institution, for example a state or a court, determines "the technical structure of the *archiving* archive [that] also determines the structure of the archivable content," as Derrida famously defined it. It is the institution that, through processes of discrimination and selection, silences or marginalizes experiences, practices, and histories—and consequently, it characterizes archives as colonial. In this sense, archives do paradigmatically record absence. However, this fundamental interdependence is different in the VOLUMES Archive because it only lately started a process of discrimination and selection. Because of these mechanisms, residual traces of hegemonic practices are to be seen in its Zurich Section, where apparently innocent city guides and descriptions relate Zurich's history without reflecting on the colonial implications of such histories. This is where Decolonize Zurich found a lacuna that could be acted upon.

Decolonize Zurich took the "Zurich Section" as a starting point to identify blind spots within the publications and at the same time let themselves be inspired by the publications to (re)imagine a more plural, equal, and decolonial Swiss society. In practice, they started by looking for absent references to colonialism or coloniality. Some were found very quickly: a city guidebook or a book on the industrial history of Zurich made no commentary or reference to Swiss colonial entanglement. During the process, it became obvious that it wasn't only a question of pointing towards silences and missing information but about using the publications as a starting point and a source of inspiration to question, critique, and propose new ways of interacting not only with the publications themselves but with the history and daily reality in the city of Zurich and Switzerland. Some Swiss art publications already make a valuable contribution by proposing critical and decolonial thinking (for example, Marie Van Berchem, *La Batheauthèque – Vers des pratiques décolonisantes*, Metis Presses 2021). Decolonize Zurich also suggested a selection of decolonial publications, which were purchased by VOLUMES and added to its archive collection (see the list in the bibliography).

Achtung
Koloniale Tiere
Nur für kritische
Schwimmer
Seulement pour
nageurs critiques
solo per nuotari
critici!
critical or critical
only swimmers :)

Wandern In Der Stadt Zürich

. Seebecken

**Winterreise
auf neuem Land**

Winterwandern an Zürichs Seeufer, wenn
inem der Wind um die Ohren pfeift und
an durch die Seebäder flanieren kann.

sula Bauer, Jürg Frischknecht

TERV...

British TV in the 90s, BB
first taste of anthropolog
Trans World Sport would
and obscure sports relate
kabaddi in India to the s
FC St Pauli. Then there w
James Richardson sitting
towns reading football r
rounding the race for th
Westerns from the 40s an
negative depictions of Na
boys and Indians in the s
had some Native America
thought of the cowboys a

Tintin was a good gu
and bringing justice to th
tunity, I didn't realize ba
flagship store, which feel
you can see how Hergé's
remains collectable for a
ized and have transcend
cultural-icon status, but
were created equally.

One of the comics I
Congo, was stacked high
band, and when I pulled
creetly placed out of th
English version read: 'A
in the Congo was first p
This brand-new trans
Michael Turner, the orig
ating forward describi
African adventure, plac
the red band continued

Tervuren Uncensored

Before setting off on my journey through Europe, I'd told myself I would avoid getting too caught up in the web of the continent's history. So much of black Europe had been written out of it, and what *had* been written often only made me angry. It would have been easy to spend five months in Europe's past, at art galleries, libraries and museums housed in old buildings, reading apologetic footnotes or being annoyed by their absence. So many landmarks have been turned into trinkets: you visit a place, get presented with a cartoon version of its history – beheadings, battles and curiosities – buy some chocolates and return to your unrelated life in the present. But I was about to be reminded that Europe's history isn't at all dead, it is still living and breathing and deeply embedded in its society's hierarchies and atmospheres, lurking just out of sight, haunting its systems. To quote something I heard the scholar Michelle Wright say at a conference in this city, 'The past is not behind us, it's all around us in changed form.'

During my time in central Brussels I often watched the last of the autumn leaves bristling and swirling upon cobbled squares, the whole city looking autumnal by nature: by day it was all browns, creamy greys and ashy greens; by night, burnt oranges, muted reds and golden sepia. Boring? For some, maybe, but I found it pleasant in a slightly faded sort of way. I could have happily wandered around obliviously, not thinking too much about the ghosts of colonialism, but one thing led to another . . .

It all started at a shop dedicated to the world's most famous Belgian, Tintin, in the rue de la Colline. I'd been a fan of the jet-set Belgian reporter since I was a child and watched the cartoons on

Beyond its contribution of suggesting new content, Decolonize Zurich found it interesting to challenge the existing content present within the Zurich archive. They skimmed through the publications, looking for anything that could be "decolonized," which meant contesting it with another epistemology of thought. Post-it notes and full collages making connections between the different publications were added. News articles were also inserted to bring another layer of information. When looking through the books, viewers can now see several perspectives, the original one being contested by less seen and heard voices. For example, what if a "Kunst am Bau" project could address racism and colonialism? What if we all checked our personal family history for colonial entanglement? One could claim that the analysis still shares the relational aspect of an archeological method that is complemented with a critical decolonial reading of the archive. Decolonize Zurich refers to decolonial in the sense of Catherine Walsh as "postures and actions that seek to undo the ongoing and complexly intertwined structures of local-national-global power, and foster, assemble, and support radically other modes of collective re-existence." This experience opened new paths for thought and ideas for future projects. It showed that through playful and creative intervention one could initiate several strains of critical thought and in the end hopefully open critical discussions. The joint aim of VOLUMES and Decolonize Zurich is to spark conversation and offer new ways of thinking instead of a fixed answer. The idea was not to lecture people by handing them historical facts but to spark interest in the topic in creative and provocative ways. Furthermore, the interventions highlighted two perspectives that could be used in the future: *multiperspectivism* and *interepistemology*, which would reorganize the "archiving archive," namely the archive's organization, and re-articulate the authority over truth or veracity in the archive. Under multiperspectivism, Decolonize Zurich understands the installment of multiple points of views and temporalities. In this form, the archive could relocate the agency of multiple temporal and subjective positions. As interepistemology, we could define the attempt to interlace different approaches to the apprehension and production of knowledge as the factual and the fictional, the discursive and the sensual, the material and the ephemeral, etc. If we accept different epistemic processes, we can start to challenge the universalizing process of marginalization and maybe initiate changes in our views about knowledge.

These interventions strongly echoed *Remapping Zurich*, another process-based series of events by Decolonize Zurich, which explores different formats and exercises to decolonize the public urban space—because colonialism is not only a historical phenomenon belonging to the past. It has real consequences in the present. Colonialism has created power structures and ways of thinking that still shape and define hierarchies and replicate inequalities in today's society. The decolonization of public urban space should focus on the interplay between historical "traces" and the contemporary issues of colonialism and racism and the colonial experience imposed through urban architecture and design. At the same time, it is not only about the material, apparent traces in the city, but about extensive and deep colonial layers. Colonial histories are also hidden in the city. Invisible histories of the extractivist banana trade, the colonial cotton industry, and exoticizing human zoos can be found in the city's "magnificent" buildings and public spaces. The invisibilities and experiences of the colonial city could be part of a remapping of the city of Zurich. To this end, Decolonize Zurich has invited artists, researchers, associations and other collectives, and the general public to discuss and explore different possibilities to create potential formats to reclaim a decolonized city.

The city of Zurich doesn't have an inventory of the places, buildings, and sites that are entangled with colonialism, racism, and other forms of marginalization based on colonial structures. While the association "Zürich Kolonial" has brought attention to the hidden colonial past of several places and buildings in the city, a petition of the collective "vo da" has led to a report on racism in the public space. Such initiatives have shown how different the colonial entanglements are in the city of Zurich.

How do we understand the traces, marks, and impact of colonial structures in the public space? Which places represent and reproduce colonialism and racism? Which histories and stories against colonialism and racism can be seen in the city? These informal decolonial walks consist of a visit of sites, places, and buildings with a colonial past or present, engaging with their history through senses, exchanging perspectives about their colonial entanglements, and discussing possibilities of intervention, contextualization, and changes in attitudes in the public space—addressing the goal of remapping the city and exploring potential ideas to do so.

Your fears are totally
groundless you know

58

Your fears are totally
grounded in
privilege
you know

with love
Decolonize Zurich

How should we build an anti-colonial decolonial memory culture? How can we show the different layers of colonialism and racism? How can we disrupt the visible marks of colonialism and racism? How can we connect with the histories beyond the Swiss borders?

NB: The interventions of Decolonize Zurich within the VOLUMES archive can be consulted directly online, at the VOLUMES studio by appointment, and are also visible through a zine produced for the occasion. The archive section is also showcased and activated within a variety of VOLUMES events.

Decolonize Zurich is a group of creators, academics, and activists who want to bring postcolonial theory into action. Theory forms the basis for our action, aiming to bridge the gap between academia and the public, theory, and action. Accordingly, practice follows theory—anything from roundtables, get-togethers, cookouts, or workshops. We believe that changing the current social and political status quo requires us to invent new measures and formats: collective, creative, and provocative.

VOLUMES is a non-profit organization and collective that was created in Zurich in 2013 to support the local and international DIY-facet of art publishing and introduce it to a larger audience in Switzerland. The VOLUMES archive is a collection of zines, artist books, and publications that exists thanks to the many donations received annually for its international open call exhibition. Taking this library as a site of investigation, we have been researching new forms for organizing, understanding, and questioning the paradigm of the archive.

A Meeting that Begins in Silence

Mathilde Chénin

Realizing the difficulty of alternative and intermediary artistic spaces to create narratives of their singular experiences, as well as the necessity of disseminating such information, I decided to use my own archival work as an artist and researcher to highlight the ways in which feminist and decolonial approaches are used in archives. I employ here my work with the collective *La Déviation,* conducted between 2019 and 2021 in the outskirts of Marseille as a point of departure. Through this text, I attempt to bring comprehension to *who* and *what* constitutes an archive—and how it can be used to provide the constitution of a "culture of forebears."[1] Furthermore, how can this be favorable to collective modes of life that have simultaneously emerged from both artistic practice and a contextual rooting that can be qualified as "emplaced."[2]

Minutes of the meetings at *La Déviation*:
a singular archive for collaborative work

Since 2019, I have been conducting a portion of my doctoral research at *La Déviation*, formerly the working ateliers of the Lafarge cement factory, located on the heights of L'Estaque, Marseille.[3] Since 2015, *La Déviation*

was first rented and then collectively purchased by a group made up of artists, with a view to establishing a space for living and artistic research founded upon the principles of autonomy, self-governance, and communal living. In addition to the material provided over the course of my residency there, the collective gave me access to a considerable collection of documents in their possession that they make accessible to their members through a database platform.[4] Amongst the available body of materials related to the operation of the project, I decided to focus upon the notes taken during the regular meetings held by the group since they first occupied the space.[5]

The assiduous frequency and intensity of the collective's meetings, and the resultant proliferation of minutes was far from unusual given the practice of collectives, whether artistic or political, to view a horizontal approach to decision-making as utopian, crucial, and desirable. However, the ways in which the *La Déviation* collective made use of this discursive space, traditionally associated with militant morphologies, is of interest to me.[6] The group's meetings provided them with an opportunity to experiment with a collective practice they referred to as *parrhesia*. *Parrhesia* is a concept that dates back to Ancient Greece and refers to the concept of candid speech or truth telling. It was also employed by Michel Foucault, during a conference he held at the University of Grenoble in 1982, as a key concept regarding the genealogy of the modern notion of "care for the self."[7] The practice of *parrhesia* led to systematic, assiduous, and conscientious notetaking on the part of the group.

Initially, *parrhesia* is presented as a tool for resolving or preventing conflicts. During the meetings, each of the participants in turn is invited to freely express whatever individual or intimate thoughts are crossing their minds and propose an analysis of sorts. Broadly speaking, it is over the course of these meetings that the nature, form, and aims of the project are discussed, from the organization of activities and daily life to the philosophical and political questions that inform those activities. I have never directly taken part in these sessions, so it is impossible for me to describe them in detail. To that end, I had Mélanie Métier, a former inhabitant and active member of *La Déviation*, reread this article as I was writing it and she encouraged me to use terms she provided, in order to accurately describe and evoke this very

singular practice of the *La Déviation* collective. In her words, these group experiences elicit a sort of tension:

> Perhaps one should describe this exercise concretely: a group of approximately ten people (up to twenty for major events) gather in a circle in a vast space within the *La Déviation* complex. Silence is maintained, sometimes for several minutes, giving each person time to reflect before speaking. It's important to describe the ambiance that reigns, the looks exchanged and the tensions that are felt before even a word is spoken. It's a very beautiful space which I have always loved, and several of us stand firmly in it, but it can also be a very difficult space, one that is feared by some of our members, who have shared this on several occasions. Some are afraid of speaking up, others of going blank, etc.[8]

The practice of *parrhesia* is far more than the mere creation of a space for managing internal, collective, and interpersonal tensions within the group. It is also a tool for the collective and reflexive practice of "productive criticism."[9] Above all, it is intended to provide an open and productive space where even antagonistic and argumentative dialogue can take place regarding the manner in which the group collectively shapes and develops the project.[10] On the contrary, the pitfall to avoid would be for the collective to end up in a "quagmire without conflict" through attempting to appease and avoid tensions.[11]

On this score, the archival material produced by these meetings is a precious resource. All the more so because the format of the notes taken in these minutes does not merely consist of a transcript which, from an external, synthesizing viewpoint, would be assumed to follow the ins and outs of a given discussion to its resolution.[12] On the contrary, the process seeks to preserve individual input with precision, along with opposing views, agreements and disagreements, deadlocks and deviations, all of which come together to reveal the twists and turns that occur at the heart of a group at a given moment.

The minutes can be accessed and modified online, and for those who read them, they reveal a space that can be qualified as a "reconnection" (*reliance*) according to Marcel Balle de Bol. He describes "reconnection" as a space, or rather a mediating agent, which enables people to create or reforge, to establish or reestablish links between themselves and a social group to which they

belong. In short, to reactivate their sense of belonging to this group, even if they are momentarily absent from it.[13] Nevertheless, while the summaries can give those who were absent the feeling of participating in the life of the collective as it is unfolding in the space, the group members are acutely conscious of the operational limits of such a "reconnection." Consequently, the summaries are taken for what they are, that is to say, a retranscription, a reformulation, one which already constitutes a layer of translation of events that occurred in real time, a step removed from the event itself.[14]

I created an inventory of this large collection of documents in the form of an Excel spreadsheet. This spreadsheet systematically records the date and subjects covered in the notes of the meeting in question. The note-taking I did follows the threads of the text, using questions that were part of my own research as a guideline. This type of metadata, of archival representation, is subjective and situated, sprinkled with my commentaries, my notes for later on, and other comments addressed to myself. Here and there lie my *fingerprints*.[15] In fact, I did not seek to produce a neutral, detached, or exhaustive description of the materials made available to me. In the first place, it was a matter of creating a navigation tool that would provide a mnemonic aid so that I could better find my way amidst this voluminous collection. It was only once I had completed cataloguing the inventory that I fully realized its narrative power, and the way in which it tells a certain story about *La Déviation*.

On the importance of storytelling

In their work *Micropolitique des groupes: pour une écologie des pratiques collectives,* Thierry Müller, Olivier Crabbé, and David Vercauteren have set themselves the goal of offering a tool to both present and future collectives to enable them to find their bearings among the sometimes conflictual processes they use.[16] The work wends its way through a "mosaic of situations and problems." It does not propose solutions, but rather provides a blueprint, in the manner of Fernand Deligny, of problems and questions.[17]

As an introduction to their work and a means of putting the way in which collectives usually keep records of their activities in perspective, the authors begin by

examining two groups linked to the writing of collective memories.[18] On the one hand are historians: the quote about them also implies that their exterior and dominant position would diminish the collectives' ability to tell their own story in their own words.[19] On the other hand, there are forebears: here the term refers to those who came before, and who call forth memory. Using both the major and minor stories of the group, they are in a position to "[transmit] pragmatic ways in which to construct a common future."[20] Although the authors refer to this figure, it is far from certain that someone takes on that role among militant Western cultures. In their view, the absence of forebears is the problem here, rather than their exteriority. Accordingly, *Micropolitique des groupes* ("The Micropolitics of Groups") opens by presenting a deficiency. Both figures point out, each from their particular perspective, the recurring pitfall among collectives of not creating an active "culture of forebears" that can be shared, one that would nourish and propagate their own experiences. Other disadvantages include the compiling of narratives by people external to the collective who, deprived of first-hand experience, struggle to express elements worthy of retention. Yet another problem is the very absence of preservation of such elements, as well as the circulation of these elements for the purpose of "supporting cultures of a collective nature."[21]

All this at a time when the art of storytelling,[22] and even more so, the ability to disseminate such tales, is no longer uniquely a powerful initiative used in neoliberal practice, but an equally powerful means of transmission, and thus, of survival, of attempts to come together to work together in common cause in alternative ways.[23] It is essential for people who work daily to formulate and implement alternative ways of being in the world in order to have the ability to convert their experience into a narrative. These narratives have the performative power to convey, demonstrate, and transform those who hear them.[24]

Many collective experiments whose temporality is often of an ephemeral or frenetic nature are not inclined to work to create this culture of forebears, but the issue is singularly brought to the fore in the case of alternative or intermediary art spaces,[25] which are simultaneously the product of artistic practices and of a spatial foundation that can be qualified as "emplaced."[26] The way artists *font lieu* ("create space") has been identified and

defined as of the early 2000s as constituting the new frontiers of art by artistic and cultural institutions.[27] Today, the paths of these initiatives have become invisible and have fallen silent, drowned out by the dominant discourses rich in a mixed bag of expressions, such as "cultural wastelands," which tends to genericize them under an umbrella of a communal and presumably joyous experience of transitional urbanism and the rehabilitation of urban industrial areas.[28] Consequently, creating an accurate narrative and transmitting their experiences is currently a major challenge for these spaces and these groups, one they must meet so that their critical dimension can exist and operate beyond the limits of their own worlds.

Creating an archive: Towards the constitution of a culture of forebears?

This question of the creation of a narrative and the transmission of experiences was at the heart of a conference in which the *La Déviation* collective took part, *Archives Communes pour des Lieux Hors du Commun* ("Common Archives for Uncommon Spaces"), held in November 2019 at the former squat Le Rivoli 59 in Paris.[29] Two curators, Lucie Camous[30] and Vincent Prieur,[31] assembled representatives of twenty intermediary art spaces, inviting them to present a selection of their archives in the form of a documentary exhibition, and participate in a series of round table discussions. The first of these discussions, "What Archives are Possible in Alternative Spaces?," was more specifically dedicated to the various ways in which the assembled collectives produced their own archives.

Although it was not explicitly stated, the proposition formulated by the curators to consider the collective and autonomous methods of archive generation resulted in a major reversal in the ways in which we generally regard archival work and designate *what* constitutes an archive. This reversal to some extent includes a feminist and decolonial approach to archives, such as the one advocated by archivist Michelle Caswell in her work "Dusting for Fingerprints."[32] Caswell invites us to rethink the role of those who are tasked with identifying elements that have value as archives by circumventing the supposedly unassuming, objective, and neutral position conferred on them by institutions. A position that, in the field of historiographical knowledge, contributes to

preserving the currently dominant operational processes, which tend in the name of this alleged objectivity to silence or exclude the voices of all those whom one could consider *sans parts* (disenfranchised) according to Jacques Rancière.[33] According to Caswell, an archivist, working rather from a situated, critical standpoint, can become the means of transmission that would provide communities with the capacity to produce their own archives and, as a result, appropriate their own historiography.

It would then seem, if we follow Caswell's lead, that collectives should rethink their groups to ensure that they make a place for an archivist, situated somewhere between the historians and the forebears. The role of the archivist is not so much to write their history as it is to identify the heterogeneous materials that might be of use in the writing of that history, according to Shannon Faulkhead.[34] In her view, the archive is not merely evidence of something to someone, but, rather, in a wider sense, a "springboard for memory."[35] Thus, their raison d'être is linked to the preservation and *maintenance* of these selected materials, to use the terms of American artist Mierle Laderman Ukeles.[36] These functions place the archivist in their rightful position of interiority/exteriority in relation to the community. They must preserve artifacts that perpetuate the effective and active aspects of the group's actions from a position of a forebear, on the "periphery" of the group, and yet within its bounds.[37]

To return to the conference held on November 2, 2019, and the question it posed, namely if and how intermediary spaces could produce their own archives, the participants put forth a certain number of arguments pertaining to the very nature of the action and archival nature of such conservation work. The fear was that the very nature of such preservation implies a sense of fixing or freezing elements that should, on the contrary, in order to retain their active and alternative "freshness," remain fluid and experiential. The fear is that this would infer forms of institutionalization that would be difficult to negotiate for such intermediary spaces. While the inherent risks of this institutionalization requires a nuanced treatment that would necessitate more than the space allotted for this article, it is inevitable that some forms of archival work entail the capture and commodification of collective memory by external actors, whether they be institutional, artistic,

or commercial.[38] This is in any case the conclusion one might reach when observing the frenetic archiving in the heat of the moment of the 2011 Occupy Wall Street movement by museums and other US groups involved with the art scene under the pretext that "Occupy is sexy."[39] As stated in an article published by the *New York Daily News*, an "archive group" had been set up by activists with the aim of literally providing shelter for hundreds of signs, posters, flyers, magazines, fanzines, and other documents in order to prevent the co-opting of the history of the movement by the views and the voices of institutions and companies.

Sharing the experience of intermediary artistic spaces: An impossibility?

It would appear that intermediary artistic spaces face several obstacles. Apart from the powerful process of capturing critical margins, which is an integral part of neoliberal capitalism, there are other, more endogenous obstacles to the work of creating narratives and a political history of their experiences.[40] The very artistic field in which these collectives work practice—from which they "make politics, even when what they create is anything but"[41]—seems to make the possibility of creating a true commonality of experience particularly delicate. As a matter of fact, the morphology and syntax of public debate make it difficult to precisely record "a political reality that is constituted independently of the mode upon which it is usually and classically expected, one that does not declare itself as expressly political, but which nevertheless well and truly acts in those terms."[42]

Over the course of the project he led in 2007 with members of the ARTfactories/autre(s)pARTs network,[43] sociologist Pascal Nicolas-Le Strat shared the conviction of artists that there would be two major risks to their practice and to intermediary artistic spaces when distilling their experiences into narratives. The first would be an "excessive and abusive generalization" which would deprive their experiences of the singularity conferred by their artistic intent. The second would be a confiscation, from and by the reified and reifying figure of the artist, of words and memories that also belong to others.[44]

On both sides, whatever their nature, form, or reach, the collective real-life experiences from the field of artistic practices, caught between the constantly reformulated question of the autonomy of art and a hackneyed representation of the *artist-person* as a regime of exception, would seem to be condemned to remain out of the common realm.[45] A knotty situation if there ever was one, and one which Nicolas-Le Strat invites us to examine with a view to implementing a policy of narrative that eludes and limits the effects of hierarchization that possibly come into play once artistic practices are conceived and deployed in a socially committed manner.[46]

Archives and/or documentation:
Recording a narrative as a process
of neutralization

If, for a moment, we take a look upstream from the writing of collective histories in the field of archives, we can see that although these different hypotheses make up the germ of an answer to the difficulty intermediary artistic venues have in recording their own experiences, they perhaps fail to underline the way in which the archival gesture is equivalent to, or in any case is similar to that which, in the field of art, is part of the action of *documentation*.

Let's consider documentation, which in the field of art consists of the following: 1) producing traces of the works with a view to making them visible and lending them an existence beyond their allocated time of exhibition; 2) sometimes producing the work itself in the field of "art in common" when the documentation in the exhibition space comes to translate and sometimes substitute itself for that which has been played elsewhere and at another time;[47] or 3) having the document serve as an object or space that enables one to perform an experiment of an esthetic or poetic nature that would challenge the traditional partition of knowledge between the arts and sciences.[48] Consequently, this act of documentation seems to be virtually omnipresent in the contemporary context, both at the heart of creative works as well as on their margins.[49] Therefore, the fact that intermediary artistic spaces collectively appropriate the question of the writing of their history, in a context that widely substantiates the archival or documentary tendencies of art, is far from insignificant.[50]

Indeed, this turning point seems to have given rise to extreme forms of a sort of "taxidermization" of collective practices linked to communal living. One example is *Infinite Spaces (Lieux Infinis),* the curatorial proposal of the architecture collective Encore Heureux for the French pavilion at the 22nd Venice Architecture Bienniale in 2018. The Pavilion was inaugurated with a large and imposing installation[51] made up of objects from all ten spaces represented in the exhibition, which were chosen according to processes of selection, sampling, and extraction, all of which are intrinsic to archival work.[52]

Set above the viewers, these individuated objects, organized according to criteria that seem to be both spatial and formal, were removed from the contexts of their use and the network of gestures, of the handling that renders them both familiar and part of the quotidian that they normally inhabit.[53] As a result, these objects were reduced to their mere materiality, and thus commodified, one might even say desubstantialized.[54] Thus conceived and curated under the auspices of an installation that—to appropriate Till Roeskens' term *dé-terrestrer*—"de-grounded"[55] the artifacts presented, it would seem that the scripting as narrative, as Yves Citton refers to it, or more generally speaking the representation here, does not so much risk an institutionalization of collective experience but rather the neutralization of the objects' emancipatory potential through their very curation.

From what I have described so far in the text, one might fear that the emancipatory potential of daily lives, artifacts, practices, actions, and customs are only to be truly lived by the happy few who directly participate in them, since some types of narrative adaptations would almost definitely relegate them to the margins of a wider commonality. Paradoxically, it may seem that the narrative itself plays a key role in the constitution of a form of communalization one could describe as "affinity." This communalization transcends the contours of the collective or the space in question, touching and moving people who have not directly had the same experiences.[56] As a palpable vehicle of shared references, feeling, or even ties of familiarity, in effect the narrative transforms the experiences into a series of symbolic common spaces, within which links of attachment are forged even as the possibilities of a wide range of uses is maintained.[57] The telling and transmission of stories relating to a group or place thus contributes to

making these singular experiences a basis for communalization, centering notions of proximity and affinity within the heart of political and social ties.[58]

Therefore, the archival space should be occupied not merely as a place of documentation or for rendering experiences visible, but as a strategic space for the formulation of counter-histories that challenge the neoliberal precept that "There's no Alternative," as well as in the field of art with its "devitalizing" installations[59] of forms of communal life. This is also crucial because it enables intermediary artistic spaces to review the singular experiences they have had, the better to communicate and disseminate them in a manner that remains active and relevant. The capacity of groups to perform this reflective review of their own history is actually a condition for the possibility of generating grassroots politics—and subsequently history—from the bottom up, based directly upon a "meshing of experiences and experimentations" and not a putative objective overview, distanced and neutral.[60]

This is precisely the direction taken by the research work undertaken by sociologists such as Thomas Arnera, who are bridging the fields of humanities and the arts to "reformulate the archival experience" based on the places themselves, their spatiality, and the practices performed therein.[61] This is also what I have attempted to do at *La Déviation*, through my inventory of meeting minutes of in-depth sessions held by the group since 2015.

The inventory as a space
for ongoing critical work

After my perusal (*dépouillement*)[62] of the archive as described above, I presented the resulting inventory to the group over the course of an informal residence outing on February 18, 2021. On this occasion, I presented the members with a modifiable digital copy of the spreadsheet so that they could make use of it. Viewed from the standpoint of my position—as an artist who had been invited to a residency in the space, and as a researcher who had been granted access to the memorial materials of the group—which placed me within the space of the collective, the creation of this archival meta-material extends the dynamic of reconnection instigated by the systematic and conscientious minutes that the members of *La Déviation* produced.

In returning it back to the group, it is also an attempt to circumvent forms of (re)presentations of memorial materials that, in the realm of art, provide matter for a devitalized installation on the forms of communal life.

Apart from its usefulness for my own research, I produced this inventory solely for the group and feel that its use should remain entirely at their discretion. While this inventory contributes to rendering the volume of documents it describes less opaque, it is not in my purview to decide whether it should be made public and accessible to others. The materials hold traces of statements, conflicts, and breaks which may occasionally not be resolved by the people who experienced them. In this respect it is fragile and delicate, and should not be released to others without the unanimous consent of the parties concerned.

Apart from this essential precaution, the fact of first presenting the fruits of this archival work to the group or the community from which the archives emanated attests to the intent to render it a tool for critical reflection specifically for the group or community in question. The inventory, like any other form of archival metadata, is already a re-reading, an interpretation, the creation of a narrative of the archive itself, as indicated by Samia Henni at the *Unearthing Traces* conference.[63] This enables one to "resocialize the archive" to re-situate the traces of its own history at the heart of the networks of socialization endemic to a community, making them actors in real time. As a result, by facilitating the group's access to its own history, my intention here is to have the inventory be more than an instrument of research that describes and communicates the content of the archive. I hope that the way in which it constitutes a narrative will engender its own open space of critical discussion, one that contributes to the constitution of a "culture of forebears" particular to this place and group. I also hope that this inventory might, on a wider level, address itself to artistic and occupying alternatives. Once there has been an internal review of the results regarding the situations that have existed or do exist among the members of *La Déviation*, other people and other groups can make use of them and actualize them in the here-and-now of their communal practices and in terms of the questions particular to them. This is the patient sedimentation of knowledge and savoir-faire at work.

At the time I am writing these lines, I still do not know whether the *La Déviation* collective has appropriated this tool and, if they have, what use they have made of it. However, there is no doubt that the long and inexorable process of sedimentation is currently underway.

Mathilde Chénin is a visual artist whose work emphasizes versions over finished forms, with collaboration being a key component of her research. She explores the collective space within which one exists and comes together to work through a concept of expanded writing practices that navigates between bodies, techniques, and language. Her oeuvre is an elaboration that incorporates different kinds of systems, from immaterial and utopian architectures to genealogies, scores and other large collective objects. Chénin has been developing her work over the course of research residencies (La Box, 2013; ESACM Research Cooperative, 2014—2015) and transdisciplinary collectives (One Metaphorical Institute 2015—2018; MACSUP, MAC Lyon, 2020—2021). Her work has been presented at the Nouveau Festival (Centre Pompidou, 2015), the BF15 (Lyon, 2016), Galerie CAC (Noisy-le-Sec, 2015), the Salon de Montrouge (2017), and the FRAC PACA (2018). In 2016, in collaboration with artists Maxime Bondu and Guillaume Robert, curator Bénédicte Le Pimpec, and computer programmer Julien Griffit, Chénin cofounded Project bermuda, a site that features shared studios for artistic production and research (Sergy, FR). In 2022, she obtained a PhD in sociology focusing on the grammars of "the commonality in the plural" such as they are composed at the crossroads between a "living together" and a "working as an artist", at HEAD—Genève and the Laboratoire de Sociologie Urbaine, EPFL Lausanne.

1   David Vercauteren, *Micropolitique des groupes. Pour une écologie des pratiques collectives* (HB Politiques, 2007), 1.

2   See Laura Centemeri, "Entre expertises et émotions: les conflits relatifs à l'extension de l'aéroport de Milan Malpensa," *Émotions et Expertises* (Rennes: PUR, 2015), 127—46. core.ac.uk/download/pdf/52435968.pdf.

3   Doctoral research (advisor Luca Pattaroni and Olivier Desvoignes, HEAD-Genève) spanning artistic practice and urban sociology. The aim was to reveal the dynamics between two regimes of engagement that are "inhabiting" and "creating": these are distinct modes and yet so necessary to each other. The areas of participant observation in the research are three communal living and art spaces that provide artistic residencies: La Déviation, Marseille (www.ladeviation.org); Moly-Sabata, Sablons (www.moly-sabata.com/); bermuda, Sergy (http://bermuda.pm/).

4   I completed three tours of research at La Déviation between October 2019 and February 2021, each for the duration of a week according to the methods of an observer-participant. On each occasion, I requested a residence, outlining the object of my research, the time required for my stay, as well as the workspaces I wished to occupy. The requests were made according to the operating methods in use at the time and were subject to change over the entire course of the period. During my stays, like all the other artists in residence, I was lodged in a caravan placed at my disposal; I took part in collective meals twice a day and participated in the tasks related to the self-management of the collective (collective housekeeping chores; cooking at least one communal meal; participation in a technical meeting). I made a financial contribution for the occupation of the spaces, operational costs, and meals. In terms of workspaces, I used the communal kitchen and office. Each of my stays provided the occasion for a presentation of the ongoing research to members who were interested upon the end of my residencies.

5   A total of 282 summaries of meetings, both technical and in-depth.

6   See Luca Pattaroni, *Politique de la responsabilité: promesses et limites d'un monde fondé sur l'autonomie*. Geneva: University of Geneva, E.H.E.S.S, 2005 and Desvoignes, Olivier, *Blackboards Were Turned into Tables: Questioning "Horizontality" in Collaborative Pedagogical Art Projects*, PhD thesis, London, London University of the Arts, 2015, ualresearchonline.arts.ac.uk/8730/.

7   Regarding the notion of parrhesia, as interpreted by Michel Foucault as part of the genealogy of the disciplinary processes linked to the truths we tell ourselves, see Michel Foucault, "La Parrêsia." Anabases [online] 16 (2012): 157—88, journals.openedition.org/anabases/3959; and DOI: doi.org/10.4000/anabases.3959.

8   Commentary on present article, sent on 25/09/2021.

9   On the notion of "productive criticism," see Judith Butler, "Qu'est-ce que la critique? Essai sur la vertu selon Foucault," in *Penser avec Michel Foucault*, ed. Marie-Christine Granjon (Paris: Karthala, Recherches Internationales, 2005), 73—104, www.cairn.info/penser-avec-michel-foucault---page-73.htm.

10 See Chantal Mouffe, "Artistic Activism and Agonistic Spaces," *Art&Research* 1, no. 2 (2007), www.artandresearch.org.uk/v1n2/mouffe.html.

11 Minutes of the meeting of November 8, 2015, La Déviation. For more on the active dimension of conflict, see Sarah Schulman, *Le conflit n'est pas une agression: rhétorique de la souffrance, responsabilité collective et devoir de réparation* (Paris: Payot Culture, 2021).

12 The taking of notes is done by several people over the course of a same meeting. Consequently, their qualities fluctuate and vary depending on each notetaker: some decide upon a faithful word-for-word transcription, others prefer to reformulate.

13 Marcel Bolle de Bal, "Reliance, déliance, liance: emergence de trois notions sociologiques," *Sociétés* 2, no. 80 (2003): 99—131, www.cairn.info/revue-societes-2003-2-page-99.htm

14 The curfew that was then in force in France had long passed when M. and I began discussing the events that caused such disturbance over the course of the summer of 2020, and which resulted, a few months later, in major changes at the heart of the group. For my part, I became acquainted with the course of these events and the reactions they provoked through the minutes of the meeting of July 5, 2020, that of the Extraordinary General Assembly on July 27, 2020, and the meeting of September 13, 2020. While I provide my feelings about the various exchanges whose transcriptions I could read, M. reminded me that, despite my meticulous reading of the summaries, they were a million miles away from what actually took place and that I could not pretend to formulate an informed opinion about these events. She specified that, for her part, she accepted the fact that, "when she is not there, she is not there," and that her absence did not enable her to know what was, or was not, going on in the group.

15 The expression is borrowed from Michelle Caswell, "Dusting for Fingerprints: Introducing Feminist Standpoint Appraisal," in eds. Elvia Arroyo-Ramirez, Jasmine Jones, Shannon O'Neill, and Holly Smith, *Journal of Critical Library and Information Studies*, vol. 3. Radical Empathy in Archival Practice no. 1 (2019), journals.litwinbooks.com/index.php/jclis/article/view/113/67.

16 Vercauteren, *Micropolitique des groupes*, 4—7. The three authors mentioned here form the emerging face of a wider collective initiative whose roots lie in the middle of the 1990s with VeGA (les Verts pour une Gauche Alternative, or Green Party), the struggles for autonomy linked to the occupation of empty buildings until the Collectif Sans Tickets (CST) which began in Brussels in 1999. Before it disbanded in 2003, the CST decided to compile a narrative of their experiences as a collective, which took the form of a fifty-page document entitled *Bruxelles, Novembre 2013*. Subsequently they spent a year sharing the text with their circle of friends and activists who criticized, extended, and added additional experiences of situations in other collectives. Then came a year of group writing and editing that would result in the publication of the work *Micropolitique des groupes*.

17 Fernand Deligny is a French educator who has worked to create open living spaces for autistic and/or delinquent children. Over the course of the 1960s and 1970s, accompanied by other adults who were not so much educators as close associates, he developed a technique for the cataloguing and transcription of the movements of children amongst these living spaces, which he referred to as *lignes d'erre* (lines of errance). These maps were not to understand or interpret the movements of the children, but rather to "see" what was not visible to the naked eye, the relationship of the children to their environment. For more on the subject, see *Cartes et lignes d'erre: traces du réseau de Fernand Deligny, 1969—1979* (Paris: Editions Arachnéen, 2013). It is this definition of the map that the authors of *Micropolitique des groupes* adapted, not so much as an instrument of observation, but rather one of evaluation, defining in that regard a culture of forebears as "a manner in which to evaluate the qualitative and intensive difference of our modes of existence by relating them to the problematic situations that preceded them." (Vercauteren, Micropolitique des groupes, 7).

18 Ibid., 1.

19 Ibid.: "As long as the history of the practices of collectives is not recounted by those who live and construct them, it will be the historians who will take charge of it."

20 Ibid.

21 Ibid., 7.

22 On the notion of storytelling, see Christian Salmon, *Storytelling: la machine à fabriquer des histoires et à formater les esprits* (Paris: La Découverte, Poche, 2008).

23 Regarding the importance of the reappropriation of the forms of narrative by left-wing activist movements, see Francesca Polletta, "'It Was Like a Fever...': Narrative and Identity in Social Protest," *Social Problems* 45, no. 2 (1998): 137—49.

24 Yves Citton, *Mythocratie. Storytelling et imaginaire de gauche* (Amsterdam, Paris: 2010).

25 Independent intermediary artistic spaces are defined as collaborative and experimental art and cultural spaces whose intention is to preserve the autonomy of art, its practices, and its actors with regard to public powers and commercial policies. These spaces are united under the banner of the CNLII (Coordination Nationale des Lieux Intermédiaires et Indépendants) whose charter they have all signed (cnlii.org/qui-sommes-nous/charte/charte/). The places represented during the meetings entitled Archives Communes Pour des Lieux Hors du Commun are: le 6B, Saint Denis; Lieu Commun, Toulouse; Le Générateur, Gentilly; La Friche Lamartine, Lyon; Les Ateliers du Vent, Rennes; Mains d'Œuvres, Saint-Ouen; Le Bon Accueil, Rennes; Pol'N, Nantes; AAIA, Roquefort; le Shakirail, Paris; La Gare XP, Paris; Doc!, Paris; 5UN7, Bordeaux; l'Assaut de la Menuiserie, Saint-Etienne; Les Halles du Faubourg, Lyon; Metaxu, Toulon; Un Œuf, Martinique; Cheminement, La Réunion; La Déviation, Marseille; La Semencerie, Strasbourg, and Le Syndicat Potentiel, Strasbourg.

26 Regarding the specificities of the regime of familiarity that is characteristic of inhabiting a place, see Marc Breviglieri, "L'usage et l'habiter: contribution à une sociologie de la proximité," PhD thesis Paris, EHESS, 1999. See also the difference Joan Stavo-Debauge established between residents and *passants* (passersby) in Joan Stavo-Debauge, "L'indifférence du passant qui se meut, les ancrages du résidant qui s'émeut," in *Les Sens Publics*, eds. Daniel Cefaï and Dominique Pasquier (Paris: PUF, 2003), 347—69.

27 See Marie Trossat, *Faire Lieu*, presented at the Séminaire Pratique de la Recherche en Anthropologie (Université Catholique de Louvain-la-Neuve, 2017).

28 See Fabrice Lextrait and Gwenaille Groussard, *Friches, laboratoires, fabriques, squats, projets pluridisciplinaires...: une nouvelle epoque de l'action culturelle*, report to M. Michel Duffour, Secrétaire d'Etat au Patrimoine et à la Décentralisation Culturelle (2001).

29 For more about the former squat Rivoli 59, see www.59rivoli.org/qui-nous-sommes/.

30 Lucie Camous is an independent curator and the Administrative and Artistic Director of Rivoli 59: luciecamous.com/a-propos/

31 Vincent Prieur is an artist and president of the association Curry Vavart, which organized the occupation of disused spaces with a view to transforming them into shared creative spaces for artists between 2006 and 2011. Since 2011, the association benefited from several conventions on temporary occupation for spaces such as the Shakirail or the Villa Belleville. Site of the Curry Vavart association: curry-vavart.com/home.htm. See also Vincent Prieur's contribution to the contemporary history of squats housing Parisian artists: Vincent Prieur, "Revendications des squats d'artistes et institutions," *Marges* 2, no. 21 (2015): 74, journals.openedition.org/marges/1035.

32 Caswell, "Dusting for Fingerprints."

33 I specifically chose to use this term, central to the philosophy of Jacques Rancière, rather than the term of "dominated" or "minority groups." While the former do indeed see their existence relegated to the status conferred upon them by the dominant processes at work, the *sans parts* (disenfranchised) refer to a figure "in movement" of sorts, a figure that exists and emerges because it rejects the idea that a status be attributed to their revolt and, by the same token, removes themselves from established spaces and orders, contributing to their contestation from spaces that refuse to "admit to and go on about the division of the world between dominators and the dominated," according to sociologist Guillaume Gourgues. For more on this, see Jacques Rancière, *La Mésentente: politique et philosophie* (Paris: Galilée, 1995) and Guillaume Gourges, "Sans Part," in *Dictionnaire Critique et Interdisciplinaire de la Participation*, eds. Ilaria Casillo, Rémi Barbier, Loic Blondiaux, Francis Chateauraynaud, Jean-Michel Fourniau, Catherine Neveu, and Denis Salles (Paris: GIS Démocratie et Participation, 2013), www.dicopart.fr/fr/dico/sans-part.

34 Australian scholar Shannon Faulkhead, for example, offers a pluralist view of records as "any account, regardless of form, that preserves memory or knowledge of facts and events. A record can be a document, an individual's memory, an image, or a recording. It can also be an actual person, a community, or the land itself." Shannon Faulkhead, "Connecting Through Records: Narratives of Koorie Victoria," *Archives and Manuscripts* 37, no. 2 (2010): 60—88.

35 Faulkhead, ibid.

36 Mierle Ukeles Laderman, *Manifesto for Maintenance Art* (1969): who went through a series of maintenance actions (cleaning, sweeping, feeding, taking out the trash, shaking hands, etc.), actualized within a familial, domestic, or social context, gestures of an artistic dimension.

37 Vercauteren, *Micropolitique des groupes*, 1.

38 See Eric Hazan and Julien Coupat. "Pour un processus destituant: invitation au voyage," *Libération*, January 24, 2016, www.liberation.fr/debats/2016/01/24/pour-un-processus-destituant-invitation-au-voyage_1428639; Frédéric Lordon, *Vivre sans? Institutions, police, travail, argent… Conversation avec Félix Boggio Éwanjé-Épée* (Paris: La Fabrique, 2019); Vincent Jarry, "Vivre sans? Trempette dans un verre d'eau," *Lundi.am*, no. 243 (May 2020), lundi.am/vivre-sans-trempette-dans-un-verre-d-eau.

39 In 2011, when the Occupy Wall Street movement was still active, the Smithsonian initiated a large-scale collection effort of artifacts and publications produced by the activists in order to create an archive of this embryonic movement, arguing for the urgency of preventing some of these ephemeral documents from disappearing, preserving them for the distant perspective required in order to write history. As for the articles pertaining to this archival work, they indicate that the materials were not collected for their historical potential, but rather because Occupy was considered "sexy" so consequently, the materials were sought for their cachet in the art world, and also possible commercial value. See www.nydailynews.com/new-york/museums-collecting-occupy-wall-street-artifacts-article-1.996617 and www.washingtontimes.com/news/2011/nov/30/national-museum-of-american-history-collects-occup/.

40 See Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello, *Le nouvel esprit du capitalisme* (Paris: Gallimard, 1999).

41 Nicolas-Le Strat, Pascal, "Faire politique latéralement: la fonction intermédiatrice du récit," *Multitudes* 2, no. 45 (2011): 192—97.

42 Ibid.

43 For more information about the ARTfactories/autre(s)pARTs network, see autresparts.org/.

44 Nicolas-Le-Strat, "Faire politique latéralement."

45 Nathalie Heinich, *L'élite artiste: excellence et singularité en régime démocratique* (Paris: NRF Gallimard, Bibliothèque des Sciences Humaines, 2005).

46 Nicolas-Le-Strat, "Faire politique latéralement." Regarding the latter, see the study led by artist Yves Mettler at a community garden in Paris in 2011: "Un cheminement engagé dans l'art," Memo for the Sociologie Pragmatique de la Politique et de la Morale seminar (Paris: EHESS, 2011), www.theselection.net/thelabel/EHESS/cheminement-56-2011.pdf, as well as the commentary made by Laurent Thévenot, "Community-Engaged Art in Practice," in *Artistic Practices*, ed. Tasos Zembilas (London: Routledge, 2014), 132—50, www.researchgate.net/publication/344663852_Engaging_in_the_politics_of_participative_art_in_practice.

47 See the definition provided by Estelle Zhong-Mengual, *L'art en commun: réinventer les formes du collectif en contexte démocratique* (Paris: Les Presses du Réel, 2019).

48 Franck Leibovici, Des documents poétiques (Dijon: Les Presses du Réel. 2007).

49 Unfortunately, there is not enough space here to deal in more depth with the question of actions in the realm of art, which tend to use and highlight the document, notably by differentiating between a "documentary tendency in art," as well as an "artistic tendency of the documentary," and what could, in the wake of the latter be considered "documentary art." Aline Caillet identifies several avenues to pursue in this area. Generally speaking, she identifies "artistic tendencies of the documentary" as with Kassel's Documenta X in 1997. Curator Catherine David reserved a large space for documentary, as such, at least for artistic forms that confront the question of the representation of the real in the era of globalization. Aline Caillet, "Introduction: l'hypothèse d'un art documentaire," in *Un Art Documentaire* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2017). Caillet states that this turning point is confirmed by curator Okwui Enwezor in 2002 who, along with Hal Foster, evokes the ethnographic tendencies of art: Hal Foster, "The Artist as Ethnographer?" in *The Traffic in Culture: Refiguring Art and Anthropology*, eds. George E. Marcus and Fred R. Myers (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 371.

50 Regarding the question of archival practices and republication in the field of contemporary art, see Virginie Bobin and Mathilde Villeneuve, eds., *Republication 01—Archives Journal Hors-Série*, (Dijon: Les Presses du Réel, 2016).

51 As early as the beginning of the 1970s, Daniel Buren raised the issue of the role played by the generalization of the form of the installation in what he perceives and conceives as a form of "devitalized displacement" of works: "This sensation that the essence of the work was lost somewhere from its area of production (the atelier) to the space where it is 'consumed' (the exhibition), pushed me extremely early to examine the problem and the signification of the place of a work. A bit later, I understood that what was being lost, what was certainly disappearing, was the reality of the work, its 'truth,' namely its relationship with the place of its creation, the atelier. A space where you can generally find finished works, some that will forever remain so, sketches, etc. The context created by these visible traces simultaneously generates a comprehension of the work in progress, which the Museum definitively extinguishes in its desire to 'install.' Isn't it true that we increasingly speak of 'installations' rather than 'exhibitions'? And isn't the process of installation closer to that of instituting, establishing?" Daniel Buren, "Fonction de l'Atelier," in *Ecrits* vol. 1 (Bordeaux: CAPC-Musée d'Art Contemporain, 1991), 195—205.

52 The ten spaces were not all what is referred to as "intermediary artistic spaces." They are represented here because they are considered by the curatorial team as "pioneering spaces that explore and experiment with collective processes to occupy the world and construct the commons." See encoreheureux.org/projets/lieux-infinis/ and lieuxinfinis.com/.

53 Breviglieri, *L'usage et l'habiter*.

54 We are in fact far from a rapport with the object that would enable, through its activation beyond the everyday, to focus on the relationship of familiarity and intimacy that one maintains with objects, and their use, such as that proposed by the oeuvre of Lygia Clark.

55 The term is a variation of the term in French *terrestration*, borrowed from the artist Till Roeskens. The reference to the Earth rather than land as territory is aimed at distancing from approaches based on identity linked to a space: Roeskens, Till, "Tentative d'atterrissage," *Terrestres, Eprouver*, no. 14 (2020), www.terrestres.org/2020/06/01/tentative-datterrissage/.

56 Regarding the constitution of a commons by affinity, see Olga Koveneva, "Les communautés politiques en France et en Russie: regards croisés sur quelques modalités du 'vivre ensemble,'" Éditions de l'EHESS, *Annales, Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, 3 (2011): 787—817; Laura Centemeri, "Entre expertises et émotions" and Luca Pattaroni, "La trame sociologique de l'espace," *SociologieS, Penser l'Espace en Sociologie* (2016), sociologies.revues.org/543.

57 In his article "Difference and the Common of the City," Pattaroni shows how, in the case of the Quartier des Grottes in Geneva, the creation of a narrative of the experience enabled the occupants to share the particular tone and ambiance of their daily life which also contributed to making the quarter a common space, not merely a spatial one, as well as symbolic, a commonality through affinity: Luca Pattaroni, "Difference and the Common of the City: the Metamorphosis of the 'Political', from the Urban Struggles of the 1970's to the Contemporary Urban Order," in *The Making of the Common in Social Relations*, eds. Alexandre Cotovio Martins and José Manuel Resende (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015), 141—172.

58 Koveneva, "Les communautés politiques en France et en Russie."

59 See Note 51 for a contextual explanation.

60 Nicolas-Le Strat, "Faire politique latéralement."

61 See Thomas Arnera's Projet Memento at the Friche Lamartine in Lyon: autresparts.org/memento-une-introduction/ and palimpseste.autresoie.com/category/acte-ii/memento-acte-ii/.

62 Despite its wide use in the field of archival studies, I am not a fan of this term. It refers to the act of extraction, which ineluctably removes something from the object removed, thus reducing or dispossessing it to a certain extent once this act is accomplished. Using another term to qualify archival work would undoubtedly enable us to see this activity in a different light, even if, on the contrary in many respects it resembles an act of care, even of reparation, as conceptualized by Françoise Vergès.

63 Henni is an historian, theorist, educator, and curator of built, destroyed, and imagined environments. Her research and teaching address questions of colonization, wars, extraction, deserts, forced displacement, and gender. www.samiahenni.com/.

Emergency Spaces VI—Community Networking Spaces for Action: The Archive

Estefania Mompean Botias

We live at a time in which facts, data, experiences, and memories are urgently and continuously recorded due to the climate emergency and the escalation of extinction rates.[1] We seek evidence and environmental accountability through data-driven techno-scientific control processes. However, there are other ways of revealing the multiple threats; the experience of affected communities and grassroots groups challenges the conceptions of the record. With this article, I intend to retrace the realities of communal and activist archives as open and adaptable spaces that reclaim individual and collective memories to reactivate social and political agency. Through this, I will present the archive as an enabling space for creating networks that respond to the intertwined crises and performative action that allows for the emergence of new possibilities. How are these places becoming catalytic sites for activating an increasingly mobilized population in the face of current emergencies? How do they become platforms for solidarity networks in moments of crisis or transformative events? What implications do they have in the city's transformation as spaces of care and bodily representation of individuals and more-than-human communities? Finally, could we speak of the archive as an emerging typology from the need to recognize new

histories, events, and experiences in a world with emerging conditions? To answer these questions, I will take the Interference Archive (IA) community archive in Brooklyn (New York) and its affective relationship with a territory in Emergency, such as the Gowanus Canal. Here I define "Territories in Emergency" as a place of friction, of rapid change in its ecosystemic conditions, interfered by climate change perturbations, risk control, and the emergence of more-than-human grounded ecosystems. In addition, with the idea of giving tangibility to these experiences, throughout the text my own experiences of everyday life will appear in yellow.

October 23, 2021. Listening to the radio on one of these regular mornings has become an exploration of planetary climate acceleration events. Fires, floods, and hurricanes are becoming part of the daily broadcast. In many areas of the United States, the Emergency has found its way into many people's daily lives. Hurricane season has begun, and I walk out the front door, reminding myself of the path to the nearest evacuation zone and shelter. These experiences reveal the need to record changes, invoke past processes, speculate on ways of living, and better understand a world in rapid change.

Archiving the living

Community archives are open, responsive, inclusive, collaborative, and generative places where the community actively constructs and archives history. It is an archive in a continuous process, a "Living Archive,"[2] reactive to present ecologies, with resonances from the past and repercussions on the future. The community archives serve to form knowledge from a community, documenting and resisting life oppressions and reimagining alternatives.[3] Thus, archiving is not only a record of the past but a political act of optimism towards a future that will need our memories to invoke struggles and crises that can give meaning to an increasingly deprived present.

In addition, the activist archives collect work from activist communities and are led by a diversity of militants. This interdisciplinary intersection of action "not only honors communities, but also forges relationships between parallel histories, reshapes and reinterprets dominant narratives, and challenges conceptions of the archive itself."[4] The archival space becomes a platform for archivist-activists to create relationships and sites

of production in social movements. On the one hand, they emphasize the living history of the community. On the other hand, they become sites for movement enactment by establishing networks and practices for action.

The emerging typologies
of the Emergency

This text starts from the need to study the different spaces formed or activated in the contemporary political moment defined by Emergency.[5] In the face of environmental degradation and ecological transformations, these archival spaces generate a constructive place while knitting together the necessary relationships of community care. These networks have been weaving for years from a shared identity forged from past, present, and future struggles, but they become more tangible in Emergency conditions: the arrival of the pandemic coupled with the climate crises and the different forms of habitat precariousness and collapse, manifested in the form of widening inequalities.[6]

Michelle Caswell centers the role of the archivist from a feminist standpoint appraisal where the archivist becomes a socially located and culturally situated agent that centers the ways of being and knowing from the margins.[7] These spaces represent typologies for the development of collective intelligence, where this intelligence, the space, and the tools developed constitute a relational knowledge configuring a capacity for cooperation. In this way, the community archive could be identified as an "other" typology. The uses are described according to the time or place to which they belong and encompass the possibility of creating new spaces with their own logics. These spaces, defined as "free spaces,"[8] "third places,"[9] and "heterotopias,"[10] among others, become the contact point of a community or movement, away from the control of dominant groups that engenders the cultural challenge accompanying proto-political mobilization.[11] This conception of relational space from the margins holds resonances with the concept of the "Third Space" by Homi K. Bhabha. He defines the "third space" as a place of articulation where power relations and postcolonial norms are subverted through political practices and everyday aesthetics. These places are characterized by intersection and empowered inclusion with hybrid identities in which fundamental cultural transformations take place.[12]

Moreover, these are the places where negotiations materialize, and mediations of affinities generate new possibilities. In this way, they become enablers that configure and activate chains of voluntarism from an urban intelligence that cultivates solidarity.[13] This "noetic process" of intelligence or relational knowledge configures capacities of cooperation in which collectives of care are developed, what Bernard Stiegler calls the "real smart city."[14] These spaces become a life-relating infrastructure in increasingly precarious places and constantly fluctuating environments. Moreover, these spaces can be understood from a more-than-human point of view with the imaginary of *refugia*. Anna Tsing invites us to see the refuge from the capacity of "resurgence" as shared work among many organisms negotiating across differences to forge arrangements of multispecies responsibilities from their interdependencies.[15] In times of severe crises, the refuge becomes a space of recomposition that promotes multiple modes of care in a multispecies struggle to perpetuate themselves from a common (more-than-human) right of survival. Hence there is a vital meaning in recognizing the more-than-human relationship between the community archive and its relational territory in moments of intersectional crises.

The Emergency and the archive

At the time of the Emergency, we could apprehend the archive as a meeting point of social mobilizations and container in the construction of socio-technical infrastructures that are often underestimated. As crises are becoming more recurrent and more severe, the activation of volunteer chains is completely changing the Emergency Response in the event of disasters.[16]
In New York, for example, following the catastrophe of Hurricane Sandy, there was a strong volunteer response organized by the Occupy Wall Street activist network: Occupy Sandy. It utilized the networks already created and appropriated in social networks by interweaving digital tools to coordinate a relief effort of quite astonishing scale and efficiency. The local response was built on the web of relationships that activists had created in their local communities due to neighborhood actions and assemblies.[17]

Activists from the Interference Archive (IA) were involved in the Occupy Wall Street movement and the Occupy

Sandy relief response. Recently, during COVID-19, the space closed its doors as a collective decision, but volunteers supported groups of students who were in charge of documenting the mutual aid work. The archive has been the place to collect material from these activities. I contacted Nora Almeida, an IA volunteer, writer, activist, and librarian at CUNY. She told me that every time something like this happens, the recurring question is: What is the role of an archival space in these moments? The first answer is to activate the networks of mutual help and recognize the space as an open support.

Interference Archive (IA) and the Gowanus Canal

The Interference Archive is an independent, community-run archive in Brooklyn with a mission "to explore the relationship between cultural production and social movements."[18]

The archive is located in an industrial area close to the Gowanus Canal, recognized as one of the most polluted waterways in the United States. A rezoning and densification project is being built alongside the canal, despite its toxic constituents and the fact that it is a high-risk flood zone, but it is surrounded by a cohesive community with a high environmental awareness.[19] Gowanus has a distinctive atmosphere, with a particular aroma combining sewage, sulfur, and burnt rubber that spreads through the streets with warehouses, artists' studios, abandoned spaces appropriated by diverse activities, gyms, and unusual bars. For a few years, the neighborhood has been at the center of a major rehabilitation project that aims to eventually transform this toxic area into public parks (mostly POPS—private owner public spaces) and more than 8,000 homes. The aspiration of the project is to create a growth-oriented "green project" with "sustainable" communities.[20] However, community activists point to how the project could aggravate the existing environmental injustices and social inequality within the community.

Soil is an archive in itself;[21] the chemical legacies of toxicity remain buried underneath for a very long time. Contaminants are often mixed and absorbed by other living organisms when released into the environment. Toxicity, flooding, and abandoned areas on the canal

Fig. 2: The ambiance around Gowanus Canal.
Credit: Estefania Mompean Botias

Fig. 1: The main space of the Archive. Credit: Interference
Archive website

banks have led to the emergence of a local ecosystem. Nora Almeida tells me that the Gowanus Green project is far from being a genuinely environmentally friendly response to the soil contamination in the region. They are trying to create a narrative that more closely portrays the construction of the neighborhood's emerging identity. That is why they are taking action to incorporate alternative narratives through collaborative events with diverse artists and activists from environmental justice groups.[22]

June 2022. We meet Miranda and Martin at the bar on the corner of 8th St and 4th Ave, near the Gowanus Canal. It's 3pm on a warm day, but the ocean breeze means that it's a lovely day for a stroll. We walk down 8th St and turn onto the lower end of 2nd Ave, where we encounter the calm water of the canal. The air is laden with sweet and humid smells. At the edge, we admire several exotic plants that are testament to the industrial activity around the canal in the not-too-distant past. As we walk towards 9th St, we see the same plants lining the edges between the parking lot and the industrial buildings. On Smith St, where affordable housing is to be constructed, Miranda points to the pile driver that has been piercing the ground for the last few weeks. She tells us that everything vibrated and that she had to close the windows of her house (two blocks away) because the air, with its smell of coal tar, became unbreathable for several hours.

The archive becomes a collector and activator of imaginaries of a place intersected by the networks that activate and inhabit it. From this perspective, the IA have seen the need to bring the archive to the streets. Thus, the archive itself becomes a performative agent and space occupier. The archive as space, augmented by the materials collected and activated by volunteer networks, enables transcending collaborations. In 2020, the archive organized several events with the Environmental Performance Agency (EPA), proposing visibility actions of non-human species agency within urban spaces and localized plant-human care practices.[23] Additionally, in collaboration with the Next Epoch Seed Library (NESL), the IA organized performative protests from sensory experimentation through walks in the area, creating relationships between the different plants, the uses of the canal edge, and materials from the archive.[24] "While interacting with these species, we consider the connections between climate justice and

reciprocity between ecosystems," Nora tells me. The case of the Gowanus Canal intersects with the long-running "Right to the City"[25] movement and the struggle for affordable housing, by fighting against the privatization and commercialization of public space. The IA seeks to connect past mobilizations, meaning that each struggle is embedded in an ecosystem of inequalities and oppression. This process helps enact activism and an approach to ecology with the materials of social movements with their recurrent symbols, meanings, ideas, and tools. For example, land liberalization, land-use change, and food production systems all interconnect with the struggles of the eviction crisis of the 1960s, the community garden mobilizations, and the 2010 Occupy movements, as well as with present and future crises.

With this example, we can see that the significance of the record arises through the contextualization of the multiple intersectional crises we are experiencing, which becomes, through the archive, an act of production in itself. It is also interesting to comprehend the expansion and articulation of the space in shaping the shared understanding that the conditions in which we are made to live are unjust and the need to conform actions for alternative futures. In this way, to archive from these perturbations is to seek a political and ethical responsibility in a world in constant climatic transformation. To archive is to unfold a committed politics of possibilities from our body and our home, to the greater transcorporeal one we share,[26] reimagining materials and multiple bodies as archives of change and at the same time as enablers of future emergencies. As an urgent process of reclamation, it is essential to occupy the place, make invisible processes visible, open the debate, and even act when the process may disrupt human and non-human ecosystems.

Thus, in a world driven by an environmental emergency activated by international networks of experts mobilizing global markets out of environmental collapse, the archive appears as a refuge of possibilities. It proclaims itself as a place of cultural, political, and technological healing that emerges from collective intelligence, networked from disturbances. Designed from the narratives and methodologies of the affected communities, it materializes as the observatory of evidence, the signal reader, and a refuge to process the more-than-human trauma of events. Thus, these spaces are characterized

Fig. 3: "All our Grievances are Connected." Rachel Schragis.

as places of transcription by and for collective memory from the perspective of the future of archival production, thus becoming vital spaces of transmission of all that we can save, while mourning our irreversible losses.

June 2021. During the warmest summer ever recorded,[27] mobilizations continue, rezoning processes resume.

Spaces are reactivated, and relational networks continue to expand.

Everything seems to be undergoing a process of restoration, awaiting the next storm season.

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1   Every day, new reports confirm that we are failing to understand the extent of the threats posed by biodiversity loss and climate warming. Recently, the Frontiers in Conservation Science report referred to more than 150 studies detailing the climate change. C. J. A. Bradshaw et al., "Underestimating the Challenges of Avoiding a Ghastly Future," *Frontiers in Conservation Science* 1, no. 615419 (2021), doi.org/10.3389/fcosc.2020.615419.

2   Nora Almeida and Jen Hoyer, "The Living Archive in the Anthropocene," *Journal of Critical Library and Information Studies* 2, no. 3 (2019): 3. The term "Living Archive" appears in several works focusing on the intersection between archive and affects theory.

3   Michelle Caswell, "Dusting for Fingerprints: Introducing Feminist Standpoint Appraisal," in "Radical Empathy in Archival Practice," eds. Elvia Arroyo-Ramirez, Jasmine Jones, Shannon O'Neill, and Holly Smith. Special issue, *Journal of Critical Library and Information Studies* 3, no. 1 (2019): 13.

4   Alycia Sellie, Jesse Goldstein, Molly Fair, and Jennifer Hoyer, "Interference Archive: A Free Space for Social Movement Culture" *Archival Science* 15, no. 4 (2015), 454.

5   From this reflection emerges the title *Emergency Spaces IV*.

6   "Inequality is profoundly interconnected with climate change." David Byrne, *Inequality in a Context of Climate Crisis after COVID: A Complex Realist Approach* (London: Routledge, 2021).

7   Caswell, "Dusting for Fingerprints," 7.

8   Francesca Polletta, "'Free Spaces' in Collective Action," *Theory and Society* 28, no. 1 (1999): 1—38.

9   Ray Oldenburg, *Great Good Place* (New York: Marlowe & Company, 1999).

10   Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces*," in *Heterotopia and the City* (London: Routledge, [1967] 2008).

11   Polletta, "'Free Spaces' in Collective Action," 1.

12   Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 52.

13   Dean Spade, *Mutual Aid: Building Solidarity During This Crisis (and the Next)* (London: Verso Books, 2020), 20.

14   Bernard Stiegler, "L'archipel des Vivants. Des territoires laboratoires en archipel pour une politique et une économie des formes de vie," In *Etica & Politica/Ethics & Politics* XXII/2 (Trieste: EUT Edizioni Università di Trieste, 2020), 161, doi.org/10.13137/1825-5167/30985.

15   Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, *The Mushroom at the End of the World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015), 52.

16   J. Dunson, "Participatory Horizons: Participation and Shared Power in Mutual Aid Disaster Relief Organizations," PhD thesis, Gainesville, University of Florida, 2016, 39.

17   Alan Feuer, "Occupy Sandy: A Movement Moves to Relief," *The New York Times*, November 9, 2012.

18   Interference Archive, "Our Mission," interferencearchive.org/our-mission/ (accessed June 8, 2021).

19   Several neighborhood environmental groups have been forming an ecosystem of activism that is raising awareness about the overflows and toxicity of the Gowanus Canal. Among them are Voice of Gowanus, Gowanus Artists in Alliance, FrodGowanus, Gowanus Dredges Canoe Club and Gowanus Canal Conservancy with its nursery at the edge of the Gowanus Canal.

20   NYC Planning, "Gowanus Neighborhood Plan," www1.nyc.gov/site/planning/plans/gowanus/gowanus-framework.page; and Hudson, "Gowanus Green," www.hudsoninc.com/projects/gowanus-green/.

21   Jan Dolfing, Youzhi Feng," The Importance of Soil Archives for Microbial Ecology," *Nature Reviews Microbiology* 13, no. 1 (2015).

22   One example is the project "The Warmest Years on Record, an Oral History of Life on a Warming Planet," in collaboration with the multimedia artist Rachel Garber Cole, *Interference Archive*. interferencearchive.org/the-warmest-years-on-record-pop-up-with-interference-archive/ (accessed June 8, 2021).

23   Virtual Multispecies Care Circle, interferencearchive.org/virtual-multispecies-care-circle/ (accessed June 8, 2021).

24   Ecological activist and artists Ellie Irons and Anne Percoco, from the Next Epoch Seed Library (NESL) and the IA co-hosted a "weed and seed" walk, interferencearchive.org/gowanus-weed-and-seed-walk/ (accessed June 8, 2021).

25   "Right to the City" is a slogan first proposed by Henry Lefebvre in his 1986 book *Le droit à la ville*. The slogan and the related ideas have been taken up by social movements and thinkers as a call to action to reclaim the city as a co-created space: a place for life detached from the growing effects that the impact of commodification and capitalism have had on increasing spatial inequalities in cities.

26   Astrida Neimanis and Rachel Loewen Walker, "Weathering: Climate Change and the 'Thick Time' of Transcorporeality," *Hypatia* 29 (2014): 560, doi.org/10.1111/hypa.12064 (accessed July 7, 2021).

27   I borrow this term from the multimedia artist Rachel Garber Cole's history project documenting climate change experiences, "The Warmest Years on Record, an Oral History of Life on a Warming Planet," which has been a great inspiration. www.environmentalperformanceagency.com/.

Back to Things: The Silences of the Archive and Object-Oriented Histories

Alina Volynskaya

Back to things! is by no means a new philosophical maxim. It can be traced back to Plato's argument against the sophists and finds its final shape in Husserl's phenomenology. Yet as articulated in Bruno Latour's recent program of object-oriented politics, it has acquired new (political) overtones: Latour not only calls for a return to and re-engagement with things, but he urges us to bring them into the political realm, to recognize in them powerful agents and "the missing social mass,"[1] to give them a voice.[2]

This call directly concerns the archive as a *locus* where things are stored, preserved, and displayed. The archive is meant to record life itself,[3] to give direct and unmediated access to the past, represented by its traces, fulfilling Leopold von Ranke's old dream of erasing his "own Self in order to let only things speak."[4] To maintain the "objectivity" and transparency of the archive, a variety of standards, protocols, rules, and practices have been established, ranging from the principle of provenance to the "gold standard" of digital preservation, the OAIS model. These regulations and ordinances make sure that archival objects are represented as matters of fact: authentic, intact, and credible, furnished with exact specifications, metadata, and dating.

It is this imperative of objectivity, of representing things as they are (or were in the past), that I call the silence of the archive. As I will argue, keeping the archive silent does not allow objects to be heard, but, on the contrary, mutes them, deprives them of agency, power, and performativity, shrinks the range of their social and cultural meaning. In order to demonstrate this point, I will outline three approaches to letting things speak: 1) constructing the cultural biographies of objects; 2) tracing the networks and environments in which objects take part; and 3) addressing the instrumentality of things. In this paper, I will exemplify the three approaches with one particular object—the Hipp chronoscope.[5] Let me introduce it the way (digital) archives do (fig. 1): it is an electromagnetic instrument for measuring small intervals of time (with a precision of about one thousandth of a second), invented by the watchmaker Matthäus Hipp in 1847, manufactured in his factory in Neuchâtel, dated from the second half of the nineteenth century, made of wood, glass, and brass, with dimensions of 59 by 26 by 22 cm. Indeed, is there anything else this modest device can tell us?

1. The cultural biography of things

One way of letting archival objects speak is to shift the archival focus from preserving and exhibiting an artifact to constructing its biography and studying its life-history. The biographical approach suggests that things have "social lives"[6] and that they "have the capability of accumulating histories, so that the present significance of an object derives from the persons and events to which it is connected."[7] Constructing the biography of a thing means tracing the thing in motion, looking at the ways and contexts in which it has circulated, moved, transformed, and been associated with individuals.

Thus understood, the biography of things stands in contrast to the custodial (or *provenance*) history as practiced in the archives. Provenance is intended to attest to the authenticity of things by offering an "objective" account of their production and possession. Biography, by contrast, gives agency to the thing and shows how it itself forms and participates in social interactions. Unlike provenance, biography does not pretend to be objective and exclusive: for instance, the Hipp chronoscope can have many different biographies.

One may associate the chronoscope with "the father of experimental psychology," Wilhelm Wundt. In the first psychological laboratory opened in Leipzig in 1879, Wundt conducted his famous "reaction experiment with Hipp chronoscope," which measured the speed of human reaction to visual, acoustic, gustatory, and other stimuli.[8] The chronoscope thus stands at the origins of mental chronography and experimental psychology; it made possible and embodied the theory of mind against which Freud later framed psychoanalysis and Husserl formulated his program of phenomenology.

Another biographical twist would be to trace the story of how the chronoscope made its way to the psychology lab from the astronomical observatory, where it was used to solve a problem known as the "personal equation"—discrepancies in the observations of star transits from different observers. This transition—from astronomy to psychology and from solving the problem of astronomical observations to measuring mental capacities—launches an entire debate[9] about the boundaries of disciplines and the birth of experimental psychology.

Or one can take a third direction and retrace the circulation of the instruments through institutions, laboratories, and the psychological community at the turn of the century, to look at how the instrument produced by the small factory in Neuchâtel found its way into archival and museum collections worldwide.[10]

Each of these accounts (along with their many possible alternatives) narrativize the object and offers insight into how it becomes invested with meaning—as opposed to the "objective" and *objectifying* characteristics like weight, size, materials that are offered in archival descriptions.

Fig. 2: Hipp chronoscope in the UNIL–EPFL collection of scientific instruments [collection-lhst.epfl.ch]. Credit: Hon. prof. Jean-François Loude.

Fig. 1: Hipp chronoscope in the Harvard Collection of Historical Scientific Instruments. [chsi.harvard.edu]
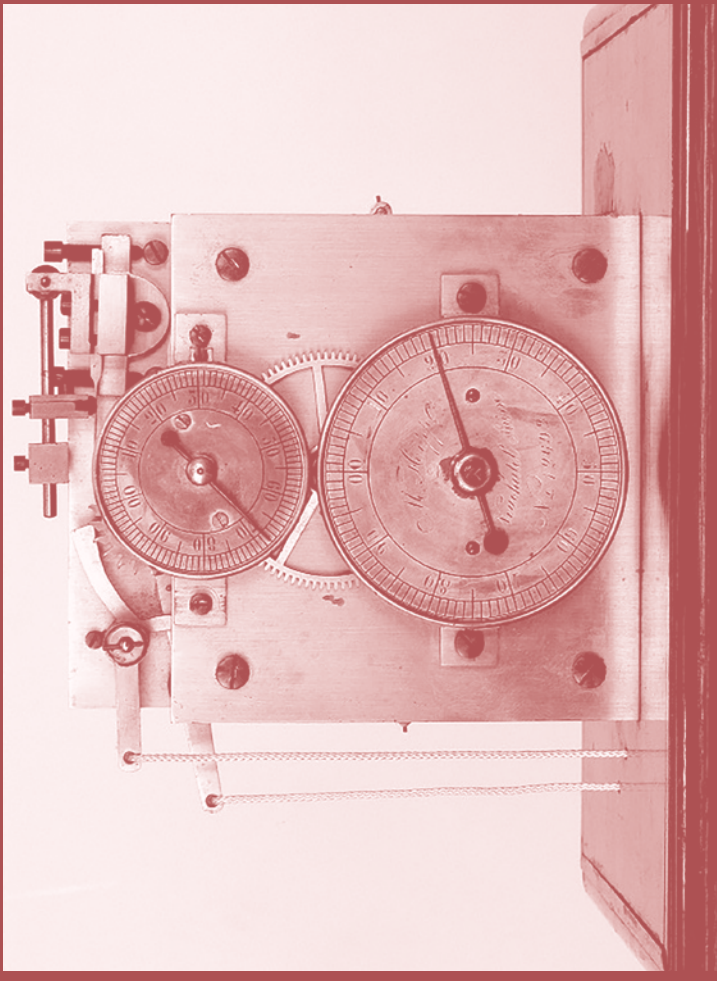
Fig. 3: Hipp chronoscope in Wundt's laboratory. Source: Wolfram Meischner and Erhard Eschler, *Wilhelm Wundt* (Cologne: Pahl-Rugenstien, 1979), 88.

2. Networks and environments

The archive conserves, isolates, and singularizes its objects. In it, a thing is performed as a unique, self-contained, and stand-alone artifact, removed and detached from its everyday settings and pragmatic context. Yet an object does not usually perform on its own, it gains its voice in interactions both with humans and other "nonhumans," by being part of assemblages, constellations, and networks.[11] It is in these interrelations of things with other agents that social meanings and spaces are being mapped and entire environments are being established.

In the case of scientific instruments, such as the Hipp Chronoscope, the most obvious example is the embeddedness of the object in the laboratory set-up of tools, documents, and humans. For example, in Wundt's laboratory, the chronoscope operated alongside a kymograph, a tuning fork, and a fall apparatus, as well as a test subject and experimenter.[12] Within this framework, the instruments took center stage (fig. 3), justifying and embodying the scientificity of the new discipline.[13] The chronoscope epitomized the ideal of precision (as compared to the observer), but it also required accuracy control on its own. A dozen different devices were invented for this purpose: various modifications of the gravity apparatuses, pendulum constructions and control hammers, which in turn required calibration with yet another instrument (a chronograph).[14] The chronoscope can thus be interpreted as the (crucial) node of this network that materializes and plays out the ideal of measurement and precision.[15]

Another option would be to put the chronoscope in the broader technological context of telephony-telegraphy (emphasizing its proximity to telegraph key in the laboratory set-up) and trace how telegraphic terms ("signals," "conductors," and "transmissions") make their way into the vocabulary for describing psychological processes.[16] The chronoscope could also be placed alongside other reaction-measuring devices: countless event recorders, interval timers, audiometers, memory drums.[17] Pursuing various combinations of how things are juxtaposed and tied together with other things and actors, provides a true object-oriented history, one in which the thing is given a power to influence its environment.

3. Instrumentality and mediation

The archive offers visitors/users a special mode of encounter with the thing. Martin Heidegger famously termed it "presence-at-hand" (*Vorhandenheit*): the relationship in which the thing appears as an object of contemplation, observation, interpretation, attribution, and other forms of detached intellectual study.[18] Heidegger contrasted this mode of encounter with embodied knowledge, "readiness-to-hand" (*Zuhandenheit*), the knowledge of an instrument in its use. To take his own example, contemplating a hammer and operating it constitute two different encounters with the instrument. What is more, the instrumentality of the hammer can only be grasped and experienced in the very process of *hammering*. In this perspective, by giving focus to an artifact, as archival representations suggest, we lose sight of the very "thingness of things," which only manifests itself through praxis.

Don Ihde complements Heidegger's argument with the idea that technologies in use have a hermeneutic power,[19] that is, they mediate and transform our experience; through technology we "read" and interpret the world: we imagine and describe molecules as they appear to us under a microscope or envision embryos from an ultrasound image. Yet this mediation, the essential power of the thing, is negated on display in the archive, when the thing is only meant to be an object of gaze, but not a *medium* through which one gazes into another object.

To return to our example: one can hardly suspect from the abovementioned archival description that for Wundt and others, the chronoscope appeared as a revolutionary instrument, enabling one to measure what was thought to be *unmeasurable*, for example, subjective time, which since Kant had been regarded as an a priori form of intuition, out of reach for empirical science or consciousness and its "psychological causality." The chronoscope was expected not just to measure individual reaction patterns, but to derive a universal law of how ideas (or in Wundt's words, "representations") enter consciousness and for how long they remain there.[20] In Ihde's terms, it served as both a point of access to consciousness and a form of its interpretation culminating in the idea of "the generalized mind" shared by all humans.

To respond to Latour's call would be to entirely alter archival identity: neither a passive storage facility nor a transparent window through which the observer can glimpse the past, the archive should be regarded as a *medium*, an active agent with its own voice, performing and *constructing* histories.[21] Consequently, the archival attitude towards objects should be changed from representing the thing as it is, emphasizing its uniqueness, singularity, and fragility, to the thing as a force of agency that accumulates histories, models social relations, and mediates our experiences.

One (albeit key) question that has hardly been reflected on in this essay is the actual way the approaches discussed can be implemented within the archive. Discussing it would require a separate essay (or rather a full-scale study), but the most obvious and simple answer is through establishing and multiplying links and associations of an object with other archival records, personalities, scholarly essays, videos, photographs, oral histories, and other forms of testimony, that is, through creating new assemblages, in which things would be empowered with voice. For as Latour reminds us, things "are much more interesting, variegated, uncertain, complicated, far reaching, heterogeneous, risky, historical, local, material, networky than the pathetic version offered… by philosophers."[22] And by archives, I should add.

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1   Bruno Latour, "Where Are the Missing Masses? The Sociology of a Few Mundane Artifacts," in *Shaping Technology/Building Society: Studies in Sociotechnical Change*, eds. Wiebe E. Bijker and John Law (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992), 225—258. Bruno Latour, "From Realpolitik to Dingpolitik or How to Make Things Public," in *Making Things Public: Atmospheres of Democracy*, eds. Bruno Latour and Peter Weibel (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005), 14—41.

2   For a discussion of technologies as material witnesses, see Susan Schuppli, *Material Witness: Media, Forensics, Evidence* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2020).

3   For a discussion of the basic archival principles as they were established in the nineteenth century, see Sven Spieker, *The Big Archive: Art from Bureaucracy* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2017), Chapter 1.

4   Leopold von Ranke, "Englische Geschichte vornehmlich im siebzehnten Jahrhundert," in Ranke, *Sämmtliche Werke*, vol. 14 (Leipzig: Duncker und Humblot, 1870), 103.

5   I wish to thank Ion Mihailescu for introducing me to the Hipp chronoscope and its multiple life-histories.

6   Igor Kopytoff, "The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process," in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 64—91.

7   Chris Gosden and Yvonne Marshall, "The Cultural Biography of Objects," *World Archaeology* 31, no. 2 (1999): 170.

8   See David K. Robinson, "Reaction-Time Experiments in Wundt's Institute and Beyond," in Wilhelm Wundt in *History: The Making of a Scientific Psychology*, eds. Robert W. Rieber and David K. Robinson, (Boston, MA: Springer US, 2001), 161—204.

9   See Simon Schaffer, "Astronomers Mark Time: Discipline and the Personal Equation," *Science in Context* 2, no. 1 (1988): 115—45; Jimena Canales, "Exit the Frog, Enter the Human: Physiology and Experimental Psychology in Nineteenth-Century Astronomy," *The British Journal for the History of Science* 34, no. 2 (2001): 173—97; Henning Schmidgen, "Time and Noise: The Stable Surroundings of Reaction Experiments, 1860—1890," *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science Part C: Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences* 34 (2003): 237—75.

10   Robinson, "Reaction-Time Experiments."

11   See Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

12   See Schmidgen, "Time and Noise."

13   According to Wundt, scientific psychology differs from usual psychology "in that her description wants to be precise." Wilhelm Wundt, "Ueber psychologische Methoden," Philosophische Studien 1 (1883): 3. As E. B. Titchener notes, "the experimenter of the early nineties trusted, first of all, in his instruments; chronoscope and kymograph and tachistoscope were—it is hardly an exaggeration to say— of more importance than the observer…" Edward B. Titchener, "Prolegomena to a Study of Introspection," *American Journal of Psychology* 23 (1912): 427.

14   See Horst Gundlach, "The Hipp Chronoscope as Totem Pole and the Formation of a New Tribe-Applied Psychology, Psychotechnics and Rationality," *Teorie & Modelli* 1 (1996): 65—85.

15   Ruth Benschop and Douwe Draaisma, "In Pursuit of Precision: The Calibration of Minds and Machines in Late Nineteenth-Century Psychology," *Annals of Science* 57, no. 1 (2000): 1—25.

16   Schmidgen, "Time and Noise."

17   The detailed list can be found in Fairfid M. Caudle, "The Developing Technology of Apparatus in Psychology's Early Laboratories," *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 412 (1983): 19—55.

18   Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. J. Macquarrie, E. Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell, 1962), 98.

19   Don Ihde, *Technology and the Lifeworld: From Garden to Earth* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990).

20   See Benschop and Draaisma, "In Pursuit of Precision"; Deborah J. Coon, "Standardizing the Subject: Experimental Psychologists, Introspection, and the Quest for a Techno-scientific Ideal," *Technology and Culture* 34, no. 4 (1993): 757—83; Kurt Danziger, *Constructing the Subject: Historical Origins of Psychological Research* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

21   Ann Laura Stoler describes this as a move "from archive-as-source to archive-as-subject." Ann Laura Stoler, "Colonial Archives and the Arts of Governance," *Archival Science* 2 (2002): 87—109.

22   Latour, "From Realpolitik to Dingpolitik," 19—21.

"Whoever has emerged victorious participates to this day in the triumphal procession in which the present rulers step over those who are lying prostrate."
Walter Benjamin, *Theses on the Philosophy of History* (1942)

1.

On June 24, 2021, former member of parliament, Chancellor of the Exchequer, and recently resigned editor-in-chief of the *Evening Standard*, George Osborne, was appointed Chair of the British Museum in London. Long held as a figurehead of the extensive austerity measures imposed under David Cameron's tenure as British Prime Minister from 2010 until 2016, Osborne's appointment in 2021 marked the climax of a decades-long cultural and political conversation, seeking to grapple with the imperial-colonial history of the United Kingdom and the way in which this history is reflected in and by its institutions.

Osborne's relationship to culture is well known. His time as senior minister in the British government was defined by austerity measures imposed not only on a

social but on a cultural level. The British people saw cuts of over 30% to Arts Council England and with it the slow dissolution of any remaining heterogeneity in the cultural representation of their country's history. Osborne's appointment has broadly been recognized as the entrenchment of a particular mode of thinking about British, or rather English, history; what we could call the consolidation of the triumphalist. The British House of Commons, formerly the House of Commons of England, is the de facto primary chamber of the parliament of the United Kingdom. In this context it is important to remember that it was the English government that spearheaded an imperial-colonial global enterprise. The Welsh, Scottish, and Irish people must always be considered, in the historic context at least, as colonial subjects no different from any of the other colonies or semi-colonies populated by the 458 million people the British Empire ruled over. With Osborne's move, the institution regains its momentum as a mechanism of propaganda. Stripping institutions of their funding allows the incumbent conservative government not only to leverage the but-where-will-the-money-come-from argument against calls for reparations. This move seeks to entrench conservative hold over the representation of British history. By taking the so-called "culture war" back to the domain of the museum and the gallery, the British right-wing finds safe haven in the institutions from which they have historically derived their cultural and ideological power.

It was Osborne too, together with former Goldman Sachs Asset Management Chairperson Jim O'Neill, who spearheaded a program aiming to reposition some sectors of the British economy away from London as its seat of cultural, political, and economic power. Through the UK DfT Northern Powerhouse Program, Osborne pledged a GBP 78 million investment for a new cultural venue in Manchester. Apparently seeking to "unleash the full economic potential" in Northern England's "core cities," the program was characteristically enacted through a series of public-private partnerships. To be called "The Factory," the name of the city's latest cultural venue is a Mancunian reference to both the city's industrial past as well as its legendary former independent record label, Factory Records. 'The architectural design competition brief for the Factory announced for its site the former Granada Studios within the city's historical industrial district. This area already features the Great Northern Warehouse, a well-preserved former

warehouse that has been converted into a multilevel leisure building complex featuring a cinema, casino, restaurants, bowling alley, bar, and gym. At an even larger scale, with space for around 7,000 people, the Factory is to become the permanent home of the Manchester International Festival (MIF), a biennial international arts festival with a specific focus the production of original new works. The architectural design competition drew entries from many globally renowned practices. Unsurprisingly, given MIF's status among these practices in the West, it was won by the Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA), with a project led by Ellen Van Loon. Much like the Fondaco dei Tedeschi, a former traveler inn for merchants in Venice, Italy, recently transformed by OMA into a high-end shopping center, the conversion of spaces of mercantile heritage into spaces of leisure caters to a certain socio-economic demographic. The MIF, with its series of events that will call the Factory home, initially took as its sites abandoned and independent locations across Manchester, spaces with a marked cultural history and more organic relationships to the city as a place of both industrial and cultural production. The event's impending containment in one location of spectacular starchitecture is a realization of the so-called "Bilbao Effect"; the construction of a single site around which real estate prices are projected to rise due to the involvement of an architectural designer whose celebrity and critical acclaim have given them some degree of fame among the general public. However, homelessness and the underfunding of welfare and public transport continue to trouble this "core city" of Northern England. These problems are not without precedents. They are rather a delayed effect of the deindustrialization of the region following WWI, only intensified by Margaret Thatcher's centralization of power in Westminster at the expense of local governments.

Manchester's new "Factory" is just further evidence of the cultural regression and further institutional intrusion of the British right wing in their now twelve-year tenure of the crown's pleasures. The socio-cultural context from which this project emerged is absolutely paradigmatic of the production of culture in the United Kingdom today; the government's austerity politics, Osborne's appointment as Chair of the British Museum in London, and his funding of the cultural venue in Manchester. In these recent events, we can mark the entrenchment of an ahistorical, regressionist understanding of culture;

a tool bound to speculative finance and the use of culture as an economic asset. Osborne's appointment provides a clear example of the consolidation of conservative ideological dominance over the production and reading of imperial-colonial history. His funding of the Factory provides a counterpoint, wherein the cultural history of Manchester is being coopted by the market into forms of market value in the name of real estate speculation. The gap between the performed politics of a historical past and its relationship to the cultural present is made increasingly insurmountable. It is against this backdrop that we seek to advance a counter-project: a Museum of Empire.

2.

It is estimated that there are about 2,500 museums in the UK. Some of the most visited are also regarded as being among the most comprehensive exhibitions of history in the world. The British Museum alone contains more than eight million pieces on permanent display. Yet, to date, there is not a single museum solely dedicated to the aspect of British history that has arguably had the most profound consequence for the UK's "greatness" in the world today: British imperial-colonial expansionism. The UK's status in the world is not a coincidence. It is the legacy of an imperfect past, a history of labor exploitation and resource extraction spanning the globe. Yet, the belief that the UK grew rich because of some inherent predisposition towards technological invention and economic rationality persists. The British people are in denial about the violence of their country's past, and are in need of a space in which to confront it.

Such a place did exist. In 2002, located at the Bristol Temple Meads Railway Station, the British Empire and Commonwealth Museum opened. Only six years later, it was closed. To raise money for what had been an underfunded institution, the museum's director sold items from its collection. The remaining items were transferred to the Bristol Archives where they were preserved and cataloged. Meanwhile, at least part of the UK's role in imperial-colonial expansionism across the globe has been memorialized through various specialized museums and exhibitions. In 2007, to increase the understanding of various forms of enslavement, the International Slavery Museum opened in Liverpool. In 2013, to address ignorance concerning the movement of

people to and from the UK across history, a Migration Museum was established in London. Finally, in 2017–2018, a selection of objects from the original British Empire and Commonwealth Museum in Bristol was seen at an exhibition at the Bristol Museum and Art Gallery, entitled *Empire through the Lens*. However, it remains unclear if and where this collection will be shown in the future. Further, the establishment of a few specialist museums and temporary exhibitions sets the issue apart from the mainstream of British history. It is time to revive the idea of a museum devoted to learning about the violence that has enabled the UK's status in the world.

The appropriation of the cultural heritage of conquered and subjugated peoples has always been an essential part of the imperial-colonial playbook. Not unlike other national museums in Europe with an imperial-colonial legacy, many of the artifacts displayed in the British Museum or even the plants collected in the Royal Botanic Gardens (Kew Gardens) at London-Richmond are looted objects. As Walter Benjamin lamented in his *Theses on the Philosophy of History*:[1]

> There is no document of civilization which is not at the same time a document of barbarism. And just as such a document is not free of barbarism, barbarism taints also the manner in which it was transmitted from one owner to another.

These "barbarisms" can be found dormant in repositories such as the British Museum, the Royal Botanic Gardens, and so many others like them. Not only through their simultaneous evidencing and denial of the violence that was the modus operandi of the establishment of the British Empire, but also through how they were obtained and persevered. The handing down of the world's treasures from conservative gatekeeper to gatekeeper only further mythologizes, fictionalizes, and entrenches a particularly static, nostalgic, and lionized conception of empire. A project for a Museum of Empire has, first and foremost, to be a project of education. Again in 2021, another member of the British Parliament, Minister of State for Universities Michelle Donelan, compared efforts to decolonize the teaching of British history to censorship under the former Soviet Russian regime. Controversially, Donelan suggested that educators were removing items from reading lists supposedly in an effort to prevent their students from being forced to confront hate speech. The year before, in 2020,

the British Department for Education (DfE) had already issued so-called "guidance" for educators involved in setting the relationship, sex, and health curriculum that categorized anticapitalism as an "extreme political stance." The department equated it with opposition to freedom of speech, antisemitism, and endorsement of illegal activity. By ordering schools not to use resources from organizations that have expressed a desire to question the contemporary economic system, the British government effectively outlawed reference to key events in the country's history. These are only further symbols of the emerging forms of authoritarianism within the current British government

In light of these events, we argue that it is the role of the historian, the architect, the archivist, and the preservationist, amongst so many others, to provide a place for the constant unfolding of history. Spaces such as the Factory in Manchester do much more for the surrounding real estate market than for the raising of historical awareness or the provocation of critical thinking. Instead, what are called for are spaces for counterhistory, spaces for the images of history, of the dead that Benjamin fears as unsafe in the hands of the victor, images and voices he fears are disappearing irretrievably. Where right-wing politics and its populists possess the tools to perpetuate their legacy, it becomes essential to dilute this hegemony with the histories it seeks to ignore. If we are to confront the past, we must produce a history that seizes on the hidden and subjugated voices of history and that frames the agency, will, and force of all those who consider themselves on the other side of victory.

Fig. 1: Benjamin Leader William's *The Manchester Ship Canal: The Making of Eastham Dock*, 1891, shows a pastoral ideal- ized image of technological development. Nowhere to be seen, of course, are the 16,000 laborers who dug the canal, nor can it speak to the historic context of its construction, in which 90% of the raw cotton spun in Manchester throughout the nineteenth century was shipped across the Atlantic from American slave plantations, which until the prior century had been the domain of the British themselves. It currently hangs in Gallery Oldham, Greater Manchester: Oldham being one of the world's first industrialized towns, a town once producing more cotton than any other in the world.

1   Walter Benjamin, *Theses on the Philosophy of History*
(Routledge, 1942), 256.

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Suspending the Postcard Paradigm
Allowing Space for the Future That Is Yet Unknown

Mari Bastashevski

In Neuchâtel, a quaint lake town in western Switzerland, two mutually exclusive perspectives of public space are coalescing around the legacy of David de Pury. Occasionally they erupt into a heated debate. In the summer of 2020, two petitions were filed with the Neuchâtel municipal council, the first asking the canton to remove the monument, the other calling for respect for history.[1]

De Pury was born in Neuchâtel in 1709, but made his fortune in Portugal, where he was appointed to the court of the King. He traded diamonds and held shares in Pernambuco e Paraíba, a shipping company that transported more than forty-two thousand African prisoners over a period of fourteen years.[2, 3] His enormous fortune, as recounted during a "decolonial" tour of Neuchâtel organized by Izabel Barros in the context of the *Unearthing Traces* conference, was bequeathed for the construction of key landmarks in the city, most of which continue to bear his name.[4]

The resistance to De Pury's "erasure" from the city is not merely a stubborn power move by a few diehard conservatives. The change in the monument's status frightens social groups whose image of safe spaces is grounded in the asynchronous and unchanging

postcard paradigm; my own catch-all neologism for a highly specific and tightly curated selection of images of Swissness that produces and maintains the dominant cultural regime.[56]

The postcard paradigm works to isolate Switzerland from the racist European past—from legacies of blood diamonds, slave-harvested cotton, and purloined gold —but while Switzerland has never formally been part of the European colonial project, it has most certainly participated and profited from it along with former European empires. "Respect for history," in the context of the De Pury bequest, refers specifically to maintaining the order of a carefully crafted, stable image that allows for cultural amnesia through ambivalence.[7, 8, 9]

On the other hand, the enduring presence of De Pury is offensive for people who have been historically subjected to racialized violence and exploitation, and all those who continue to be affected by its legacy, as well as multiple forms of systemic racism manifested across Switzerland in nuanced and convoluted ways.

To pacify the protesters without unsettling the conservatives, the municipal council of Neuchâtel agreed to add a clarification plaque to the monument. The plaque speaks of slavery in general terms, careful not to tarnish De Pury's legacy specifically. In line with progressive signaling, the council has also thrown money at the problem, inviting artists to engage with the monument. The call for proposals makes it clear, however, that the council is willing to only accommodate the problem if it is framed in terms of two opposing, but equally valid, perspectives, in such a way that only postpones the debate. Much like the postcard paradigm, the issue is removed from future-past temporalities at the heart of today's problems.[10, 11, 12]

De Pury's presence in the urban landscape is not only a question of a fixed notion of history, it is also one that continues to negate the possibilities of a city transcending toward a future beyond racialized exploitation; a "city yet to come." A city that AbdouMaliq Simone defines, using the example of rapidly developing regions in Africa, as emerging quickly not through conscious governmental policies, but by way of complex diverse networks, fluid, makeshift collective actions on the part of multiple actors running in parallel with centralized and decentralized city authorities.[13] A city not of just binary

competitive perspectives—conservative vs. progressive state/grass roots—but a monadology of partial and interdependent tacit knowledge networks that create what is lost around the De Pury square: a sense of future potential.[14]

In particular, I want to address the sense of future potential that stems from the process of becoming effectively *unhomed*. To be "unhomed"—according to the postcolonial theorist Homi K. Bhabha—is not to be homeless or spaceless, but rather to escape easy assimilation or accommodation. The unhomely experience, according to the essayist Edward Galvin, is the traumatic ambivalence between a personal, psychic history and the wider disjunctions of political existence. Stalled at an impasse, the De Pury conversation sabotages not only the home of now, but all potential possibilities of a different future that can be produced within a home. The stasis in conversation doesn't affect contemporary racial politics, it continues to generate future politics of unhoming for racialized and radicalized subjects, by preventing them from taking part in decisions about the use of public space.[15, 16, 17, 18]

When an idea of home-space is ruptured, we mourn the loss of the unrestricted movement of bodies across a "homed" space, as well as the words and feelings that came to define those territories over time. But, as Mark Fisher has demonstrated in "Lost Futures," it is the enduring loss of potentiality, the lost utopia, that makes the feeling of being unhomed so compatible with the sense of the universe shrinking into a dot, precisely because the idea of "home" holds within it an entire universe long before any educated attempt to deconstruct how such utopias are influenced by geopolitical and neoliberal notions of future belongings. While the loss of said potentiality may not always be linked to material conditions in any obvious manner, becoming unhomed is thus an embodied experience. One may recall Psalm 137: "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget its cunning [...] If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth."[19] Even a couple going through a less-than-biblical break-up often describe the loss of future utopias, such as growing old together, as debilitating. The disrupted "memory" of a future carries a spillover effect onto the perceived history of what has been. A history that, in turn, re-defines and restricts potential future imaginaries. That is what Denise Riley describes as time that is "a great circle
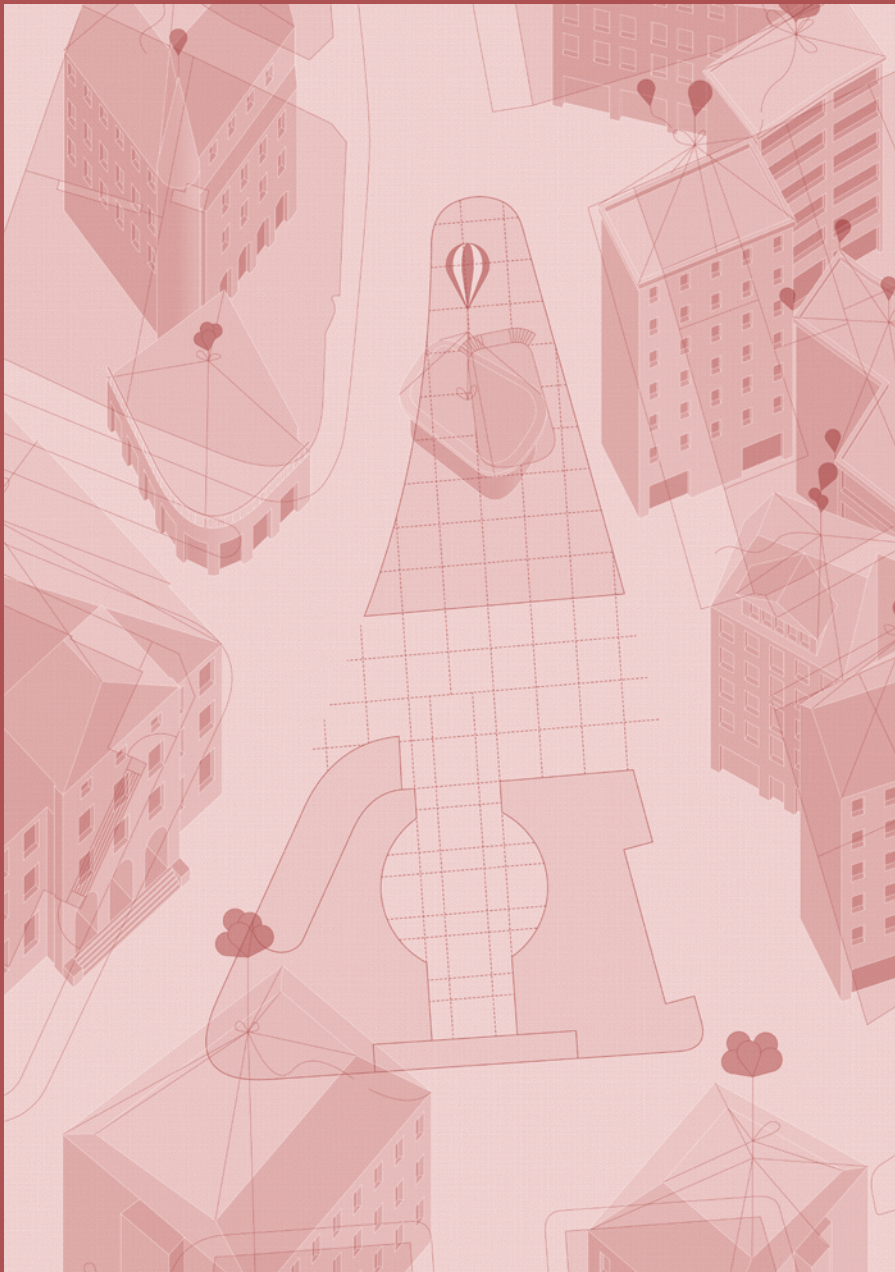
Fig. 1: Concept illustration. Riccardo Acquistapace, EPFL ALICE,
Ellipse Architecture.

with no rim," a rhythmic condition that can be as much a result of rupture or event as the lack thereof, the lack of flow in the passing of time, or as Fisher put it, the slow cancellation of the future.[20, 21] In the present case, the fixation of De Pury to the identity of Neuchâtel within a postcard paradigm is a form of optimism at its cruelest for absolutely everyone involved, as it embodies a fixed notion of history and future that threatens, in its perceived stability, the disintegration of both understandings of Swiss identity.

The unchanging, enduring presence of De Pury turns a city into a temporary-permanent fixture for anyone who is made into the "Other" by being psychically placed outside the boundary of the postcard paradigm, then systematically deterred from producing an idea of a future home in the city that is to come. Any attempt at reparation situated within these parameters of the real—such as the accommodation of competing perspectives on just the Square—is futile for as long as it ignores the fictional and utopian bonds that may allow the weaving of monads of all perspectives into the tapestry of a future city. Ultimately, to borrow from Benedict Anderson, it is not the real, but the fictional that is the glue that sustains as well as destroys communities. In the phrase of the critic Jacqueline Rose, "fantasy is not [...] antagonistic to social reality; it is its precondition or psychic glue." It is the loss of this utopia that makes the grief for the home in which it has been envisioned so compatible with a universe dissolving.[22]

Symbolic repair work, consisting of practical, direct, and immediate solutions to the Square's status, may benefit from a re-examining of the perceived stability of De Pury, as well as other elements of the postcard paradigm. The *fantasy of a distinctly Swiss sublime* is understandably subsumed by pictures of gold, blood, and other commodities that make the country a transit warehouse for global trade. The fantasy relies mostly on the stability of certain notions of nature, ignoring how the geopolitical is always in a constant tension with the dynamics of circulation that undergird it.

The complexities of the role of the nature-image in relation to the coloniality of space are often exemplified, if even by chance, in disciplines other than art. Consider, for example, the subfield of "invasive biology"—that, befitting its militarized name, works against certain structural changes by way of generating justifiable models

of "stable nature." While this anthropic form of nativism attempts to ground all that is nature outside of time, it poses more difficult dilemmas than it solves and results in occasionally contradictory, often laughable—if fascinating—theories. A number of peer-reviewed papers situate the "fixed" x-nature as native to x-location, for example, local nature is all that which existed or happened before the "Columbian Exchange," a period in time that marks the final point from which the question of nativity (be it among humans or other-than-human species) permanently loses justification for its presence in a given discipline.[23]

Posthumanist-leaning theories within biology expand the timeframe by arguing, boldly, that all human activity since the ice age is influenced by human mobility, broadening the field of invasive biology beyond biology.[24] These arguments are more complex than the few examples I draw on here, but it is the lack of consensus in a field that is interesting vis-à-vis the perceived stability and impartiality of nature, framed within the postcard paradigm, just like the heart of the history the Neuchâtel municipal council seem to be so worried about erasing.[25, 26]

The paradox of the postcard paradigm, as the example with De Pury's Square shows, is that it depends on both the maintenance and complete rejection of any kind of temporality in which it is situated. It is precisely this timeless environment, in which the paradigm of the postcard strengthens as it instantiates a kind of reductionist logic within an ecology of images, that subordinates it constantly to the obviation of both past and future.

Conifers, potatoes, and buildings and architectural styles that, much like the De Pury riches, have migrated into Switzerland by way of Columbian or other exchanges, all readily assimilate to the empty frames created cyclically by the enduring political regimes of early and late capitalism. Less than a century after the introduction of conifers into Switzerland through regenerative forest management, the tree has completely reconfigured the country's landscape and has been seamlessly assimilated into its postcard identity. Just as in the case of the potato, and its accession to a central place within the national cuisine in the form of the rösti, any selected elements can become, at will, interchangeable markers of the other and the local, when summoned retroactively.

Home, local, safe, and space—the dominant mythemes and the potentiality they hold function according to market demands; recognition and belonging seek a stable image, as well as aesthetic and affective affinities. None of the elements comprising the postcard paradigm, including, and in particular, nature, are in any way stable; yet few places in the world find their identity as melded to the postcard paradigm as much as Switzerland, be it the aesthetic "ecological service" provided by alpine landscapes, or the "picturesque" old city of Neuchâtel. A wide range of pictorial representations through which the environment—built and organic—acts as a medium constitutive of a future community. Each example builds toward an aesthetic totality.[27]

The question of De Pury's statue in Neuchâtel touches a crucial point here because his substantial donation to the city implicates that the space, its idyllic historical aesthetics, its wealth, and its pretensions of geopolitical "neutrality" are grounded in the transatlantic slave trade. Spatial distance and monetary abstraction historically allowed the Swiss identity to endure in mythological terms, while enriching itself through the proceeds of slavery.

However, because this logic retroactively fills the history of a space with the totality of the postcard-image, it also continuously conceals the intimate relationship between the space and the power dynamics of circulation that (ful)fill it, foreclosing the space for agency that would allow any and all of the human inhabitants to readily embrace the more universal logic of perpetual evolution and mobility.

Re-framed speculatively in the future itself, and in terms of threatened or lost futures, the controversy around De Pury's estate is a controversy about what is excluded and included into the space of a fixed, postcard model that has to be defined in order to be protected against ever-invasive universal threats, controversies now rapidly accumulated by way of changes in human, as well as environmental, mobility. It is a form of cruel optimism, best defined by Laura Berlant, against uncertainty within a frame that is so incredibly small, and so arbitrarily defined that it is bound to implode.[28]

Yet it is perhaps exactly this rupture in which the future is allowed to once again become uncertain—rather than fixed within the promise of violence repeating itself—

that we may find a significant shift in the De Pury conversation, a future that actually allows for the contemplation of a city yet to come.[29]

The invasive change invades the imaginary first in that it is already "here." The complete suspension of the postcard paradigm, not just a cosmetic temporary change, is what could create a future sense of belonging and safety by way of acknowledging the chain of events, histories, and circumstances through which humans and ideas migrated and continue to migrate. It is a history so complex—and circumstances are increasing in complexity—that to summarize a primordial belonging into a postcard, and by that define unbelonging, is an impossible and fatuous endeavor.

The explicit acknowledgement and subsequent rejection of the postcard paradigm would allow for a utopian future notion of shared community, *a priori*. A space that could accommodate such change in place of this, and other, cursed monuments, for me, is not one that accommodates dual perspectives, but one designated or rather, abandoned deliberately as "a space for the future," like the blank pages at the beginning and end of a book. It would be a gestural leap of faith in the future, away from an arrogant prescriptiveness, to a space delineated as a kind of temporal and perceptual geography that welcomes the sprawl of the dream canvas— occasionally blank, other times overflowing—and the best possible version of futures we can ever dream of or hope for: the unknown.

Mari Bastashevski is an artist, writer, and lecturer at Kunstakademie in Trondheim, Norway and Wageningen University, Netherlands. Occasionally, she collaborates across disciplines, and performs random acts of journalism. Twice, she's circumnavigated the world by sea. At the moment, she is spending a lot of time thinking through the tripartite relationship between animals, humans, and technology and working on research that explores how emerging technologies of seeing, such as VR, could become sites of field research into said relationships. Her past photography work, published here, is the result of extensive online and field investigations, and a collage of documents, photographs, and texts to explore the role of visual presentation in creating and sustaining conflicts within the ideological status quo. She has exhibited with Bonniers Konsthalle, Maison Populaire, Musée de l'Elysée, HKW Berlin, Art Souterrain, Noorderlicht, and has been published in Time magazine, the New York Times, Courrier International, Le Monde, e-flux, and VICE, among others. She was a visiting scholar in 2021 at the ALICE Laboratory at EPFL in Lausanne, a 2019 artist-in-residence at Chateau d'Oiron, a 2017—2018 technology fellow at the Data & Society Institute in New York, and Yale ISP Researcher in 2016. She has also been awarded art residencies at IASPIS Stockholm, and Cité des Art in Paris. In addition, she is an editor at Humanimalia, an open-access journal of human/animal studies operated from Utrecht, Netherlands.

1   "Gedenktafel Statt Abriss Der Statue von David de Pury in Neuenburg," Swiss Info, www.swissinfo.ch/ger/gedenktafel-statt-abriss-der-statue-von-david-de-pury-in-neuenburg/46894724 (accessed August 25, 2021)

2   Carlo Ginzburg, "Latitude, Slaves, and the Bible: An Experiment in Microhistory," *Critical Inquiry* 31, no. 3 (2005): 665—83.

3   Jean-Pierre Jelmini, "Neuchâtel, Jean Piaget's Home Town," in *Jean Piaget and Neuchâtel: The Learner and the Scholar*, eds. Anne-Nelly Perret-Clermont and Jean-Marc Barrelet, (London: Psychology Press, 2007), 31—40.

4   Isabelle Barroz, *Unearthing Traces, a decolonial tour of Neuchâtel*, Neuchâtel, Switzerland May 29, 2021.

5   Here I'm using the inverted definition of safe space in the text, space as developed in racial and queer politics as a space where hierarchies of neoliberalism are sufficiently suspended, allowing for respite from both material and perceived violence, that is, a space that explicitly shelters certain groups from state-sanctioned violence. Yael Arbell, "A Place That Is Different from the Usual Capitalist World": The Potential of Community-led Housing as Safe and Just Spaces," *Spatial Justice* 16 (2021).

6   Catherine O. Fox and Tracy E. Ore, "(Un) Covering Normalized Gender and Race Subjectivities in LGBT 'Safe Spaces'." *Feminist Studies* 36, no. 3 (2010): 629—49.

7   Nina Bandi and knowbotiq, eds., *Swiss Psychotropic Gold*, (Basel: Christoph Merian Verlag, 2020), 70—79.

8   Rohit Jain, "How to Be Affected in Postcolonial Public Spaces? Ethnographic Remarks on a Multifocal World in the Making," *Issues – ONCURATING*, www.on-curating.org/issue-35-reader/how-to-be-affected-in-postcolonial-public-spaces-ethnographic-remarks-on-a-multifocal-world-in-the-making.html#.YvEdofFBwbZ (accessed August 8, 2022).

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Unearthing Traces

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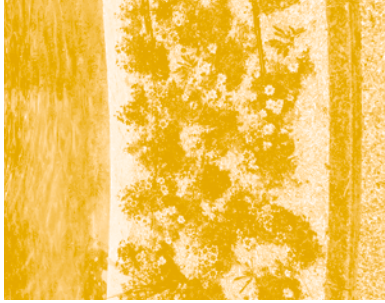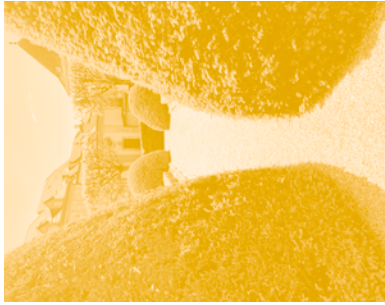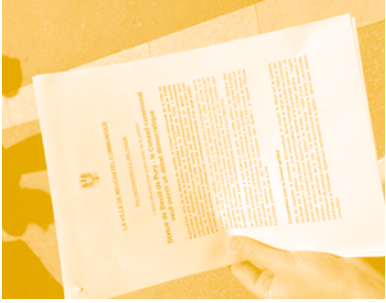of *Unearthing Traces*, doctoral researcher and architect

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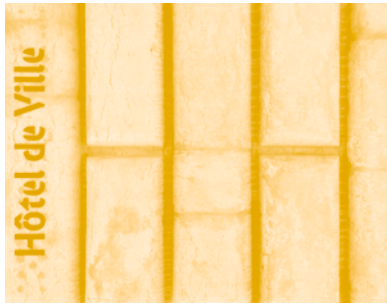
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Critical Fabulations,
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Archival power, silences, and absences profoundly shape and structure postcolonial landscapes, spaces, and urban environments by controlling bodies, histories, and interactions. This book explores pathways to dismantle these imperial entanglements by developing methodologies and plural epistemologies through an interdisciplinary dialog between history, memory politics, critical theory, and archival practice together with the fields of the built environment, landscape, urban studies, architecture, and the arts. Unearthing traces catalyzes critical discussions that not only challenge the objectivity and dismantle the neutrality surrounding current archival practices and archival institutions, but also question what constitutes the archive itself. The book unearths potential histories and minor narratives buried by the imperial production of pasts and silences. The diverse range of contributions in the book offers original research, discussions, positions, and tools and provides a critical resource for scholars, architects, artists, activists, and archivists who want to engage with landscapes and built environments in a critical and postcolonial perspective in relation to archival materials and practices.

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